

# Africa Policy Information Center

## Annual Report 1996



*The Africa Policy Information Center (APIC) is a nonprofit, educational organization with the primary objective of widening policy debate in the United States around issues affecting grassroots African interests throughout the continent. APIC facilitates linkages between the Washington policy arena and the American public and others concerned with US policy towards Africa. Formerly the Washington Office on Africa Educational Fund, APIC is the educational affiliate of the Washington Office on Africa, which was founded in 1972 by a coalition of religious denominations and trade unions.*

APIC works to democratize foreign policy debates that determine the US role in Africa by:

- ▶ identifying critical policy issues in United States/African relations;
- ▶ bringing to the policy process diverse perspectives from Africa and the United States; and
- ▶ disseminating information and analyses to a broad cross-section of the American public.

APIC focuses on the strategic use of information and analysis to strengthen the impact of its advocacy affiliate, the Washington Office on Africa, and of other groups and networks involved in advocacy for human rights, social justice and sustainable development priorities.

APIC's programs include electronic communications, print publications, and policy analysis/information referral services. We provide policy information and resources for a changing Africa in a changing world.

### **Africa's Second Independence and Africa Advocacy**

In the first few post-Cold-War years, Africa has experienced both the depth of horror, as in the Rwandan genocide, and extraordinary moments of hope, as in Nelson Mandela's election in South Africa. Although most other positive and negative signs are more ambiguous, it is clear that Africa has now decisively stepped into its "Second In-

dependence" era. While difficulties still abound, the issues and the context are new. Africans are taking the initiative and moving ahead.

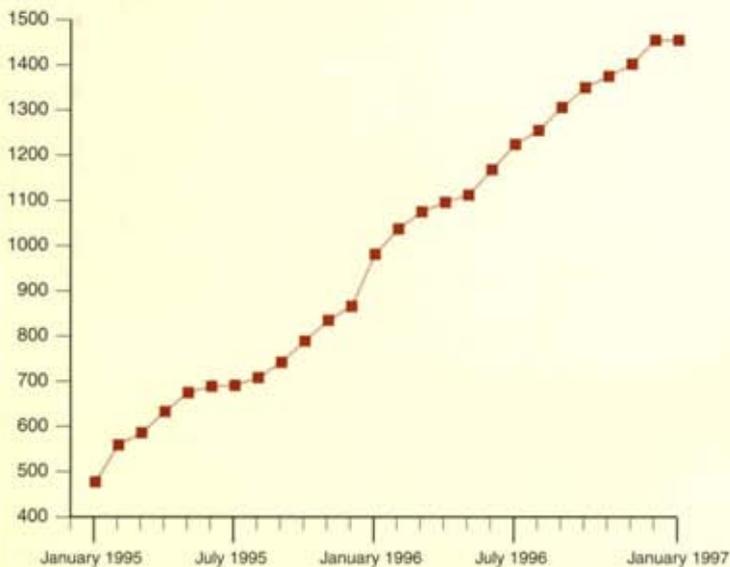
The "Second Independence" phrase, first coined by Congolese revolutionaries in the 1960s, meant—and means—that the benefits of independence must reach beyond a small elite. African peoples have formidable internal and external challenges to face, in this era of global competition and rising inequality. But there is also a new horizon of possibilities.

In order to build future relations with Africa on a mutually beneficial basis, a swamp of stereotypes, ignorance and just plain racism must be cleared away. Cold War stereotypes have not yet been replaced by informed understanding. The premise of our work is that addressing these issues requires the effective use of old and new communication technologies to build informed constituencies for constructive U.S. relations with Africa.

Africa is not one country but a large and diverse continent. Africa advocates need to work effectively on specific issues and specific countries, and work together to make a strong impact on the public arena. In order to do this, we must share information and analyses, engage in mutually respectful dialogue, and convincingly project more truthful frameworks to replace the negative stereotypes. APIC puts these tasks front and center, as a service to the wider Africa advocacy community. Sustained growth in programs from 1995 to 1996 strongly confirmed the approach.



## E-mail Addresses on the Africa Policy Electronic Distribution List



Note: Several addresses on the list are in turn listservs, mailing lists or conferences with many readers, and many subscribers regularly pass on selected documents to others. Readership of any given document is therefore approximately five to six times the number of addresses on the list.

## Electronic Communication Program

*"APIC's redistribution of key policy documents has significantly furthered our mutual efforts at public education on important African issues.... Your Center has become a valuable source of information regarding developments in and about Africa."*

Salih Booker  
Senior Fellow, Africa Studies Program,  
Council On Foreign Relations

APIC has pioneered in the strategic and cost-effective use of new electronic communication technologies for Africa advocacy. By redistributing selected information and analyses produced by other reliable sources, as well as its own publications, APIC has provided a multiplier effect for the providers and helped to build a wider web of interconnectedness among different sectors of the Africa advocacy community.

## Distribution List

In 1996, as in 1995, the leading component of APIC's electronic communication strategy was the Africa Policy Electronic Distribution List, a service providing information and analysis by e-mail on key policy issues. Readers of the list, estimated at over 6,000 at mid-1996, received two to three postings a week of carefully selected policy-relevant documents on a wide range of issues in US/African relations—a total of 117 files in 1996. The number of subscribers continued to grow steadily throughout the year, as it did in 1995. Responses to a survey in July 1996 showed that readers rated highly the quality and usefulness of the documents they received, and reused them in their own advocacy and public education work.

The Distribution List serves in a sense as a magazine, featuring not only published material from APIC and APIC's affiliate the Washington Office on Africa, but also a selection of the best and most timely advocacy-relevant material available from other sources in Africa and around the world. The topics include both continent-wide issues, such as aid, trade, debt, development, landmines, and women's rights, and country-specific concerns particularly on the international and Washington policy agenda. The postings include press releases, action alerts, briefings and other documents.

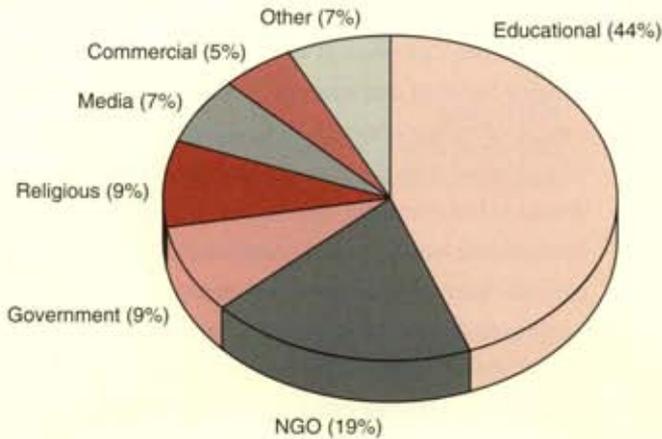
Policy overviews included APIC's *Policy Outlook* in January, APIC's *Thinking Regionally* Background Paper in April, and WOA's *Questions for Candidates* in October. Among a long list of other information providers for repostings on these issues were the African NGO Caucus at the UNCTAD meeting in May in South Africa, the UN Special Initiative for Africa, African and international campaigns against landmines, plus other UN agencies and non-governmental networks.

Country-specific postings prominently featured Angola, Zaire, Nigeria, Liberia, Burundi, Rwanda



# Electronic Distribution List Readers, July 1996

## By Institutional Sector



and South Africa. Also included during the year were Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Sudan, and Zambia. Information providers for country-specific postings, in addition to APIC and WOA, included an even wider range, from government agencies through non-governmental organizations in Africa, Europe and North America. These postings often focus specifically on human rights and conflict issues.

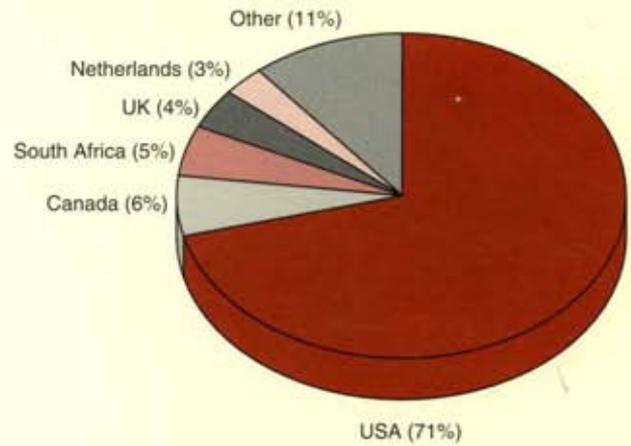
## Readership Survey Results

In July 1996 we surveyed subscribers to our list, and gained sufficiently representative responses, from more than 400 readers, for detailed statistical analysis and evaluation. The reader response was phenomenal. On a scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good), respondents gave the documents distributed an average rating of 4.4. Almost 90% rated the frequency of documents distributed "about right." [Additional details on survey results and methodology are available on-line at

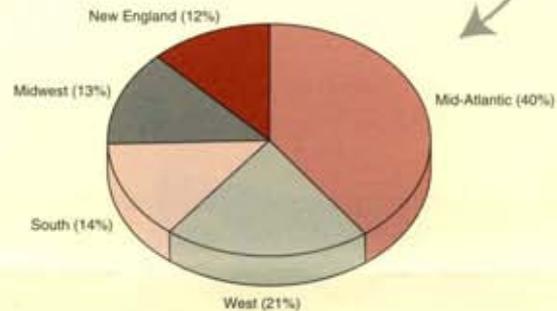
**APIC has pioneered in the strategic and cost-effective use of new electronic communication technologies for Africa advocacy.**

Angola were very appreciated by refugees wanting to know what to expect on returning home!

## By Country



## ... and by Region in USA



<http://www.africapolicy.org/survey/report96.html>.]

In addition to responding to multi-choice questions, dozens of respondents added unsolicited praise and thanks, exhorting us to "keep up the good work" and praising the "excellent service."

Readers not only in the US, but also in South Africa, Canada and more than twenty other countries used phrases like "very useful," "invaluable," "excellent," and "very helpful." From a refugee camp in northern Zambia one reader commented that the reports on





## THINKING REGIONALLY

### Print Publication Program

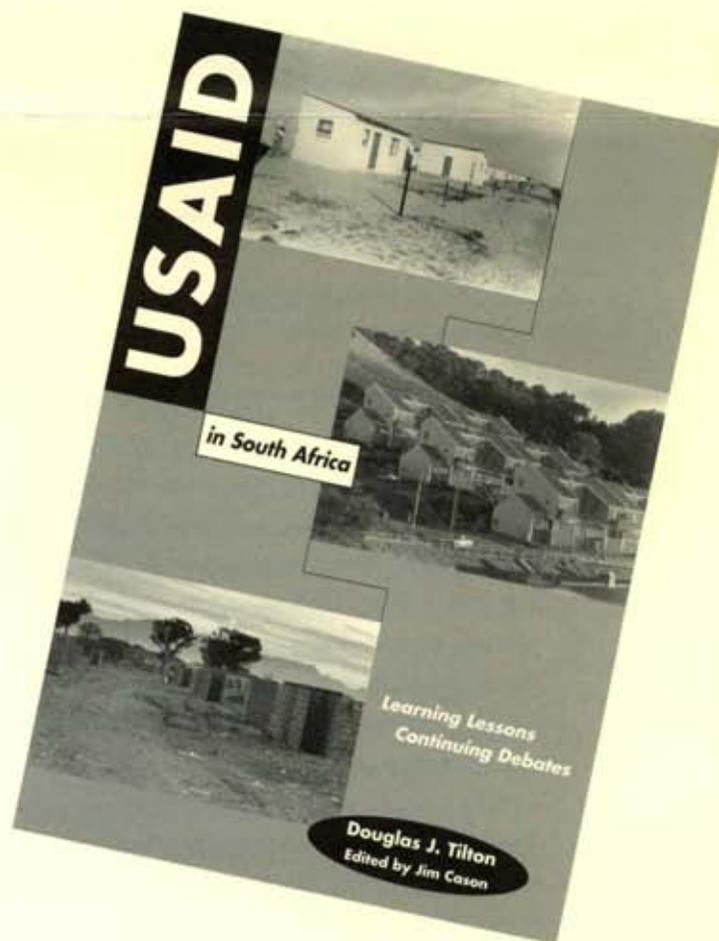
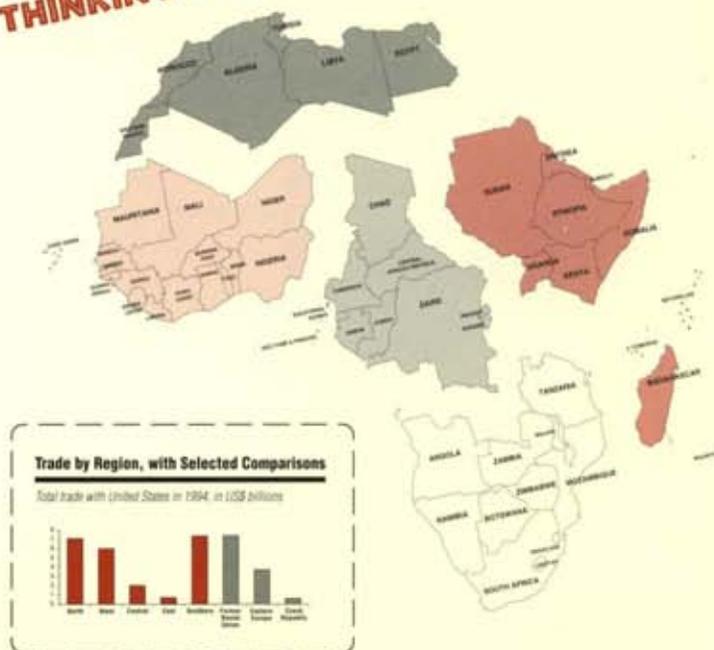
*"We depend on APIC for timely and useful information and analysis on southern Africa. Keep up the good work!"*

Joan Gerig  
Southern Africa Network,  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Recognizing that information overload can be just as great a problem as lack of information, APIC has concentrated on presentation of high-quality resource material that can be used by a wide variety of constituencies. We believe that print publications as well as electronic publications are necessary for an effective outreach strategy. Continually rising costs for production and distribution make careful selection of topics and format particularly imperative. Accordingly, we have concentrated on producing resource materials that can help shape policy paradigms or provide distinctive background and analysis not elsewhere available in accessible format.

In 1996 APIC published three 8-page background papers, one book, and one poster. APIC print publications are designed for accessibility and for continuing background relevance beyond immediate crises and short-term policy debates. Topics are chosen for their relevance in defining paradigms and perspectives on ongoing policy issues. Each publication undergoes an extensive review process, with comments on drafts from the academic, policy and activist communities. Background papers are designed to be long enough to provide substantive information, while still short enough to be easily and quickly read.

*Thinking Regionally: Priorities for US Policy toward Africa*, by Salih Booker, Fellow for Africa at the Council on Foreign Relations, was published in March. The same regional theme, as a basis for conceptualizing US policy toward Africa, was contin-



## Africa Policy Information Center

### STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

For The Years Ended December 31, 1996 and 1995

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	1996	1995
<b>Support and Revenue</b>				
Grants	72,000	325,000	397,000	203,465
Contributions	13,548	0	13,458	12,213
Special Contributions	0	0	0	10,215
Interest	2,005	0	2,005	1,858
Miscellaneous	560	0	560	4,503
Contributed Services	39,735	0	39,735	24,600
Net assets released from restriction	140,048	(140,048)	0	0
Total Support and Revenue	271,389	184,952*	456,341	261,639
<b>Expenses</b>				
Program Services	250,920	0	250,920	178,340
General and Administrative	72,298	0	72,298	56,228
Total Expenses	323,218	0	323,218	234,568
<b>CHANGES IN NET ASSETS</b>	(51,829)	184,952	133,123	27,071
<b>NET ASSETS, Beginning of Period</b>	47,845	0	47,845	14,051
<b>NET ASSETS, End of Period</b>	(3,981)	184,952	180,971	41,122

\* Consists of \$140,000 general support grant income designated for 1997 and \$44,952 unexpended restricted grant income for a project to be completed in 1997.

See notes to financial statements and accountants' report Walker & Company, LLP, Certified Public Accountants.  
Available on request from APIC.

ued in the *Africa's Regions* poster, released in August. *Africa on the Internet: Starting Points for Policy Information* was published in July, providing a unique Africa-specific guide to using Internet resources, by e-mail and in conferences as well as on the World Wide Web. *Nigeria: Country Profile*, released in November, provided basic background on current policy issues, history, culture and links to further sources, for activists, students and others. The latter two background papers were also made available, including graphics and live links, on the Africa Policy web site.

The fourth of APIC's longer publications, a 112-page paperback book entitled *USAID in South Africa: Learning Lessons, Continuing Debates*, was published in May. Written by APIC staff member Douglas J. Tilton, and edited by MacArthur Fellow Jim Cason, this assessment of the achievements and shortcomings of one of the largest US foreign assistance programs in sub-Saharan Africa concluded that there are compelling reasons to continue to provide assistance to South Africa. But it also stressed that the US assistance program in South Africa must be fundamentally refocused in order to



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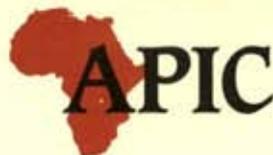
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Mahlet Yared  
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Jeff Manchester  
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### Interns

*Winter/Spring:* Milen Beyene, University of California (Davis); Leola Calzolari, UC (Davis); Elizabeth Latham, Johns Hopkins University; Aislinn O'Donnell, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland; Julia Wallace, George Washington University (Washington, DC)

*Summer:* Christina Abilandou, UCLA; Respicius Batamula, Gallaudet (Washington, DC); Linda Heilmann, Maxwell School (Syracuse, NY); Anthony Inkumah, University of Maryland; Danny Rashbaum, Northwestern University; Maria Saino, Georgetown University (Washington, DC); Emily Willits, Swarthmore College (PA)

*Fall:* Maya Bhullar, SUNY at Cortland, NY; Jeff Lee, Univ. of Southern California; Omami Ojigbo, UC (Davis); Andrew Schleicher, Kalamazoo College (MI)

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Web: <http://www.africapolicy.org>

strengthen local control of the development process and reduce economic inequality.

### Policy Analysis/Information Referral Services

APIC's prominence on the Internet and WOA's prominence in Washington-based coalitions, such as the International Roundtable on Nigeria and the Africa Trade Policy Working Group, have produced an ever-increasing stream of requests for information and analysis by e-mail, phone, and drop-in. Congressional staff, students, journalists and others

inquire about the full range of issues covered by the Africa Policy Electronic Distribution List, and more. This often demand- and crisis-driven work takes up a considerable portion of the organization's staff time and is an important part of our presence in both the Washington policy arena and the grassroots advocacy arena.

Recognizing that it is necessary to prioritize responses according to the organization's core competencies, APIC operates with a conscious division of issues into (1) issues of strategic priority for its advocacy affiliate WOA, (2) other issues covered on





**Nigeria: Country Profile** combined glimpses of art, literature and historical background as well as current issues of the Nigeria pro-democracy campaign, to provide a unique background resource for activists and students.

the Electronic Distribution List and prominent on the policy agenda, and (3) other issues in which APIC's role in responding to queries is limited to efficient referral to the most appropriate organizational and on-line sources. The greatest emphasis is given to analysis and response to queries in the first two categories, while general inquiries are most often referred to the Africa Policy web site and to the *Africa on the Internet* background paper in particular.

Among organizational concerns in 1996, and continuing into 1997, was to find ways to respond more efficiently to information requests, in order that staff not be overwhelmed by the rapidly expanding demands. APIC strategies to deal with this problem of growth included (1) continuing (and successful) efforts to attract competent interns; (2) stream-

lining intern training procedures to allow interns to quickly assume substantive responsibilities; (3) improving internal information collection and sharing procedures; and (4) developing regular procedures for referring inquiries to the Africa Policy web site and other

reliable sources of information. Computer upgrades planned in the last quarter of 1996, including beginning of the installation of a Local Area Network and Intranet, were expected to contribute significantly to such time-saving efficiencies.

One prominent example in which APIC took a particularly pro-active role in helping to shape debates in 1996 is the set of issues surrounding the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, first introduced that year. An internal APIC staff study in early 1996 focused on trade, debt, investment, aid and other as-

pects of US economic relations with Africa. Building on this study, and on the 1995 Background Paper by Robert Browne, *The U.S. and Africa's Trade*, APIC regularly provided information on and participated in the developing Washington debate on the issue. APIC and WOA elicited comment from African NGOs and others, and helped to build the growing awareness that a comprehensive approach must reject the false dichotomy of trade vs. aid.

### **Organizational Development**

From its earlier incarnation as the Washington Office on Africa Educational Fund, with an annual budget in the early 1990s of less than \$25,000, APIC's success in defining a unique role for itself won growing confidence from funders in 1996. This is reflected in the financial statements in this report. Base funding for 1997 and 1998 was assured with commitment of a \$430,000 grant from

the Ford Foundation for the period July 1996 through December 1998, and a \$200,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York for the two-year period 1997-1998. Together the two grants provided approximately 40% of the proposed budget for the grant period.

Much effort in 1996 went into establishing plans and procedures to make this organizational growth sustainable and to enable implementation of ambitious plans for further expansion in 1997 and 1998. Areas still needing major attention as 1996 ended were diversifying the funding base and ensuring adequate staffing levels for outreach and development as well as substantive programming. The prospects were very good for substantially increased outreach and impact in the coming decisive years for Africa's second independence.

**APIC and WOA helped to build the growing awareness that a comprehensive approach to US economic relations with Africa must reject the false dichotomy of trade vs. aid.**

