

Peace

Violence and conflict are among the greatest enemies of Africa. Famine is linked directly to war, occurring both between and within countries. All four of the countries most seriously affected by famine — Ethiopia, Sudan, Mozambique and Angola — are currently being torn apart by internal conflict. Apart from the sheer destructiveness of violence, development is weakened by the diversion of scarce human and financial resources into war and the preparations for conflict. Governments and international organizations devote less attention than they should to the genuine security that comes from economic and social well-being. These problems are compounded by outside powers pursuing their own strategic objectives in Africa. Without progress towards peace, development will remain a vain hope in many parts of Africa.

Debt

The international economic system bears down hard on Africa. The international debts of African states are among the highest in the world in relation to export earnings. The poorest countries are now faced in the coming five years with a net transfer of financial resources out of the continent, as debt servicing rises and aid levels fall. While the commitment of African governments to policy and institutional reform is crucial, such reforms cannot be fully effective and, in all likelihood, will not be sustained unless supported by adequate outside assistance. Virtually all proposals for preventing famine point to the need for joint plans of action between Africa and the international community to ensure that: the debt burden is managed in such a way as to support, not impede, Africa's economic recovery and development; the real value of official development assistance to Africa is increased; and, to the greatest extent possible, that such assistance is provided as freely usable and fast disbursing foreign exchange.

Partnership

There is an important measure of agreement on the requirements for preventing African famine. But consensus is not enough. Africans have heard resolutions and seen agreements before — and yet they starved. The governments of Africa must resist powerful pressures to ignore the poorest parts of their own countries; the governments of