

THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON AFRICA

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August 23, 1995

Dear Friend:

Throughout September and perhaps until mid-October the Senate Foreign Operations Committee and eventually the full Senate will consider their Fiscal Year 1996 Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill. This upcoming legislation (currently no public draft is available) will be pivotal in determining aid to Africa.

House Resolution 1868 (H.R. 1868) is the House counterpart appropriations bill, passed last month. **The Senate appropriations proposal is the last opportunity we have to preserve the current funding available or diminish the impact of the cuts for sustainable development for Africa.** The spending amounts in the two bills from the House and Senate, will be sent to a conference committee for reconciliation. Spending amounts set by the conference committee are generally not open for further amendment from either chamber when the reconciled bill reaches them for the final vote.

H.R. 1868 decimated spending allocated for sustainable development in Africa. The effect of reductions in the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill is a 20% cut from President Clinton's FY 1996 request. Foreign aid is very small to begin with - less than 1 percent of the entire federal budget. **Development aid to Africa represents only one-half of one-tenth of 1 percent of the total FY 1995 federal budget.**

Despite the conservative leadership rhetoric that everyone must sacrifice to obtain a balanced budget by the year 2002, these drastic cuts are unfairly distributed. Favored countries and regions, like Israel, Egypt and Eastern Europe, are immune to cuts. Favored agencies, like the Defense Department, face small cuts. And in several cases Congress has even increased defense spending above and beyond the requests from the Pentagon. Business interests receive protection and increases in the spending level for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

Compare that to the impact on programs that fund sustainable development in Africa: the primary government-to-government program is the Development Fund for Africa (DFA), which is cut from \$802 million to \$528 million. The African Development Foundation (ADF), funded at \$16.9 million in the FY 1995 budget, is cut to \$11.5 million and is slated for elimination.

The third major source of funding for African governments is the International Development Association (IDA), the interest-free loan component of the World Bank. IDA was established with a mandate of poverty reduction. It prioritizes loans to the poorest of countries and 40% of IDA's loans have been to African governments. Under these
(continued on next page)

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reductions the IDA total budget is cut by more than 50% the first year. WOA has been highly critical of World Bank activity in Africa but IDA is the only source of large-scale development financing for nations that are not considered "creditworthy" by the international markets. Consequently, the InterAfrica Group wants IDA retained at the present level, but calls on IDA to fulfill its mandate of poverty reduction more effectively. The NGOs recommend several changes to achieve this goal: 1) shifting the balance of lending to at least 60% for human development programs, and 2) credits to make poor people agents of economic change. Structural adjustment and infrastructure lending must then be limited to 40% or less of total lending to any African government. The recommendations from the African NGOs would preserve IDA, reverse the current lending mix, and restore the emphasis to human-centered poverty reduction, and lessen the hardship caused to poor people by the adjustment programs.

Contributions to UN Development Programs (UNDP) and peacekeeping initiatives are the **fourth** source of Africa assistance and are also reduced or eliminated. The impact of UN peacekeeping reductions, again, hurts African countries. Four of the last eight UN peacekeeping operations have been in Africa. Commitments to development are impotent without commitments to peace-keeping, and justice-building efforts that are prerequisite to participatory democratic initiatives and economic growth *through* development.

We have an important round of battles in the Senate beginning in September.

First, the Development Fund for Africa must be retained. Congress established this special allocation to assure that aid to Africa supported sustainable development and poverty alleviation projects. Dismantling the DFA **practically guarantees** an elimination of development aid to Africa. Aid that manages to flow is likely to cause an increase in the type of bad "development" work that has characterized USAID since its inception. The presence of the DFA does not guarantee that current projects are without fault, but it has established a protected and prioritized source of funds for the poorest countries in Africa, while it provides a legal framework from which assessments and reforms can be made.

Second, the ADF is the only source of funds that go directly to grassroots development initiatives in local communities. It **must be retained** and funded at least at its current level.

Third, the sustainable development programs must be kept separate from the short-term military and political agenda of the State Department. As described in the attached Action Alert the Senate is likely to consider legislation, The Foreign Relations Revitalization Act, S. 908 that merges the U.S. Agency for International Development with the State Department. Such a merger would further politicize and militarize the assistance process. Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), the bill's author, has pledged to introduce S. 908 as freestanding legislation *or* to see it amended to other vital legislation, like the Foreign

Operations Appropriations Bill.

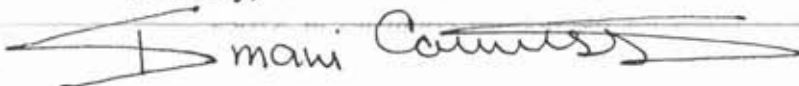
It will be an uphill struggle to maintain funding levels, given the "slash and burn" approach of the 104th Congress, their isolationist policy, and their preferential treatment of business interests over human-centered development.

Your letters, calls and district visits to Congressional offices are desperately needed. They do make an impact. In March the response from individuals like you forced the Foreign Operations Subcommittee to rethink an attempt by its chair, Mitch McConnell (R-KY), to cut \$110 million dollars from the 1995 Development Fund for Africa. Members of this subcommittee need to continue to hear from you. I've enclosed an action alert for your additional background information. I've also enclosed quick simple guidance for letter writing.

We also invite you to join the **WOA Rapid Response Network**. Legislation moves very fast when the conservative leadership wants it to. It is a way to limit public debate and response to their proposals. To overcome that obstacle, we have initiated the Rapid Response Network (RRN). As a member of the RRN you can have fast breaking information on the legislative process as it relates to Africa, and you can make your support for African development programs known to your elected officials and relevant committee members before decisive votes are cast. The Rapid Response Network will be mobilized via telephone, fax and/or e-mail for emergencies that require a response in 24 to 72 hours.

Please use the enclosed reply envelope for your contribution to: support this crucial campaign to preserve aid to Africa, join the **Rapid Response Network**, and to share a copy of your Senate letter with us. Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Imani Countess". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Imani Countess
Executive Director

Enclosures: August 1995 Action Alert
 How to write a letter/Sample letter

CITIZEN ADVOCACY

How to Write a Letter

Writing a letter to your Senator or Representative is one of the most important things that you can do as a citizen. It's the way that most elected officials hear what the voters are thinking. **You can be sure that your letter will be read and answered, if you —**

1. Let them know who you are.

Make sure your letter lets the reader know that you are a voter. Mention your membership in community or other organizations.

Remember: It is important to let the Senator or Representative know that voters from all walks of life in his or her state or district care enough about this issue to write a letter.

2. Tell them why this issue is important to you.

Write about one issue and highlight that issue in your first paragraph. Tell the Representative or Senator what you support and what you oppose.

You might also include a copy of an article or editorial from your local newspaper with the major points underlined.

3. Use your own words and keep it simple.

Don't send a form letter, a post card, or have several people send the same letter. Your own words—simply and clearly put—are more effective than anything else.

Remember: You don't have to be an "expert" on this issue. As a concerned voter, your view is more important than all the "expert testimony."

4. Ask for a response.

Make it clear that you would like to hear from your Senator or Representative about his or her views on this issue. Ask what she or he is going to do? Ask how she or he is going to vote?

5. Send us a copy of your letter.

We'd like to see thousands of similar letters going out; and when our leaders meet with your Senators and Representatives, they will want to be able to remind them that their constituents are concerned.

We also want to keep you posted on what's happening. Let us know you've written, and we'll send you updates.

90 Second Letter

Can you write a letter in 90 seconds?

An effective letter contains these *three essential ingredients*:

A. Request something specific

("I urge you to support legislation . . .")

B. Name the Action

(" . . . that maintains aid to Africa through the Development Fund for Africa (DFA) and at the current funding levels . . .")



C. Give a Reason

- ▶ "U.S. assistance is encouraging democracy and helping people meet their basic needs."
- ▶ "Current development aid to Africa is less than one-tenth of one percent of the U.S. budget."
- ▶ "54 percent of Africa lives in absolute poverty."

The Washington Office on Africa

ACTION ALERT

110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Suite 112 • Washington, DC 20002 • 202/546-7961 • FAX 202/546-1545

AID TO AFRICA IN JEOPARDY

August 1995

Conservative budget cutters of the 104th Congress targeted foreign aid, and Africa faces severe losses. Deep cuts cripple the Development Fund for Africa (DFA) and the African Development Foundation (ADF). Refugee and disaster relief, food aid, and funds for UN agencies that help Africa are also threatened. Additional cuts deplete funds through multilateral banks.

BACKGROUND

These drastic reductions in the aid budget are not distributed fairly or equally. Favored countries and regions, like Israel and Eastern Europe, are immune to cuts for political reasons, while Members of Congress say that aid to Africa, and foreign aid in general, are irrelevant to U.S. national interest. This is a tragically short-sighted view. Aid for sustainable development reflects the best of American ethics and values. When we assist in the development process, we help reduce the negative effects of poverty, environmental degradation, and conflict on the entire globe. Additionally, the U.S. has a moral obligation to assist those countries whose development needs are closely tied to the negative Cold War history of U.S. involvement in their internal affairs.

Many Americans think foreign aid is a huge drain on the public purse, when aid to all countries amounts to **only 1% of the federal budget**. The cuts proposed in African aid will be of little use in balancing the U.S. budget, but they will have a devastating impact on some of the world's poorest populations. The \$802 million budgeted in 1995 for the DFA was only **one-half of one-tenth of one percent** of the total federal budget; about \$3 per year, per American family. The ADF, which supports small, promising grassroots development efforts, is funded at a paltry \$17 million.

Cuts Won't Help Reform

Advocates agree that there is a need to improve existing policies and programs. Unfortunately, these cuts undermine the most constructive components of U.S. foreign aid and make real reform more difficult. They contribute to a spiraling humanitarian crisis, setbacks in the democratization process, and the loss of opportunities for trading partners. **The essential goal of foreign aid should be to reduce global poverty through sustainable development, to foster peace, and to provide humanitarian relief in the face of natural and manmade disasters.**

What is at stake

Currently, child health programs of USAID save lives of an estimated 800,000 children yearly in Africa. About 4 million children each year are vaccinated against preventable diseases and another 100,000 children do not die of diarrhea because of U.S.-supported oral rehydration therapy.

Democratic initiatives in two-thirds of sub-Saharan countries will be undermined. There will be fewer funds for preventive diplomacy and fragile peace processes that help avoid more costly conflicts.

Support will be lost for mutually profitable long-term economic ties. In 1994, U.S. exports to Africa were 22% greater than to the former Soviet Union. Research estimates that for every \$1 billion in U.S. exports, 19,000 jobs are created here. At \$4.4 billion in 1994, that's 85,000 jobs in the United States.

Congressional Calendar

The House has passed an authorization act (H.R. 1561), which would merge the U.S. Agency for International Development into the State Department and drastically cut development assistance. They also passed the Foreign Operations Appropriation Act (H.R. 1868), which contains only \$528 million for the Development Fund for Africa (a 34% cut) and \$11.5 million for the African Development Foundation (a 33% cut). **The cuts would have been much greater without sustained opposition from Africa advocacy groups throughout the first half of this year.**

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, (Jesse Helms R-NC, Chair), approved separate authorizing bills similar to the House versions, (the Foreign Relations Revitalization Act, S. 908; and the Foreign Aid Reduction Act, S. 961). S. 908 merges the U.S. Agency for International Development with the State Department. Such a merger would further politicize aid and make assistance subject to the short-term priorities of U.S. foreign policy. The Senate leadership tabled this bill just before the August 4 - September 6 summer recess. S.961 cuts overall development assistance and recommends approximately \$619 million for Africa, still a \$183 million reduction from the 1995 Development Fund for Africa (DFA). S. 961 includes **no earmarked** funds for the African Development Foundation and the DFA is **not listed** as a separate account. Both bills will be considered in September.

The next step is Senate action on appropriations bills, also after the recess. It plays a critical role in setting funding levels. Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), chair of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, said he has "a hard time finding a U.S. national interest" in aid to Africa. Other Republicans on the full committee, including Chair, Mark Hatfield (OR), Arlen Specter (PA) and James Jeffords (VT), are undecided and may be influenced by voter contacts. All senators will vote on the final version.

ACTION

Contact your two senators and Mitch McConnell (R-KY), chair of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee. Urge them to:

- 1) **Maintain \$2.1 billion** in sustainable development aid via U.S. Agency for International Development, especially \$802 million for the Development Fund for Africa.
- 2) **Maintain \$17 million** in funding for the African Development Foundation.
- 3) **Maintain independent agency status** for long-term sustainable development programs, protect it from short-term political priorities of State Department.

Sen. McConnell's phone number is (202) 224-2541; his fax number is (202) 224-2499. Also write or call the other members of the committee:

Subcommittee *Republicans*: Arlen Specter (PA), Connie Mack (FL), Phil Gramm (TX), James Jeffords (VT), Judd Gregg (NH), Richard Shelby (AL). *Democrats*: Patrick Leahy (VT), Ranking; Daniel Inouye (HI), Frank Lautenberg (NJ), Tom Harkin (IA), Barbara Mikulski (MD), Patty Murray (WA). Others on the full committee: *Republicans*: Mark Hatfield (OR), Chair; Ted Stevens (AK), Thad Cochran (MS), Pete Domenici (NM), Christopher Bond (MO), Slade Gorton (WA), Conrad Burns (MT), Robert Bennett (UT). *Democrats*: Robert Byrd (WV), Ranking; Ernest Hollings (SC), Bennett Johnston (LA), Harry Reid (NV), Robert Kerrey (NE), Herb Kohl (WI).

The Honorable _____, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510. Capitol switchboard for reaching congressional offices: (202) 224-3121.