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Statement on Motions by
the Right Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for
External Affairs, in the
House of Commons on the
Canadian response to the
crisis of famine in
Africa

February 13, 1985

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.

The Honourable David MacDonald was appointed the Special Co-ordinator for the African Crisis. He will complete his original mandate on March 31st, and is preparing a detailed report. That will be submitted in March to the Government and then to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. I have expressed to the Chairman of that Committee my hope that Mr. MacDonald's report be considered as a high priority, so the Government can have the recommendations of both the Committee and Mr. MacDonald when we consider any further special steps Canada might take in response to the crisis in Africa including measures to encourage the continuing direct involvement of individual Canadian.

I want to advise the House of some of the initiatives Canada has taken so far:

- * A \$6.5 million shipment of food has been delivered to Ethiopia through the World Food Program.

- * Another \$11 million in food aid is to be delivered to the three Sahel countries, Mali, Niger and Chad in the coming weeks.

- * Supplementary grants of \$6 million have been allocated to the Canadian Food Grain Bank, for the shipment of 30,000 tons of food for the Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia, and the Sahel.

- * A grant of \$3 million for UNICEF is targeted specifically at health care for mothers and children and the development of long term nutritional and sanitary service measures.

- * I want to stress that this is in addition to CIDA's regular Africa program which this year totals almost \$300 million. Most of that money is directed to CIDA's programs that have longer-term objectives, aiming to assist African countries to become self-sustaining, particularly in agriculture. This is in keeping with the Canadian people's expectation that their generous contributions to African relief will be part of a hastening solution to these terrible recurrent tragedies that have been so wasteful of human life.

- * With the same objective in mind, I am pleased to announce that the Minister of Finance is advising the President of the World Bank that Canada will contribute \$100 million over the next 4 years to the World Bank's Voluntary Special Facility for Sub-Saharan Africa. This is an entirely new initiative taken by the World Bank, to supplement their regular programme in Africa, and is designed to support the efforts of African Governments in undertaking policy and institutional reforms to develop their own agricultural production. So far, in direct and supplementary contributions, the donor countries, including Canada, have pledged approximately \$1 billion (US) to this special facility.

The heartening response by Canadians has been a lesson about sacrifice and generosity to all of us. This Parliament can be proud of its quick response to unparalleled suffering - but we should be more proud and gratified with the response of thousands of individuals and groups across this country. The suffering in Africa is far from over, and I look forward to working with other Members of this House in developing means to express our continuing concern and commitment to bring relief to that devastated region.