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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Sub-Commission on Prevention of
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Agenda item 12

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER AND THE PROMOTION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Written communication submitted by the International League for
the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, a non-governmental
organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[19 August 1985]

The International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples warmly welcomes
the efforts made by your Sub-Commission with a view to establishing the right to
adequate food as a human right. It is also pleased to note that your
Special Rapporteur has submitted his report on this important question.

The League believes that the normative nature of the right to adequate food is
of considerable significance in regard to the establishment of the new international
economic order.

As a result of the present tragic situation, Governments and several NGOs have
been providing aid for starving people in Africa and more particularly in Ethiopia.
We find these efforts highly commendable.

However, reference must be made to various questions relating to distribution and
control.

In zones in which armed conflicts are taking place, it seems that aid is not
reaching its destination and, according to some sources, part of it has even been
distributed to the armed forces.

The situation is extremely serious in some areas most severely affected by drought.
Humanitarian organizations estimate that, in these areas, one and a half million
persons are affected by drought and 750,000 are severely affected by famine. Tens of

thousands of refugees have been accommodated in camps at which no official international aid has yet arrived, and the operations that are being conducted by voluntary humanitarian organizations can meet barely 15 per cent of needs.

Humanitarian aid should not be impeded in this manner. It is essential that such aid should reach all the people in need thereof, even if this requires the declaration of a temporary cease-fire, as has been proposed; this would be in conformity with the humanitarian law of war, as embodied in the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

The right to adequate food, which constitutes an acknowledged human right, and the humanitarian law of armed conflicts imply that aid provided by donor countries and NGOs must be distributed to all those in urgent need.

Article 1 of the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Peoples, which constitutes the basis on which the International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples operates, stipulates that:

"Every people has the right to existence".

This existence may be threatened not only by genocide but also by famine.