

RELEASE IN PART
B5

From: H <hrod17@clintonemail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 20, 2010 7:44 AM
To: 'millscd@state.gov'
Subject: Re: LA Times: The starving can't wait

That's really good

Let's hope.

B5

----- Original Message -----

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
To: H
Sent: Wed May 19 19:45:10 2010
Subject: Fw: LA Times: The starving can't wait

From: Huang, Cindy Y
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Cc: Klevorick, Caitlin B; SGHFSI; Radelet, Steven C
Sent: Wed May 19 19:22:34 2010
Subject: FW: LA Times: The starving can't wait

FYI

From: Schiegg, Nicole (LPA/PR) [mailto:nschiegg@usaid.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, May 19, 2010 7:21 PM
To: Garvelink, William (AID/A); Weil, Lynne (LPA/AA); Jaisinghani, Priya (AID/A); Huang, Cindy Y; Bradley, Susan (DCHA/PPM); Skoric, Dale (DCHA/FFP); Gohmann, Anna (LPA/AA); Skoric, Dale (DCHA/FFP); Walter, Lee (LPA/CL); McKenna, Tjada (EGAT/AA); Lewis, Josette (EGAT/AG)
Subject: LA Times: The starving can't wait

Hi, All: Marjorie Miller's editorial is out - concluding sentences: Moreover, the Obama administration has made global hunger and food security a foreign policy priority, promising to attack the underlying factors that contribute to food crises, from population growth and deforestation to crop and food distribution problems. In the meantime, we concur with the food aid groups that the administration has made a good start. Faster food deliveries can save lives.

Best, Nicole

latimes.com

The starving can't wait

The Obama administration is expanding pilot programs to get food aid to the needy faster.

2:55 PM PDT, May 19, 2010

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A close observer of current events could be forgiven for thinking that world hunger is waning, given that the issue has largely disappeared from headlines since the global food crisis that led to riots in 2008. Sadly, the opposite is true. Continued high food prices, drought and a worldwide recession that has reduced remittances from immigrant workers in developing countries have all contributed to swelling the ranks of chronically hungry people.

Although development experts need to address the global shortfalls in production, distribution problems and other underlying causes of famine, the immediate challenge always is to feed the hungry. In 2007, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization reported 923 million undernourished <<http://lat.ms/dxkryY>> people worldwide, an increase of 80 million over 1992. <<http://http/lat.ms/dxkryY>> Last fall, the organization counted more than 1 billion hungry people — an estimated 15% of the world's population — up by nearly 80 million in just two years. Population growth, rural-to-urban migration and other factors mean the numbers will continue to rise over the coming decades. This is dispiriting news by any measure, but there is at least some progress to report in U.S. efforts to feed the hungry.

The United States is the world's largest food donor, and historically the U.S. government has required that its food aid be purchased at home and shipped by American companies to the countries in need. International aid organizations have long argued that this is expensive and inefficient, and most other developed countries have made the switch to cash allocations that allow the food to be purchased where it makes the most sense — sometimes in the donor countries, but more often in the region where it will be consumed. Now the U.S. is beginning to follow suit with pilot programs that allow aid groups to buy food elsewhere, rather than exclusively in the United States, or to distribute vouchers to the poor.

The pilot programs, begun under the George W. Bush administration and advanced under President Obama, can cut the cost of food aid <<http://http/lat.ms/dpVgmK>> by up to one-third in parts of Africa, according to the Government Accountability Office, and deliver the goods three times as fast. For the hungry, that can mean the difference between life and death. Right now, that life-and-death struggle is most acute and concentrated in the West African nation of Niger, where drought has devastated the grain harvest and there is fear of a famine even more widespread than one in 2005. More than 2 million people already require food assistance, and the government estimates that about half of the country's 15 million people are at risk. The U.N. special envoy to Niger declared the problem a disaster in January, clearing the way for international humanitarian aid that needs to be in place by summer. Disturbingly, food shipped directly from the United States today probably wouldn't arrive until fall, whereas food from the region could be delivered within a couple of months.

The amount of food aid funds authorized for local and regional purchases through the pilot programs is relatively small — about \$325 million of the \$1.9 billion in U.S. food aid this year. Yet groups that distribute sustenance to the hungry, such as the U.N. World Food Program and the not-for-profit Mercy Corps, say it is a good beginning that gives them more flexibility to address a variety of problems. In some instances, famine is caused by a failed harvest and there simply is no food in the region. In those cases, it may still make the most sense to buy food in the United States. Sometimes the problem is limited to one country in a region or to a certain part of the country, and food is readily available for purchase nearby; buying it there cuts transportation costs and delivery time. In still other cases, hunger is the result of poverty — there are grains in the market, but people don't have money to buy them. That's where vouchers are useful. Vouchers and purchases of indigenous crops also ensure that people get culturally appropriate foods that they are accustomed to eating.

Buying locally is not always the answer. In Latin America, for example, it may be cheaper to ship food from the United States, according to the GAO report. Many local markets have a limited number of reliable suppliers, poor or insufficient inventory and lack legal systems necessary to enforce contracts, making strict oversight essential. Huge purchases on the ground can also drive up prices, forcing consumers who might have been able to buy their own food out of the market and into the ranks of the needy.

Nonetheless, with proper care and oversight, the benefits frequently outweigh the risks. Local and regional food purchases can stimulate agriculture in underdeveloped countries and feed dollars into hungry economies, as well as food into hungry bellies, while also reducing global greenhouse gas emissions by planes, ships and trucks. Furthermore, shipping food to impoverished countries can undercut their agricultural base, as former President Clinton noted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in March when he expressed regret for policies implemented during his administration to export U.S.-subsidized food to Haiti, making it cheaper to buy U.S. rice there than the Haitian-grown commodity. Similarly, too much food charity shipped from the United States can discourage production in the recipient country and damage its ability to feed itself even in good times.

In the United States, resistance to cash allocations came from farmers and longshoremen, for whom the aid purchases amounted to a kind of backdoor subsidy. The Bush administration tried and failed to pass a farm bill that would have allowed 25% of U.S. food aid funds to be used to purchase food abroad — compared with at least 50% in Canada and nearly 100% in the European Union. The Bush administration finally was able to get \$60 million over five years in a pilot program under the 2008 farm bill, and the Obama administration has authorized \$300 million in International Disaster Assistance funds this year. Moreover, the Obama administration has made global hunger and food security a foreign policy priority, promising to attack the underlying factors that contribute to food crises, from population growth and deforestation to crop and food distribution problems. In the meantime, we concur with the food aid groups that the administration has made a good start. Faster food deliveries can save lives.

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