

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(79) 194 final

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL
ON EMERGENCY FOOD AID FOR ZAMBIA

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Current situation

1. In January 1979 the FAO launched an appeal on behalf of Zambia by alerting the international community of the unprecedented food crisis with which Zambia will undoubtedly be confronted during the next few months.

Owing to the drought which has devastated Zambia the main maize harvest (April/May 1979) is likely to be 50% below normal, leaving a deficit of at least 400 000 t in this product, only a tiny part of which will be able to be covered by commercial imports in view of Zambia's precarious external financial situation. The already critical economic situation is made worse by the increasing stream of refugees from Zimbabwe.

2. Proposed food aid

The Commission is of the opinion that, considering the gravity of the situation, considerable assistance must be provided both by the Community and by its Member States.

The Commission for its part has already proposed that Zambia be allocated 10 000 t of cereals under the 1979 programme. In addition, as the Commission announced at a meeting of the Council's Ad Hoc Working Party on Food Aid, it believes that a further amount should be added to the proposed 10 000 t. A figure of 6 000 t has been put forward in this connection, this amount to be deducted from the 1978 reserve¹.

Insofar as aid proposed by other donors is concerned, it is appropriate to mention here that the World Food Programme will implement a number of projects in Zambia during 1979 which will involve supplying in the order of 15 000 t of cereals.

¹Where 8 050 t is still available.

No other indication as to the intentions of other donors is available at the moment. In view of the extent of the disaster the Commission suggests that Member States use every possible means to provide Zambia bilaterally with additional aid in cereals of the order of that to be granted by the Community, that is around 15 000 t to 20 000 t.

A review of the needs will be carried out by the Commission towards the middle of 1979, in the light of the harvest and the aid programmed by other donors. Following this assessment, should it be proved that a need exists, the Commission reserves the right to propose additional amounts of cereals for Zambia.

3. Mobilization procedures

Since the staple food in Zambia is white maize and this product is not available on the Community market, it would be desirable, for the purposes of implementing the two operations on behalf of Zambia (10 000 t and 6 000 t), to purchase the products in question on the world market.

According to information received by the Commission these amounts could be obtained on the Kenyan market, where stocks of white maize amount to 100 000 t. Information is also awaited on the exact state of white maize stocks in Malawi.

4. Conclusion

In view of the above the Commission proposes that the Council take the following decision.

(i) To grant Zambia emergency food aid of 6 000 t¹ of cereals. This aid will be charged against the reserve of the 1978 programme and will be delivered to the place of destination.

(ii) If the product to be delivered is white maize, this could be bought on the world market. This possibility would be extended to other food aid awarded to Zambia under the 1979 programme.

The Commission also recommends that additional amounts of cereals aid of the order of around 15 000 t to 20 000 t be supplied directly by the Member States.

¹This operation will cost about 1 000 000 EUA at world prices, the expenditure being in keeping with appropriations already decided.

