

Agriculture by Marcia Merry

One Ethiopian child dies each minute

Food relief officials cite "donor fatigue" as an excuse for a failure to produce enough grain, and supply it.

At a June 6 press conference in Geneva, Switzerland, officials of the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), said that one child dies every minute in Ethiopia today. In Mozambique, they said, one child in three dies before reaching the age of five.

UNICEF officials have appealed for relief funds, but their minimum financial objectives have not been met. Therefore, officials at the press conference said that, besides strife and drought, "donor fatigue" has caused the grim death toll in Africa.

This euphemism, donor fatigue, shows the miserable subservience of the world of international officialdom in the face of the individuals and agencies imposing policies that are known to be causing starvation on the scale of genocide.

Bureaucrats at government agencies such as the powerful U.S. Department of Agriculture, or the Brussels-based European Community Agriculture Commission, are not expressing purported "fatigue" of their respective nations, by not producing and shipping emergency food. They are implementing a policy that they know, or should know, is exterminating peoples.

Government officials are collaborating with other U.N.-associated agencies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), to loot whole nations down to their last breath.

For months, relief officials have made urgent appeals for food for Angola, Mozambique, Sudan, and Ethi-

opia. The April 1990 U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization *Food Outlook* publication on "Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture," said, "Famine conditions are emerging in northern Ethiopia and parts of Sudan, with serious food shortages also reported from Angola and Mozambique. Several other low-income countries also face food emergencies. Further donor assistance is urgently needed."

Two months later, as of June, UNICEF officials simply decried "donor fatigue" and presented the grim fatalities statistics. UNICEF had previously sought \$15.25 million for emergency work in Ethiopia and \$11.7 million for Mozambique, but these requests were never met.

On June 6, UNICEF officials made a special appeal for \$30.9 million for Operation Lifeline Sudan, a joint effort with other U.N. and Red Cross agencies, for the year beginning from May 1990.

The other U.N.-affiliated agencies—the IMF, the World Bank, and GATT—are the very institutions operating to block economic development in these regions, and to divert scarce food to other locations. The position of these agencies is that poor countries should rely on low-technology methods of producing cash crops (euphemistically called "appropriate" or "organic"), to sell abroad, and make revenue with which to perpetually pay debt. This means grinding poverty and death for whole nations.

It is the imposition of these policies that Pope John Paul II, in 1988, denounced as the "structures of sin."

Last March, the Pope personally visited Africa to make a plea for merciful intervention and to warn that Eastern Europe must not distract us from Africa's needs.

This year, worldwide food aid shipments to impoverished food-short countries are likely to total only about 8.3 million tons, much lower than the annual amounts made available in the mid-1980s, when the need was lesser. Another 3.3 million tons of relief food are going to nations of Eastern Europe.

Overall, this leaves millions to die slowly, or rapidly, from malnourishment and disease, or outright starvation. For the decade of the 1980s, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak estimates that 500 million people perished for want of adequate basic food.

For the last three years in a row, worldwide annual grain output has been lower than annual consumption, causing a dramatic drawdown of grain stocks to next to nothing. This year, the carryover of global grain stocks is expected to be 5% less than last year; and down to about 50% less than four years ago.

For Africa as a whole, the drawdown of stocks has been at least 8%, to the genocide level.

The same process is under way in Ibero-America. In Central America, stocks are about half their 1987 level. Fully one-third of the 85 million people of Mexico are suffering from some degree of malnutrition.

For just minimum consumption for 5.2 billion people, the world needs to produce over 2 billion tons of grain a year. But the production level in recent years is only 1.8 billion tons or less. For better nutrition, well over 3 billion tons of grain should be harvested—for direct human consumption as cereals, and for indirect consumption through the livestock chain.