

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

that we reflect on the many accomplishments of Local 537 members and with appreciation that we commend the organization for its unparalleled service to our great state.

The history of Local 537 is a lesson in perseverance. The Pipefitters have seen decades of prosperity followed by years of declining job opportunities. In response, Local 537 members have become more versatile. They have borne witness not only to the advancements in the technology and materials on which their trade is dependent, but also to the evolution of workers' rights and labor unions. When hard times have fallen, the Pipefitters found work across the continent at the Trans-Alaskan pipeline, across borders to the oil fields of Canada and across state lines to construction jobs in New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island—always to return when new opportunities arose at home.

With a membership of over 2,600, the jurisdiction of Local 537 covers Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, and Suffolk counties and extends into Plymouth and Worcester counties. From Boston to Lowell and Salem to Quincy, the work of Local 537 is visible within the interiors of the very landmarks that make our state and cities unique and recognizable. They have left their mark on the resident halls and academic facilities of Harvard University, Boston College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Boston University; the piping systems in the Deer Island Water Treatment Plant and Weymouth Power Plant; and beneath the bleachers of the stadiums and arenas that house New England's proud sports teams.

Today, Local 537 retains the competitive edge and adaptive spirit of the original plumbers, gas fitters and steam fitters who first organized themselves over a century ago. The Pipefitters are a true Massachusetts institution and we thank the organization for its numerous contributions to the Commonwealth.

CONGRATULATING JULIE YOUNG, RECIPIENT OF THE 2011 HAROLD W. MCGRAW, JR. PRIZE IN EDUCATION

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 9, 2011

Mr. WEBSTER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to recognize Ms. Julie Young upon receiving the 2011 Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education. Ms. Young is highly regarded for her hard work and dedication to improving education in this country and for helping to create a smarter, better educated world.

Ms. Young is President and CEO of the nation's largest and most influential virtual program: Florida Virtual School. Her journey began with a love for teaching and a dedication to learning that dates back to childhood. Today, she is passionate about the positive impact that Florida Virtual School has on thousands of families. I have been fortunate to work with Ms. Young as the Florida Virtual School has grown from 77 students in 1997 to its current enrollment of over 130,000 K–12 students.

Ms. Young's interest in combining technology and learning began when she served

as a teacher trainer for a partnership between her school district and IBM. That experience also ignited her with the vision to apply proven business principles to education. She interacts regularly with business, education, and policy leaders across the nation to shape the future of learning, and she sees Florida Virtual School playing a significant role.

Ms. Young is also excited about the opportunities online education and blended learning models have provided for the profession. These innovations help to retain great teachers who might have otherwise left the field. She takes particular pleasure in identifying and growing leaders.

In addition to directing the work of 1,500 employees, Ms. Young is a frequent national speaker. She serves on the Board of the United States Distance Learning Association, International Association for K–12 Online Learning, Florida Learning Alliance, Florida TaxWatch Center for Educational Performance and Accountability, Florida Sterling Council Board of Directors, K–12 Blackboard Advisory Council Member, and Microsoft K–12 Advisory Council Member Assistant. She was also recognized by Technology & Learning Magazine as one of the Top 30 influencers in Ed Tech, along with Bill Gates and Steve Jobs. In 2003, she was inducted into the United States Distance Learning Association "Hall of Fame."

On behalf of the citizens of Florida's 8th Congressional District, I congratulate and applaud Ms. Young for her work. She is most deserving of the 2011 Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education as she inspires others to follow in her footsteps.

HONORING ALICE FINCH LEE ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 9, 2011

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join with all Alabamians in sending warm personal congratulations to a beloved member of our community, Miss Alice Finch Lee, who celebrates her 100th birthday on Sunday, September 11, 2011. "Miss Alice's" compassion for others is matched only by her determination for justice. Her life-long dedication to civility and fairness is a credit to our state.

Monroeville, Alabama not only wears the crown of literary capital of our state with its ties to such giants of letters as Truman Capote and Nelle Harper Lee, among others, but it is also home to a one-of-a-kind legal lion.

Miss Alice grew up in a tight-knit family accustomed to making a difference. Her father, the late A.C. Lee, was a respected businessman and attorney. He owned the local newspaper, The Monroe Journal, while also practicing law. His inscrutable reputation for fairness is believed to have inspired Miss Alice's younger sister, Nelle, in crafting the character Atticus Finch in her world famous novel To Kill a Mockingbird.

Miss Alice was a quick study, joining her father at the age of 18 in running the newspaper. It wasn't long before she also acquired an interest in law. Her decision to attend law

school, a move strongly supported by her father, was a bold one considering women were not often seen in the legal profession during the 1930's and 40's. Undeterred, she graduated from the Birmingham School of Law and passed Alabama Bar in 1943.

It was Monroeville's good fortune that Miss Alice came back home and partnered with her father in practicing law in her hometown. Joining what is now considered to be one of the oldest law firms in Alabama, Barnett, Bugg, Lee & Carter, Miss Alice made a name for herself as a calm but reliable voice for equality and an advocate for the disadvantaged. Never seeking attention or accolade, she is best known for her uncommon generosity. A recent newspaper profile accordingly dubbed Miss Alice as "Atticus Finch in a skirt."

At the tender young age of 100, Miss Alice still works in her Monroeville law office attending to her clients' needs on a daily basis and giving each the full measure of her attention. When I personally looked in on her last week she was busy reviewing a contract and graciously gave me a few minutes to wish her a happy birthday.

She has been called a trailblazer, a role model and an advocate for what is right. In South Alabama, we are also proud to call her our friend. Miss Alice, on your 100th birthday, we wish you much joy and happiness, with a heartfelt prayer for many more to come.

IN CELEBRATION OF CONSTITUTION WEEK

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 9, 2011

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate Constitution Week.

Founded in 1890, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) is a volunteer women's service organization devoted to promoting patriotism, preserving history, and educating future generations. In 1955, DAR petitioned Congress to devote the week of September 17th–23rd for the observance of Constitution Week and to commemorate the signing of the Constitution on September 17, 1787. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed this resolution into law the following year. This year marks the 224th anniversary of the drafting of the Constitution.

The Constitution is much more than a historic document; it serves as a guide for our country and represents our commitment to the principles of freedom, liberty, and the unalienable rights of every American. It is woven into the very fabric of our great Nation—elected officials take oaths to support and defend it; citizens are free because of it; and our government design and functions exist because of it. Constitution Week provides us with a moment to pause and reflect upon our country's founding and renew our duty to protect and defend the Constitution.

I am thankful for DAR's efforts to promoting Constitution Week and raising awareness about the importance of our Constitution and our Nation's rich history. Mr. Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me celebrating Constitution Week.