

## INTERNATIONAL

## Clinton helping Africans with AIDS

WASHINGTON (AP)— President Clinton issued an executive order last week making it easier for AIDS-ravaged Africa to obtain inexpensive drugs and medical technologies.

The president took the action after nearly identical language in the order was taken out of an African trade bill that Congress is likely to pass and send to the White House this week.

The order states that the U.S. government will not seek to overturn any intellectual property law or policy imposed by a sub-Saharan African government that promotes access to HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and medical technologies.

"Given the devastating impact of AIDS, the United States will not require or negotiate restrictive rules in the intellectual property rights area," said U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky. She said the administration remained committed to protecting basic intellectual property rights.

Alan Holmer, president of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, said the pharmaceutical industry agreed with the president on the need for incentives to develop new AIDS medicines.

But he criticized the executive order for adopting a "discriminatory approach to intellectual property laws"

and focusing exclusively on pharmaceuticals. "We recognize that AIDS is a major problem, but weakening intellectual property rights is not the solution."

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., who proposed the AIDS drugs amendment to the trade bill with Sen. Russell Feingold, D-Wis., praised the executive order as "the right thing to do."

She said it struck a balance between the need of African nations for access to AIDS drugs and the need to ensure that intellectual property is protected.

Feinstein said the order conforms to World Trade Organization rules that give countries flexibility in ad-

ressing public health concerns, in this case by assuring them access to cheap, generic AIDS drugs.

The order also states that it is U.S. policy to encourage sub-Saharan African nations to take steps to address the underlying causes of the HIV/AIDS crisis and that the United States should work with individual countries to assist them in developing effective public education campaigns.

Barshefsky noted that the United States had previously worked out an agreement with South Africa on the production and import of cheaper AIDS drugs. She said the executive order would make (See AIDS, Page 13)

## WORLD BRIEFS

## GHANA'S CONGESTED CAPITAL TO GET MODERN CAR PARK

ACCRA, Ghana (PANA) - Construction of Ghana's second modern car park will begin in the year to ease congestion on a busy road network where indiscriminate parking by commercial drivers causes traffic jams, especially during rush hours. The three-tier car park will be built at the Kaneshie market complex, in the west of Accra, to ease vehicular congestion on the Obetsebi Lamptey Circle-Malam road and accommodate more vehicles. The seven million-U.S.-dollar park would also ease the congestion of sellers who have abandoned their stores to trade at the main lorry station thus causing a heavy human traffic. Kwame Amporful, general manager of Accra Market Limited, told Ghana News Agency that the project would be completed in two years. It will have a capacity of 325 vehicles. The ground floor would take buses, the first floor 84 taxis, with the second floor taking 158 private cars. Accra City Car Park, Ghana's first multi-story car park, located in the city center, began trial operations in April. The Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Merchant Bank, First African Group, and Labor Enterprise Trust own the 500-car capacity park. It took two years to complete the 5.5 million-dollar park.

## LIFE RETURNING TO NORMAL IN CHOKWE AFTER FLOODS

MAPUTO, Mozambique (PANA) - Life is returning to normal in the flood-hit district of Chokwe, in the southern Mozambican province of Gaza, as people who had fled from the floods on the Limpopo river in February and March return in masse to their homes. Most of the returnees had taken refuge in the Chihaquelane accommodation centre and in the neighboring district of Macia. Chokwe district administrator Agostinho Chiau told the Mozambique News Agency about 99 percent of the people have returned to their homes. But 584 families decided to settle in Macia, while another 110 decided to remain in Chihaquelane, the largest of the more than 100 accommodation centres set up by the government for the flood victims. At the height of the crisis, about 80,000 displaced people took shelter at Chihaquelane. Chiau also said that all Chokwe primary school pupils have resumed their studies but the secondary school in Chokwe town still cannot be used, pending rehabilitation work after it was seriously damaged by the flooding. "While we await the rehabilitation of the secondary school, the students will have their classes at the Chokwe agricultural college," he said.

## Jamaica: Enquiry on round up of homeless ends

Dionne Jackson Miller  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

MONTEGO BAY, May 8 (IPS) — After two months and 73 witnesses, officials probing human rights abuses against Montego Bay street people have wrapped up the public aspect of their work, but are now faced with the crucial task of determining who was responsible and how to prevent recurrences.

The three-person Commission of Enquiry was appointed in February following months of public outcry over last July's illegal sweep of this city's streets by state officials using government equipment, in which about 30 street people were rounded up.

Those who resisted were allegedly pepper-sprayed and bound, and they were all then transported in trucks to a neighboring parish and abandoned without food or water.

The commission was presented with a five-point mandate — to clarify the facts and circumstances of the removal; to report on the identity of the persons who participated in or gave instructions for the removal; to make recommendations to prevent similar occurrences anywhere in Jamaica; to recommend redress to be extended by the State, and to propose how the public and private sector, and civil society can help improve the lot of the homeless.

Police investigators had previously spoken of a wall of silence thrown up by Montego Bay interests to cover up the issue, and attorneys participating in the enquiry spoke of experiencing

the same resistance to revealing the truth.

Despite a general lack of cooperation, however, two policemen implicated senior police officers in the organization of the removal, while one, Inspector Ainsworth Gidden, also implicated prominent politicians.

In addition, a local journalist, Lloyd B. Smith, took the stand and named business operators whom his sources said were involved. He also testified to a conversation he had with a government senator who bragged of organizing a similar removal in preparation for the Group of 15 (G-15) summit held in Montego Bay last February.

But much of the testimony was hearsay, and all the allegations were subsequently denied by those named, leading some observers to doubt whether the Commission will be able to name those behind the forced removal.

"I would classify the outcome as pretty much inconclusive," says human rights attorney Hilaire Sobers. "There have obviously been high points — the testimony of Lloyd Smith, of Inspector Gidden — but by and large when one looks at the terms of reference, I'm not too clear in my mind, based on what has come forward so far, that those terms have been substantially fulfilled."

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