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E.C. EFFORTS TO FIGHT FAMINE IN AFRICA

The European Community has made a major effort to help victims of the drought that has swept Ethiopia and other African countries. "The Community did not wait until the African tragedy mobilized world public opinion, nor until the full extent of the catastrophe was known, before taking large-scale emergency action," Lorenzo Natali, Vice-President of the E.C. Commission, said last week.

The Community and its member states are expected to provide about 1.7 million tons of food aid valued at about 595 million European Currency Units (ECUs)* to sub-Saharan Africa in 1985. Most of that aid (1.45 million tons valued at about 508 million ECUs) is targeted for 20 famine-stricken countries under an African relief package, the "Dublin Plan," that was launched in December at a summit meeting of the 10 E.C. Heads of State or Government.

The principal beneficiaries of Community aid are seven countries that have been hit most severely by drought: Ethiopia, Sudan, Mozambique, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. The Community has granted those countries almost 400 million ECUs in food and other relief for 1984 and 1985 (see chart on page 3).

The Community is assisting the afflicted countries under:

- its regular food-aid program;
- food and non-food emergency programs;
- emergency provisions of the Lomé Convention, its trade and aid pact with 65 developing nations.

In addition, individual member states are providing assistance.

Most E.C. aid to Africa has been in the form of supply and transportation of

*ECU = \$.67 on February 27, 1985

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food. It has also supported health and nutrition programs sponsored by international and nongovernmental organizations and provided medical and other relief supplies. In addition, the E.C. is supplying seeds to prepare for the next harvest. To avoid disturbing local markets and nutritional habits and to save transportation costs, the E.C. Commission gives priority to local or regional grain purchases.

Because of the urgency of the situation, the Commission has taken steps to expedite and coordinate its African relief measures. A small "crisis cell" of officials has been given extensive powers to make day-to-day decisions on allocating aid. Representatives of the Commission and the 10 member states meet regularly to exchange information on aid programs, delivery timetables, port facilities and assessment of needs.

Under a plan approved by E.C. Development Ministers in November, the Commission each year will prepare a report on expected harvests in areas that are regularly hit by drought. Working from that report, Community donors will outline a plan of action if an emergency situation exists.

The Community also takes an active part in United Nations coordination efforts and has extensive contacts with the major bilateral donors.

Throughout discussions of the African drought, Community officials have emphasized the need for long-term solutions to food-security problems. A recent Commission report on Africa stressed that short-term food-aid measures should not undermine longer-term efforts by developing countries to increase their own agricultural output. The E.C. has begun to integrate its food aid more closely into recipient countries' agricultural policies. These efforts should be intensified, the report said.

Mr. Natali noted that modern technologies could offer new methods of fighting drought. With the help of the European Space Agency, the Community recently equipped a satellite station at Mas Palomas, Canary Islands, to receive information from American Landsat satellites. This will enable the dynamics of desertification in Africa's Sahel region to be studied.

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E.C. AID TO SEVEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY FAMINE

	Executed in 1984		Executed in 1985		Total Famine Aid 1984 & 1985
	Regular Food Aid	Emergency Food and Other Aid	Regular Food Aid	Emergency Food and Other Aid	
ETHIOPIA	42.0	22.9	39.6	42.5	147.0
SUDAN	11.4	2.8	19.0	19.5	52.7
MOZAMBIQUE	20.0	4.3	19.0	2.0	45.3
MALI	16.0	4.5	11.7	10.7	42.9
MAURITANIA	23.3	4.5	9.0	1.5	38.3
NIGER	4.5	5.5	17.0	10.3	37.3
CHAD	7.9	7.0	11.9	6.0	32.8
TOTAL	125.1	51.5	127.2	92.5	396.3

In millions of European Currency Units (ECU)

ECU = \$.67 on February 27, 1985

