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President: Mr. DRISS (Tunisia)

Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. The PRESIDENT said that, in accordance with the decision taken at the 1779th meeting, the Council would hear a statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in his capacity as focal point for assistance to the Pakistan refugees in India.

2. As it had been decided to devote a single meeting to the question, he urged members to be brief in their statements.

3. Prince Sadruddin AGA KHAN (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he greatly appreciated the opportunity of reporting to the Council in detail on the problem of the immense humanitarian needs of the refugees from East Pakistan in India and the response from the United Nations system to alleviate their plight. He would also try to answer the specific requests for information that had been addressed to him earlier, particularly by the New Zealand delegation.

4. The recent exodus of East Pakistanis had started after 25 March 1971 and had rapidly reached alarming proportions. The total number reported by the Government of India on 12 July was over 6,849,000, distributed as follows: West Bengal, 5,277,800; Tripura, 1,062,900; Assam, Meghalaya and Bihar, 509,100. Thus the world was confronted with one of the major population movements of modern history, with all the tragic concomitants of human misery and suffering.

5. From the first days of the influx of the East Pakistanis, the Indian authorities and people had made a considerable effort, at the local, State and Central levels, to provide shelter, food and medical assistance for the refugees. A number of voluntary agencies normally working in the areas affected had adapted themselves immediately to the emergency and had started to take care of the newcomers. During the same period consultations had taken place in New Delhi between the Government of India and the United Nations programmes and specialized agencies represented in India, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

6. On 23 April 1971 the Government of India, through its Permanent Representative to the United Nations, had asked the Secretary-General for aid from the United Nations system and related organizations and had suggested, *inter alia*, that preliminary discussions should take place at New Delhi between the Indian authorities and the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Secretary-General had brought the matter to the attention of the ACC which had met on 26 and 27 April 1971, and after consultations had decided, on 29 April that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should act as the focal point for the co-ordination of assistance from all the organizations of the United Nations system.

7. After immediate consultations with the Government of India, the High Commissioner had sent a mission to India composed of the Deputy High Commissioner, the Director of Operations and the Legal Consultant. The Mission, which had remained in India from 6 to 19 May 1971, had visited refugee areas and had held discussions with representatives of the Government of India, the United Nations programmes and specialized agencies represented in India and non-governmental organizations. A succinct report on the findings of the mission had been sent to Governments.

8. Even before the return of the mission, two United Nations bodies already carrying out extensive programmes in India had provided immediate assistance: WFP, in response to a request by the Government of India on 26 April 1971, had made available within a few weeks \$3.1 million worth of food, and early in May UNICEF had made available milk powder, medical supplies and vehicles to a total value of \$600,000.

9. Before the mission's return from India, it had become clear that concerted action by the United Nations system would require *ad hoc* measures for inter-agency consultation and co-ordination. Accordingly, he had invited the executive heads of the United Nations programmes and agencies most directly concerned to send representatives to a meeting of what had become the Standing Inter-Agency Consultation Unit. The first meeting had been held in the Palais des Nations on 18 May 1971. A representative of the League of Red Cross Societies had been invited to participate in the work of the Unit, which had been meeting regularly ever since.

10. On 19 May 1971 the Secretary-General had launched an appeal to Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and private sources, for emergency assistance for refugees from East Pakistan in India.

11. The Secretary-General had indicated his decision that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees should act as the focal point for the co-ordination of assistance from all the organizations of the system, and had expressed his certainty that donors would make use to the greatest

extent possible of the established channels of the United Nations family, in particular UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and WHO, and his hope that donors would keep UNHCR informed of all action thus taken or contemplated and that they would utilize the arrangements made by the High Commissioner to ensure co-ordination and make the best use of external assistance. The High Commissioner had followed up that appeal a few days later by sending Governments a succinct report on the three-man mission, together with detailed estimates of requirements established by the Government of India.

12. In order the better to handle the growing work-load resulting from his designation as the focal point of the United Nations system, he had set up a small *ad hoc* unit of UNHCR staff members, which would need to be strengthened by drawing upon additional staff as the operation gathered momentum. The fact that the staff resources of the High Commissioner's small Office had already been heavily taxed as a result of the major emergency would have to be taken into account in planning, in order to ensure that the other activities of UNHCR were not neglected.

13. In agreement with the Government of India, he had sent a senior officer of UNHCR, Mr. Thomas Jamieson, to represent the focal point of the United Nations system in New Delhi. Mr. Jamieson had taken up his duties on 5 June 1971 and had since been joined by two other senior officers.

14. Meanwhile, the Government of India had established a Central Co-ordination Committee for Refugee Relief. The representative of the focal point, as also representatives of other interested United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, participated in the activities of that Committee upon the invitation of the Indian authorities.

15. The situation in the refugee areas of the States of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, Meghalaya and others was one of great human misery, created by the massive arrival of millions of people in a state of destitution and physical exhaustion.

16. The United Nations and others were being constantly criticized for alleged lack of action and slowness in response. The fact was, however, that neither shelter, food, water supply, sanitation, nor adequate medical care could be improvised overnight. He paid a warm tribute to the thousands of officials of the Indian Government, members of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and private persons who had lent their assistance from the very start of the emergency.

17. Of the reported 6 million East Pakistanis in India at the end of June, the Government of India had estimated that some 3 million were accommodated in camps, one million in *ad hoc* reception centres and some 2 million with friends, relatives or the local population.

18. The situation in the camps varied from barely tolerable to extremely serious. Even in the best organized camps, the situation deteriorated instantly if several thousand new people arrived within a matter of hours, which was reported to have happened frequently. The refugees accommodated in schools and public buildings had

created serious disruption of the educational and administrative arrangements in the States affected. More adequate accommodation had to be provided in order to restore liveable conditions in those areas and prevent the problems from spreading. Similarly, the accommodation of millions of people with the local population in an already densely populated area could last for only a relatively short time. One major problem of the relief action was therefore the provision of shelter. The situation was particularly acute in the Calcutta area, which had had to cope with overpopulation and difficult social problems for some years, and in Tripura. The Indian Government had therefore introduced a scheme of temporary resettlement of refugees and had established in other States a number of huge reception camps which could each accommodate up to 50,000 refugees. The refugees were transported by air, some in aircraft made available by other Governments, by rail or by road.

19. Fortunately, when the emergency had started the Indian Government had had adequate buffer stocks of food available as a safeguard against drought and other natural disasters. The immediate problem had therefore been a matter of logistics and transport rather than a lack of local food resources. On the other hand, the buffer stocks were vital to over-all food planning in India and needed to be replenished. Moreover, although there were considerable quantities of staple food, only limited stocks were available of pulses and edible oils, vital elements of even a reduced daily diet, and of children's food.

20. One of the most difficult problems arose from poor sanitation and drinking water in camps and reception centres which had considerably increased health hazards in regard to cholera, all forms of enteritis and other illnesses. Steps had been taken to improve sanitary conditions, but effective results were difficult to obtain in a short period of time.

21. Another important problem was that of transport and logistics. There were few main roads leading to the refugee areas, especially in the States of Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. The transport of food and other items required vehicles, and the difficulties were compounded by the considerable distances from the main ports of arrival and places of storage. Finally, the monsoon, which was particularly heavy that year, had made secondary roads impassable. An imaginative response was needed and increasing use of sophisticated means of delivery, possibly including helicopters, might be required to avert disaster.

22. The Government of India had made a first global assessment of requirements on 16 May 1971, on the assumption that there would be a refugee population of 3 million in India during a period of six months from the end of March 1971. Those requirements amounted to the equivalent of \$175 million, the figure mentioned by the Secretary-General in his appeal of 19 May 1971. As a result of the further influx of refugees, the Government of India had made revised estimates on 26 June 1971 amounting to the equivalent of \$400 million based on the needs of an average population of 6 million refugees over a six-month period from the end of March 1971. Those revised estimates had been transmitted to Governments.

23. In the two days following the Secretary-General's appeal of 19 May 1971, millions of dollars had been pledged. Up to 14 July a total of \$47.7 million in cash and \$51.7 million in kind, making a grand total of \$99.4 million, had been pledged to the focal point. Of that, \$93.9 million had been contributed by Governments and \$4.4 million provided from resources already available to WFP, UNICEF, WHO and UNHCR. Contributions to the focal point also included \$1.1 million received from non-governmental sources. The significance of that figure, which was small compared with the present needs, resided in the fact that a number of non-governmental organizations had welcomed the designation of a focal point within the United Nations system and were prepared to co-operate with it in various ways, including the channelling of contributions through it.

24. A number of Governments had chosen to make donations in kind and in cash direct to the Indian authorities, in some cases over and above significant contributions made through the focal point. The bilateral efforts of Governments were estimated at the equivalent of \$49 million.

25. The sudden influx of East Pakistanis into India had created considerable concern all over the world, not only in Governments but among the public and in charitable and humanitarian non-governmental organizations. From the earliest stage of the emergency, therefore, a number of non-governmental organizations had provided assistance to the East Pakistan refugees in India either from available resources, from funds received from Governments, from funds raised individually or through *ad hoc* appeals. He was endeavouring to collect precise information on those efforts, which were at present estimated at the equivalent of \$17 million in cash and in kind.

26. Following a request received from the Indian Red Cross, the Secretary-General of the League of Red Cross, Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun Societies had appealed to the affiliated national societies for funds and donations in kind, and the League had so far received a total equivalent to \$3.2 million in cash and in kind. That was being made available to the Indian Red Cross, which, acting within the over-all framework established by the Indian authorities, had accepted responsibility for a supplementary feeding programme, particularly for children and nursing mothers, and for supplementary medical care. UNHCR maintained close co-operation and consultation with the League of Red Cross Societies, which participated in the Standing Inter-Agency Consultation Unit.

27. The functions of the co-ordinating mechanism devised to make the best use of assistance for the East Pakistan refugees in India were three-fold: (a) to mobilize and secure international support and contributions; (b) to arrange for the procurement of supplies in a co-ordinated manner and to deliver the supplies to India; (c) to maintain close liaison with the Government of India. Those functions were carried out in close association with FAO, WHO, UNICEF and WFP and the League of Red Cross Societies. Shortly after the initial measures of co-ordination had been taken, a natural division of roles had emerged between the various

members of the United Nations family associated in the effort, which had been accepted by all those concerned.

28. The focal point received contributions in cash and kept a record of contributions announced in kind. Subject to the necessary consultations with the Government of India, with members of the United Nations system and with donors, the focal point made funds available either direct to the Government of India or through United Nations programmes or specialized agencies, which purchased the necessary items and arranged for their delivery to India. The focal point also covered transport costs when free transport could not be obtained and had made arrangements for the co-ordination of air transport. ICEM had offered its technical experience, and two of its staff members, who were experts in transport matters, were on loan to the focal point.

29. In the early phase of the emergency, UNICEF had provided, from available resources, children's food, medical supplies, vehicles and other items. Since it was the only member of the United Nations system equipped and accustomed to handle general relief items, it was playing an important role.

30. A major role was being assumed also by FAO and WFP. Contributions in food were reported by the focal point to WFP, which took charge of all further arrangements, including reception from the donors, shipment, and delivery to India. WFP also acted as the purchasing agency for food items bought outside India.

31. WHO was the check-point for all health supplies. It had performed a vital role when cholera had broken out in the refugee areas and continued to play an important role of co-ordination and supply.

32. Although it was premature, at that stage, to draw any broad conclusions of an organizational nature from the activities of the focal point, there was no doubt that, after a short period of adjustment, the various parts of the intricate international machinery had fitted together much more smoothly than would have been thought possible. There was excellent understanding between the executive heads concerned, and at working level there prevailed a climate of genuine co-operation and a feeling of common undertaking.

33. He would like to elaborate on one aspect of the duties entrusted to him by the Secretary-General: the raising and making available of funds. As far as contributions in cash were concerned, there was, of course, some delay between the announcement of a contribution and its actual payment. That delay, if not too long, did not play a significant role in normal programme activities, but it could be an obstacle in a real emergency, such as the present, and he was grateful to the Governments which had been able to pay, rapidly, the amounts pledged.

34. There was also the problem of contributions paid gradually and on a conditional basis, entailing time-consuming negotiations between the donor Governments, New Delhi and Geneva. In that respect, too, he was grateful to the Governments which had found it possible to make funds available on the basis of the estimates of requirements circulated to them.

35. By 14 July 1971 the amount of cash actually received by the focal point had been \$13.3 million, as against total pledges in cash of \$47.7 million. All the funds received had been either spent or committed.

36. The matter of contributions in kind was essentially one of logistics. It had been possible to airlift to India a number of goods donated, particularly medical supplies and light shelter material, but it was much more difficult to send bulk food, vehicles and other heavy goods by air. There was therefore a time gap between the announcement of contributions in kind and their delivery on the spot, but every effort was being made to reduce the time gap to a minimum.

37. It had been clear from the very outset that concentrated efforts would have to be directed towards meeting the requirement for shelter. The Government of India had initially placed orders for the local purchase of shelter material for more than 800,000 persons. It had already obtained 36,000 tents and 750 tarpaulins, and further deliveries were expected by the end of July and during August. Cash contributions through the United Nations system had been made available to the Government to cover part of the cost of those local purchases.

38. UNICEF, with funds provided by the focal point, had immediately arranged for the purchase and airlifting from abroad of shelter material, including polythene sheeting, tents and tarpaulins. Its deliveries had already covered the shelter requirements for approximately one million persons and it was expected that quantities sufficient to cover the needs of a further million persons would be airlifted by the end of July. In addition, material to provide shelter for about 300,000 persons had been purchased by UNICEF in India and significant contributions in shelter material had been provided through bilateral arrangements with the Government of India and by voluntary agencies.

39. In its revised list of requirements the Government of India had indicated that it was taking steps to provide "basha" huts, light structures of local material with polythene sheeting whenever possible, to accommodate approximately 3 million persons, at a total cost of some \$48 million. He hoped that substantial cash donations could be made available to the Government of India to assist in meeting that vital need.

40. In the revised request of 26 June 1971, the Indian Government had estimated that 776,000 metric tons of basic food — i.e. rice, pulses, sugar and oil — were required to feed an average population of 6 million refugees over a period of six months. That quantity excluded items such as salt, milk powder and children's food, of which a total of 30,000 tons was necessary as supplementary feeding.

41. Of the bulk food items requested by the Government, almost half had been delivered or pledged so far through the focal point, as also, to the extent that was known, on a bilateral basis. The offers made, however, did not always correspond to the demand; for instance, wheat, which was not very palatable to the population concerned, had been offered, while of the 580,000 tons of rice required only 160,000 had been offered. That was particularly disturbing since there were ten countries each of which exported more

than 100,000 tons of rice a year. The same was true of pulses, of which a maximum of 124,000 tons was required while 9,500 tons had been offered. Sugar showed at present a deficit of over 47,000 tons, which could be purchased in India if funds were made available, while 10,000 tons of edible oil and the same quantity of milk powder were still necessary. He urged the countries producing those food items, particularly rice, to make a special effort to help bridge the gap between the requirements and the aid pledged or delivered.

42. With respect to supplementary items, there was still a deficit of some 10,000 tons of milk powder and about the same quantity of salt. In an effort to reach some 1.5 million children, 5,000 tons of high-protein food valued at about \$800,000 had been purchased by UNICEF in India with funds provided by the focal point. That was being used to fill the gap until the arrival of at least 10,000 tons of a similar type of food for the children, donated by the Government of the United States of America, which was due in the course of August and September.

43. In May 1971, at the time of the three-man mission to India, a specialist from WHO had been associated with the group. The unprecedented influx had created difficulties in providing the most elementary medical attention; moreover, malnutrition and a deterioration in sanitary conditions were conducive to the rapid spread of infectious disease. There had been an acute shortage of drugs, hospital and other medical equipment, lack of vaccines and other supplies for disease prevention programmes, and completely inadequate facilities for coping with sanitation needs.

44. Since that time there had been a marked increase in the number of refugees, and steps had been taken by the Government of India and the Indian Red Cross to deal with the health situation.

45. One of the most dramatic health problems in the area was cholera, endemic in that part of the world. The disease had increased to serious proportions because of the epidemiologic situation and difficulties in providing adequate sanitation for the refugees. About 11 million doses of cholera vaccine had been sent to the Indian Government from all sources, and WHO thought that the supply should be continued for the time being in case of further outbreaks. Nevertheless, vaccination was not the only or the best means of preventing the spread of cholera, and other action was being taken by the Government of India. The main effort, however, was directed towards improving basic health, sanitation and water facilities.

46. It had been estimated that by 22 June 1971 there had been 25,000 to 30,000 cases of cholera and about 4,000 known deaths in hospitals and medical centres. Because of difficulty in ascertaining the actual cause of death, those figures were probably under-estimates. Owing to poor sanitary conditions and the movements of some refugees from the camps, it was difficult to predict what would happen in the future. A careful watch must therefore be maintained while emergency measures were taken to cope with the current situation.

47. WHO was sending supplies to India for the treatment and prevention of cholera and other medical supplies for

dealing with the general health situation, in response to a request from the Government of India. To date 80 per cent of all supplies requested and agreed had been delivered and were being utilized in the refugee areas. The remaining 20 per cent was essentially rehydration fluid, which was being shipped weekly. The total weight of all the supplies shipped and awaiting shipment was estimated at 400 tons. WHO, in co-operation with the focal point and in close consultation with the Government, was working out further requirements for both immediate and medium-term needs and action was being taken to meet them. Among other things, stocks of antibiotics and antimalarials were being made available to meet possible outbreaks of diphtheria and typhoid and to combat malaria.

48. The Director of the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia had paid a visit to the refugee camps at the end of June with the Secretary of the Ministry of Health to review the health situation and work out the necessary requirements for the immediate future. He had also made available the services of senior WHO staff for constant contact with the Government on all matters related to that problem.

49. In view of the tremendous strain on the Indian transport system, additional means of moving relief goods from the port or airfield of entry to the refugee areas had had to be found. Efforts had been made to obtain vehicles from Indian manufacturers and from stocks available in India. To supplement them, the Government of India had included trucks, jeeps and trailers in the list of material required from abroad. Ambulances, too, were needed for the transport of the sick. The magnitude of the need could be seen from the numbers requested by the Government: 768 trucks, 480 jeeps, 244 trailers and 120 ambulances.

50. All-purpose jeeps, lorries, trailers and small ambulances had been made available by UNICEF and more jeeps were being diverted from existing UNICEF projects in India. Other transport had been provided, by airlift, through the League of Red Cross Societies and voluntary agencies.

51. To bridge the gap between the transport now available and the total requirements, orders had been or would be placed in India, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. As delivery dates varied from late August to early October, ways and means were being urgently considered to find transport already in India and put it into operation for the interim period. The possibility of airlifting some of the most urgently needed transport items, such as small ambulances, was also being investigated.

52. The members of the Council, as indeed all those who had been preoccupied by the emergency, were undoubtedly wondering what was the next step to be taken. He wished to repeat the earnest hope expressed by the Secretary-General in his appeal of 19 May 1971, that the unfortunate people involved would be voluntarily repatriated at the earliest possible time.

53. He had noted in that connexion that the Government of India had stressed the urgency of an early return, since the refugees could not be permanently settled in India. He had also noted the position of the Government of Pakistan

that the refugees should be repatriated. He assured the Council that he was ready to facilitate, in any way possible, the voluntary repatriation of the refugees, which must remain the humanitarian goal that guided the endeavours of all concerned. He was all too aware of the complexities of the situation, but felt that the primary need was to ensure a climate of confidence, one in which the refugee himself would voluntarily wish to return.

54. That was largely why he had visited Pakistan and India in June at the invitation of the two Governments, which he thanked for the opportunity given him to study the situation and share in an exchange of views. He was heartened that certain Governments, in announcing their contributions, had already earmarked funds to promote and facilitate voluntary repatriation, and he was glad to have received the agreement of the Government of Pakistan to the posting of a senior officer in Dacca, whose presence would be useful now, and more so later, when the process of voluntary repatriation gathered momentum. Until then, massive external assistance would be required for the emergency relief operation in India.

55. In his appeal of 16 June 1971 the Secretary-General had pointed out that, although the United Nations humanitarian relief action in East Pakistan was a separate operation, distinct from the programme of assistance to refugees from East Pakistan in India, the two operations were related to the extent that, as conditions in East Pakistan improved, there would be a better possibility of arresting and reversing the flow of refugees. Close co-ordinating links were therefore being maintained between the staff conducting the two operations.

56. The situation was one of stark tragedy, affecting an immense number of human beings and it had to be approached in a humanitarian way. Every effort must be made to alleviate the distress of the refugees. He was grateful for the generosity already demonstrated, but the needs were vast and required further massive assistance from the international community. Since, however, relief in itself was no permanent solution, he must stress once again the critical importance of voluntary repatriation as the best solution to the problem.

57. Mr. SHAHI (Pakistan) said that the magnitude of the problem of the East Pakistan refugees was second only to that of the mass movements of population which had accompanied the birth of India and Pakistan as independent States in 1947. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had said, it was the largest and most difficult emergency action of modern times.

58. His Government was deeply grateful to all those who had responded to the Secretary-General's appeal by pledging assistance to the extent of nearly \$175 million, in cash and kind, for the refugees. The refugees who had moved into India were nationals of his country; hence all those who were making donations or ministering to their needs were entitled to his country's gratitude. It would be difficult adequately to convey his Government's appreciation of the Secretary-General's call for massive assistance to the people of East Pakistan and of the efforts made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the

heads of agencies, non-governmental organizations and individuals to alleviate human misery in a spirit of human solidarity.

59. The High Commissioner had drawn attention to the hope expressed by the Secretary-General that the refugees would be voluntarily repatriated as soon as possible. The President of Pakistan had made several appeals to the refugees to return to their homes and had promised them speedy rehabilitation. His Government had established twenty-one camps along the border for the reception of the displaced persons and had gone so far as to offer a general amnesty, even to military deserters and dissident political leaders. On 18 June the President had reiterated his earlier statements to the effect that there was no question of withholding permission for the refugees to return, irrespective of their caste, creed or religion, and that adequate arrangements had been made to receive them. Again, on 28 June he had expressed his fullest sympathy for the refugees and had repeated his earlier appeals to them to return to their homes. He had also stated that his country would welcome any assistance which the United Nations could extend in facilitating their return to Pakistan.

60. His Government had accepted the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the matter of repatriation and had readily agreed to the stationing at Dacca of the latter's representative, who would be accorded every facility of movement and access to the reception camps. A most important step had been the President's appointment of Dr. Abdul Mutalib Malik as his Special Assistant for Displaced Persons and Relief and Rehabilitation Operations in East Pakistan, with the rank of Cabinet Minister. Dr. Malik would be in a position to take decisions on the spot and to keep the President continuously informed of the progress of the relief and rehabilitation operations. It was therefore clear that there was no difference between Pakistan and any other State Member of the United Nations concerning repatriation, which was regarded by all as the only solution.

61. It was said that fear prevented the refugees from returning to their homes. That was obviously so, but it was necessary to consider the cause of that fear. Bearing in mind the economic and social conditions of the masses living in countries like India and Pakistan, their susceptibility to fear was something which no administration or social scientist could ignore. Panic spread like wildfire. Both India and Pakistan had had the experience of a large-scale flight of people from their homes immediately after the establishment of the two independent States in 1947, although both Governments had undoubtedly done their utmost to prevent such migrations. Both had failed for the simple reason that an elemental fear had been awakened among the minority communities on both sides and people had become immune to the persuasion of their own Government. That being the human reality, compassion and statesmanship demanded that nothing should be done to increase fear among the people who had fled from East Pakistan and that every effort should be made to reassure them and to strengthen their will to go back to their homes and to engage in the rehabilitation of their country.

62. The elimination of fear required the co-operation of the Government of India. Without that co-operation, Pakistan's appeals to the refugees to return could not succeed. The Government of Pakistan had done everything possible to establish a climate of confidence and accepted its responsibility to ensure respect for the life, property and honour of all returning refugees, in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It was to be hoped that no attempt would be made to inject political demands, aimed at the dismemberment of Pakistan, into the problem.

63. Unless India decided to extend its co-operation, in its own interest and in that of Pakistan, the situation could hardly be resolved in the way that human decency required. Co-operation would release India from the burden of providing shelter and food for the people displaced from East Pakistan and, in the long run, would open a constructive dialogue between India and Pakistan of benefit to both countries. The President of Pakistan had publicly expressed his readiness for such a dialogue at any time and in any place. His Government undertook to ensure, with material assistance from the international community, that the refugees were resettled in their homes without any discrimination based on religious or political creed.

64. Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand) emphasized the magnitude of the task undertaken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as the focal point for international assistance to refugees from East Pakistan in India, and the tremendous burden that the sudden influx of nearly 7 million refugees imposed on the Government of India. His delegation was confident that no effort was being spared to cope with the pressing requirements of a situation of great human misery. It had been particularly pleased to hear about the climate of genuine co-operation that existed among the United Nations agencies concerned.

65. Although much had been accomplished, much more remained to be done. The urgent need for additional assistance was all too clear in view of the rapid spreading of epidemics and infectious diseases brought on by inadequate sanitation facilities, malnutrition and the lack of clean water and of medical supplies and facilities. In that connexion, the actions of the specialized agencies and the non-governmental organizations participating in relief efforts were especially commendable. The amount of help required had increased with the continuing flow of refugees across the border and the situation was one from which the international community dared not turn away its eyes.

66. The High Commissioner's responsibilities were crucial in channelling aid to alleviate the human misery that had been caused. His influence had been a restraining one in dealing with issues that had aroused intense feelings on both sides. The New Zealand delegation hoped that the High Commissioner's efforts would further promote an international atmosphere in which the problems that had given rise to the refugee crisis could be dealt with.

67. As he had stated in the debate on agenda item 2 (general discussion of international economic and social policies) (1778th meeting), it would not be fruitful for the Council to consider the reasons why that situation had arisen or the political conditions that needed to exist before

the refugees would be content to return to their homes. Obviously, any action which would impair an already difficult situation should be avoided. New Zealand, for its part, had no wish to become involved in the internal affairs of either India or Pakistan. Nevertheless, the loss of life caused by the refugee crisis was deeply distressing and its implications for the stability of the region were apparent. Very little beyond immediate basic relief could be achieved without the establishment of a climate of confidence in East Pakistan which would allay the fears of those now taking refuge in India. The dictates of humanitarianism extended beyond the provision of food and shelter to the long-term future of the refugees and, particularly, their right to return of their own free will to their homes in conditions which promised them a normal life as citizens participating fully in their society. It was to be hoped that it was that message of humane concern, rather than a blueprint for a solution that did not lie within the Council's competence, which would emerge from the discussion.

68. The New Zealand delegation endorsed the High Commissioner's view of the critical importance of voluntary repatriation as the best solution to the problem. The fulfilment of that humanitarian purpose was dependent on the reduction of tension between India and Pakistan, and it was clear that the essential problems arising out of the refugee crisis were not easy to solve. No country outside the region was in a position to offer suggestions on the nature of a solution, but the Council could focus attention on the need for an atmosphere of negotiation and compromise and for a longer-term settlement. If the international community did not face up to the problem now, it would have to do so later when the problem would have assumed even greater dimensions.

69. New Zealand commended the efforts of the High Commissioner and assured him of its full support in his continuing endeavours to obtain the welfare and rehabilitation of the East Pakistan refugees.

70. Mr. KITTANI (Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs), said that he wished to inform the Council of the efforts of the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to provide humanitarian assistance to East Pakistan.

71. On 22 April 1971 the Secretary-General had sent a letter to the President of Pakistan expressing his great concern at the situation in East Pakistan and offering all possible assistance, on behalf of the United Nations system of organizations, to help the Government of Pakistan in its task of bringing urgently needed relief to the population of East Pakistan. That offer had been accepted and an assessment of relief requirements had been communicated to the United Nations. On 19 May the Secretary-General had made an appeal for international assistance to alleviate the serious hardships and suffering of the sizeable and continuing influx of refugees from East Pakistan to India. Those two efforts of international assistance were related, inasmuch as the improvement of conditions in East Pakistan would help to arrest and reverse the flow of refugees into India.

72. In early June he had travelled to Pakistan on behalf of the Secretary-General for consultations with the Government concerning the modalities of international humanitarian help for East Pakistan. There had been full agreement on the manner in which the relief operations should be organized, and the President of Pakistan had shared the Secretary-General's concern that the United Nations should be in a position to assure the international community as a whole and individual donors that all relief assistance from and through the United Nations system would reach its intended destination — the people of East Pakistan. Following that agreement, the Secretary-General had designated a Representative in East Pakistan to act as the focal point for ensuring co-ordination of the work of the agencies and programmes of the United Nations family which would provide assistance in their respective fields. At the same time, a counterpart Pakistan Government inter-departmental committee had been established and the two groups had been working closely together since then in planning and organizing relief operations. On 18 June the Secretary-General had appointed a Headquarters Co-ordinator within the framework of the Office for Inter-Agency Affairs for international humanitarian assistance from and through the United Nations to East Pakistan, and an Inter-Agency Working Group on humanitarian assistance to East Pakistan had recently been set up at Geneva to co-ordinate relief efforts. On 16 June the Secretary-General had issued an appeal to Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, private institutions and donors for contributions in cash or in kind to alleviate the suffering which had befallen the population of East Pakistan.

73. The basic framework for the provision of relief assistance from and through the United Nations had thus been established and a sustained effort had been made, in co-operation with the Government, to evaluate the nature and extent of the humanitarian assistance required. Details of the food, transport and health conditions prevailing in East Pakistan, as also an indication of the assistance required, were to be found in a press release which had just been issued.

74. The people of East Pakistan had been affected by a major cyclone and floods that had struck the delta area in November 1970 and by the hardships resulting from the civil disturbances beginning in March 1971. There had been considerable population movements to rural areas, causing incalculable loss of crops and purchasing power and disruption of transport. The main problem appeared to be the distribution of food and other relief supplies. The Government of Pakistan was undertaking major efforts to make the port at Chittagong fully operational and efficient, but it was clear that water transport rather than rail and road facilities would have to be relied on for food and relief supplies.

75. Work was continuing on the planning and organization of a large-scale international humanitarian effort in East Pakistan. The United Nations estimate of food stocks and funding required as a first step indicated that an initial sum of \$28,200,000 was needed at the present time.

76. The Executive Director of WFP was awaiting information from the FAO/WFP team now in East Pakistan before deciding whether to recommend that further emergency food aid should be provided. According to the FAO's senior agricultural economist deputed to Dacca, disruption of transport was still a limiting factor and crop estimates were difficult. There were great fears for nutrition and resulting health problems.

77. A WHO team had completed an initial survey of current and anticipated medical problems, specific plans had been drawn up for prevention of major diseases, for medical care and settlement of sanitation problems, and longer-term plans and estimates of needs were now being prepared in co-operation with the Government.

78. The UNICEF Office in Dacca had studied the possibilities of organizing and providing supplies for food distribution among pre-school and young school children. It was hoped to reach at least 25 per cent of all primary schools and to provide about 1,200,000 young children with a supplementary ration of about 100 grammes per day of pre-cooked high-protein children's food. Concurrently with the special feeding programme, UNICEF had agreed to accelerate currently-aided projects in East Pakistan, particularly in the field of health, rural water supplies and education. Additional assistance might also be required for the displaced persons in the country and, subsequently, for refugees returning from India.

79. Other efforts included those of private organizations such as the League of Red Cross Societies and CARE.

80. Although the humanitarian relief operation in East Pakistan was still largely at the assessment and planning stage, all estimates of assistance requirements pointed to the urgency of mobilizing substantial external resources for relief action. He wished to convey the Secretary-General's deep appreciation of the splendid manner in which all United Nations programmes and agencies had responded to the challenge and acted in concert.

81. Mr. McCARTHY (United Kingdom) said that the High Commissioner's statement had brought home with new force the extent of a human tragedy that was virtually unprecedented in scale. Although a political solution must emerge if the refugee problem was to be ended, the Council should concentrate on the humanitarian issues.

82. As soon as the dimensions of the refugee problem had become apparent, the United Kingdom had realized that the burden was too great for India alone to support and that it would be right for the United Nations to assume a central role in the international action required. It had therefore entirely approved the decision to designate the High Commissioner as the focal point for the relief effort and had welcomed the action taken on behalf of the Secretary-General by the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs on other aspects of the complex and tragic events which the Council was discussing.

83. The United Kingdom Government had matched its full support for a relief effort directed by the United Nations by its own actions. On the day following the Secretary-General's appeal of 19 May, it had announced its

readiness to contribute £1 million (\$2.4 million) to the relief effort in India through the focal point. Since then, further contributions had been made, bringing the total to £8.25 million (\$19.8 million) which had been either given directly to the focal point or channelled through it. In addition, voluntary societies in the United Kingdom had collected more than £1 million. In response to the separate appeal of the Secretary-General, the United Kingdom had announced on 14 July that it was providing a further £1 million for relief in East Pakistan. Other countries, of course, had contributed to United Nations relief efforts, and the extent to which people in many countries had been moved by the needs of the millions of refugees was demonstrated by the fact that donations had been received from countries which themselves had pressing development needs.

84. The United Kingdom would continue to support United Nations relief efforts in ways consistent with the requirements established by the focal point. It was ready to give the most sympathetic attention to any request for increased United Nations facilities essential to the task and hoped that other Governments would do likewise. The problems posed by the refugee situation were immense and the Council should do all it could to support and, where necessary strengthen, the relief effort. That was a task which humanity would not allow it to shirk.

85. Mr. ZAGORIN (United States of America) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the manner in which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs had assumed their onerous tasks. The High Commissioner's willingness to serve as the focal point for the channelling and co-ordination of aid to refugees in India and the parallel effort in East Pakistan illustrated the possibility of establishing, on a permanent basis, a focal point for all relief which might be furnished through the United Nations in the event of future natural or man-made disasters. That possibility would be discussed in greater detail under agenda item 14 (Assistance in cases of natural disaster).

86. The United States Government had been struck by the magnitude of the requirements for aid to almost 7 million refugees from Pakistan in India in the basic matters of housing, feeding and elementary health. It had noted, in particular, the attitude of restraint and compassion with which the Government of India was reacting to the problems resulting from the enormous influx of refugees into its territory. Between May and July 1971, the United States Government had furnished \$30,500,000 in cash and \$40,000,000 in kind through the focal point as an expression of its sense of responsibility to the world community and its willingness to help to the greatest extent possible. It had also contributed to United Nations relief efforts in East Pakistan. Failure to deal effectively with a disaster of the greatest magnitude would have complex and tragic consequences; the obligation of other members of the United Nations family to make immediate contributions to the focal point to help carry the staggering burden was therefore a matter of the greatest urgency. The United States would continue to give its full support to inter-

national humanitarian relief assistance both for the refugees in India and for the emergency situation in East Pakistan. It hoped that there would be restraint on both sides in order to create conditions conducive to the refugees' repatriation.

87. Mr. KRISHNAN (Observer for India) speaking under rule 75 of the rules of procedure, said that in April 1971, when his Government had first approached the United Nations for assistance to meet the pressing needs of the refugees, they had numbered only half a million. That number had increased to 6.3 million by the end of June and some 40,000 to 60,000 people were still arriving each day. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had said, their number was at present nearly 7 million, or more than the national populations of over half the States Members of the United Nations. Never before in history had there been such a mass exodus in so short a period.

88. Ever since the beginning of the tragic events in East Pakistan, the Indian Government had brought the seriousness of the developing situation to the notice of the world community. The grave violation of human rights and fundamental and democratic freedoms was resulting in a reign of terror and the consequential exodus of millions of men, women and children uprooted from their homes in search of security and shelter. That was a matter of common knowledge and the Council had considered that aspect of the matter during its fiftieth session. It was now faced with a grave economic and social situation and the desperate need to remedy it. The references to the issue made by a number of delegations and the Council's decision to devote a separate meeting to hearing a statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and considering the problem were evidence of the deep concern of the international community about the fate of those unfortunate millions. The crying need was not merely for sympathy and immediate relief but for positive help in finding an enduring solution through which they would be able to reshape their future in a climate devoid of fear and uncertainty which would promote economic, social and political opportunities. They were looking in particular to the United Nations for such help.

89. People were fleeing not just because of the lack of food or water but because of a well-founded fear of being the victims of persecution on ethnological, religious or political grounds. Graphic accounts of the conditions which had compelled the refugees to flee had been given not only by correspondents of many leading world newspapers, including one from West Pakistan, but also confirmed by the UNHCR team which had visited India in early May and had met refugees of all types and ages and by teams of parliamentarians and other independent witnesses from several countries who had visited the area in recent weeks.

90. The Council must appreciate that the first essential element in any solution of the problem was that the exodus must cease. The international community should impress upon the Government of Pakistan the need to take urgent steps to instil confidence in the population so that they did not continue to flee in panic. The Pakistan representative had conceded that it was fear that prevented the refugees from going back - presumably the same fear which had

impelled them to flee. He had then explained that the people both in India and in Pakistan were susceptible to fear and that fear spread fast. That seemed to be an over-simplification. Their sub-continent had had more than its share of natural disasters over the centuries, yet they had not resulted in such mass movements. The only conclusion to be drawn was not that fear was inherent in the social and economic environment in the sub-continent and people were helpless against it, but that fear was born out of the political situation prevailing in that region. A ruthless policy of repression was not exactly the way one could set about restoring normality or creating confidence among the civilian population, and yet, strangely enough, that policy was still being practised, while the international community was being assured that conditions had returned to normal.

91. The second essential element in a lasting solution, which had been universally recognized, even by the representative of Pakistan, was that refugees should return in peace and security to their homes as early as possible. The refugees must return of their own free will and the only way in which they could be encouraged to do so was by the creation of suitable conditions in East Pakistan.

92. The representative of Pakistan had stated that twenty-one reception camps had been set up on the Pakistan side of the border. The movement of refugees from camps on one side of the border to the other was, however, no solution. What they wanted was permanent re-settlement in their own homes.

93. In his statement in the Council on 9 July, the representative of Pakistan had referred to the four statements by his President declaring amnesty and appealing to all refugees to return. He had requested the Government of India to bring those appeals to the notice of the refugees in India. The fact that over 3 million more refugees had crossed into India since then showed that those appeals had resulted in causing even greater panic. Refugees could hardly be expected to return when thousands were pouring across the frontier every day because life where they were had become unbearable and dangerous.

94. The IBRD mission which had made an extensive tour of East Pakistan had reported that the situation there was far from normal and there was no sign of any return to normality. The report said that people remained afraid and untrusting and that it was unlikely that economic pressures strong enough to overcome that reserve could or would be generated. There could be no return to normality until there was a drastic reduction in the visibility and preferably even the presence of the military and until normal civilian administration was re-established in East Pakistan.

95. A United Kingdom parliamentary delegation had visited the region towards the end of June and Mr. Prentice, one of its members, had said that there was no normality, there was complete army rule there and that local people were suffering from fear and an army complex. It was clear that the situation was still deteriorating.

96. The representative of Pakistan had referred to his Government's adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants and assured the Council that it would fully respect all human rights,

including security of life, property and honour. Yet in a note of protest on 18 June 1971, the Indian Government had brought to the notice of the Pakistan Government reports of the destruction of houses and title deeds belonging to the refugees and of the distribution of their land to others, and had pointed out that such measures would mean destitution for numbers of refugees who returned and would create another vast humanitarian problem.

97. Speaking of the general amnesty, the representative of Pakistan had said that every deserving case would be ministered to, which meant that the amnesty was not universally applicable. At the fiftieth session of the Council, he had denounced the refugees, mainly women, children aged and wounded, as a band of criminals and saboteurs. He had also said that only "*bona fide*" refugees would be permitted to return. Such phrases seemed to confirm the widely felt suspicion that his Government had not really declared a general amnesty. In his statement at the present meeting, he had tried to minimize the effects of his earlier remarks by seeking to present the amnesty as a truly general pardon. Those inconsistent and often contradictory statements made by the highest authorities could hardly inspire confidence in those who might wish to return. The only way to encourage them to return was to give credible guarantees for their future safety and well-being.

98. The only truly humanitarian and lasting solution to the problem lay in a viable political settlement which would assure the civilian population the free and peaceful exercise of their fundamental economic and social rights, so that they could be confident that their legitimate social, economic and political aspirations would be recognized and that military rule would give way to a truly representative and democratic rule for which they had already voted. In his statement on 28 June 1971, the President of Pakistan himself had said that normality could only return to a country without full participation of the people in its administration. That could surely be brought about only by transferring power to the already elected representatives of East Pakistan. Any humanitarian solution to the problem therefore required the evolution of such a long-term political framework in which the legitimate aspirations of the people concerned could be fully satisfied.

99. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was well aware of the complexity as well as the inexorable logic of the situation. At a press conference in New York in June 1971, he had said that while the building of reception centres and the declaration of an amnesty were excellent, only a political solution which gave them confidence in the future would encourage the refugees to return. In his statement at the present meeting he had said that the need was to ensure a climate of confidence, in which the refugee himself would wish voluntarily to be repatriated.

100. India had borne the major burden of the sudden influx of refugees. The magnitude of the continuing influx had already created an intolerable situation in India from the economic, social, security and other points of view. Pakistan should not be allowed to seek solutions to its own political and other problems at the expense of India and on

Indian soil. The problem of the early repatriation of refugees must be tackled in earnest. The problem concerned not only Pakistan but also the internal affairs of India and was indeed a matter of international concern because it might have grave effects on peace and stability in the area.

101. With regard to the immediate problem of aid and assistance for the refugees, the High Commissioner had given a detailed account of the relief effort being organized under United Nations auspices. The Council now had a clear picture of the extent and type of relief effort required. The Indian Government was deeply grateful to the international community for their sympathetic response to the pressing needs of the refugees and appreciated the aid still being received on a bilateral basis, through multilateral channels, through the United Nations system, from various Governments and from public and private humanitarian agencies.

102. It had been widely recognized that the problem was one of the greatest challenges which the world had ever faced in the field of humanitarian assistance. While India was doing the utmost within its resources — in the current year's budget 30 per cent of the additional tax burden on its people was for relief to the refugees — its capacity was not unlimited. In the States bordering on East Bengal, which were bearing the main brunt of the inflow, schools had been closed to provide shelter for the refugees. Health resources had been stretched to breaking point and there were acute shortages of transport, tentage, food and medicine. Development programmes had been adversely affected and almost the entire resources of local administrations were concentrated on organizational and other matters pertaining to refugees. In certain border villages, the number of refugees exceeded the population of the village itself. Hospitals were brimming with sick and wounded refugees and large-scale preventive measures had had to be taken. The world was aware of the heavy death toll from the cholera epidemic, added to which was the imminent danger of other epidemics such as diphtheria breaking out in the refugee camps and spreading fast among the local population.

103. Although the response of the international community had been sympathetic and encouraging, it had not been adequate to cope with the relief effort needed. When the UNHCR team had visited India in May 1971, it had made an estimate of \$175 million for 3 million refugees over the next six months. In the context of the further heavy influx of refugees, the latest estimate for 6 million refugees for six months was \$400 million — and there were now nearly 7 million refugees. The help offered so far, both through the United Nations and on a bilateral basis, amounted to only \$160.5 million. His delegation urged the Council to issue a strong appeal to all States Members of the United Nations to contribute further substantial amounts so that the minimum needs of the refugees could be attended to.

104. While the Indian and the international community as a whole continued to do their utmost for the relief of the refugees, the flow of relief could not be perennial or permanent. Those unhappy people should not be compelled

to live on charity in a foreign land. They had the right to return to their homes and it was the moral duty of the international community to ensure that they were able to do so soon.

105. While conceding that the refugees should return to their homeland, the representative of Pakistan had extended himself on the co-operation that his Government expected from the Government of India. He had pointed out that susceptibility to fear was endemic and had said that that fear could only be eliminated with the co-operation of the Indian Government and that without such co-operation it would be impossible for his Government to succeed in its endeavours to persuade the refugees to return.

106. The Indian Government was certainly ready to co-operate in the physical arrangements required to move refugees back across the frontier to their homeland. It could, however, do little to eliminate the fear that had been implanted in the minds of those unfortunate millions by actions which the Pakistan Government itself had taken and was still taking. The Indian delegation agreed that the will of the refugees to go back should be strengthened but the initiative for that must come from the rulers of Pakistan through the adoption of practical measures to build confidence rather than vague appeals and declarations.

107. The representative of Pakistan had said that no attempt should be made to inject political demands, aimed at the dismemberment of Pakistan, into the problem. In so saying he had seemed to imply that the Indian Government was in some way seeking such dismemberment. By making such a remark it was he who was injecting a political element into the discussion of a vast humanitarian problem. The Prime Minister of India had said, as early as 27 March 1971, that something new had happened in East Bengal, where the entire people had taken an action almost unanimously. India had welcomed that action, not because it wanted any interference in the affairs of a neighbouring State but because of the values for which it had always stood and because it felt that the action would help to create an entirely new situation, a situation which would strengthen Pakistan and the opportunity for which had been lost. That statement put the matter in its right perspective. If there was any danger of dismemberment of Pakistan, that was the consequence of the unwise and suicidal policies followed by its Government.

108. He would not have dealt with that aspect of the matter if the representative of Pakistan had not raised that political issue. The latter had gone even further in appealing for co-operation and had seen fit to offer the Indian Government gratuitous advice on what was in its short and long-term interests in order to establish a better climate on the sub-continent. The current session of the Council was not, however, the proper forum in which to discuss such issues. He would not offer the Pakistan representative advice, but would urge him to ponder the consequences of his Government's action and consider whether it would not be in Pakistan's interest to revise its policy.

109. To sum up, the continuing inflow of millions of refugees from East Pakistan imposed a severe burden on

India, and presented a threat to peace and stability in the area. The plight of the refugees should be a matter of grave and urgent concern to the international community. All efforts should therefore be made to bring the flow of refugees to a halt. Every endeavour should be made to expedite the voluntary return of the refugees to their own homes in conditions of freedom and security. Normal conditions should be restored in order to guarantee to all concerned the free exercise in full freedom of their economic and social rights. The international community had a responsibility towards the refugees and should spare no effort to bring about the above-mentioned objectives by making the Government of Pakistan change its present policies. Meanwhile, the international community and the United Nations system should do everything to increase the flow of assistance to the refugees.

110. He urged the members of the Council to ponder those points and he sincerely hoped that, after due deliberation, the Council might be able to adopt a positive and constructive decision along those lines.

111. Mr. HAMBRO (Norway) said that he had been specifically instructed by his Government to express its serious concern about the recent events in the Indian sub-continent and its deep sympathy with the tragic situation of the refugees. His Government appealed to the parties directly concerned to make every effort to establish the necessary conditions to prevent any further increase in the influx of refugees into India and to induce those that had already crossed the border to return to their homeland.

112. He further expressed his Government's appreciation of the work done by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in co-ordinating the relief activities of the United Nations system on the present occasion.

113. M. FERNAND-LAURENT (France) said that the victims of a man-made disaster deserved as much sympathy and assistance as the victims of a natural disaster. That was why he had listened with equal interest to the oral reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs. His delegation congratulated the Standing Inter-agency Consultation Unit on its excellent work in co-ordinating the humanitarian activities of all the organizations in the United Nations system for the benefit of the refugees from East Pakistan. His delegation was happy to note that all the speakers at the present meeting had agreed that the final objective to be sought was the repatriation of the refugees, but he pointed out that that would not be a definitive solution unless at the same time the influx of refugees into India was brought to an end. In the mean time, it was the moral duty of the United Nations to supply material assistance to the refugees who had already crossed the border. His Government had earmarked 2.5 to 10 million francs for that purpose, most of which would be channelled through the focal point and other United Nations bodies. His Government did not wish to see the Standing Inter-agency Consultation Group transformed into a permanent aid organ. Therefore, he hoped that Governments would

give the High Commissioner and his representatives on the spot every facility in the accomplishment of his mission and would help to establish the climate of confidence which was a prerequisite for the return of the refugees to their own land.

114. Mr. MOJSOV (Yugoslavia) congratulated the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on his comprehensive account of the tragic situation of the refugees from Pakistan and of the measures undertaken to assist them. The situation was without precedent in the recent past. The cost of shelter, food and medical care for the more than 6 million refugees was far too large to be borne by the Indian States bordering on East Pakistan. The enormous outlays that India was making to help the refugees, to the detriment of its own economic and social development, were not enough to meet the needs. While the material expenditure could be reduced to some extent by the involvement of the whole international community, the question of how to remedy or mitigate the social and political consequences of such a situation remained. His Government was deeply concerned about the tragic events and felt convinced that the only true and humane solution, and one that would at the same time be in the best interests of both India and Pakistan, would be to make it possible for the refugees to return to their homes.

115. His delegation hoped that the High Commissioner would use all his experience and authority to achieve that solution. It was the duty of the international community to do everything it could to enable the refugees to return. His Government fully supported the High Commissioner in his efforts to co-ordinate the assistance given by the United Nations system and it urged the Council and all bodies inside and outside the United Nations system to lend their support in that vast and complex task.

116. Mr. SZARKA (Hungary) said that his Government had been following the tragic situation in Pakistan and India closely. It was deeply concerned about the plight of the refugees and applauded the great efforts made by the Government of India to assist them.

117. The problem was a delicate one in view of its political implications, and the material assistance which was being given represented only one facet of the over-all solution that must be found. Ultimately, the only viable solution would be to create the necessary conditions to enable the refugees to return to their homeland. In the meantime, however, it was necessary to help the refugees to survive. He therefore appealed to the international community to redouble its efforts to lend assistance, which had not been on a large enough scale so far.

118. Mr. LOVEDAY (Observer for Australia), speaking under rule 75 of the rules of procedure, said that he associated his country with the concern and sympathy that had been expressed over the tragic situation of the refugees in India, and congratulated the High Commissioner on the work of co-ordination performed by his Office as the focal point for all relief activities within the United Nations system. He also congratulated the United Nations bodies

concerned on the high level of co-operation they had achieved.

119. His Government had been closely following the developments in India and was deeply disturbed by the economic and social disruption that had been caused. More than \$1 million of public assistance had already been given in addition to nearly \$1 million from private sources, all of which had been channelled through the Government of India, in co-operation with UNHCR. Australia would remain in contact with the focal point in order to keep its assistance in line with the changing needs of the situation. With the co-operation of the international community, the immediate crisis could be overcome and the long-term work of rehabilitation and reconstruction begun.

120. Mr. PATHMARAJAH (Ceylon) said that the High Commissioner had rightly described the influx of refugees from East Pakistan into India as one of the major population movements of modern history. Their influx had placed a tremendous strain on the Government of India. His delegation deeply sympathized with that Government in its difficulties and agreed that the refugee problem was an international responsibility, because of its humanitarian aspects and because it involved relations between neighbouring States and therefore had implications for world peace.

121. The assistance given by his Government would take the form of some \$400,000 worth of clothing. Ceylon was making that contribution despite its own economic difficulties, in the conviction that the situation of the refugees required prompt and immediate assistance. His delegation hoped that more countries, whether rich or poor, developed or developing, would rally to the Secretary-General's appeal for aid.

122. Mr. CARANICAS (Greece) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the steps being taken by the United Nations to help the refugees from East Pakistan. It was the duty of the Council to consider the problem without delay. The number of refugees had already reached the staggering figure of nearly 7 million. He felt sure, however, that with the generous support of Governments, organizations and private sources the immediate crisis could be overcome and once that had been done it would be possible to attack the roots of the problem, for which a long-term solution was needed. The problem was no longer an internal affair of India and Pakistan, for its political implications made it a matter of concern to the whole international community. Nevertheless, he appealed to the Council not to allow political overtones to creep into the discussion, and to the delegation of Pakistan not to renew the unproductive dialogue that it had held at the fiftieth session of the Council with the Indian delegation.

123. His delegation felt that the time was not ripe for a discussion of the voluntary repatriation of the refugees, since people were still streaming across the border into India. The necessary conditions for their return had first to be created by the Government of Pakistan itself, although the United Nations would offer its full co-operation in that

task. For the time being, therefore, the Council should focus on the humanitarian aspects of the problem and content itself with remedying the emergency situation that existed along India's eastern frontier. The essential thing was to amass the necessary relief supplies. He therefore hoped that the Secretary-General would renew his appeal to Governments, organizations and private sources to contribute as much as they could in a spirit of international solidarity.

124. Mr. NESTERENKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the informative statements of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs had shown that the new international problem of the refugees in India who had fled in connexion with events in Pakistan was even more serious than had at first been thought. Many millions of people were affected and their numbers were constantly increasing. His Government and people were no less concerned that those of other countries at the bloodshed and suffering caused by the deteriorating situation; they were also concerned that the problem was causing tension between India and Pakistan and increasing the danger of a conflict in that part of Asia.

125. The USSR was playing its part in providing assistance for the refugees; its gifts included 50,000 tons of rice and two aircraft. The Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent had provided considerable quantities of foodstuffs, medicaments and other supplies. His Government was well aware, however, that interim measures could not provide a radical solution to the problem. The huge problem of caring for such a gigantic concourse of refugees would impose a heavy burden on the United Nations, which alone could not solve the problem. There appeared to be general agreement among Governments, including the Government of Pakistan, that any solution should be based on the voluntary repatriation of the refugees. All who cherished humanitarian principles should strive to create the conditions so urgently needed which would enable the refugees to return home to a life of peace, honest toil and guarantees of personal security.

126. His Government was convinced that only a peaceful solution to the problems dividing India and Pakistan would be in the interests of both peoples and serve the cause of peace in that area. Any other course would play into the hands of those external and internal forces which for mercenary motives were working against both India and Pakistan. His Government's position had been made clear in a number of pronouncements by Soviet leaders. For example, in April 1971 President Podgorny had written to the President of Pakistan that a peaceful political settlement would be in the interests of the whole Pakistan people and of peace in the area, and in June the Prime Minister, Mr. Kosygin, in an address in Moscow had urged the leaders of Pakistan to solve the problem on the basis of humanitarian principles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the well-being of the peoples of Pakistan and India. The Government and people of the USSR sincerely desired peace and justice in East Pakistan and the speediest

possible solution to the grave problem of its refugees on Indian soil.

127. Mr. SMOQUINA (Italy) associated his delegation with the profound concern that had been expressed about the sufferings of the Pakistan refugees. The unprecedented problem with which the international community was faced called for rapid and concerted action on a vast scale. He thanked the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs for the picture they had given of the tragic situation, and expressed his Government's deep appreciation of the efforts that had already been made to help the refugees.

128. Italy had responded to the Secretary-General's appeal by giving aid in both cash and kind through the Government and the Italian Red Cross. Nevertheless, while aid should continue to be given, and if possible on an even greater scale, to relieve the sufferings of the refugees, the true solution to the problem lay in the return of the refugees to their homeland. The international community should therefore take action on two fronts: it should induce the refugees to return and at the same time it should ensure that the necessary conditions were created for them to do so in full confidence. His Government hoped that the parties most directly concerned would agree to do all that they could to make that possible.

129. Mr. ASANTE (Ghana) said that his delegation agreed that the ultimate aim of the United Nations should be the return of the refugees to their homeland and it hoped that the refugee problem would not contribute to the deterioration of relations between India and Pakistan. It considered that the Council should concern itself only with the humanitarian aspect of the problem.

130. Mr. SAYAH (Tunisia) said that the statements by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and by the Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs had made the Council even more fully aware of the seriousness of the situation that had developed with the flow of refugees from East Pakistan.

131. The Government of Tunisia was not in a position to make a large contribution to the assistance efforts but it joined with all other Governments represented in the Council in appealing for a dispassionate view of the problem. His Government was of the opinion that the appropriate conditions had to be created in order to find a definitive solution to the problem. In that regard the discussions that had taken place were encouraging, and it could be hoped that there was a possibility for voluntary repatriation of the refugees.

132. M. CHAMMAS (Lebanon) said that the High Commissioner's assessment of the needs of the refugees should prompt all States to give every possible assistance to enable him to discharge his responsibilities. His delegation expressed the hope that the international community would unite in helping the High Commissioner to create the appropriate conditions for coping with the vast humanitarian problem of the plight of the refugees.

133. Mr. SHAHI (Pakistan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it would have pleased him to see an end to the present discussion without having to make another statement, but it was his duty to his Government not to leave the serious allegations by the observer for India unanswered.

134. He had never intended to inject political elements into the discussion. He had wished, however, to emphasize that the repatriation of the refugees could not be brought about through the efforts of the Pakistan Government alone. He had also explained that steps had been taken by his Government to create a climate of confidence, but unfortunately the observer for India had taken exception to his description of the Pakistan efforts and had gone on to speak of serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms that had taken place and were taking place in East Pakistan. That in itself was an injection of a serious political element into the discussion.

135. He wished to try to allay the fears of the observer for India and to remove some of the erroneous impressions that that representative seemed to have gathered from his previous statement. Firstly, the observer for India had said that the Government of India had received reports of the destruction of property, documents and title deeds belonging to members of the minority community which had left East Pakistan and that the Indian Government had protested to the Pakistan Government in that connexion. He wished to assure the observer for India that there was no truth whatsoever in those allegations. There had been no attempt on the part of any Pakistan authorities to destroy such documents and property. There was a small army in East Pakistan and it had been involved only in meeting the threat of secession. It was not concerned with the destruction of documents and property. If there had been any instances in which anti-social elements had taken advantage of the situation to carry out such crimes, he was sure that the Pakistan Government would have taken remedial action.

136. Secondly, the observer for India had said that it was not enough that the refugees should be moved from camps in India to reception camps in East Pakistan. He wished to assure the observer for India that the reception camps in East Pakistan had been established in order to provide immediate relief for the refugees. The Pakistan Government did not anticipate that the returning refugees would stay for any length of time in the reception camps, which would rather be transit camps where they could rest on the way back to their homes.

137. The observer for India seemed to have some misconceptions about the question of general amnesty. The Government of Pakistan had considerably enlarged the categories of people to whom the amnesty would apply. The only exception was for those against whom evidence of crimes existed. The Pakistan army had been wrongly charged with crimes of genocide that had been carried out by secessionist elements before the intervention of the Pakistan army on 25 March 1971. If the Pakistan Government had unmistakable evidence against persons who were responsible for those massacres, surely it was only right that

the general amnesty should not apply to them. The vast majority of the refugees, however, would be entitled to the benefits of amnesty. When he had said that the Pakistan Government owed no apology to certain people who had been denied amnesty, he had not been referring to the refugees, but rather to the secessionist elements who had carried out the armed uprising against the Pakistan Government. He therefore thought that, by declaring a general amnesty, his Government was doing its utmost to create a climate of confidence and he appealed to the observer for India not to belittle the efforts of the Pakistan Government.

138. He agreed with the observer for India that Pakistan could not be allowed to seek a solution of its problems at India's expense. Pakistan had appealed to India for co-operation precisely because it wished to be able to solve its own problems. According to the Government of India, fear would be removed when power in East Pakistan was transferred to the elected representatives of the people, and that was precisely what the President of Pakistan had said he would do. Transfer of power, however, was an exclusively internal matter that concerned only the Government of Pakistan. By way of comparison, he did not think that the Government of India would like Pakistan to tell it how power should be transferred to certain representatives of the people against whom military action had been taken by the Government of India. By requesting the international community to demand the return of secessionist elements to power in East Pakistan, the Government of India was interfering in the territorial sovereignty of Pakistan. It was not right that India should be able to dictate a political settlement in East Pakistan and a transfer of power to representatives of the people who had tried to bring about secession through armed uprising. He doubted whether other States Members of the United Nations would be prepared to countenance such gratuitous advice on the part of the Government of India.

139. He regretted that the observer for India had construed the statement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as justifying the thesis of the Government of India. He had feared that the representative of India would so construe that statement in order to use it for purposes of political exploitation against the Government of Pakistan. That did great damage not only to the interests of the human beings involved but also to the integrity of the United Nations and to the non-partisan character of the relief campaign launched under the auspices of the Organization. He stressed that, in stating those facts, he was not defending any controversial position or evading any issues on Pakistan's behalf. He was simply appealing for scrupulous adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and for due respect for the division of functions among the organs of the United Nations, including the Secretariat. He hoped that all United Nations organs would remain strictly within the framework of their respective competence and would adopt no position that would exceed their specific mandates.

140. With regard to the reasons why the refugees did not want to return to East Pakistan, his delegation was of the opinion that it was unrealistic to claim that poor people

would condemn themselves to homelessness and destitution because of their aversion to a particular system of government. The exodus of the refugees could be partly explained by the psychological conditions generated by the exaggerated reports of killings in East Pakistan and by fear of large-scale military actions in the border area between India and East Pakistan. Both of those factors were of such a nature that they could not be eliminated by the efforts of the Pakistan Government alone.

141. He was fully aware of the grim stories published in the world press, to which the observer for India had referred. The observer for India had also mentioned Mr. Prentice, a British Member of Parliament. There were other Members of Parliament, however, who were opposed to Mr. Prentice and there was no reason why their testimonies should be discounted. He recalled that Mr. Prentice had been a signatory to an advertisement in *The Times* of London which had urged the United Kingdom Government to recognize Bangla Desh. After identifying himself as a promoter of secession in Pakistan, Mr. Prentice could hardly be expected to be objective, but he had nevertheless been welcomed as an observer in East Pakistan.

142. The observer for India had also referred to the report of the IBRD mission, which had been released to the press along with the personal impressions and observations of an official of IBRD. The impressions of other officials of the IBRD mission had not been released. Responsible leaders of East Pakistan had visited the same places as the IBRD official and had told a different story from his. Those leaders had written a letter to the President of the World Bank expressing surprise and resentment at the publication of such personal impressions. The members of the IBRD team, who had been in East Pakistan from 31 May to 11 June 1971, had said that the situation in East Pakistan was worsening but they had not stated their reasons for such an opinion. They had deliberately neglected to mention that it was worsening because incursions into East Pakistan were taking place from Indian sanctuaries. The report of the IBRD mission had stated that the Pakistan army in East Pakistan should be reduced in size in order to increase confidence. The Pakistan Government would be happy to be able to recall its army from East Pakistan, but the difficulty was that the borders would then be left wide open to raids from Indian territory.

143. With regard to the assertion of the observer for India that his Government had done nothing to create fear in the minds of the East Pakistan refugees, he had earlier referred to reports of killings that had taken place before the Pakistan army had moved into action, and which had been deliberately ignored by the world press. What had happened was that, when the secessionist elements had defied the authority of the Government of Pakistan and had proclaimed *de facto* separation by taking over the administration of the provinces of East Pakistan, all the criminal elements in the East Pakistan gaols had been released and had carried out many of the destructive activities and massacres that had later been blamed on the Pakistan army. Those facts had been distorted in Indian newspaper reports, and if the refugees were told day in and day out about

reports of genocide in East Pakistan, that was hardly an encouragement to them to return to their homes. It should be possible for the Government of India, which had an intimate and direct knowledge of social and economic conditions and of the psychology of the people of East Pakistan, to adopt a more responsible attitude than that of fabricating and disseminating wild rumours and breeding fear among the people who had fled East Pakistan. Responsible leadership in India should have realized that all the main ingredients of the explosive mixture in East Pakistan were present also in India. It should have realized how dangerous it was to encourage fanatical hatred between ethnic and linguistic groups and how such hatred could undermine the fabric of national existence. It should have been mindful of the dangers of disintegration and division from which few multilingual or multiracial States were immune. If ever there was a situation in which one Government should have understood the difficulties of another Government, it was the situation in East Pakistan. Responsible leadership in India should have refused to exploit that situation, which could have been contained if it had not been aggravated by ceaseless interference from India. If India would revise its policies, there was no doubt that the uprooted peoples of East Pakistan would speedily return to their homes.

144. Fear was responsible for the fact that the refugees did not want to return to their homes. Not only were they being told by the Government of India that it was dangerous for them to return, but their fear had been greatly aggravated by the fact that, by its actions, the Government of India was converting the border between East Pakistan and India into an arena of armed confrontation, thus making it impossible for the displaced persons to contemplate a return to their homes. India had massed troops on the East Pakistan border, when it had no reason to believe that Pakistan was preparing for an invasion of Indian territory. It was thus apparent that the two factors that prevented the solution of the problem of the East Pakistan refugees had not been sought by Pakistan and the elimination of those factors required constructive co-operation on the part of the Government of India. The Government of Pakistan would be grateful for assistance from India in persuading the refugees that the reports of killings and genocide in East Pakistan were wildly exaggerated and untrue.

145. The delegation of Pakistan had been impressed by the appeal of the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for a peaceful settlement of Pakistan's problems, but it wished to make it clear that any intervention by the United Nations or any public debate that would lend itself to political exploitation by India could not but retard progress towards the agreed objective of the repatriation of the East Pakistan refugees. Political exploitation would only aggravate the situation and contribute to the refugees' fear of returning to their homes. To say that the situation in East Pakistan required a political solution was to utter a truism. The Government of Pakistan had been the first to state that proposition, but to tell the Government of Pakistan what the political solution should be was not just interference in Pakistan's internal affairs but

hostile interference that would do nothing to alleviate the misery and suffering that had evoked the humanitarian concern of the United Nations.

146. Pakistan was not trying to shirk its responsibilities. It was prepared to assume full responsibility for the repatriation of the refugees, without interference from the Government of India. The observer for India had referred to the statement by Mrs. Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, on 27 March 1971, in which she had blamed the Government of Pakistan for not acceding to the demands of the secessionist elements, which would have meant the practical and constitutional dismemberment of Pakistan. He drew the attention of the observer for India to the Prime Minister's statement of 15 June 1971, in which she had said that India would not countenance a political settlement that would suppress the Bangla Desh. That statement by Mrs. Gandhi constituted a demand for a political settlement with the secessionist elements, and that was tantamount to the dismemberment of Pakistan. The Government of India was thus requiring that Pakistan's constitutional problems should be solved in a way that would be acceptable to India. He wished to make it very clear that such demands constituted hostile interference in Pakistan's internal affairs.

147. The PRESIDENT suggested that, in view of the limited time at the Council's disposal, and in accordance with rule 51 of the rules of procedure, no delegation in exercising its right of reply should speak more than twice and for longer than five minutes.

It was so decided.

148. Mr. KRISHNAN (Observer for India), speaking under rule 75 of the rules of procedure, said that in view of the decision just taken by the Council, he would have to be brief in replying to the entirely unfounded and unwarranted allegations which had just been made by the representative of Pakistan.

149. The representative of Pakistan had referred to the disturbed state of the border between India and Pakistan and had alleged that any threat there to peace and security was the result of the Indian Government's actions and propaganda. There was no need to rebut such an allegation, since it would be clear from his previous statement that the actions of the Pakistan authorities over the past months were entirely responsible for the disturbed situation. With reference to the observation in the report of IBRD from which the representative of Pakistan himself had made a selective quotation and then proceeded to attack it -- about the presence of the army in East Pakistan, the representative of Pakistan had argued that it had been the result of Indian actions. It was obvious, however, that security measures taken by the Indian Government were necessitated by the situation that had arisen in East Pakistan.

150. The situation on the Pakistan side of the frontier had brought about the expulsion of 7 million people, which amounted to an act of covert aggression by a neighbouring country. The Pakistan delegation had given its own unconvincing version of events and who was responsible for them.

The allegation that India was responsible was part of a pathetic attempt to "whitewash" what was still happening in East Pakistan, and needed no refuting. The world press had spoken about the situation and the Council was aware of the full picture. Whereas the Government of India, like many other Governments, had been repeatedly advocating a peaceful solution to the grave problem, the Government of Pakistan had been trying to apply a solution which was based on terrorism and repressive measures of its army. The Indian Government considered that such activities could only further aggravate the situation and lead to an even more enormous influx of refugees. It was absurd for the representative of Pakistan to assert that Indian propaganda could instil so much fear and cause such a huge influx of refugees.

151. The allegation of the representative of Pakistan that India was training refugees for military action was also totally unfounded. The Government of India was engaged in no such activities and had indeed ordered no exceptional troop dispositions, as it had pointed out on several occasions. All his Government was doing was to station normal forces on the border as required for his country's legitimate defence and security. It was the provocations of Pakistan which had caused the tense situation on the border.

152. Contrary to what the representative of Pakistan had alleged, he had not put words into the mouth of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. No amount of misrepresentation by that delegation would deceive the Council. He could not but express astonishment at such unfounded suspicions and mistrust of the United Nations system and its representatives. The time-limit prevented him from going into greater detail, but his Government totally denied the unfounded allegations which the representative of Pakistan had made in his second statement. They provided further proof that the Government of Pakistan was aggravating the serious situation in the Indian sub-continent.

153. The PRESIDENT said that the Council was most grateful to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for the vigour and efficiency with which, in his capacity as focal point of the United Nations system, he was co-ordinating the multilateral programme of humanitarian assistance to the unfortunate refugees.

154. The international community had rarely been confronted by a refugee problem of such gigantic proportions. The possible consequences had seldom been so grave. He was convinced that the Council shared the High Commissioner's profound concern and accorded him its full support.

155. Eloquent words were not enough in view of the refugees' desperate plight. It was the responsibility of Governments throughout the world to provide international aid on a massive scale to alleviate the heavy burden of the Indian governmental and non-governmental authorities.

156. Everybody was aware that the voluntary repatriation of refugees was the best, indeed the only solution to the grave problem. The sooner it was accomplished, the better.

An atmosphere of confidence was needed to bring the flow of refugees to a halt and to ensure their voluntary repatriation; that could be achieved only if all concerned co-operated and showed the necessary understanding. The appeals launched by the President of Pakistan for the return of the refugees were therefore to be welcomed and it was the hope of all that the aim of repatriation would be achieved under the best possible conditions.

157. Millions of human lives would depend on a massive humanitarian effort on the part of all. In the face of a problem of unprecedented dimensions, the duties of the international community could not be over-emphasized. The Council was grateful to the High Commissioner and to the executive heads of the other United Nations agencies and programmes for their efforts on behalf of the refugees.

158. The Assistant Secretary-General for Inter-Agency Affairs had made a most informative statement and the

Council had duly noted that a report was about to appear giving a detailed account of the humanitarian work being carried out by United Nations bodies in East Pakistan.

159. The Council shared the concern which had been shown by the Secretary-General in his appeal of 16 June 1971. It was touched by the humanitarian spirit of the Secretary-General's desire to provide the relief so urgently awaited by the population of East Pakistan. It was to be hoped that Governments, organizations and private donors would join in a concerted effort in the name of the peoples of the United Nations to alleviate the sufferings of the stricken East Pakistanis. Therein lay an opportunity for all to prove by their actions the validity of the noble purposes and principles of international solidarity and co-operation laid down in the Charter.

The meeting rose at 2.55 p.m.