

STATEMENT ON MOTIONS

Mr. Speaker, I rise to give a brief interim report on the Canadian response to the crisis of famine in Africa. Since November, nearly 500,000 individual Canadians have contributed money personally to African famine relief. The average individual donation has been \$65 - double the amount normally contributed to non-governmental organizations. We are witnessing an unprecedented humanitarian response which continues in intensity and is made more remarkable by the difficult economic conditions in our country.

Acting in that spirit, with unanimous support in Parliament, I announced a Special \$50 million Fund for Africa in November and the Government committed part of that Fund to match the money donated by Canadians. Originally, it was projected that the matching portion of the fund would be limited to between \$15 and \$20 million. As a result of the overwhelming public response, I am announcing today the Government's decision to increase the limit on matching, by providing an additional contribution to the Fund for Africa of \$15 million. The system of matching was an important catalyst in mobilizing contributions by Canadian citizens and encouraging the co-operation of non-governmental organizations, and I am confident that a high-level of contributions will continue, even though a firm limit has been now set on the matching portion of the Fund for Africa.