

ENOUGH FOOD IS FLOWING INTO ETHIOPIA TO PREVENT FAMINE. TRANSPORT WITHIN ETHIOPIA, HOWEVER, IS ANOTHER MATTER - IN FACT, A CRITICAL PROBLEM. THE ROADS, WHERE THEY EXIST, ARE POOR TO START WITH, AND SOME ARE NOW IMPASSABLE BECAUSE THEY ARE INCREASINGLY UNSAFE. THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH TRUCKS - MANY HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. THERE IS NOT ENOUGH FUEL - THERE IS, FOR INSTANCE, NONE IN PLACE AT THE MOMENT FOR THE AIRLIFT. PLANES HAVE TO DETOUR TO ADDIS ABABA TO REFUEL, MAKING THE AIRLIFT EVEN LESS EFFICIENT AND MORE EXPENSIVE AS A WAY OF CARRYING FOOD... AND YET IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO STAVE OFF DISASTER.

I LEARNED YET AGAIN ABOUT THE VITAL WORK BEING DONE BY NGOs, AND ABOUT THE EXCELLENT LEVEL OF COOPERATION WITH AND AMONG INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. I LEARNED, ONCE AGAIN, HOW MUCH THE WORLD RELIES ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS, WHICH IS PLAYING A KEY ROLE IN THIS COMPLEX SITUATION.

I SAW WITH MY OWN EYES THAT SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY HAVE EXTREMELY LIMITED CAPACITY TO SUPPORT LIFE... WHILE OTHER PARTS ARE FERTILE AND PRODUCTIVE. THE RATIONALE FOR ETHIOPIA'S RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM, WHATEVER THE POLITICAL MOTIVES, WAS UNDENIABLY VISIBLE, AND PLAIN AS DAY - BROWN DUST IN THE NORTH, GREEN LAND IN THE SOUTH.

I WAS, AND I REMAIN, VERY CONCERNED OVER PERSISTENT RUMOURS OF THE USE OF FORCE IN THE RECENTLY RENEWED RESETTLEMENT CAMPAIGN - EVEN OF SHOOTINGS OF PEOPLE RELUCTANT TO MOVE. INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO VERIFY THESE RUMOURS ON SITE - BUT SO FAR THERE IS NO CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE TO CONFIRM OR TO REFUTE THE DISTURBING STORIES.

I TOOK EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THE POSITION OF CANADA - AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, FOR THAT MATTER - CRYSTAL CLEAR. I HAVE BEEN ASSURED BY THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT THAT ETHIOPIA'S OFFICIAL POLICY, IN THE RESUMED PROGRAM, IS FOR VOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT ONLY.

I CAN TESTIFY, MR. SPEAKER, AS A FIRST-HAND WITNESS, THAT CANADA IS PLAYING A VALUABLE AND SIGNIFICANT PART IN HELPING TO AVOID A HUGE TRAGEDY IN ETHIOPIA. WE DID MUCH IN 1984-85... WE ARE DOING STILL MORE, THIS TIME... AND THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA WILL ALWAYS BE READY TO AID THE VICTIMS OF DISASTER, WHETHER IT IS NATURAL OR MAN-MADE. I CAN REPORT THAT CANADIANS, ALONG WITH PEOPLE FROM MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, ARE DOING MARVELLOUS WORK UNDER THE MOST DIFFICULT CONDITIONS. AND I FEEL OBLIGED TO SAY THAT OUR CONTINUED HELP AND SUPPORT IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH TO MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHOSE FUTURE HANGS ON A PRECARIOUS, KNIFE-EDGE BALANCE.

THESE FEW WORDS CAN EXPRESS ONLY A FRACTION OF MY THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS AS I SAW, BRIEFLY, THE ORDEAL OF THE PEOPLE OF ETHIOPIA, AND THE SPIRIT OF THEIR STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE AND MOVE AHEAD.