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NEW AID PLAN FOR AFRICA

The Commission of the European Communities outlined on 31 October a new two-pronged 200 million ECU plan to deal with the rehabilitation problems in the worst drought-affected countries in Africa. The plan aims to provide continuity between the almost completed Dublin Plan and the soon to be implemented Lomé III Convention.

It envisages action on two fronts. First to bolster the capacity of these countries to cope with catastrophes by creating early warning mechanisms (including meteorological surveillance), setting up of contingency plans for distribution and regional communication, and re-establishing food and seed stocks and improving the logistics and infrastructure for the transport of the aid. Secondly the rehabilitation plan focuses on efforts to revive the rural economies by restoring the basic inputs - such as fertilizers, re-establishing agricultural credit systems, and actions to enable displaced rural workers to return to their place of origin.

The Commission's outline of the plan proposes that 100 million ECU be made available by the European Community, and that Member States match that figure by providing a further 100 million ECU.