

remains the world's greatest development challenge.

The DFA has proven to be an effective mechanism in providing foreign assistance to Africa. Its flexibility and orientation toward establishing measurable results distinguish the DFA.

The Development Fund for Africa was cut from \$781 million in 1995 to \$675 million in 1996, a cut of 13.6 percent, which was very regrettable because we know that this is where the humanitarian funds are needed.

I had occasion to visit West Africa along with other members of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and we saw firsthand how these countries are crying out to us for assistance. I have long said on this floor that despite the pleas for assistance, we have indeed been falling short in recent years.

I think again it is very shortsighted because the world looks to America for leadership, the world looks to America for assistance, and if we want to see democracy flourish in these countries, we want to see people not suffer, we need this kind of humanitarian assistance. So restoring a line item at \$704 million is an appropriate policy response to the challenge facing United States policy in Africa, sort of a midway point between restoring most of the money that has been cut. There are many of us that believe it should be more, but I think that this is a very, very important step in the right direction.

I urge adoption of this bill.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in support of H.R. 3735, legislation reauthorizing the Development Fund for Africa [DFA].

By supporting the DFA, the House is sending an important message that Africa does matter and that the United States must remain engaged through the flexible and effective mechanism the DFA provides.

Africa continues to present significant development challenges to the United States and to the world. According to the 1995 World Development Report, 22 of the world's 30 poorest countries are in Africa. When compared to Asia or Latin America, life expectancy in Africa is shorter; infant and child mortality is greater; adult literacy is lower; fewer children are enrolled in primary and secondary schools; and population growth is higher. Obviously there is a tremendous amount of work to be done.

Reauthorizing the DFA will protect funding levels for Africa that might otherwise be diverted to short-term foreign policy crises elsewhere; it will continue to provide flexibility in designing and developing effective strategies for the region; and it will sustain the performance-based, results-oriented system for sub-Saharan Africa where aid resources are concentrated in countries that show the most commitment to developing their economic and political systems, and to addressing serious social problems.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Mr. BEREUTER for introducing the bill and Mr. GILMAN for bringing it before the House today, and I urge all my colleagues to vote to support the DFA.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership of the House for scheduling floor action so quickly on this bill to reauthorize the Development Fund for Africa.

In this era of declining real foreign aid appropriations, it is important that Congress help set our foreign aid priorities by legislation and through negotiations with the executive branch.

Foreign aid needs in Africa are one of our highest priorities and deserve some legislative protection from the other demands upon the foreign affairs budget.

The money we invest today in promoting economic development, private enterprise development, and democratization in Africa is a wise investment.

As we have been in recent years, the lack of economic development and economic opportunities and the lack of democratic political systems has led to some extremely expensive humanitarian crisis and costly U.N. peace-keeping operations—such as those we have faced in recent years in Somalia, Rwanda, Angola, and Liberia, to name only a few countries on the continent.

While other regions of the world have shown economic progress, sub-Saharan Africa continues as a region with the least economic prosperity.

Given the lack of economic development, we should continue our efforts in Africa while phasing out our programs in the countries where they have now achieved their objectives.

I therefore strongly support the reauthorization of the DFA and an authorized level of \$704 million—which is the administration's requested level for the next fiscal year—with the hope that the Appropriations Committees will be able to find the resources to meet the needs of Africa.

This is a bipartisan effort, and I urge all Members of the House to support this bill.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Mr. BEREUTER and his bill, H.R. 3735, to reauthorize the Development Fund for Africa for fiscal years 1997–99. As our chairman of our Africa Subcommittee, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, will attest, while other regions of the world have improved their economic growth, sub-Saharan Africa remains far behind the rest of the world in per capita GNP. Given the lack of progress, there is a strong case for continued aid to Africa while other aid programs may be phased out. To reflect this strong sentiment behind continued aid to Africa, the committee will mark up this bill to reauthorize the main United States development aid program for that region.

I will note that from 1962 to 1989, Africa only received 6.7 percent of United States foreign aid. This increased to 10 percent in the early 1990's. This bill reflects the consensus that percentage should increase. While other regions have managed to attract private capital, Africa's share of the world trade has declined to just 1.6 percent, including South Africa. Infant mortality on the continent remains at twice the rate of other developing regions. Many countries need to graduate from aid, including South Africa, as AID plans. Others, many others in Africa, have a long way to go and this bill recognizes that fact.

Originally, the bill was drafted to reflect funding for Africa included in the House-passed version of the fiscal year 1997 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill (H.R. 3540). Under that measure's bill and report language, Africa was set to receive \$539 million in development assistance, reflecting 41 percent of the worldwide development assistance ac-

count (the same percentage used in the President's request). In addition, the appropriations bill contained a child survival account that CRS projected would contribute \$140 million to Africa. Therefore, under the fiscal year 1997 House appropriations bill, a total of \$679 million in development assistance would go to Africa.

In negotiations, representatives of the administration urged our committee to put aside the House appropriations figures because the Senate did not duplicate them and could provide a higher total number for Africa, especially since the Senate also did not have a child survival fund. Therefore, I offered a compromise amendment to the bill, authorizing the DFA at the administration's fiscal year 1997 request level of \$704 million for 3 fiscal years, fiscal years 1997–99. We hope to provide a steady base of funding to slowly improve Africa's lot.

This bill has the support of the administration and major outside foreign assistance groups such as InterAction and Bread for the World. I want to specifically thank Carolyn Reynolds of InterAction and Cathy Selvaggio of Bread for the World for their support. I also want to wish the Acting AID Administrator for Africa, Gary Bombardier, well in his new position. While I have been critical of some actions taken by AID in South Africa, much of our sub-Saharan African aid program enjoys strong support. Gary was instrumental in starting the DFA during his service in Congress and our action today underlines that continuing support for the continent.

With that, I commend the bill to the House and urge all Members to support its passage.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3735, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 3735, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nebraska?

There was no objection.

MICROENTERPRISE ACT

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3846) to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to authorize the provision of assistance for microenterprises, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows: