

ADDRESSING THE HUMANITARIAN  
EMERGENCY IN EAST AFRICA**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 9, 2011*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, good afternoon. Two months ago, this Subcommittee held a hearing on Somalia that revealed the extent of the suffering from what witnesses agreed was the worst drought in the Horn of Africa since the 1950s. Our hearing today is, in part, a follow-up to that July 7th hearing in order to examine the U.S. Agency for International Development's long-term strategy to address humanitarian crises in East Africa, such as the current devastating drought. The need for this continued focus on the region is apparent given the ongoing, disturbing reports that we are receiving about Sudanese attacks on its Blue Nile State that will drive residents into South Sudan and reports of theft of international food aid.

We now know that an estimated 13.1 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. The United States to date has devoted a total of \$604.6 million in humanitarian assistance funding for the Horn of Africa. At the same time, our government has devoted \$370.7 million in Fiscal Year 2011 to helping the newly independent Government of South Sudan respond to crises largely caused by Republic of the Sudan attacks that have sent people streaming into this young nation.

The drought in East Africa apparently is part of a persistent weather trend in the region, but there is disagreement on the extent to which the La Niña and El Niño weather phenomena will affect weather patterns in East Africa over time. The current La Niña phenomenon, which began in August 2010, results in wetter than normal conditions in Australia and parts of Asia from December to February and drier than normal conditions over equatorial East Africa over the same period, leading to the current drought in the region.

But while drought is one reason for food shortages, it is exacerbated by stagnating agricultural development and unsustainable forms of livelihood. In our July 7th hearing, Nancy E. Lindborg, Assistant Administrator in the U.S. Agency for International Development's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, raised the issue of the long-term need for changes in livelihoods in the region. She quoted a local cattle herder as saying, "We are seeing the end of the pastoral lifestyle as we know it."

In countries across the region, as Lindborg testified, nomads are without water and pasture and unable to migrate safely. Many of them are left without assets or income, and as they migrate out of rural areas to urban areas, they strain an already stressed situation.

There are nomads in Africa from Western Sahara to Sudan. If weather conditions have conspired to end what in some cases are livelihoods developed over millennia, who will work with these pastoralists to develop new ways of surviving? Part of our humanitarian strategy, therefore, must involve working with African governments on developing viable strategies for helping nomads transition into new livelihoods that fit their skills and are sustainable in often resource-poor conditions. In the long run, donors will be increasingly less

likely to continue to support people suffering through repeated droughts in the same areas. We must break this cycle now and help them to find durable solutions for the future.

In Somalia, the hardest hit country in the region, the terrorist group al-Shabaab has obstructed the delivery of humanitarian assistance and directly threatened aid agencies. It has also interrogated aid workers and accused them of spying for the West or proselytizing. Maritime piracy and the hijacking of aid shipments have also hindered the provision of aid. By late 2009, threats against humanitarian workers and attacks against aid compounds had driven many international groups out of al-Shabaab-controlled areas; most of the remaining groups left southern Somalia in 2010. The result has been an estimated 2.2 million people in southern Somalia, representing some 60% of those who remain in the country, in need of aid but currently out of reach of most aid agencies.

We face serious questions about how to meet the desperate needs of people like those living in areas controlled by al-Shabaab. We want to prevent terrorist organizations from benefitting from humanitarian aid, but we must balance this concern with our desire to keep alive those needing food, water and medicine. There has to be a solution that not only prevents aid from going to terrorists, but also prevents the terrorists from perpetrating further violence against their own people by denying them access to life-saving assistance.

Meanwhile, our government is helping the new Government of South Sudan to effectively respond to the expectations of the population for essential services and improved livelihoods, as well as containing the conflicts that are likely to erupt. This new government is learning to handle the normal business of establishing a government even as an estimated 371,455 people have migrated from the North to South Sudan, as well as to Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan States in the Republic of the Sudan and the disputed area of Abyei since October 30th of last year.

Apparently continuing attacks in Southern Kordofan and now Blue Nile State will only continue the flight of thousands of people into South Sudan. Given its troubled relationship with the Republic of the Sudan to the North, our assistance to the new government must build its capacity as a democratically elected institution and help enable it to avoid and address such crises. Empowerment should be our focus as we help this new government take its place among the world's nations.

Drought and other natural disasters and man-made catastrophes due to conflict have been a persistent story in East Africa. In an era of limited resources, we must encourage adapted lifestyles, develop strategies for delivering aid in conflict areas and enable our partner governments to manage crises more successfully. We look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses as to how we can move toward achieving these goals.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPTEMBER 11TH REMEMBRANCE DAY IN PEORIA, ILLINOIS

**HON. AARON SCHOCK**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 9, 2011*

Mr. SCHOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the City of Peoria, Illinois' establishment of September 11th Remembrance Day on September 10th this year. In recognition of the 10th anniversary of the tragedy of September 11, 2001, the citizens of Peoria are dedicating September 10, 2011 to remember those who lost their lives on that day and the brave men and women who, despite the dangers, rushed to help others.

The images of the attacks on September 11th are seared into our national memory. Those who lived through that terrible day, in New York, Washington, DC and Pennsylvania, as well as in cities and towns across the nation, will always remember where they were when they heard that the United States was under attack. Two thousand eight hundred nineteen people lost their lives on that tragic day, and the citizens of Peoria honor them with this Day of Remembrance.

The tragedy of September 11th will never be forgotten, but neither should the spirit of unity brought about by countless acts of heroism on that day and in the days following; acts of ordinary Americans who found themselves in extraordinary circumstances and answered the call to help. It is in honor of those who died, but also of those who rushed into burning buildings, sacrificed themselves to protect countless others, and came from all across the country to offer assistance that residents of Peoria pause on the Day of Remembrance.

Abraham Lincoln, who once represented Central Illinois in this chamber, said on the battlefield at Gettysburg, "it is from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion." We as Americans renewed our devotion to our national values in the wake of September 11th, values that unite rather than divide us. Through the establishment of this Day of Remembrance, Peoria residents continue their dedication to that same cause. This nation has endured many challenges, but the American people have always joined together to overcome them.

Therefore, in honor of the victims and heroes of September 11, 2001, I recognize Peoria, Illinois' establishment of September 11th Remembrance Day.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF THE LOCAL 537 PIPEFITTERS ASSOCIATION OF BOSTON

**HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 9, 2011*

Mr. KEATING. Mr. Speaker, the Massachusetts delegation moves today to honor the Local 537 Pipefitters Association of Boston, which will be celebrating its Centennial on Saturday, September 10, 2011. It is with pride