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Hoz food aid/johala/1 Joseph Hanlon. CP 2166, Maputo
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Western donors failed to heed Mozambique's appeals for food aid last year. Despite the worst drought in history, pledges of aid in 1983 were similar to those of the previous year. Thus total food imports were unchanged. at just over 300,000 tonnes of grain per year.

Publicly, the government is profusely thanking the donors. Privately, they say that many of then "tens of thousands" of people who died did so because of a lack of food aid. The other important factor was action by the South African backed Mozambique National Resistance, who stole food from the population. and mined roads and attacked lorries to prevent relief operations.

The drought lasted two years. From December 1981 until December 1983. rains in the southern half of the country were less than half normal. Thus the 1981/82 crop was small, and donors increased the pledges from 181,000 tonnes in 1981 to 273,000 tonnes in 1982. When it was clear that the 1982/83 rains had failed. and thus the 82/83 crop would be negligible. the government appealed for still more aid. stressing that the total crop failure meant a much greater demand. But by mid-1983 food aid pledges were actually below 1982. In June. internal trade minister I Aranda da Silva made a special appeal to diplomats. He said that starvation had only been avoided so far because of a Special donation of 25,000 tonnes of maize by Zimbabwe. itself affected by the drought. "If we don not get more support now. hundreds will die," he said. But there were few additional pledges, until October. when Western diplomats were shocked into action by being taken to see dying children in refugee camps. Total food aid pledged in 1983 was 290,000 tonnes. with
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Athe EEC, Japan, Canada and the Soviet Union actually cutting aid. This was balanced by major increase: by the World Food Programme and Zimbabwe, IIXII as well as the United States. Holland, and Britain.

Those who pledged over 10,000 tonnes of grain in 1983 were:

Grain pledged (1600 tonnes)

1981 1982 1983

United States 20 20 43

BBC 1 30 ' 58 42

World Food Programme 14 22 41

Netherlands 15 . 6 30

Zimbabwe ' - - 25

UK 12 e - 15

Denmark ' 14 _171 14

Canada 16 27 12

USSR - 17 10

Italy 5 7 10

TOTAL 181 273 290

Mozambique is also plagued by the slow arrival of food aid.

in the most extreme case, some of the grain pledged by Holland in 1981 has still not arrived. Again. the eight of dying children' -- seemed to galvanise the aid bureaucracies and cut the red tape, according to Mozambican officials.

According to da Silva. Mozambique will need at least 100,000

tonnes more of cereals before the tpctx harvest begins in April.

gains have been reasonable throughout the country. but that harvest will still be below normal. This is due to the leteness of the rain, and the shortages of seeds in many areas as peasants had long since exhausted their dead reserves.

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The drought also hit export crops, where production fell to record low levels. This, in turn, exacerbated the economic crisis. As a result, Mozambique will have no money for commercial food imports in 1984. Combined with the expected reduced crop, this means Mozambique will be dependent on food aid at least as large as it has been in the past two years. and based on 3:: the 1983 response, this may be difficult to maintain. Antonio Johala in Maguto

Actual rain 1 arts to Mozambique 000 tonnes

(The increase in delivered food aid, as distinct from pledges. in 1983 is due to the long lead time between promise and delivery)

1981 1982 1983

commercial imports 143 108 67

food aid arrived 153 198 247

TOTAL IMPORTS . 314