

EUROPEAN BACKGROUND INFORMATION COMMUNITY

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BACKGROUND NOTE

No. 42/1976

October 22, 1976

THE COMMUNITY, EMERGENCY AID, AND THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Giving emergency aid to countries hit by famine, drought, earthquakes, and other natural calamities is one of the lesser known of the Community members' joint activities. Yet in the past two years, the Community has taken part in 37 emergency projects in 23 countries and has, additionally, contributed more than \$710 million to the international rescue operation for the developing countries most hurt by the rise in oil prices. This emergency aid is separate from economic aid to countries with which the Community has association or co-operation agreements.

The Community gives three types of emergency aid: aid to civilian victims of disasters, emergency food aid, and exceptional aid to the 46 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries associated with the Community by the Lome Convention.

Emergency Aid to Civilian Victims of Disasters

Each year, the Community's budget contains an appropriation for emergency aid. This aid can go to developed as well as developing countries, such as happened when the Community sent blankets, medical supplies, and tents to the earthquake victims in Friuli, Italy, last May.

In 1975, the Community sent emergency aid to Vietnam (260,000 units of account*), Turkey (UA 100,000), and to Angolan refugees (UA 150,000); in 1976, to Guatemala (UA 700,000), Lebanon (UA 100,000), and Mozambique (UA 70,000).

*Different types of units of account are used to calculate each kind of aid. Currently, one unit of account averages approximately \$1.15.

Emergency Food Aid

Each year a reserve is set aside for food aid to meet unexpected shortages. Usually, aid covers both the cost of food and transportation to disaster areas and the food is given free to victims by governments or specialized organizations such as the Red Cross, the United Nations International Children's Fund, and the World Food Program.

In 1975, these operations involved some 64,000 metric tons of cereals, 5,000 tons of powdered skim milk, and 4,000 tons of butteroil. This aid benefited people affected by war in Vietnam, Cyprus, Angola, and Palestinian refugees. Somalia, Haiti, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Pakistan, India, and Turkey received Community aid in response to natural disasters.

Food aid projects sponsored by the Community so far this year involve 38,000 tons of cereals, 4,800 tons of powdered skim milk, and 2,750 tons of butteroil, costing a total of UA 14 million. This aid is going to Angolan refugees, Mozambique, Zambia, Zaire, Lebanon, Vietnam, Senegal, Niger, and Mali.

The Community's main contribution toward the world food security goals set by the Seventh Special Session of the UN General Assembly (500,000 tons of cereals) has been the setting aside of 105,000 tons in its reserves in 1976 for direct aid. The Community has set aside an additional 20,500 tons in 1976 for distribution through international organizations such as the Red Cross and the World Food Program. Reserves of milk products have also been set aside for emergency food aid.

Exceptional Aid to ACP Countries

The Lome Convention provides for exceptional aid, in the form of grants, to the ACP's. This aid is financed through the Community's European Development Fund. Initially set at UA 50,000,000, this fund will be replenished at the end of each year to reach a maximum of UA 150,000,000 for the five-year life of the convention.

Since April 1, 1976, when the convention went into force, nearly UA 47,000,000 in emergency aid has been given, to

- Niger (a supply of groundnut seeds because aphides destroyed crops)
- Somalia (construction of schools under nomad settlement plans)
- countries affected by events in Southern Africa: Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, Zaire (purchases of rolling stock or parts)
- Mauritius and Madagascar (repairs of cyclone damage)
- Rwanda (purchases of trucks and fuel to alleviate this landlocked country's supply problems).