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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

6 December, 1984.

Food Aid for Africa

Thank you for your letter of 5 December about the implications for our aid programme of the European Council's conclusion on the provision of further food aid for Africa.

The Prime Minister has noted this.

Charles Powell

C.R. Budd, Esq.,

Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

5 December, 1984

Prime Minister

Dear Charles,

Food Aid for Africa

The Prime Minister asked in Dublin about the implications for our aid programme of the European Council's conclusion that the Community and its member states between now and the next harvest should provide 1.2 million tonnes of cereals for Africa. *It seems that we can -*

It should be possible for the Community and the member states to provide amounts of this order from within the existing budgetary provisions. This is because, as the Prime Minister pointed out in Dublin, the food aid programme for next year adopted by the Council (551 mecus) should be directed towards the provision of more emergency aid in cereals and less food aid in the form of more expensive dairy products; and the provision of aid to the countries most in need, rather than some of the current recipients who are middle-income countries in the Mediterranean area. As the Prime Minister also pointed out, use should be made of the £60 million (100 mecus) in the emergency provisions of the European Development Fund (Article 137 of the Lome Convention). The 250,000 tonnes of cereals which the Commission envisage should be financed from this source would cost about 54 mecus, leaving some 46 mecus available to meet other emergencies. *within present financial provisions. CDP 5/11/84*

The Community under the existing Food Aid Convention is obliged to provide 1.65 million tonnes of cereals annually, of which 722,000 tonnes are to be provided by the member states. In practice both the Community's programme and the programmes of the member states as a whole have substantially exceeded these figures in the last two years. The Council has approved a figure of 1.1 million tonnes for the Community's programme in 1985, of which the greater part will go to Africa. The member states can be expected to provide substantially more than 722,000 tonnes, of which again the bulk will go to Africa. This year we have already provided 110,000 tonnes of cereals world-wide through our bilateral aid programme, almost all of which has gone to Africa. The Dutch, French and others have also provided large amounts of cereals aid.

The Commission and the Parliament may of course come forward with proposals for next year for additional food aid, because if countries outside the Community do not match the efforts the Community and the member states are making, there will still be some continuing need (including the expectations of non-African countries). The Commission and some member states will also be looking for ways to dispose

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of the surpluses which will result from the very large cereals harvest this year. Such proposal would be made in any event and we shall deal with them on the lines set out in paragraph 2 above.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

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10 Downing Street

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5 DEC 1984

