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Meeting on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia,  
convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations at  
Geneva, on 20 and 21 July 1979, and subsequent developments

Report of the Secretary-General

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since 1975, there has been a steady movement of people out of Indo-China. Nearly a million have left their countries, half of whom were received by the neighbouring countries of South-East Asia.

2. By the end of 1978, the problem had begun to reach alarming proportions. In the month of April 1979 alone, more than 25,000 "boat-people" had arrived in the various countries of the region and tens of thousands had crossed the border into Thailand. During his visit to the area in April and May 1979, the Secretary-General was able to obtain first-hand information concerning the situation and to discuss with the Heads of Governments directly involved measures that could be undertaken to alleviate a potentially explosive problem.

3. In his discussion with the Heads of Government of Malaysia, Viet Nam, China, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand, the Secretary-General expressed the great concern of the United Nations about developments in the region and, in particular, his concern over the humanitarian problem of refugees in South-East Asia. He also expressed understanding of the problems faced by the countries of the region in trying to cope with the large increase in the number of refugees arriving as against the much lesser number who were departing for countries of resettlement. During his discussions with the authorities in Viet Nam, the Secretary-General was informed of the decision to permit orderly departures, which would take into account cases of family reunion and other humanitarian considerations, provided entry visas had been granted by countries of new residence.

4. On his return from the region, the Secretary-General decided to designate a senior official to follow developments closely from the region and to report to him on a regular basis on the humanitarian problem in all its aspects. On 11 June 1979, he appointed Ambassador I. Turkman of Turkey as his Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs in South-East Asia to perform this function.

5. Considering the fact that the situation was rapidly assuming crisis proportions, and in support of the best efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, other agencies and Governments to alleviate suffering and to find lasting solutions, the Secretary-General decided to send an appeal to the heads of a number of interested and concerned Governments requesting their help and co-operation in urgently coping with this problem. In his communication of 24 May 1979, he emphasized the need for strict adherence to the internationally accepted humanitarian principle of asylum. Without a generous policy of at least temporary asylum, he pointed out, there can be no basis for humanitarian action. While appreciating the heavy burden of the countries of South-East Asia, he appealed to them to grant asylum while the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees pursued his efforts to find places for their resettlement. He called on them to increase their financial contributions to

the Office of the High Commissioner and to join in the search for lasting solutions by making an increased number of resettlement places available to enable those waiting in the camps to start a new and productive life.

6. Even as the Governments were responding to the Secretary-General's appeal by increasing their contributions to UNHCR and by offering limited possibilities of resettlement for the refugees, the situation continued to deteriorate. In a letter dated 31 May 1979, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland proposed to the Secretary-General that an international conference be convened to deal with the problem. At the Tokyo Economic Summit Conference of industrialized countries, a special statement on Indo-Chinese refugees was issued on 28 June 1979. This statement confirmed the intention of the Governments represented to increase significantly their contributions to the relief and resettlement of Indo-Chinese refugees by making more funds available and by admitting more people, while taking into account existing social and economic circumstances of each of their countries. At the same time, the Heads of State and Governments requested the Secretary-General to convene a conference as soon as possible with a view to attaining concrete and positive results.

7. The twelfth Ministerial Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations held in Bali, Indonesia, on 30 June 1979, took note of the statement issued at Tokyo and welcomed the decision of those countries to increase significantly their intake of Indo-Chinese refugees as well as their financial contributions. They also stressed the important role of processing centres as a step in the implementation of the resettlement programmes. In this regard, they welcomed the offer of sites by the Governments of Indonesia and the Philippines for the establishment of processing centres. The Foreign Ministers supported the proposal for the convening of an international conference on Indo-Chinese refugees under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General. The Secretary-General also received suggestions from a number of the Governments supporting the proposal of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and calling upon the Secretary-General to take up this matter and to hold a conference on Indo-Chinese refugees under the auspices of the United Nations.

8. Intensive consultations were conducted by the Secretary-General and, at his request, by UNHCR with a large number of interested Governments to determine the most effective framework within which such a meeting could usefully be held with a view to achieving concrete results. Following these consultations, the Secretary-General informed Governments of his intention to convene a meeting at Geneva, on 20 July 1979, of Governments in a position to make a contribution to a solution of the problem. He emphasized that the meeting should concentrate on the humanitarian aspects of the problem and should produce additional support to enable UNHCR to enlarge its efforts to meet the problem. The Secretary-General proposed that Governments be represented at the ministerial level.

II. MEETING ON REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS  
IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

9. The Meeting took place on 20 and 21 July 1979. Sixty-five Governments attended, several other Governments attended as observers and interested intergovernmental organizations and groupings of non-governmental organizations were also represented.

10. In his opening statement, the Secretary-General emphasized that the purpose of the Meeting should be to seek concrete ways of alleviating a crisis, the results of which would literally involve the life or death of thousands upon thousands of human beings. He said that the spectre of men, women and children cast on the waters to drift and drown and of others on land abandoned to famine and despair had been a deeply moving experience. He recalled that, during the previous four years, over a million persons had left their countries in Indo-China. Half of this total sought asylum in the neighbouring countries and, despite the best efforts of all concerned, only 200,000 had been processed for resettlement outside the area. Over 350,000 refugees remained in the ASEAN countries and Hong Kong and there had been a steady increase in the number of new refugees arriving in those countries. It was, therefore, essential that the rest of the world should act in a decisive way to ease this tremendous burden imposed upon those countries. Such action, he said, would enable those States to adhere to the principle of first asylum and to contribute within the limit of their possibilities to an over-all action that would lead to desirable solutions for the refugees.

11. The Secretary-General stressed that in dealing with this issue, everyone should be aware of the fact that the refugee problem had political roots. He felt, however, that finding adequate solutions to the humanitarian aspects of the question would surely also help contribute to the creation of an atmosphere in which other aspects of the problem were more likely to be resolved. In the meanwhile, the Secretary-General said that he hoped that, as a result of the Meeting, there would not only be a significant increase in commitments for resettlement opportunities and in contributions of funds, but that specific suggestions would also be made as to how the programme of action could most quickly and successfully be translated into reality.

12. The Secretary-General emphasized the need for everyone concerned to realize the interrelationship of obligations and responsibilities on the part of the countries of origin, those of first asylum and those of final settlement. The countries of origin had an obligation to respect the right of emigration and family reunification, while avoiding any action leading to the departure of their people under conditions which put their lives in jeopardy. These countries also had the responsibility of co-operating fully with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the other countries concerned to ensure an orderly outflow with the prospect of a safe journey. Since the countries of first asylum were developing countries confronted with serious economic and social constraints, it was essential that countries outside the area assumed the principal responsibility for resettlement. The Secretary-General emphasized that, while the countries of initial arrival were expected to respect fully

the principle of first asylum for refugees coming there by land and sea, they in turn expected an assurance that they would not be burdened with the residual problems and that no refugees would stay in their countries for more than a specified period. The countries of final settlement needed to set up local facilities in the region to expedite this process and were faced with significant financial problems.

13. The Meeting had before it a paper prepared by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees which highlighted the various aspects of the problem (see annex 1 below). The proceedings were marked by an extraordinary spirit of co-operation, and a number of countries put forward concrete and imaginative proposals. Generous offers of places of resettlement, of processing centres and of funds were made.

14. The discussions at the Meeting clarified a number of issues. A consensus also emerged on the framework of the plan of action.

15. In the first place, it was agreed that urgent efforts should be undertaken to reduce the backlog by resettlement on a larger and faster scale than hitherto. It was clearly understood that this movement should cover land cases as well as boat cases. Secondly, the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the orderly departure from Viet Nam of individuals to reunite with their families, as well as other cases involving humanitarian considerations, should be carried out, but not at the expense of those in the camps in South-East Asia. Thirdly, a major breakthrough was achieved on the establishment of processing centres. The availability of these facilities would make a direct and important contribution to reducing the hardships pertaining to the exodus of refugees and would provide a major reassurance to countries of first asylum. Work has already started on Galang Island, offered by Indonesia. The Government of the Philippines has also provided a new site for 50,000 refugees, the costs for which will be met by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees within the limits of available funds. Special attention was also paid to the question of rescue at sea for the so-called "boat-people". The High Commissioner for Refugees has already taken steps towards mobilizing international co-operative efforts to achieve this by ensuring that ships in the area are alerted to the vital need to rescue refugees in distress. Finally, the general principles of asylum and non-refoulement were endorsed.

16. The Secretary-General had stressed that much of the success of any plan of action would depend on a substantial reduction of the disorderly exodus of thousands of persons from their homelands. During the Meeting there was considerable discussion of the possibility of a moratorium on "illegal departures". Following extensive consultations, the Government of Viet Nam gave assurances that, for a reasonable period of time, it would make every effort to stop illegal departures and to co-operate with UNHCR in expanding the present seven-point programme designed to bring departures within orderly and safe channels.

17. The Secretary-General stated also that he would be following developments in the area personally, and through his Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs in South-East Asia. The role of the Special Representative would be, in particular, to maintain close contacts with the Governments concerned.

### III. INITIATIVES TAKEN SINCE THE MEETING

18. Following the Meeting at Geneva, UNHCR has undertaken and/or promoted a series of initiatives aimed at implementing the plan of action which was presented to the Meeting. 1/ Basically, these activities embraced the following tangible results of or suggestions made during the meeting:

- (a) An increase in the number of resettlement places available for refugees, which had risen from 125,000 at the end of May to 260,000 by the end of the meeting;
- (b) Announcements of pledges totalling some \$US 160 million in cash and in kind;
- (c) A proposal to establish a fund for achieving durable solutions, for which a sum of \$25 million was announced in principle;
- (d) An offer concerning a refugee processing centre to accommodate 50,000 persons, in addition to two earlier offers;
- (e) Expansion of the programme of orderly departures from Viet Nam;
- (f) Practical proposals regarding the problem of rescue at sea.

19. In addition, the High Commissioner announced at the end of the Meeting that a "Standing Co-ordinating Mechanism" was to be established, grouping together organizations in the United Nations system, the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS) and other non-governmental agencies.

20. Against this background, working meetings were convened and organized by the High Commissioner, and three teams of senior UNHCR officials visited South-East Asia in July and August. A meeting was held on 23 July 1979 at UNHCR headquarters at Geneva, under the chairmanship of the Deputy High Commissioner, which was attended by representatives of 23 countries, who had announced new or continuing programmes, as well as by representatives from ICEM and voluntary agencies. The purpose of the meeting was to take full advantage of available resettlement offers, through concerted action by all concerned, in order to move a maximum number of persons out of South-East Asia within the shortest possible time. In its co-ordinating role, UNHCR would:

- (a) Seek to develop a well-balanced operation, taking into account both land and boat cases;
- (b) Aim at a fair distribution of quotas between countries of first asylum;
- (c) Establish a number of priorities (those whose lives are endangered, family reunion cases and "sensitive groups", such as unaccompanied minors, the handicapped and those who have been longest in the camps).

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1/ See annex I below, para. 40.

21. Following this meeting, a UNHCR mission, composed of senior officials, went to South-East Asia and, during the period from 29 July to 17 August, visited Hong Kong, Indonesia, Macau, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. The main purpose of the mission was to help field offices organize resettlement on an increased scale and to discuss major aspects of the refugee problem in each country. Talks were held, at the highest levels, with authorities and embassies concerned, with organizations of the United Nations system, with voluntary agencies and with ICEM officials in an endeavour to ensure the most efficient action and the best possible co-ordination at the field level. Discussions focused on the principle of asylum, resettlement and matters such as living conditions in camps while awaiting resettlement, registration of refugees, transit centres for refugees whose departure is imminent and refugee processing centres for those accepted by resettlement countries, but having a low priority for actual movement.

22. Since that time, the High Commissioner has continued to monitor the situation closely. The increased number of resettlement opportunities available in July 1979 are being utilized through an accelerated rate of resettlement (18,161 refugees from the area were resettled in July, 20,536 in August and 25,495 in September). To that effect, registration of refugees and preparation of individual resettlement dossiers has been intensified. Active co-operation with an increasing number of selection missions, which have visited the regions from various countries, has been taking place in each country of temporary asylum. While the average monthly rate of departures during the first half of 1979 was 8,897, it increased to 21,400 during the third quarter of the year. Efforts continue to obtain additional offers of resettlement (the High Commissioner has been notified of some 13,500 since the July Meeting), as well as to maintain the impetus in processing and in the rate of departures. New arrivals in the area, both land and boat cases, amounted to 25,750 in July, 9,846 in August and 14,282 by the end of September. A total of 206,678 had arrived during the first half of 1979, that is, a monthly average of 34,446. As at 30 September, the total number of Indo-Chinese refugees and displaced persons in South-East Asia was 342,998, primarily in ASEAN countries and Hong Kong, and consisted of 181,184 "boat people" and 161,814 who arrived in Thailand by land.

23. New resettlement offers from the international community have increased the total to 273,500 for the one-year period extending from July 1979 to June 1980. UNHCR has endeavoured to reach a target of approximately 25,000 departures per month (attained in September 1979) in an effort to utilize over a 12-month period the total reserve of 273,500 resettlement offers.

#### A. Refugee processing centres

24. The idea of a refugee processing centre first came up during the Consultative Meeting with Interested Governments on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia, held at Geneva on 11 and 12 December 1978. Among the various closely related matters discussed and considered urgent was a proposal whereby special centres would be established where refugees and displaced persons could be processed for resettlement in an orderly way within a specific time scale, and against guarantees that there would be no residual problem. It was felt that this proposal should be



further elaborated and studied by Governments. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers, in their statement at Bangkok on 21 February 1979, had declared their readiness, subject to a number of principles and conditions, to make a positive and concrete contribution by providing a place or places in the ASEAN region to serve as sites for refugee processing centres. At a conference held at Jakarta on 15 and 16 May 1979, the Government of Indonesia offered to accept up to 10,000 refugees at any one time. The Government of the Philippines had also announced at the meeting held on 20 and 21 July that a site offered by his Government with a capacity of 7,000 persons would be increased to a capacity of 10,000 persons and that, "under United Nations funding and on the principle of no residuals", an additional processing centre would be offered which would hold a maximum of 50,000 refugees.

#### B. UNHCR follow-up missions

25. To follow up on the various offers, UNHCR missions took place at a senior level, both before and immediately after the July Meeting. During these missions, the modalities of the establishment of refugee processing centres were discussed with the two Governments concerned. In the feasibility studies, UNHCR has been assisted by the Governments of Indonesia and the Philippines and by international teams of experts and consultants, mainly from Japan and Switzerland. Furthermore, UNHCR has signed an agreement with the Government of Switzerland which provides for technical co-operation in the establishment of the centre in Indonesia; a similar agreement is expected to be signed shortly with respect to the Philippines. The Government of Switzerland has provided UNHCR, in Indonesia, with a team of experts, who serve as technical advisers in the planning and construction of the centre for 10,000 persons on Galang Island near Singapore. Similar assistance will be provided to the Government of the Philippines towards the establishment of the centre for 50,000 persons in Bataan Province on Luzon. Agreements with the Government of Indonesia have been signed to ensure the speedy establishment of the centre and similar agreements are expected to be signed in the immediate future with the Government of the Philippines. These involve the establishment of new or the improvement of existing infrastructure (for example, road network, water and electricity, drainage system, port facilities, radio communications), construction works (for example housing, health, education and recreational centres, administrative quarters), land clearance and provision of furniture and equipment. Agreements to govern the running of the centres, including the employment of necessary staff, and the care and maintenance of refugees admitted, are in preparation.

26. Apart from international experts already mentioned, ICRC, LRCS and its member societies, organizations of the United Nations system (notably the World Food Programme) and voluntary agencies will all have their part to play. It is hoped that one or possibly two centres will open before the end of the year to at least partial capacity.

### C. Orderly departures from Viet Nam

27. Following the announcement on 12 January by the Government of Viet Nam that it was prepared to grant exit visas to all Vietnamese, with the exception of those in certain categories who, by written request, expressed their wish to leave, and after discussions held at Hanoi between the Vietnamese Government and UNHCR, a Memorandum of Understanding was concluded on 30 May 1979 between the Government and that Office regarding a seven-point programme for the orderly departure from Viet Nam of "family reunion and other humanitarian cases". This programme is being carried out on the basis of a procedure involving the exchange of lists whereby Governments of countries prepared to admit persons from Viet Nam for resettlement ("receiving countries") compile lists of persons for whom entry visas are available and the Vietnamese Government prepares lists of persons duly registered as wishing to leave under the programme. These lists are exchanged under the auspices of UNHCR and those persons whose names appear on both lists qualify for departure. Cases appearing on only one list (that is, only on a receiving country list or only on the list of the Government of Viet Nam) will be subject to discussions between UNHCR and the Vietnamese Government or the Government of the receiving country, as appropriate.

28. Practical measures within the framework of the programme commenced both in Viet Nam and at UNHCR headquarters immediately following the conclusion of the Memorandum of Understanding. In Viet Nam, the Government and UNHCR have appointed personnel pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding who are co-operating closely in implementing the programme, both in Hanoi and in Ho Chi Minh City, and at UNHCR headquarters a special unit has been set up to serve as liaison, through the UNHCR field offices concerned, with the competent authorities in the receiving countries, especially in relation to the provision and transmission to Hanoi of lists of persons for whom entry visas are available.

29. Flights under the programme commenced at the end of June and, by the end of September, there had been eight flights from Viet Nam to Bangkok, involving the movement of 879 persons to various receiving countries in the Americas, Europe and Oceania.

30. Efforts directed towards establishing the regularity of movement and accelerating its rate are being actively pursued with a number of Governments of receiving countries as well as with the Government of Viet Nam. Particular attention is being given to the need for the careful preparation of lists and the streamlining of processing procedures.

### D. Rescue at sea

31. The question of the rescue of refugees and displaced persons in distress in the South China Sea has been of concern to UNHCR since 1975. The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's programme, at its twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth sessions, made several recommendations regarding this problem, which was further considered during the Consultative Meeting with Interested Governments on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia, held at Geneva on 11 and 12 December 1978.

32. Due attention was given to the problem of rescue at sea during the meeting at Geneva, at which a number of representatives made statements relating to search and rescue operations. In his closing statement, the High Commissioner proposed that a meeting of experts be called to discuss practical steps that could be taken. The proposal was endorsed by the Secretary-General and supported by a number of Governments involved in rescue operations in the area.

33. Thus, a Meeting of Experts on Rescue Operations for Refugees and Displaced Persons in Distress in the South China Sea took place at Geneva on 14 August 1979, under the chairmanship of the Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees. It was attended by representatives of 10 Governments and by experts from the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) <sup>2/</sup> and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). During the meeting, there was general recognition and reiteration of the fundamental importance of the issue from the humanitarian standpoint, and of the fact that rescue arrangements should be rendered more effective.

34. It was agreed that consultations should take place between Governments and the shipping community, that appropriate instructions should be issued to ships operating in the South China Sea that, when called upon to do so, they should assist in search and rescue operations in the area. Attention was given to the need for special resettlement arrangements in cases where the flag State is not prepared to provide resettlement guarantees, and consideration was given to avoiding a possible negative impact on the over-all resettlement programme in the area which could result from the inclusion of rescued refugees and displaced persons in existing resettlement quotas. Finally, it was agreed that UNHCR would continue consultations on the problem with Governments, IMCO and other interested organizations.

35. With regard to practical implementation, UNHCR has been following closely, in liaison with Governments, embassies and agencies concerned, the question of landing and resettlement arrangements for those rescued. This includes such points as disembarkation in the first port of call, resettlement guarantees by flag States, resettlement arrangements as required and provision of care and maintenance pending departure.

36. From 1 January to 30 September 1979, UNHCR had been involved in arrangements for 6,973 persons rescued by 96 ships belonging to 21 countries. Disembarkation took place mainly in Singapore and Japan, with a smaller number in Hong Kong.

#### E. Liaison group for Indo-Chinese refugees and displaced persons

37. In his closing statement, the High Commissioner indicated that "a standing co-ordinating mechanism" would group together representatives of the United Nations system, ICEM, ICRC, LRCS and others in the non-governmental sector. A first meeting of the "liaison group" created to this effect took place on 29 August, under the chairmanship of the Deputy High Commissioner, after the return of UNHCR missions sent to South-East Asia. Representatives attended from UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Volunteers programme

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<sup>2/</sup> Discussions took place between members of a senior UNHCR mission and IMCO at London, on 25 July 1979.

World Food Programme (WFP), the International Labour Office (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNESCO, World Health Organization (WHO), Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO), Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS), the International Council of Voluntary Agencies and the American Council of Voluntary Agencies.

38. The principal tasks set for the liaison group were as follows:

(a) To review the situation of Indo-Chinese refugees and displaced persons and their specific material and resettlement needs;

(b) To determine what steps are being taken and can be taken by each organization represented in the group to meet these needs most effectively, avoiding duplication of effort;

(c) To review in the same light offers of assistance received by members of the group from Governments or from organizations not represented in the group.

39. Discussions took place along the above-mentioned lines and the liaison group meeting thus established a broad framework for co-ordination of assistance and services, as well as for the exchange of information. Further meetings of the group as a whole, or smaller groups, according to the subject matter, are foreseen. UNHCR offices in the field have been instructed to convene similar meetings.

#### F. Strengthening of staff

40. To act on all the measures described in the present report, UNHCR has had to send additional staff to the region. Thus, as at 30 September, 52 staff members had joined the UNHCR teams in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. These included Professional officers, mainly concerned with the organization of refugee movements, and General Service staff to assist in related tasks. Concurrently, the staff at UNHCR headquarters is also being strengthened.

41. Experts, technicians and volunteers, working under the aegis of UNHCR, have been sent to the ASEAN countries. The services of these persons have been placed at the disposal of UNHCR by Governments, the United Nations Volunteers programme and by voluntary agencies. The role of such personnel is mainly connected with the improvement of life in refugee settlements and assistance in the establishment of the refugee processing centres mentioned above. Services have thus been made available in a wide number of fields, such as education, vocational training, medicine, sanitation, nutrition, engineering and social welfare.

#### G. Financial situation

42. The situation at the end of September 1979 of amounts paid or firmly pledged in cash and in kind towards the UNHCR in South-East Asia for refugees and displaced persons from Indo-China is included below (see annex II below). It shows a total of \$US124,856,737 for the general programmes and \$US30,578,757 for the refugee processing centres, together \$US155,435,494.

H. Concluding remarks

43. Since the end of 1978, the problem of Indo-Chinese refugees has reached staggering dimensions. In June, the exodus attained its peak with 70,000 people arriving in countries of temporary asylum in South-East Asia. The plight of the refugees was compounded by the suffering and loss of life among the boat people in the South China Sea. The influx created serious political, economic and social problems in South-East Asian countries, which in turn endangered the continued adherence to the principle of first asylum. Offers of resettlement places remained inadequate, resulting in a constant growth of the refugee population in already crowded camps.

44. The Meeting held at Geneva on 20 and 21 July, concentrating on the humanitarian aspects of the problem, tried to devise a response mainly on the basis of two complementary approaches: the channelling of the outflow of refugees from Viet Nam through agreed procedures of orderly departures at a level which could stop or at least reduce to manageable proportions the influx into first asylum countries, and a substantial increase in the availability of resettlement places enabling a significant and progressive reduction of the backlog in refugee camps in South-East Asia.

45. These two steps were rapidly put into effect following the Meeting. As a result, during the months of August and September, the departures from countries of temporary asylum exceeded the arrivals by some 10,000, and a proportional net decline was registered in the population of refugee camps. The UNHCR is trying to maintain the level reached in September of 25,000 departures per month in an effort to utilize over a 12-month period the total reserve of 273,500 resettlement offers for the one-year period extending from July 1979 to June 1980. It is clear, however, that, even with such a rate of resettlement, and assuming a stabilization and hopefully a decrease in the number of arrivals, the elimination of the backlog would take more than two years. The continuation and further development of present policies aiming at channelling all departures from Viet Nam directly to receiving countries, the maintenance of a very high level of resettlement offers and the availability of processing centres, which would improve the living conditions of the refugees and alleviate the burden of first asylum countries, are therefore of vital importance.

46. Recently, substantial progress was achieved regarding orderly departures. The working procedures were refined and the necessary administrative and organizational measures worked out. Lists are now being exchanged of persons considered eligible to depart from Viet Nam directly to resettlement places. Some countries have agreed to broaden the scope of criteria for eligibility beyond family reunion cases. It is hoped that other receiving countries will act similarly. Both UNHCR and the Government of Viet Nam are expecting 5,000 or 6,000 departures a month once the arrangements have become fully operational. Such a rate of departure should significantly reduce arrivals in first asylum countries.

47. In recent weeks, a new and far-reaching development has taken place. Some 200,000 Kampuchean sought asylum in Thailand by the end of October and another 130,000 are in the border area, many of whom are expected to cross into Thailand in the near future.

48. On 19 October 1979, the Prime Minister of Thailand announced that all the Kampuchean refugees would be granted temporary asylum in Thailand, that there would be no refoulement and that the refugees would be housed initially at holding centres until the setting up of a national refugee centre. The Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees warmly welcomed this constructive approach, and several Governments, the United Nations system, ICRC and the voluntary agencies extended, on an urgent basis, support to the action of the Thai Government in favour of the refugees. In response to these developments, the High Commissioner sent a special mission to Thailand on 27 October to assess the situation and to discuss with the Thai Government plans for immediate expanded assistance to meet the needs created by the influx. In order to assist the Government of Thailand in the establishment and operation of holding centres, UNHCR has made available to the Government and voluntary organizations an initial amount of over 2 million dollars.

49. The additional requirements arising from the massive flow of refugees from Kampuchea have been identified within the programme of relief assistance to the Kampuchean people and supplementary financial commitments have been obtained. The over-all programme proposed by the Government for eight months to be funded by UNHCR, totals \$59,714,000. Meanwhile UNHCR is sending additional staff to Thailand, including a medical co-ordinator.

50. The new influx from Kampuchea has greatly increased the burden carried by Thailand, which is now sheltering close to 350,000 refugees. This is equivalent to two thirds of all the Indo-Chinese refugees in first asylum countries. Some of the refugees, specially among Laotians, have been living in Thailand longer than others. A new effort to increase resettlement places for refugees in Thailand needs the urgent support of Governments.

51. The Geneva Meeting, held on 20 and 21 July, has had a definite impact on the course of events in South-East Asia. Its conclusions reflected a consensus on the need to mobilize all efforts to alleviate human suffering. A combination of policy adjustments and intensified international action has created conditions under which a certain degree of optimism might be permissible. However, the new influx from Kampuchea has reminded all concerned of the fragility of the situation, so long as the root causes have not been resolved. The problem can be contained and gradually eased only if countries of origin, of first asylum and of final resettlement continue to adhere to the conclusions of the Geneva Meeting.

Emergency humanitarian relief to the people of Kampuchea and the Pledging Conference of 5 November 1979

52. Relief assistance to Kampuchea is, to an extent, interwoven with the refugee problem. Indeed, the misery and deprivations afflicting the people of Kampuchea

is an important cause of the recent massive influx of refugees into Thailand. Help is being provided under the emergency relief programme to these refugees.

53. The dimensions of the tragedy unfolding in Kampuchea are well known. The population is in extreme need of relief assistance. Most of the children are severely malnourished and are suffering from various diseases, which take a heavy toll on those weakened by hunger. The shortages of doctors, hospitals and drugs are acute. It is estimated that only 10 to 20 per cent of land normally under cultivation has been planted for the country's major harvest period at the end of the year, and rice is in such short supply that little, if any, will be available for the forthcoming planting season.

54. It is to prevent the danger of extinction of a whole people that UNICEF, ICRC and WFP have established a joint emergency relief operation. Meanwhile, FAO, through a substantial programme, will be engaged in assisting agriculture and fisheries in Kampuchea.

55. Under the emergency relief programme, estimated food needs over the next six months are some 165,000 tons (mainly rice and pulses, but also oil, sugar, fish, dried skim milk and enriched blended food). The programme will amount to approximately \$250 million over the next 12 months.

56. Since the end of July, the UNICEF-ICRC airlift has delivered some 300 tons of food, medicines, various materials and vehicles. The rate of delivery of these goods is now expanding rapidly. A first shipment of 5,000 tons of rice has already reached Kompong Som harbour and other shipments are following. In this connexion, the Government of Viet Nam has indicated that the Mekong River could be used for the transportation of food and supplies intended for relief assistance.

57. To obtain commitments for the emergency relief programme and to underscore the international concern felt over the plight of the people of Kampuchea, the Secretary-General convened a Pledging Conference at United Nations Headquarters on 5 November 1979. Seventy-six countries participated in the Conference and several were represented at the ministerial level.

58. A total of \$210 million in cash and in kind was pledged at the Conference both for the programme of emergency relief to the people of Kampuchea and for the UNHCR requirements to cover the needs of Kampuchean refugees in Thailand.

59. Like the Geneva Meeting on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia, the Pledging Conference provided a highly gratifying response to human suffering and distress. The financial resources and the moral commitment for an urgent and adequate relief assistance to Kampuchea have thus been secured. However, the logistical problems continue to be extensive and their solution require practical arrangements and effective co-ordination between the representatives of the United Nations system, ICRC and the competent national authorities. The Secretary-General has received assurances which give reason to expect that the necessary co-operation will be afforded, permitting the expanded programme to be implemented successfully. He will continue to follow the situation very closely and report to responsible United Nations organs as necessary.

ANNEX I

Background note dated 9 July 1979 prepared by the  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for  
the Meeting on Refugees and Displaced Persons in  
South-East Asia



## I. INTRODUCTION

1. A grave crisis exists in South-East Asia. This paper relates to the hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons whose fundamental right to life and security is at risk. Expanded, concerted and comprehensive action is urgently needed of the international community.
2. The human tragedy of the refugees and displaced persons is inseparable from the political and economic developments relating to Indo-China. The immediate crisis results from the dimensions of the exodus, the present denials of asylum and the imbalance between the large numbers arriving and the rate at which durable solutions are being found for them.
3. Since 1975, over a million persons are known to have left their countries from the three States of the Indo-China peninsula. Over 550,000 a/ of them have sought asylum in South-East Asia, some 200,000 of whom have already been resettled away from the area. Over 350,000 remain in countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) group and in Hong Kong. Between 1 January and 30 June 1979, there was a net increase of over 155,000 persons in the camps in South-East Asia, despite the departure of some 54,000 over the same period.
4. In December 1978, the High Commissioner convened a Consultative Meeting with Interested Governments on Refugees and Displaced Persons in South-East Asia. The summing up by the Chair of the outcome of the meeting will be found in appendix I below.
5. Despite the most strenuous efforts over the past months that have witnessed a doubling in resettlement opportunities between October 1978 and May 1979 (from 53,500 to 125,000 over a 12-month span), the problem has clearly run ahead of the solutions.
6. This note briefly describes the present situation in the region, analyses some aspects of it and suggests a plan of action, for consideration by Governments at the meeting convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 20 and 21 July 1979.

## II. PRESENT SITUATION

### A. Land cases

#### Thailand

7. Since 1975, over 245,500 persons arriving by land from Kampuchea, Laos and Viet Nam have been given temporary asylum in Thailand. At 30 June 1979, 81,500 of

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a/ In addition, some 235,000 entered China (para. 12), 150,000 entered Viet Nam (para. 11) and over 130,000 were resettled directly to the United States.

these had been resettled, and 16,500 Kampucheans, 146,000 Lao and 1,500 Vietnamese remained in Thailand. These persons are supported by UNHCR, which has spent \$US33 million for this purpose over the last four years. In addition, the World Food Program (WFP) has provided food aid worth over \$US 3 million.

8. A further 80,000 Kampucheans entered Thailand in the first months of 1979. Some 40,000 of them were returned while the international community was engaged in seeking solutions. Some of those returned had already been accepted for resettlement. Offers of material assistance pending solutions were to no avail. Land cases in Thailand, and particularly some of the recently arrived Kampucheans, may face the prospect of refoulement.

9. Conditions in the centres supported by UNHCR vary according to local circumstances. The continuing increase in numbers has been detrimental to all aspects of the running of the centres, including the promotion of self-sufficiency projects and education programmes.

10. Resettlement abroad has been the only durable solution to date. Several initiatives have taken place to promote voluntary repatriation to Laos. These continue, in consultation with the Governments concerned, but have yet to yield significant results. No local settlement has so far taken place.

#### Viet Nam

11. By mid-1978, 150,000 refugees and displaced persons had arrived in Viet Nam from Kampuchea. Steps were taken to provide emergency relief, including WFP supplies, to these persons. As a result of events in Kampuchea, the majority have been repatriated, while a limited number of others continue to be resettled abroad. Some 30,000 remain in Viet Nam. Assistance towards local integration is being given.

#### China

12. By June 1979, some 235,000 refugees and displaced persons had arrived from Viet Nam. China has indicated that UNHCR aid would be welcome to supplement the considerable efforts already undertaken and has also stated that UNHCR could make arrangements to help the resettlement of those who so wished. Applications from some 19,000 persons had been received by the Chinese authorities.

### B. Boat cases

13. At 30 June 1979, the principal locations of the some 195,000 pending boat cases were Hong Kong (59,000), Indonesia (43,000), Japan (550), Macau (2,800), Malaysia (75,000), the Philippines (5,000), Singapore (450) and Thailand (9,400).

14. From the total of 277,000 arrivals by sea since 1975, by 30 June 1979, 82,000 persons had been resettled, including 7,550 from Hong Kong, 3,650 from Indonesia, 350 from Macau, 45,400 from Malaysia, 4,600 from the Philippines, 2,500 from Singapore and 12,950 from Thailand.
15. Over the last months there has been a marked increase in the rate of arrivals. This has particularly affected Malaysia, Hong Kong and, recently, Indonesia. A total of 26,600 boat people arrived in the area in April 1979, 51,150 in May 1979 and 56,950 in June 1979. These figures would, of course, be higher if asylum had been granted to all who sought it. Faced with the increase, however, certain of the countries most directly affected have refused permission to land and have expelled many thousands of boat people to the high seas.
16. Given the apprehension concerning future arrivals and despite the availability of funds from UNHCR, certain Governments have been reluctant to allow the expansion of the centres for boat cases, a measure which is necessary to ensure adequate conditions for those allowed to land. For instance, one small island now holds some 40,000 boat people in grossly inhospitable conditions. Over-crowded ships have been held off-shore for many months despite pleas to permit disembarkation. Logistical problems have become acute and the risk of epidemics grave. Notwithstanding every effort, food distribution arrangements, water supply and basic sanitation conditions have often been most unsatisfactory. With considerable help from voluntary organizations, the potentially critical consequences of inadequate facilities have been avoided, but the risks remain acute.
17. UNHCR assistance for the support of boat cases as at 30 June 1979, totalled some \$US 43 million of which \$US 10.5 million has been provided in Hong Kong, \$US 1.1 million in Macau, \$US 3.1 million in Indonesia, \$US 20.2 million in Malaysia, \$US 2 million in the Philippines, \$US 1 million in Singapore and \$US 1.5 million in Thailand.
18. Apart from very limited local settlement within the region, the only solution possible to date for boat cases has been resettlement outside the region.

#### Rescue at sea

19. Many thousands of boat cases have been rescued on the high seas by passing vessels. The craft used by the boat cases are often overloaded and unseaworthy. Boat cases have also reported that passing vessels have ignored distress signals. Regrettably, therefore, persons have been lost at sea not only when rescue was not at hand, but also as a result of disregard of distress signals.
20. The rendering of assistance to persons at sea whose lives are in danger has long been recognized as a legal obligation. In December 1978, the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General of the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO) made renewed appeals to Governments and, through the International Chamber of Shipping, to shipowners and masters for the

observance of the obligations incumbent upon all ships' masters towards vessels in distress. The rescue at sea of boat cases has, however, posed special difficulties.

21. From the beginning, certain Governments of the region have been unwilling to allow disembarkation of rescued boat cases without guaranteed resettlement, even though UNHCR undertook to meet the expenses incurred. While the majority of flag States or States of ownership of rescuing vessels have been ready to provide resettlement guarantees, this has not always been the case. There are indications that some Governments, whose practice had previously been liberal in this regard, may be reconsidering their position. Heavy costs have also been incurred by owners as a result of the proper and exemplary discharge of an internationally recognized obligation by their masters.

22. The situation has been exacerbated by the fact that some boats in need of rescue on the high seas had already reached land only to be turned away or towed back to sea.

23. None of these factors condones failure to meet the obligation regarding rescue at sea. However, the dilemma faced by masters in the present situation is very real.

24. Whether because their distress signals were ignored or simply never seen, boat people on the high seas are dying. Urgent measures must be taken to remedy this situation.

#### C. Orderly departure from Viet Nam

25. In furtherance of a conclusion of the Consultative Meeting held in December 1978, UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Viet Nam on 30 May 1979, concerning the orderly departure of family reunion and other humanitarian cases from that country. It is hoped that early implementation of this programme will ease the situation in some measure.

#### D. Refugee processing centres

26. As a result of proposals made at the Consultative Meeting and at a subsequent meeting called by the ASEAN Group in May 1979 in Jakarta, a mission led by UNHCR has recently examined the feasibility of establishing refugee processing centres on the islands of Galang and Tara, in Indonesia and the Philippines, respectively. These Governments have indicated that the sites could accommodate some 10,000 and 7,000 persons, respectively, in transit. They would be drawn from boat people in the ASEAN region who had resettlement guarantees, but whose onward movement was not imminent.

E. Material assistance and financial implications

27. UNHCR has supported in a major way the boat and land cases in the countries of first asylum of South-East Asia, has provided assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Viet Nam and is in contact with the Chinese authorities with regard to assistance to those in China.

28. The support offered in the countries of South-East Asia has covered basic food supplies, in some cases with WFP assistance and shelter, including the construction of centres, medical care and other essential facilities. The level of assistance takes account of the special needs of the beneficiaries, as well as of the conditions of the local populations. To date, some \$US 95 million has been provided by UNHCR for this purpose and for resettlement costs, and monthly expenditures for its programmes are currently some \$US 10 million.

29. The programme has either been implemented through governmental bodies, such as the special organization set up within the Thai Ministry of Interior, or non-governmental organizations, such as the Malaysian Red Crescent Society. Governments have made available land and varying facilities for the centres.

30. Many non-governmental and voluntary organizations have provided vital direct assistance to the refugees and displaced persons in the region and have played an indispensable part in the resettlement process in receiving countries. Some Governments have funded travel costs for resettlement directly, but UNHCR has provided over \$US 20 million for internal and international travel, the latter largely organized through the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM).

31. Since the problem began four years ago, there has been a major increase in the UNHCR staff in the region. In addition to the material assistance programme, UNHCR is involved in the registration of cases, organization of interviews, processing and many other aspects of the resettlement operation, for which each family or individual has a separate file. Programme support costs have been some 6 per cent of total expenditure.

32. International financial assistance has generally not been lacking and the circle of contributing countries has widened. b/ However, the rapid influx and the unsatisfactory locations of several major centres has sometimes made swift response difficult. Given the increase in numbers, greatly increased financial support will be required by UNHCR to meet the needs of the situation. On 30 June 1979, and on the basis of the present case-load and programme, the projected shortfall for 1979 was some \$US 50 million.

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b/ Details of contributions to UNHCR are given in annex II below.

F. Over-all assessment of the situation

33. Compared with the grave refugee problems of the past, the number involved in South-East Asia are not unmanageable. The difficulties arise not so much from the actual numbers facing the individual countries of the region, but rather from the historical and political complexities of the problem and the uncertainties as to the future. It is these factors which have inhibited durable solutions.

34. The three possible durable solutions for the refugees and displaced persons are voluntary repatriation, local settlement and, in the absence of these alternatives, resettlement outside the country of first asylum. In South-East Asia only the latter has, to date, produced significant results, but the considerable efforts made by various countries have not kept pace with the ever-increasing needs. The pending case-load has thus continued to increase dramatically. Precisely because the problem has not been contained, local settlement on any significant scale has not been possible in South-East Asia. Conditions in Indo-China have meant that voluntary repatriation, except for the Kampucheans who were in Viet Nam, has been extremely limited.

35. Both for the land cases in Thailand and the boat cases throughout the region, the solutions provided to date have been outrun by events, despite great efforts. A backlog of pending cases has built up. As a result, the countries of the region have lost confidence in the ability of the international community to control the problem. In turn, as the exodus has continued, the internationally accepted principles of asylum and non-refoulement have been breached. Moreover, lacking the reassurance that the problem will be contained, the countries of the region have been reluctant to provide local durable solutions where these might otherwise have been possible.

36. There is now no way in which the problem can be resolved by piece-meal measures. No single action, however generous, will suffice. More than ever, the crisis demands coherent and closely co-ordinated action of the international community if further lives are not to be lost. UNHCR and the United Nations system, together with other intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations, must and will continue to play their role, but the solution to the problem lies, ultimately, in the hands of Governments. A plan of action is suggested below.

III. SUGGESTED PLAN OF ACTION

37. To resolve the problems in the area, it is essential that any plan of action address itself to the situation in its totality and be comprehensive in its search for solutions. The objectives to be achieved are the following:

(a) First, that wise and humane measures are taken by those concerned to remedy a situation in which thousands upon thousands of Indochinese leave their homes in the present manner.

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(b) Second, the countries of the region where the refugees arrive need to respond, and be enabled to respond, in a manner that prevents appalling tragedy. Every humanitarian principle requires that refugees not be turned away and forced into situations that further endanger their lives.

(c) Third, the international community, in its widest sense, must unite in a truly co-operative and concerted endeavour so that actions and commitments, of an on-going character, do indeed give the refugees the chance for new lives and also provide the reassurance that the countries of South-East Asia need as long as the problem lasts.

38. It is essential that the first of these objectives be met so that the exodus does not continue in the present appalling manner. This is a responsibility of the Governments concerned.

39. Nothing, however, should obscure the immediate duty of the international community towards those who seek asylum. Their problems cannot wait.

40. The observations and suggestions that follow call for closely interlinked action. Without a recognition of this, there is danger that the efforts of the international community will remain insufficient.

(a) There is at the moment a "back-log" in South-East Asian camps of over 350,000 persons, who are awaiting durable solutions. As a first, but considerable step, it is necessary to reduce this "back-log", which must be achieved by a much higher monthly rate of departures from the camps than at present. This means exceeding the average rate of arrivals which, it is most earnestly to be hoped, will decline.

(b) In practical terms, the offers of resettlement made available over a 12-month span need now to be fully used within a maximum of six months.

(c) Ideally, movement even at this rate should be directly to countries of resettlement. Such an effort would immediately ease the situation. If this should not be fully possible, however, alternatives are essential. Clearly, the alternatives imply the identification and establishment of refugee processing centres or holding centres of a far greater capacity than presently made known. Governments in a position to offer sites for such centres, whether within or beyond the region, should advise UNHCR of the possibility.

(d) These urgent measures should be taken irrespective of the total number to be resettled. The problem requires sufficient on-going commitments, but swift action now to reduce the "back-log" is essential to bring the problem under control and will advance the achievement of an over-all solution.

(e) The total number of resettlement places available to UNHCR are inadequate even for the present case-load. They now need to be more than doubled from the 125,000 places available at the end of May 1979. The High Commissioner has already approached Governments individually, suggesting indicative numbers to them.

(f) To the extent that such resettlement takes place in developing countries, financial assistance should be forthcoming from the international community.

(g) With regard to future arrivals, it is clear that on-going commitments, at least initially, should be made at the increased scale suggested in (e) above. The High Commissioner will monitor the situation carefully and, at regular intervals, will advise Governments of the needs, in light of the trend of arrivals.

(h) Resettlement procedures and criteria must be still more flexible and, in particular, must take account of family groupings. The increased rate of departures will require early expansion of facilities at sites where the refugees are assembled prior to onward movement.

(i) If the "back-log" is reduced, as suggested above, and on-going commitments match needs as they arise, the problem can be contained. Other complementary and essential steps will then contribute more readily towards the over-all solution.

(j) Within the framework of such an over-all plan, durable solutions will also need to be pursued in the region.

(i) Clearly, the prospects of repatriation - on a voluntary basis - must constantly be explored. UNHCR would be fully prepared to assist the Governments concerned in this regard. In other areas of the world, UNHCR has helped with the organization and financing of large-scale repatriation and has provided assistance for the reintegration of those who have returned. The critical factors have been the clearly-expressed wish of the country of origin that the refugees return and the voluntary decision of the refugees themselves to take advantage of the opportunity.

(ii) As a contribution to an over-all solution and with the containment of the problem, the possibility would arise for a degree of settlement in the region for those for whom this is the most appropriate solution. Projects could be formulated and funded from international resources with a view to ensuring that the local population benefited as well.

(k) For those awaiting solutions, conditions must be improved. Self-sufficiency, education and other appropriate projects must be encouraged.

(l) In addition to the role of the appropriate United Nations agencies and programmes, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations have an important part to play in this plan of action.

(m) Persons should be enabled to depart from Viet Nam in an orderly way for family reunion and other humanitarian reasons. The Memorandum of



Understanding between the Government of Viet Nam and UNHCR to this end must be carefully implemented with the co-operation of all concerned.

(n) The places allocated for the movement of such cases should be over and above the numbers required for movement from the camps of South-East Asia.

(o) If the success of the programme for orderly departure from Viet Nam is to be ensured, it is axiomatic that the current massive departures should not continue in the present tragic manner.

(p) The consequences of conflict in the region should not be followed by the ravages of hunger. The dangers of starvation, particularly in Kampuchea, are evident and there is immediate need to meet this critical situation.

(q) Many thousands of boat cases have perished at sea. Those in distress must be rescued before they die and masters of vessels in the area must scrupulously observe the law of the sea in this regard. UNHCR is additionally ready to meet the cost of care and maintenance for those so rescued. Further arrangements should be made, by those Governments in a position to do so, for search and rescue in the South China Sea. UNHCR will follow up on these cases.

(r) Within the framework of the over-all solutions envisaged, Governments of the first port of call must allow the disembarkation of all those rescued. UNHCR will, of course, continue to meet the cost of supporting such persons pending durable solutions.

(s) The necessary financial support, on the widest possible basis, will be indispensable to the success of this plan of action.

(t) Finally, it cannot adequately be stressed that a most essential component of any plan must be the firm re-establishment of the observance of the practice of asylum and non-refoulement, in accordance with internationally accepted humanitarian principles.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

41. There can be no denying the gravity of the responsibilities facing the international community in the present crisis. The States of the Indo-China peninsula, those of South-East Asia and the world at large all have obligations to help resolve the desperate tragedy of the refugees and displaced persons. Much is at stake: fundamental principles of law and of conduct, the future of countless people and the sanctity of human life, the will and capacity of the international community to respond in unison and in full measure. It is imperative that Governments take firm decisions to act in concert in order to contain, reduce and resolve the problem. The forthcoming meeting must achieve this end.

APPENDIX TO ANNEX I

Consultative meetings with interested Governments on  
refugees and displaced persons in South-East Asia

(Geneva, 11-12 December 1978)

Summing-up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. The consultations have underlined that the problem of refugees and displaced persons must be treated in a strictly humanitarian and non-political way, in keeping with the nature of UNHCR. The Office must advocate and implement policies that reflect this fundamental position.
2. These policies must receive governmental understanding and greatly increased support.
3. UNHCR must be enabled to help refugees and displaced persons wherever they are, in all parts of the region, not merely selectively. The interrelationships in the region, as well as their international dimensions, were fully elaborated.
4. The consultations recognized that no comprehensive solutions can be attained unless such is the will and determination of Governments within and beyond the region. UNHCR cannot substitute for this. Governments must, therefore, take the appropriate decisions, for only through their actions can existing problems be solved and new problems avoided.
5. In resolving these problems, the following urgent measures are closely related or are interdependent:
  - (a) The consultations noted that there can be no humane or durable solutions unless Governments grant at least temporary asylum, in accordance with internationally accepted humanitarian principles. The consultations also noted, as a corollary, that existing facilities in countries of first asylum in South-East Asia were already overloaded and that for such countries temporary asylum depended on commitments for resettlement in third countries and the avoidance of residual problems in the area.
  - (b) The meeting considered a proposal whereby special centres would be established where refugees and displaced persons would be processed for resettlement in an orderly way, within a specific time scale, and against guarantees that there would be no residual problem. It was felt that this proposal should be further elaborated and studied by Governments.
  - (c) While greatly appreciating the offers of resettlement announced during the consultations, it was evident that a far wider range of countries must announce increased numbers of places for this purpose. These further offers, which are most urgently required, must be announced in advance, be available on a regular basis, and above all, match the need. This would permit the pooling of opportunities and the allocation of resettlement numbers to areas of greatest need.

(d) Procedures must be further reviewed in order greatly to reduce the time between acceptance and departure; they must be humanitarian and flexible. The speed of movement must be greatly accelerated.

(e) In the particular case of rescue at sea, the decision adopted by the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme at its twenty-ninth session must be scrupulously implemented if lives are not to be lost. The consultations took note of the appeals made jointly by the Secretary-General of IMCO and the High Commissioner to the States members of IMCO and to the International Chamber of Shipping and welcomed the positive actions already taken by certain countries.

(f) Many statements during the consultations underlined the need to promote other durable solutions in the region, including voluntary repatriation.

(g) It was stressed that efforts must be intensified to promote self-sufficiency projects. Attention was drawn to the adverse special consequences of idleness and dependence on international relief.

(h) It was also stressed that considerations relating to the stability of the region as a whole indicated a need for a continuing dialogue in the area on the humanitarian problems that were being faced. Unilateral and bilateral efforts directed towards the improvement of economic conditions in the Indo-China peninsula could help redress the devastation caused by war and successive natural calamities and influence the decisions both of those who might wish to repatriate voluntarily and of those who might otherwise consider leaving for economic reasons.

(i) The consultations felt that where persons left their countries in order to reunite with their families abroad, countries of origin and those where such reunion would take place should establish bilateral or multilateral procedures if this has not been done. More regular and orderly procedures could advantageously be considered in order to facilitate humanitarian solutions.

(j) In the course of the deliberations, substantial new financial contributions were announced. It was recognized, however, that further generous contributions will be needed from the widest possible range of countries, in order to reduce the material burden on countries of first asylum to help, if necessary, potential third countries of resettlement and to provide for other durable solutions.

(k) Warm appreciation was expressed for the contribution of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and voluntary agencies. Their capacity and skills should be fully utilized.

(l) All Governments were urged to communicate to UNHCR, at the earliest possible opportunity, the necessary steps that they intended to take to further the measures outlined in the summing-up. This was absolutely essential in order to maintain the momentum of these consultations and to ensure that the international community gave the fullest and widest attention to the problems discussed. This would also enable the closest follow-up of each of these matters.

ANNEX II

UNHCR programmes in South-East Asia for refugees  
 and displaced persons from Indo-China

Contributions pledged and/or paid for in 1979,  
 including contributions in kind

(In United States dollars)

Situation as at 30 September 1979

DONOR	Total	General programmes a/	RPCs and Other Trust Funds
<u>Governments</u>			
Australia	3 393 741	3 116 415	277 326
Austria	75 188	75 188	
Canada	1 028 956	1 028 956	
Canada (Provincial Government of Alberta)	854 701	854 701	
China	973 141	973 141	
Denmark	1 889 466	1 889 466	
Finland	1 000 000	1 000 000	
Germany	6 116 037	4 272 559	1 843 478
Iran	90 000	90 000	
Ireland	400 000	400 000	
Israel	5 000	5 000	
Italy	1 235 006	1 235 006	
Japan	38 000 000	31 500 000	6 500 000
Netherlands	6 657 812	6 657 812	
New Zealand	209 180	209 180	
Norway	1 960 784	1 960 784	
Papua New Guinea	300 000		300 000
Republic of Korea	5 000 000	4 800 000	200 000
South Africa	50 301	50 301	
Spain	50 000	50 000	
Sweden	2 544 496	2 544 496	
Switzerland	3 102 354	2 499 944	602 410

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DONOR	Total	General programmes <u>a/</u>	RPCs and Other Trust Funds
<u>Governments (continued)</u>			
Tunisia	5 000	5 000	
United States of America	41 500 000	22 000 000	19 500 000
Total, Governments	149 056 271	119 580 057	29 476 214
<u>Organizations</u>			
European Economic Community	31 236 678	30 983 678	253 000
European Parliament	1 368 430	1 368 430	
The Sovereign Order of Malta	10 000	10 000	
Total, non-governmental organizations and others	6 379 223	5 276 680	1 102 543
GRAND TOTAL	155 435 494	124 856 737	30 578 757

a/ Annual programme and special operation.

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