

Mobilize 25 Million Tons of Food Aid for Africa Now!

by Mary Jane Freeman and David Cherry

Nearly 25 million metric tons (mmt) of grain or grain equivalent is urgently needed as food relief, to feed more than 850 million people in 41 out of 53 nations of Africa, *right now*. This need is over and above the 40 mmt of grain imports that these nations customarily have bought annually in recent years, but cannot now afford; and over and above the small tonnage of food relief being doled out at present by the World Food Program-related efforts, on a triage basis of reduced rations.

Continuing this scale of food deprivation constitutes genocide. The crisis is intensified by the fact that global food supplies don't now exist to relieve it. There must be a mobilization for both agricultural production and emergency aid, and in the meantime, an immediate end to the use of food for biofuels.

The 25 million metric tons figure was calculated by quantifying the "food gap" that exists for each of 41 low-income nations, relative to what is needed to meet the minimal daily level of 2,100 calories per person throughout the country, which, as of 2007, was not being met by domestic production, commercial imports, and food aid levels at that time.

Table 1 gives these figures for each country, based on a data series for 70 low-income nations worldwide, kept by the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Economic Research Service, whose latest annual report, released in July 2008, is *Food Security Assessment, 2007*. The USDA set the 2,100 calories per day criterion, and the *EIR* worked up the figures of projected needs for Africa, as of early 2008. **Figure 1** maps 28 of the most food-short African nations, ranging from unmet needs of 5 to 10% (for the 79 million people in Ethiopia) up to 20 to 55% (for the 59 million people in the Democratic Republic of Congo).

This quantification of unmet need throws into sharp focus the fact that, just to meet barely minimal levels of food requirements in Africa, agricultural output must be expanded throughout the world, as rapidly as possi-

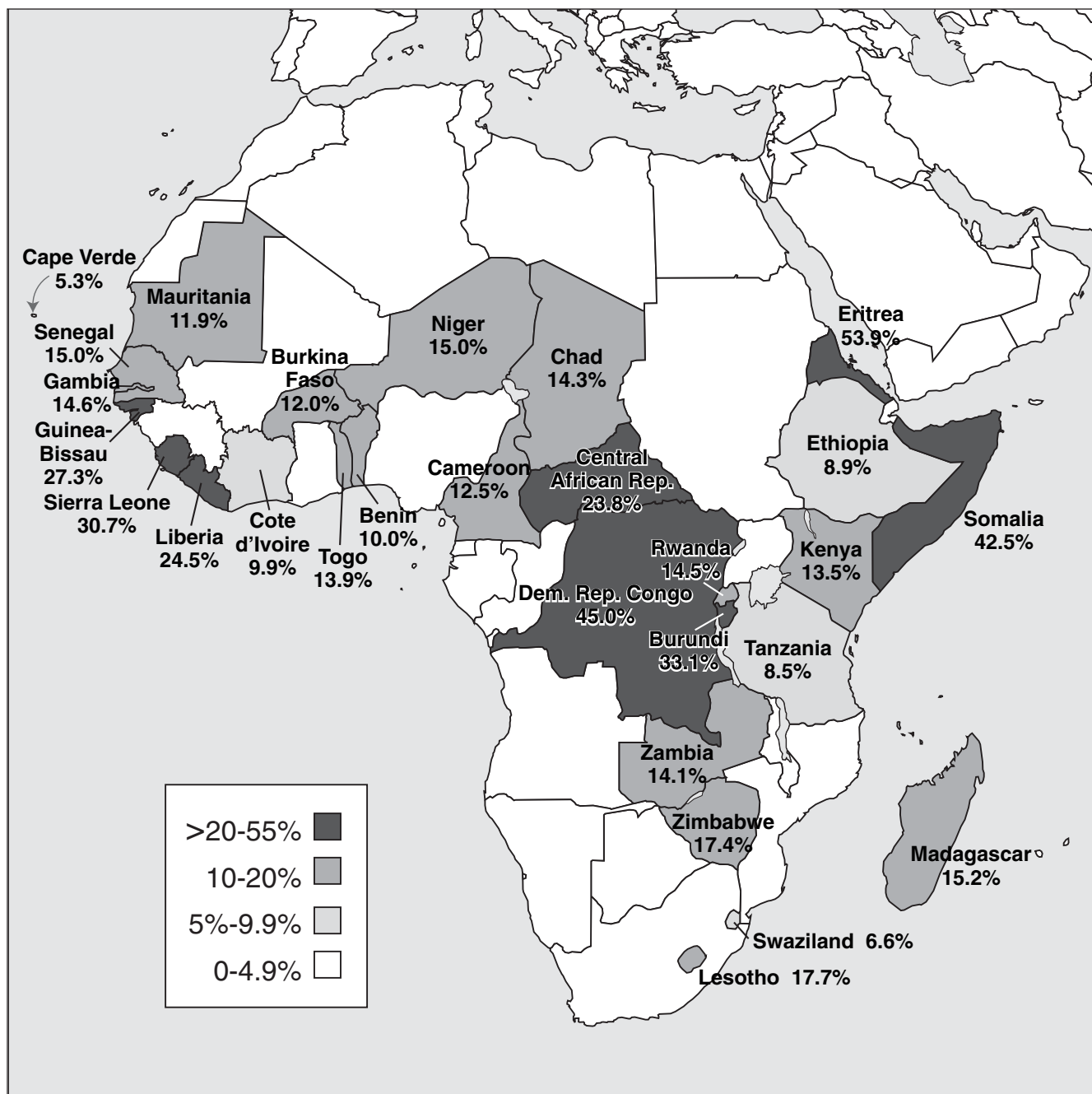
ble to provide the tonnages for the required relief effort. At the same time, a mobilization to rapidly increase production levels in Africa must be an international priority.

A few comparisons underscore the point: The 25 mmt for Africa *far exceeds the 18 mmt the World Food Program gave as cereals food aid worldwide in 1993—the highest aid year on record!* Second, the 25 mmt amounts to fully one-eighth of the total volume of world grains traded annually in recent years—a mere 200 million tons a year—out of the 2 billion tons a year of annual world production of grains (of all kinds). Most grains and oil crops are consumed in the country in which they are produced, with a few notable exceptions of the export-source nations, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, the EU-27, and now Russia. In five of the last 10 years, world grain consumption overall exceeded production! Stocks of staples—wheat, rice, and corn—have been drawn down to record low ratios of reserves to consumption. Countries are taking action to protect their own food supplies, by withholding the sending of their food to the world market.

So where is food relief for Africa to come from? Only from a break with the practices and thinking that caused the crisis in the first place, and a mobilization for expanding production and aid. An international petition is now circulating, calling for the UN General Assembly to take up the food crisis and act, when it convenes Sept. 26 in New York City. On July 29, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, chairwoman of the Schiller Institute, released a resolution, titled, "Make the Dream of the American Revolution Come True!" (<http://www.larouchepac.com>). It calls for doubling world food production, ending the World Trade Organization, and the thinking and practices behind it, banning biofuels, and setting up a new world credit system for infrastructure and development.

FIGURE 1

Food Deficit in 28 African Nations, from 5 to 45 Percent of Need, 2008



Sources: USDA Economic Research Service, "Food Security Assessment, 2007" (July, 2008); UNEP population data, 2005; EIR.

Institutional Sabotage

This demand for UN action is a follow-up to the effort Zepp-LaRouche initiated in May, to have emergency action taken up at the June conference in Rome on food security, held by the UN Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO). Despite worldwide endorsements and support for her initiative, action on it was thwarted by institutional officialdom—FAO, World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD, et al. There have been more instances of conspicuous non-action since then.

TABLE 1

Unmet Food Need in 41 African Nations as of January 2008—24 Million Tons

Region/Country	Population 2005 (Millions)	Unmet Food Need (Tons, Grain Equivalent)	Weekly, Pounds Per Capita			Percent Unmet to Total Need (Per Capita)
			Aggregate Food Available ¹	Unmet Food Need ²	Total Food Need ³	
Central		8,200				
Dem. Rep. Congo	58.7	7,195.1	6.3	5.2	11.5	45.0%
Cent'l African Rep.	4.2	284.6	9.2	2.9	12.1	23.8
Cameroon	17.8	719.8	12.0	1.7	13.7	12.5
East		7,495				
Eritrea	4.5	657.9	5.3	6.1	11.4	53.9
Somalia	8.2	925.6	6.5	4.8	11.2	42.5
Burundi	7.9	718.9	7.8	3.9	11.7	33.1
Rwanda	9.2	357.4	9.6	1.6	11.3	14.5
Kenya	35.6	1,321.9	10.1	1.6	11.7	13.5
Ethiopia	79.0	1,872.7	10.3	1.0	11.3	8.9
Tanzania	38.5	875.5	10.4	1.0	11.3	8.5
Sudan	36.9	453.1	12.7	0.5	13.2	3.9
Uganda	29.0	312.1	12.2	0.5	12.6	3.6
South		2,261				
Lesotho	2.0	97.5	9.7	2.1	11.8	17.7
Zimbabwe	13.1	600.1	9.2	1.9	11.1	17.4
Madagascar	18.6	883.1	11.2	2.0	13.2	15.2
Zambia	11.5	402.4	9.0	1.5	10.5	14.1
Swaziland	1.1	21.3	11.4	0.8	12.2	6.6
Mozambique	20.5	158.9	12.0	0.3	12.3	2.7
Malawi	13.2	50.3	12.8	0.2	13.0	1.2
Angola	16.1	47.3	13.9	0.1	14.0	0.9
West		5,892				
Sierra Leone	5.6	582.8	10.0	4.4	14.4	30.7
Guinea-Bissau	1.6	127.2	9.0	3.4	12.3	27.3
Liberia	3.4	246.4	9.3	3.0	12.3	24.5
Senegal	11.8	510.0	10.4	1.8	12.2	15.0
Niger	13.3	670.5	12.2	2.1	14.3	15.0
Gambia	1.6	68.0	10.4	1.8	12.2	14.6
Chad	10.1	460.6	11.5	1.9	13.4	14.3
Togo	6.2	240.7	10.1	1.6	11.7	13.9
Burkina Faso	14.0	588.6	13.1	1.8	14.9	12.0
Mauritania	3.0	107.0	11.3	1.5	12.9	11.9
Benin	8.5	250.6	11.3	1.2	12.5	10.0
Côte d'Ivoire	18.6	570.3	11.8	1.3	13.1	9.9
Cape Verde	0.5	8.4	12.5	0.7	13.2	5.3
Guinea	9.0	130.1	13.1	0.6	13.7	4.5

Region/Country	Population 2005 (Millions)	Unmet Food Need (Tons, Grain Equivalent)	Weekly, Pounds Per Capita			Percent Unmet to Total Need (Per Capita)
			Aggregate Food Available ¹	Unmet Food Need ²	Total Food Need ³	
Mali	11.6	143.9	15.0	0.5	15.5	3.4
Ghana	22.5	175.4	13.6	0.3	14.0	2.4
Nigeria	141.4	1012.3	14.8	0.3	15.2	2.0
North		12.5				
Morocco	30.5	12.5	14.3	0.0	14.4	0.1
Tunisia	10.1	0.0	13.9	0.0	13.9	0.0
Egypt	72.9	0.0	15.1	0.0	15.1	0.0
Algeria	32.9	0.0	15.8	0.0	15.8	0.0
Total	854.6	23,860.5				

Sources: USDA Economic Research Service, "Food Security Assessment, 2007" (July 2008); UNEP population data, 2005; *EIR*.

Notes

1. Aggregate Available is the amount, in grain equivalent, of food available for consumption. The category includes domestically grown grains and roots, (projected) commercial imports and food aid, totaled together, minus non-food use, such as feed and waste.
2. Unmet Need is the amount of food lacking, relative to what volume should be present to ensure that each income quintile of a population is fed a minimum of 2,100 calories per day.
3. Total Need is the aggregate available food plus the "unmet need," or that which would be required to feed each income quintile of a population.

On July 30 in Washington, D.C., an establishment action plan was released by a team nominally chaired by Sens. Robert E. Casey (D-Pa.) and Richard C. Lugar (R-Ind.), sponsored by the CSIS (Center for Strategic and International Studies). The 14-page report, "A Call for a Strategic U.S. Approach to the Global Food Crisis," was produced with participation of project directors from Oxfam America, CARE USA, Bread for the World, and the German Marshall Fund. Josette Sheeran, director of the World Food Program, was on hand for the report's release. Despite the obviously worsening crisis, this group still called for such policies as "wise use" of biofuels, support of more free trade through the WTO Doha Round (which collapsed the same day), and "study" of how to "modernize" food aid.

No more studies are necessary. The scope of the crisis is detailed continuously by many sources, but it is being blacked out of the headlines: the UN World Food Program, the Famine Early Warning Systems (<http://www.fews.net>), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (FAO.org/gIEWS/english), and governments and embassies of the nations themselves. "Information for decision-makers," is how the USAID office of the U.S. State Department de-

scribes the purpose of its Famine Early Warning Systems website, which even gives a detailed map of worldwide food riots this year. The question is, who will act?

Starvation in Africa

The USDA report stated that overall, in the 70 low-income nations studied worldwide for 2007, nearly 1 billion people lacked enough food to meet a minimal diet of 2,100 calories a day. To meet this need would require 44 mmt of food aid. Far less was given to them. Of the 1 billion people, fully 85% are in Africa. As of 2007, the USDA report found that more than 22 mmt of aid was required, presupposing that the 41 low-income African nations could obtain 42 mmt of commercial food imports. But this is no longer happening, given the dry-up of supplies on world markets and hyperinflation. As of May, for example, only 20 mmt out of 38.5 mmt of food imports (commercial and aid) projected to be required in 2008, had been lined up for 44 African nations monitored by the FAO ("Crop Prospects and Food Situation" series), called low-income food-deficit countries or LIFDC.

Food prices are going wild. For example, the price of white maize grew by nearly 200% between June 2007 and June 2008 in Ethiopia, as reported by

USAID's Aug. 1, 2008 bulletin, "Horn of Africa—Complex Emergency." Fuel prices, the bulletin states, have gone up 77% in parts of Somalia, just since January 2008.

The USDA report gives country-by-country data for Africa of the following kind. An aggregate of food available to a country is given for grains and root staples, such as cassava, including food produced domestically, total commercial imports, and food aid received. All were converted to grain equivalents. Then, assuming a daily intake of 2,100 calories, the USDA's Economic Research Service determined a desired level of food for that nation, and determined what the shortfall would be. This, it called a "distribution gap," making reference to the fact that enough food has to be provided, to be distributed to all sections of society.

EIR took these data and made a *linear* projection from it for what would be needed for 2008. This gives the total of 23.861 million tons for 2008, shown in Table 1.

There are built-in understatements all the way through in these figures. First, the Economic Research Service utilized "preliminary," that is, not *actual* "2007 food-production data," to project food production in 2007 within a country. Second, the projections made for the two external components of its data—commercial imports and aid—were based on "constant country food-aid data at the 2004-06 level." Right there, using so-called trend data to project future need, in this case, 2007, erased the dynamics of reality, and necessarily, understated the need, because the breakout of hyperinflation and world market food shortages hit in 2007.

Finally, the Economic Research Service assumes a diet of only 2,100 calories per day—a puny two-thirds of the 3,500 minimum daily calories requirement set in advanced sector countries, inclusive of a portion of animal protein. Considering these understatements, it can only be assumed that those countries found to be in great need in 2007, must be in greater trouble today.

The dire situations are clear at a glance in Table 1. The case of Democratic Republic of Congo, with 59 million people, makes the point about the emergency condition of the whole continent. Barely one pound of food a day per person is available on *average* across this huge, resource-rich nation. This is death.

Henry Kissinger's NSSM 200

Today's emergency in Africa is not a failure, but a "success" of the food control policy of the last three

decades of globalization. This is most easily understood by referring to the December 1974 classified policy document called NSSM 200—National Security Memorandum 200, by then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, a self-described agent of influence for the British Foreign Service. NSSM 200 (declassified in 1989) declared that, in the interests of Anglo-American policy, population growth and economic development were to be suppressed in 13 designated nations around the world, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Egypt, so that their own and neighboring countries' scarce resources would be "preserved" for international Anglo-American use. Under Kissinger, and thereafter, food-as-a-weapon policies were used, including the dumping of U.S. commodities, and the withholding of food aid.

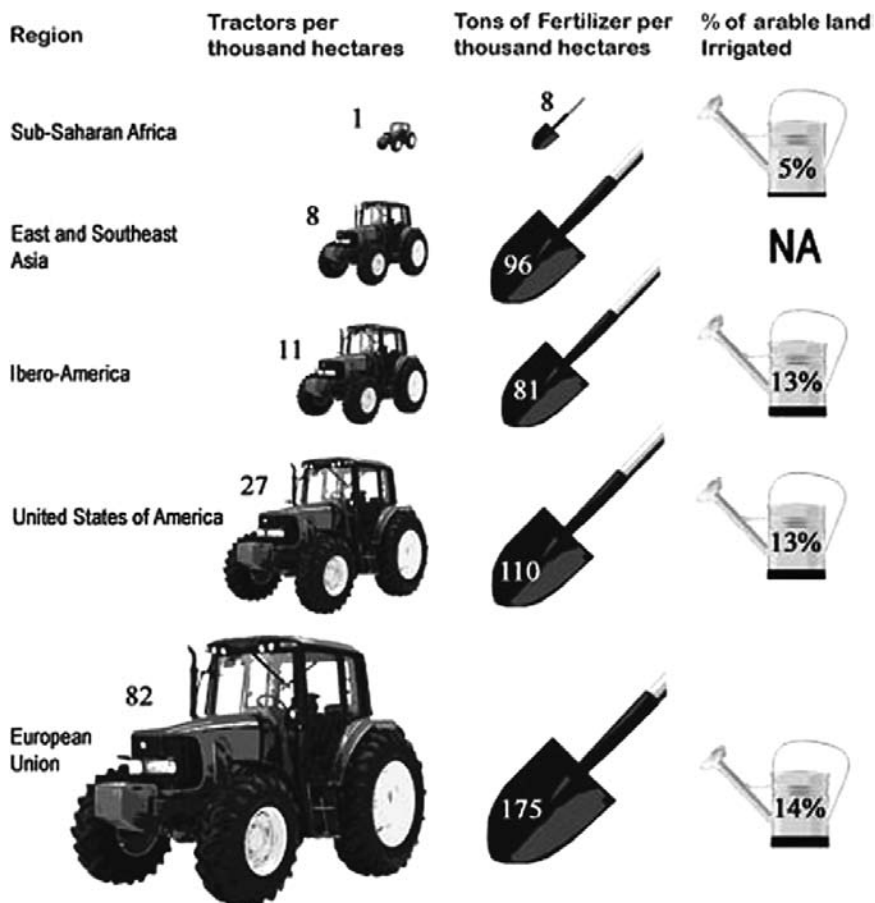
Over the decades, a phalanx of public agencies—the IMF, World Bank, UNDP, the FAO, and others, together imposed technological backwardness through the denial of development of water, power, and transportation infrastructure; denial of access to high-yield seed stocks and farm inputs, and so on. The euphemism of "appropriate technology" was promoted to justify this policy. Looting was conducted through rigged, unfavorable terms of trade, public/private partnership rip-offs, cash-cropping, and other schemes.

A special role was played by the green genocidal movement, including frontman Al Gore, as well as such "specialists" as former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice, now a top advisor to Barack Obama. The no-growth environmentalist arguments asserted that nuclear power, rail systems, and high-powered tractors are wrong for Africa, because we must go "back to nature." We dare not "pollute Africa" with bad development, the greens stated. In line with this, the USDA food security assessment report even advocates that Africa should turn to low-tech biofuels! Concerning sub-Saharan Africa, the report states, "[its] agricultural sector is faced with limited access to essential inputs such as fertilizer and high-yielding seed varieties. Water is scarce..." So, the USDA Economic Research Service argues, "there are low-input feedstocks that could be grown in this region for biofuels ... [which] can enhance farm income..." Pure and simple: relegate Africans to low-tech, non-food cash crops.

After waves of this kind of technological apartheid over the past 35 years, the absolute tonnage of food production per capita has accordingly fallen.

FIGURE 2

The Face of Technological Apartheid



Sources: LaRouche Political Action Committee graphic; EIR; FAO statistics.

Along with severe food shortages, Africa now has the worst ratios in the world for tractors, fertilizer use, irrigation, and other key factors of production per unit area, as shown in **Figure 2**, from the LaRouche Political Action Committee website.

In May, LPAC issued a white paper, “Kill the WTO: Double Food Production” (http://www.larouhepac.com/files/pdfs/080530_food_policy.pdf). The white paper’s section on Africa describes how, in 1978, Lyndon LaRouche commissioned a study to determine “the basic requirements for industrializing” Africa, to feed its growing populations and provide for a prosperous future. A crucial feature of that study was the building of a transcontinental rail system—something African governments at the time had planned and hoped to build. Now, putting this on the agenda as a priority, is one of the do-or-die measures for dealing with the world food crisis.

The Dire Case of East Africa

Four of the East African countries—Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and Kenya, with a total of more than 130 million people—together provide an example of what Africa’s hardest-hit areas are facing. Governments in the region know that Africa is not producing enough food, and that *the speculators are jacking up the prices* of imported food, fossil fuels, and products such as nitrogen fertilizers. Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh, one of several speakers at the Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Tehran July 31-Aug. 1, said, “The artificial hikes in energy and food prices, driven mainly by speculation, and the weakening of the value of the U.S. dollar have compounded the problems facing our countries.”

Across East Africa, the prices of staples have shot up, especially since January. In Eritrea, in May, the price of sorghum was 2.2 times that of May 2007, the price of maize increased 2.5 times, and the price of wheat flour increased 2.1 times. In Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, the price of maize in April was 2.0 times that of April 2007.

Elsewhere in Ethiopia, the price of wheat has doubled in the past six months. In Nairobi, Kenya, the price of maize in May was 1.7 times what it had been in May 2007. These increases have made staple food supplies unaffordable for many people.

The sharp rise of fertilizer and fuel prices in the region is seen in the example of Kenyan maize farmers, who use two nitrogen fertilizers in combination. The cost of using diammonium phosphate went from \$40 per acre in August 2007, to \$100 at the end of April 2008. Calcium ammonium nitrate went from \$22 per acre to \$37, in the same period. Fuel costs also rose, such that the cost of plowing and harrowing increased from \$60 to \$100 per acre for two passes. The combined cost of these inputs alone (there are others), has gone from \$122 to \$237, nearly doubling in less than nine months.

A brief survey of the current situation in three of

these four countries—Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia—exemplifies the worsening food availability since the USDA Economic Research Service data were collected.

Kenya: Today, in Kenya, between 2 and 6 million people are at risk of hunger, and will require emergency food aid by September, the World Food Program’s July 15 “Hunger’s Global Hotspots” report states.

A Kenyan farmer in the Mount Elgon District, who could not afford to use fertilizer, is expecting to harvest 360 kilograms of maize per acre, instead of 1,800, a loss of 80%, the IRIN news service reported July 24. Kenya produced 3 million metric tons of maize in 2007, but some experts predict only 2 million for this year. The Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture estimates that maize production in the “long rains” season this year will be 20% lower than in 2007, an FAO July 15 Global Information and Early Warning System update (GIEWS) reported.

Somalia: In Somalia, 2.6 to 3.5 million people—35 to 50% of the population—require food aid. Acute malnutrition of children has risen to between 18% and 24% in some areas, well above the 15% that is deemed an emergency, as reported by food relief organizations in late July. Such desperation has led to the murder of five food aid workers in recent months, as militias maraud for food supplies. An Aug. 1, 2008 USAID Fact Sheet, “Horn of Africa—Complex Emergency,” stated that 180,000 children in Somalia “are acutely malnourished,” which is an 11% increase just since January.

The GIEWS July 15 update noted above reported, “The humanitarian situation is rapidly deteriorating” in Somalia, because of “increasing food prices” and the devaluation of the currency. Sorghum prices have already gone up more than 60% since January 2008. “Disaster similar to the 1992-93 famine, when hundreds of thousands of people perished,” could engulf parts of the country within months, Peter Goossens of the World Food Program told a news conference on July 23.

Ethiopia: More than 10 million people, 12% of Ethiopia’s population, need food aid—a doubling since January. Of these, 4.6 million people require emergency food aid, while another 5.7 million, who are in safety-net programs, need additional food to survive until the November harvest. Among the 10 million, are 75,000 children with acute malnutrition. The 4.6 million people in need of emergency food aid is nearly double the 2.6 million in the government’s April esti-

mate, the July 15 GIEWS update pointed out. The country has already used up its emergency cereal reserves to feed its urban poor.

In the famines of the 1980s, 1 million Ethiopians died. Today, “Ethiopians are waiting for rain—or death,” a BBC correspondent said in mid-July.

The Backdrop of Drought and Violence

The famine is occurring against a backdrop of drought and political violence that amplifies its effects. In Eritrea, rainfall has been below average in the North Red Sea region, but normal in the central highlands. In Ethiopia there has been extreme drought over much of the country. In Kenya, rainfall has been very poor in the Northern Rift Valley and Northwestern provinces.

The civil war in Somalia, sustained by the Ethiopian invasion in December 2006—with backing from Britain’s Tony Blair and U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney—has harmed Ethiopia, but has led to an existential crisis for Somalia. Thousands of Somalis have been killed in the fighting; nearly a million have fled the capital, and thousands more are still leaving. There is scarcely a government worthy of the name.

The alignment of Eritrea with the Somali Islamists—against Ethiopia’s armed support for the nominal government—means that Ethiopian-Eritrean tensions are aggravated, with economic consequences: Ethiopia is landlocked and would benefit from access to the Red Sea via Eritrean ports, but the hope of such access is made the more distant by the Somali war.

Political and ethnic violence in Kenya, in the wake of the December 2007 election, led to the displacement of possibly as many as 600,000 people; 300,000 of them were living in camps, and the rest with family and friends, according to a UN estimate. Since then, the numbers of displaced persons have declined slowly.

West Africa: The Next Famine?

In the 17 countries of Africa’s western region, the unmet food need ranges from 30.7% in Sierra Leone to 2% in Nigeria (see Table 1), but the actual food need today is, of course, greater than the projection.

Prospects for local food production are worse than a snapshot taken today—or over the next six months—would suggest. Nigeria, which is not high on the list of African food-deficit countries, provides an example. The rapid decay of Nigeria’s infrastructure raises the prospect that a country which feeds its population

today—albeit most are very poor—is headed for hunger. Since the return of “democracy” in 1999, under President Olusegun Obasanjo, and now under his successor, Umaru Yar’Adua, the IMF and World Bank have reigned supreme, through their conditionalities. The economy is far worse now than ever.

Of Nigeria’s 140 million people, 85%, almost 120 million, live in poverty, most on \$1 to 2 per day. For the vast majority, there is no way to earn an income. Electricity production for the national grid, officially reported at the very low figure of 2,169 megawatts, has been reported to *EIR* as actually being only 1,000 megawatts. No business or household has electricity for more than a few hours a day. Yet Nigeria is the eighth-largest crude oil producer in the world!

Guerrilla warfare in Nigeria’s oil and gas production region, supported by a criminal syndicate, has reduced oil sales by between 25% and 50% (500,000 to 1 million barrels per day) through disruption and theft of the oil, according to estimates.

In the current food crisis, Nigeria has drawn on its ten strategic grain reserve centers (their combined capacity is 250,000 metric tons of grain). But as infrastructure decays, rural populations become increasingly difficult to reach and, correspondingly, replenishment of the reserves becomes increasing difficult and expensive. When will the breaking point be reached?

Southern Africa: The Case of Zimbabwe

In calling for more aid for Zimbabwe on Aug. 5, the International Red Cross/Crescent estimated that 5.1 million Zimbabweans are likely to face hunger by January 2009—that is 45% of the country’s population. This is British genocide, now as before. Today the Brits destabilize the country; before, in the 1990s, Zimbabwe followed the dictates of the WTO, GATT, and IMF, which caused the once self-sufficient regional breadbasket to be dismantled. When President Robert Mugabe finally reacted to this sabotage, by seizing and distributing to black Africans the farms held by whites (most of them loyal to Britain), the British launched economic and financial warfare against Zimbabwe.

This deliberate British genocide has been concealed in the press as supposedly resulting from Mugabe’s “mismanagement of the economy,” providing propaganda for the British push to put their puppet, Morgan Tsvangirai, in power. Now, 80% of the population lives at or below the poverty level, the Red Cross states.

Lawrence Freeman contributed to this article.

Interview: Teodros Kiros, Ph.D.

Ethiopia Is ‘Afflicted by Avoidable Famines’

Teodros Kiros, Ph.D., an Ethiopian-American scholar now based in Boston, discussed the current food crisis in East Africa with Alex Getachew of the La-Rouche Youth Movement in Boston, and EIR’s Marcia Merry Baker, on Aug. 6. Edited excerpts from the discussion are given below.



Dr. Kiros has written extensively on moral economy and philosophy, and other topics, including six books, over 100 articles, as well as many short stories. His monograph Moral Philosophy and Development—The Human Condition in Africa was published in 1992 (Ohio University Press, African Series, No. 61). He is currently a DuBois Fellow at Harvard University; his past teaching positions include visiting scholar at Brown University, and lecturer at Suffolk University. He is active with the Boston-based African Community Economic Development of New England (ACEDONE).

Baker: In the context of decades of globalization, where we now have economic activity plunging and the financial system blowing apart, one of the worst hit places in the world for acute food shortages is East Africa: the Horn of Africa, and Ethiopia in particular. What would you say of this dire situation?

Kiros: As you know, famine is not foreign to the Ethiopian experience. Of course, Ethiopia need not necessarily be equated with famine, because it is the center of world civilization! Human history as we know it was begun in what is now being called Ethiopia, about 4.5 million years ago. Further, for example, our earliest human ancestor, Lucy, whom Ethiopians refer to as Dinkinish (which we translate into English as “Miraculous”), originated there.

So, we are speaking about the part of the world that, on the one hand, is the origin of the oldest, the best, and