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Tilden J. LeMelle, Chairman
Jennifer Davis, Executive Director

"I CANNOT REMEMBER WHEN I LAST HAD A DECENT MEAL."

October 4, 1996

Dear Friend of The Africa Fund,

Recently we received a desperate plea for help from a young Zimbabwean who had just finished his studies in the U.S. "I cannot remember when I last had a decent meal. I live on hot dogs."

He had completed an accounting course but the school would not release his degree because he still owed registration fees. An Africa Fund grant helped him to survive and pay his arrears so that he could get work.

This is a story that is repeated many times every year. The Africa Fund is one of the only places Africans in the U.S. can turn for emergency assistance, given quickly and without red tape. Although an Africa Fund grant has to be relatively modest, it can make a huge difference in someone's life.

These are just a few of the people we have helped in the last few months:

* We were approached by a refugee from the Cameroon who was seeking political asylum in the U.S. He had been mugged and lost all his money. The documents he needed for his asylum case were in French and he had no money for a translator. The Africa Fund helped him find a place to stay and paid for an English translation.

* A South African exile finally had a chance to return home to work for the Department of Health, but had no funds for moving expenses. An Africa Fund grant enabled him to take up this important position.

* A leader of the democracy movement in Togo fled to the U.S. and received political asylum. In Togo, he was an accountant but in New York he could only find work as a security guard. The Africa Fund helped him take courses in English and accounting software while he continued to work part time.



* An Africa Fund grant helped a young Mozambican complete his studies in aeronautical engineering at an American university. With this training he will be able to make an important contribution to rebuilding his country which badly needs engineers.

In some ways our emergency assistance grants are the most personal and satisfying part of The Africa Fund's program. We actually get to see people turning their lives around and building a future for themselves and their families against long odds.

People we have helped in past years have gone home to serve their countries as cabinet ministers, scientists, civil servants, journalists or doctors.

But there is nothing more heartbreaking than telling an African in desperate circumstances that we cannot help because our emergency assistance funds are inadequate. Unfortunately, our limited resources force us to turn people away much too often.

I am asking you to help us continue to provide grants to Africans who face a temporary emergency. Only your generosity, and that of caring people like you, makes this work possible.

I know we can count on you.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Davis
Executive Director

P.S. Your contribution to The Africa Fund is tax deductible.