

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 29, 2011 6:14 AM
To: H
Subject: This speaks to the FtF oppor we have been discussing for speech - he did this yesterday

James P. McGovern (MA)
5-Minute Special Order
Thursday, July 28, 2011

**U.S. MUST LEAD GLOBAL RESPONSE
TO FAMINE IN HORN OF AFRICA**

M. Speaker -

Last week, the United Nations declared famine in Somalia and reported urgent needs in Ethiopia and Kenya. On our nightly TV news and daily papers, we are seeing the pictures of people dying, of children suffering extreme malnutrition, and mothers carrying their babies walking over a hundred miles in search of food and safe haven.

Tens of thousands of people in Somalia have already died. The Horn of Africa is suffering a devastating drought, with this year being recorded in some locations as the driest or second driest year on record since 1951. The impact has been compounded by war, neglect and spiraling food prices.

Currently, some 11.5 million people across East Africa urgently need food aid, medical supplies and care. More than 130,000 Somali refugees have left their country for refugee camps along the borders of Ethiopia and Kenya. They arrive exhausted and physically depleted. News reports estimate that about 1300 Somali refugees arrive in northern Kenya every single day. They join already overcrowded camps, and stress the ability of the Kenyan government and humanitarian agencies to provide food, water, emergency care and shelter.

Working with local partners and NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children and Italian Aid, UNICEF will be vaccinating hundreds of thousands of children. Dehydrated and suffering from malnutrition, these children - especially those under the age of five - are particularly susceptible to the measles, polio, diarrhea and pneumonia.

To date, in fiscal year 2011, the United States has provided over \$450 million in humanitarian aid to the Horn of Africa through USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the Food for Peace Program, along with refugee assistance from the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

But much more needs to be done. The next three to six months will be critical. The drought is expected to worsen, at least through the end of the year. And then we will wait to see what happens during the next cycle of rains. Will communities be able to recover? Will small farmers be able to plant new crops? Or will heavy rains produce floods that drive communities deeper into poverty?

My colleagues need to understand, however, that the current crisis, terrible as it is, could have been much worse. There is good news amongst so much tragedy. The last time a drought of this magnitude hit Ethiopia, over 14 million people faced starvation. This time, about 4.5 million Ethiopians are in need of emergency aid. The difference? Since 2005, the United States and other donors have made significant investments in Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program.

I saw first-hand several of these programs in 2007. They help small farmers and poor communities diversify the crops they planted, broaden their sources of income, create local markets, better manage their water resources, and increase

the nutritional content of their own diets and those of their children. This has enabled over 7.5 million Ethiopians to withstand the worst effects of the current drought. These families and communities are NOT part of the 4.5 million Ethiopians who require urgent humanitarian aid.

These programs work. They were models for Feed the Future, our current global program to promote sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition. It's how you end global hunger, M. Speaker. It's the difference between needing to help rescue 4 million people rather than 14 million. It's also the difference between investing \$6.00 per person each year so they become more food secure and resilient to disasters - or having to invest \$250 per person to deliver emergency relief that only covers three to four months.

It's the smart way to invest our development resources. This is why I'm so appalled by what happened yesterday in the mark-up of the State/Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill. Development, humanitarian, and disaster aid programs were all brutally cut. These cuts come on top of the Agricultural Appropriations Bill that devastated our emergency food aid programs.

With the worst drought in 60 years hitting the Horn of Africa, these cuts amount to the U.S. turning its back on its own strategic interests and walking away from our international commitments.

Instead, we need to increase our emergency response to the current crisis, ensure we have the resources to invest in long-term development, and continue our global leadership in ending hunger and famine once and for all.

We need to do better, M. Speaker.