

## WORLD BRIEFS

### RED ALERT ON THE PLIGHT OF SIERRA LEONEAN REFUGEES

DAKAR, Senegal (PANA) — The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has expressed concern over the deteriorating condition of refugees fleeing the fighting in eastern Sierra Leone. In a statement issued in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, the agency said refugees arriving by the hundreds every day in Gueckedou, southwestern Guinea, are suffering from exhaustion, diseases and malnutrition. "Since early March, more than 160,000 Sierra Leoneans crossed the Guinean border," it said, adding that 27 refugees, including 16 children below the age of five years, died of respiratory diseases, diarrhea, malaria or malnutrition in just two weeks. "We are very concerned by the growing number of refugees, especially children, dying from diseases and malnutrition a few days after their arrival in Guinea," Paul Ares, WFP regional manager for coastal West Africa, said. "More than 1,600 children have been admitted in health clinics and therapeutic feeding centers in the last two months and this number is rising sharply," he added.

### MOZAMBIQUE ATTRACTS MORE INVESTMENT

WINDHOEK, Namibia (PANA) — Mozambique is now attracting more investment than other countries previously regarded as major investment destinations in Southern Africa because of the fast pace at which it is implementing reforms, said President Joachim Chissano on May 18 at the southern Africa Economic Summit. He explained that his country had suddenly become a hit with both regional and international investors because of the prevailing peace and the economic reforms his government is undertaking. "As a country which has just come out of war, we are receiving huge investments because investors are tapping into areas which could not be ventured into during the war," Chissano said. "We also suffered a lot during the many years of war and all the people of Mozambique have worked hard to create an environment attractive to investment." In the last few years, Mozambique has been attracting noticeable investment with multi-billion dollar projects in gas, hydro-electric power, iron smelting, aluminum, sugar plants, tourism and coal mining. The projects are funded by American, Japanese, South African and United Arab Emirates companies.

### MOBILE PHONE SERVICES COMING TO ETHIOPIA'S CAPITAL

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (PANA) - Ethiopians here will have cellular telephone services before the end of the year, according to the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation. In a press release, the corporation said it has signed an agreement with the Swedish telecoms group "Lm Ericsson" for the installation of the first cellular telephone network, which will serve 36,000 subscribers in and around Addis Ababa. The corporation did not give the amount of money involved in the agreement, but said the project will become operational before the end of 1998. It said it was now making every endeavour to introduce "state-of-the-art communication technology and the global system for cellular to Ethiopia," following the agreement for the purchase of the initial digital cellular telephone. "In the near future, the services would expand to major towns and gradually cover the entire country," it said. Meanwhile, the government has also reported that the corporation will begin registration of potential cellular phone subscribers in Addis Ababa June 1. The total subscription fee is set at 597.30 birr (about US\$85), with applicants required to deposit about 30 percent or 179 birr of the total sum on registration. (US\$1 = 7 birr).

### SOUTH AFRICA DONATES \$100,000 TO SPECIAL REFUGEE FUND

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (PANA) — The government of South Africa has donated \$100,000 to the Organization for African Unity's Special Fund for African Refugees, the continental body said in a statement. Accepting the check for the donation from Welile Nhlapo, the South African ambassador to Ethiopia, O.A.U. Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim expressed gratitude for the timely donation. He said it demonstrated continental solidarity with those in need. He also said the O.A.U. devotes six percent of its regular budget for assistance to refugees and urged member states to emulate South Africa's example in supporting the special fund. Nhlapo said the donation was a token, but stressed that his government understands "the hardships confronting refugees from the experiences of its own people during the liberation struggle."

## INTERNATIONAL

# U.S. motion to condemn Cuba defeated by human rights body

Special to Sentinel-Voice

GENEVA and HAVANA (IPS) — The United Nations Human Rights Commission rejected a move to condemn Cuba brought by the United States, showing just how far the effects of the Caribbean nation's international liberalization policy have spread.

The proposal was toppled by a vote of 19 against, 16 in favor and 18 abstentions, whereby the 53-member body resolved Cuba should no longer be on the "black list" of countries that are serious human rights violators.

The Fidel Castro government is considered a model nation on human rights issues related to equal access to health, education, employment and social security for all its citizens.

And while it has been struggling against economic crises since 1990, the population still has a life expectancy of 75 years, and the nation has the second lowest poverty index amongst the developing nations.

However, certain civil liberties, like the right of free association and to hold meetings, are not guaranteed, and there are no opposition political parties nor independent media institutions. According to a United States report presented to Congress in January, "the Cuban

government's human rights record is still bad. It has continued with systematic violations of the fundamental political and civil rights of its citizens."

In presenting the report, Undersecretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor John Shattuck pointed out that the Castro administration had barred the entry of a special rapporteur on human rights for five years.

Factors which contributed to the rebuff of the U.S. initiative undoubtedly include Pope John Paul II's recent visit to the island, the steps taken to make this a success by the Fidel Castro government and the island's rapprochement with Spain and Latin America.

And according to diplomatic sources, it was also due to a certain jaded feeling in several foreign ministries and exasperation with repeated U.S. attempts to keep Cuba condemned since 1991.

The repetition of the U.S. initiative constituted "an exercise that is wearing thin, which has lost its foundation, above all taking into account the substantial and significant steps Cuba has taken in the last 12 months," Cuban delegate Aymee Hernandez Quesada told IPS.

Chilean representative German Molina said the resolution proposed by Washington was increasingly

founded on elements of bilateral conflicts that had already been overcome. Meanwhile, Cuba received the news with glee. "Truth and justice triumphed today," Havana's U.N. representative Carlos Amat told the national Radio Rebelde. "The unfair condemnation has lasted too long."

Both Chile and Uruguay had always previously backed the United States on this front, but this year they abstained, as did all the other Latin American nations except for Argentina and El Salvador, which voted against Cuba.

There were also further desertions in the group of Western countries which traditionally move as a bloc to back the United States proposal of the motion.

Austria, France, Ireland and Italy did not support the presentation of the resolution, although they then voted for it, along with the other Western nations.

Two key votes in the balance for Cuba were those of Pakistan and Malaysia, which had abstained until last year.

During the session debating the case of Cuba, the United States used procedural tactics to try and postpone the voting.

"If the vote had been held in the afternoon, pressure from Washington in the capitals of the Commission member countries could have modified

the result," said one Latin American diplomat.

During the debate, a U.S. diplomat read out the texts on two resolutions on Kosovo and Sudan at dictation speed, as part of an effort to delay treatment of the Cuban question.

But Commission Chair Jakob Selebi of South Africa warned him the delaying tactics would have to stop.

Hernandez said the unfavorable voting for the United States had already been forecast in 1997, when support for the motion "fell from the floor of 20 affirmative votes, which is a psychological barrier in the Human Rights Commission."

In the 1997 vote, the U.S. initiative had 19 affirmative votes, 10 against and 24 abstentions.

For Cuba "it is significant that without making concessions we managed to get the Human Rights Commission to defeat a project resolution promoted by the United States," said Hernandez. "It was shown there is implicit support for Cuba in the U.N. Commission, as was proven by the applause, the thanks and congratulations expressed even by many of those who voted in favor of the project," she said. "Cuba has always said it is prepared to work to improve human rights in Cuba, as we have been doing up until now."

## Burst of nationalism hits Jamaican soccer squad

By Howard Campbell  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

KINGSTON, Jamaica (IPS) — Following months of basking in the success of World Cup qualification, Jamaica's celebrated soccer team, called the Reggae Boys, have been jolted by a spurt of nationalism just one month before their historic opening match against Croatia.

The addition of two English-born players — bringing the number of English professionals in the squad to eight — has earned team coach Rene Simoes the wrath of local fans, who claim the Reggae Boys have become too British for their liking.

Danny Maddix and Daryll Powell, who both play in the English Premier League, have been called by Simoes to play in tournaments in Iran and the United Kingdom, a move which has not gone down well with fans and sportswriters alike.

The Brazilian-born Simoes has been largely credited with

transforming the Jamaican game from amateur standards to its present state of competitiveness. He is easily one of the most popular public figures in Jamaica.

But he has come under fire in recent weeks, especially from the media. Tony Becca, sports editor of the daily *Gleaner*, writing in his weekly column, chastised Simoes and the Jamaica Football Federation for their continuous selection of players born overseas of Jamaican parents at the expense of homegrown ones.

"As important as putting on a good show, selling Jamaica and foreign exchange are to Jamaica, is it right that the local Jamaicans who got the team to France not go to France?" Becca asked, adding: "Is it fair for the young Jamaicans who have been performing well and have been dreaming of parading on a stage from which they can impress scouts to be robbed of that opportunity while others step in?"

But the 44-year-old Simoes has stood by his decision, saying once the players are eligible to play for Jamaica, he sees no reason why they should not be included.

"I don't care what people think, once they are good players they will play," he said. "If the squad that I have does not improve I will have to look elsewhere."

There was little opposition when Simoes went to England in early 1997 to scout for players with Jamaican connections to play for the local team, which at the time was struggling for one of the three places to the World Cup from the Confederation of Central American and Caribbean Football (Concacaf) zone.

The first batch of players — Paul Hall, Fitzroy Simpson, Deon Burton and Robbie Earle — all made the squad, figuring prominently in the team's dramatic revival. Burton and Hall in particular were outstanding, scoring eight goals between them as Jamaica

made it to the World Cup for the first time.

Since the team's historic performance in November in the match against Mexico, other overseas players with Jamaican links have expressed interest in wearing the Jamaican team's colors, some as far away as France and Denmark.

Their inclusion has destroyed the chances of players who were fixtures in the team up until a year ago. Among them are striker Paul Young, midfielder Altamont Butler and defender Donald Stewart, all of whom helped Jamaica top the preliminary table of the Concacaf zone.

While Burton, Simpson and Hall have become integral to the public relations blitz that has made the Reggae Boys a marketing executive's dream, Simoes' other selections have not been as popular.

Chelsea defender Frank Sinclair and Wimbledon striker Marcus Gayle, both of whom

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