U.S. LANDMINES KILL ANGOLAN CHILDREN

March 29, 1996

Dear Friend of The Africa Fund,

In Angola today landmines paid for with American tax dollars are killing and maiming children, women and men.

Luis Upeme had his left leg amputated above the knee after he stepped on a land mine planted by Jonas Savimbi's U.S. financed UNITA. Luis Upeme was a farmer not a soldier. He was trying to get to his crops because his family was hungry.

He is one of over 70,000 Angolans who have lost arms or legs to landmines. Many will never walk again.

Today the war is over but the landmines remain. There are at least 10 million landmines - one for every person in Angola. They claim 150 to 200 new victims every week.

Whole cities, towns and villages are surrounded by belts of landmines. Minefields are preventing 170,000 people in Malange from moving beyond the city limits. They subsist on food aid because they cannot get to their fields to grow crops.

Many of these mines were made in the U.S.A. The U.S. sent Savimbi and UNITA $250 million in covert military aid including landmines. For Nixon and Kissinger, UNITA was an important cold war surrogate.

Twenty two countries, including Canada, have now banned the production and export of landmines. The U.S. refuses to join them.

The Pentagon has consistently opposed the ban because it would be a victory for peace activists. But now the Defense Department has ordered a review of the land mine policy.

The Africa Fund is using this opportunity to press the Clinton Administration to join the landmine ban. We are reaching out to religious leaders, city and state legislators, and community activists from coast to coast asking for action to stop landmines.
We are also working to increase U.S. aid to help Angola clear the landmines. It can cost $1,000 to detect and clear a mine that may have cost as little as three dollars. Funds are also needed to train Angolan de-miners and to alert people to where mines are planted.

We need your help to continue and expand this critical work.

Please sign and send the enclosed post card to President Clinton urging him to ban landmines and support Angola's clearance efforts.

I hope you will also contribute as generously as you possibly can so that we can alert thousands more Americans to the need for action to stop landmines.

Helping to ban landmines is only part of The Africa Fund's work:

* We are campaigning to save Nigerian democracy advocates who will soon face the same military tribunal that ordered the execution of poet and environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa.

* The Africa Fund is bringing a delegation of southern African women legislators to the U.S. to meet with state and city legislators and leading U.S. women's organizations.

* We are building partnerships between people in southern Africa working for education and women's rights and their counterparts in the U.S.

Your tax deductible contributions to The Africa Fund make all this possible. I know we can count on you.

Thank you.

For justice and peace,

Jennifer Davis
Executive Director