



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 41st MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMER (Netherlands)

later: Mr. MUGUME (Uganda)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 99: OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
(continued) (A/41/12 and Add.1, 264, 338 and Corr.1, 360 and Corr.1, 380 and Add.1,
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(a) REPORT OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

(b) ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/41/3
(chap. III, sect. G))

1. Mr. PHIRI (Zambia) said that the international community must share the burden of and responsibility for protecting the basic human rights of refugees, which must include respect for the principle of non-refoulement and efforts to ensure the safety of refugees in transit. It must also emphasize respect for the principles of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, breaches of which were among the chief causes of the violence that produced increasing numbers of refugees.

2. In southern Africa, the huge refugee problem was the result of the apartheid system, while the régime's policy of hot pursuit also threatened the safety of refugees in asylum countries. It was essential to eliminate apartheid - which could be accomplished peacefully only through comprehensive and mandatory sanctions - in order to pave the way for voluntary repatriation, which was the best solution. His own country would not be deterred by threats or attacks from continuing to offer asylum to refugees in southern Africa as long as they needed it. It also sought a permanent solution to the problem of the homeless Palestinian people and other refugees in the Middle East, therefore supported the convening of an international conference on the Middle East with the full participation of all interested parties.

3. He hoped that the international community's assistance projects for refugees in Africa would be implemented and that increased funding for them would be forthcoming. He also welcomed the idea of linking refugee aid to the social and economic development of the host countries, as well as the inclusion of the question of refugees and displaced persons in United Nations programmes to deal with the critical economic situation in Africa.

4. Mr. BROUWERS (Netherlands) said that it was the duty not only of States, but also of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to distinguish between genuine refugees and asylum-seekers leaving their country for economic reasons, and that requests for asylum must be dealt with on an individual basis, with due regard for the relevant international instruments. His own country, which also admitted refugees on humanitarian grounds, would continue to be generous in granting asylum and had doubled its resettlement quota as of 1987.

(Mr. Brouwers, Netherlands)

5. The prospects for more voluntary repatriation of refugees seemed promising and he welcomed the High Commissioner's efforts in that connection, as well as his concern for follow-up of voluntary repatriation to monitor compliance with human rights. He also welcomed the High Commissioner's stress on the link between refugee aid and development, including the importance of income-generating projects, and hoped that speedy action would be taken on the vital matter of the structural reform of the High Commissioner's Office.

6. Miss AIOUAZE (Algeria) said that the increasingly serious refugee problem required an increasingly serious commitment to help on the part of the international community. A highly disproportionate number of the world's refugees were concentrated in African countries, which, despite their humanitarian impulse to help, were prevented by their critical economic situation from sustaining the resulting burden. At a time when offers of help and asylum were being made only reluctantly, the generosity of the countries of asylum must be backed by the solidarity and assistance of the entire international community. The burdens on the host country must be fairly shared and joint efforts must be made to find solutions. Her delegation therefore supported the efforts that the High Commissioner was making to that end and regretted that his increasingly burdened Office had been unable to finance all its essential programmes. She hoped that everything would be done to reverse that situation.

7. Mr. AFANDE (Kenya) said that his delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's efforts to make UNHCR more efficient in dealing with the increasingly serious problem of refugees.

8. He particularly welcomed the efforts of the international community to deal with the refugee situation in Africa, and the effectiveness of UNHCR in achieving the voluntary repatriation of refugees, their integration into the societies in which they settled and efforts to make them self-sufficient. It was important in Africa to distinguish between the causes of the refugee problem and the conditions that either aggravated those causes or made them operative. Cultural and linguistic differences were not themselves a major cause, but they could aggravate the situation.

9. Despite their tradition of hospitality, the African countries were not equipped economically to cope unassisted with their refugee problem, and long-term solutions had to be sought. That meant, inter alia, encouragement of voluntary repatriation or settlement locally or in a third country, the introduction of productive activities for refugees, careful distinction between refugees as defined in international conventions and other kinds of asylum-seekers, cost-effective and unpoliticized assistance to cope with emergencies and long-standing situations, and effort to find durable solutions.

10. Mr. VALENCIA (Guatemala) said that the refugee problem had assumed alarming proportions, especially in the developing countries, and that his own country had not been spared. Violence and political instability in Guatemala had caused many people, especially the most vulnerable, to flee to Mexico, whose generosity in providing asylum and facilitating voluntary repatriation under safe conditions was greatly appreciated. All those who wished to return to Guatemala voluntarily were

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(Mr. Valencia, Guatemala)

welcome to do so and would be given every assistance for resettlement. The restoration of peace and stability in certain areas and popular support for democracy had enabled thousands of refugees to return voluntarily to the country, where they received all the help they needed, and he hoped that their numbers would increase as conditions continued to improve. His country agreed with a number of others in the region that voluntary repatriation was the best solution and therefore felt that the refugees should keep informed of all developments in their countries of origin that would create a stable and secure climate enabling them to return under conditions in which they could enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

11. He said that the efforts of UNHCR were commendable and should be encouraged, provided that they remained humanitarian and apolitical.

12. Mr. HOGUE (Australia) said that his delegation fully endorsed the view that the promotion of durable solutions to the refugee problem was the primary and long-term aim of the High Commissioner's activities. Voluntary repatriation, and to a lesser extent local integration, must be the ultimate durable solution for the vast majority of refugees in the world today. Resettlement, which was occasionally necessary in certain refugee situations, could become self-perpetuating and counter-productive. The prospect of resettlement in more prosperous countries could attract people who were not genuine refugees, and that was not in the interests of the country of first refuge, the resettlement countries or the people themselves. The desires of those who were not genuine refugees as envisaged in the 1951 Convention were more legitimately channelled through normal immigration procedures, leaving international attention free to concentrate on refugees with a well-founded fear of persecution.

13. Australia supported the High Commissioner's anti-piracy programme in the South China Sea and commended to other Governments participation in the Rescue at Sea Resettlement Offers Scheme (RASRO), maintaining, however, that RASRO should not be abused or in any way derogate from flag-State responsibility.

14. Australia subscribed firmly to the principle of non-refoulement and believed that countries of first refuge must comply with their international and humanitarian obligations towards asylum-seekers. That did not mean, however, that special privileges should be granted to people who had no basis for their claims. At a time when resources and compassion were inadequate to the enormous task of dealing with bona fide refugees, it was necessary to ensure that they received the protection and attention they deserved.

15. Some countries inevitably bore a heavier refugee burden because of their geographical location. They should not, however, bear an undue load, be it as countries of first asylum or as countries of resettlement; that burden must be shared by all, as individual human beings and representatives of Governments.

16. The question of regional as against global refugee responses was a delicate and complex one. Effective systems of regional co-operation had been developed in a number of regions, including his own, but were not necessarily applicable universally. The proposed development of a formulation that determined limits of

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(Mr. Hogue, Australia)

governmental actions, on either a regional or a global basis, might jeopardize the necessary flexibility of such responses and impinge unduly on the rights of sovereign States to decide on who should be permitted entry as a refugee. Care should be taken to avoid creating unrealistic and unworkable structures for allocating responsibility for responding to refugee problems. Australia hoped that the High Commissioner would continue to approach refugee matters in a pragmatic and humane way.

17. Mr. SEIFU (Ethiopia) said that the vital role of UNHCR could be enhanced by respecting the criteria of impartiality towards refugees, independence of Governments and neutrality in all controversies of a political nature. Encumbering the role of the High Commissioner with the sensitive task of seeking solutions to the underlying causes of refugee flows would inevitably lead to UNHCR involvement in intricate and at times controversial issues of a political nature which could very well compromise its essentially humanitarian task. The non-humanitarian aspects of the problem must be tackled not by the High Commissioner but by States, and not by the Third Committee but by the proper forums of the United Nations. The Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees had presented a constructive framework to deal with such aspects.

18. As part of States' major responsibility in that field, they must accede to the relevant international instruments. Ethiopia noted with satisfaction the growing number of accessions to the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol and endorsed the Geneva Declaration adopted by the Executive Committee at its thirty-seventh session. It also wished to urge African States that had not yet done so to ratify or accede to the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. States should also be ready to share equitably the responsibility for care for refugees and the search for durable solutions.

19. As a country of origin, Ethiopia favoured voluntary repatriation as the most viable solution. It required the goodwill of both the country of origin and the country of asylum, as well as the material, financial and diplomatic support of the international community. It therefore urged UNHCR and donor countries to increase the funds allocated to voluntary-repatriation projects. Meanwhile, his Government would continue to extend assistance to settle the refugees in Ethiopia and to enable them to be self-sufficient through rural settlement schemes. He also extended his Government's thanks to the High Commissioner and all States, United Nations agencies and voluntary organizations for their valuable assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced people in Ethiopia.

20. Equitable international burden-sharing required that the industrialized countries should not only extend financial assistance but should also continue to provide opportunities for resettlement. With the deteriorating economic and social situation of the developing countries, the distinction between refugees and economic migrants might soon become academic. While noting with interest the Danish proposal that the United Nations should institute a uniform determination of refugee status and a mechanism for equitable sharing of resettlement efforts, his delegation believed that such a responsibility was better left to sovereign States. It was a question that required thorough study and wider consultation among all concerned parties.

21. Mrs. NIKOLIC (Yugoslavia) said that the difficult situation of refugees in Africa was a matter of particular concern. The Eighth Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, which had considered the situation, had drawn attention to the problems confronting the countries of first asylum. It had expressed support for the Declaration and Programme of Action of the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and had called upon the international community, the United Nations and its specialized agencies to undertake measures to carry out the projects adopted by the Conference.

22. Yugoslavia supported the humanitarian activities and developmental approach of UNHCR and its orientation towards finding durable solutions. It attached importance to voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement in third countries, in accordance with specific local situations. Action should be taken with a view to increasing financial and material assistance to countries of first asylum, as well as to all countries with a large refugee population. It supported UNHCR's efforts to promote co-operation and co-ordination with other United Nations agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

23. Yugoslavia welcomed the adoption of the Geneva Declaration on the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, which recalled the need for universal accession to those instruments. The organization of seminars and courses on the protection of refugees could contribute to a better understanding of that aspect of the refugee problem.

24. Yugoslavia regretted, however, that no consensus had yet been reached on conclusions relating to the banning of military attacks on refugee camps, but supported the conclusions adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the Executive Committee on the detention of refugees. It hoped that the proposed restructuring of UNHCR would contribute to even greater efficiency, and welcomed UNHCR's realistic approach towards improved programme implementation. Yugoslavia, committed as it was to the humanitarian principles on which UNHCR activities were based, participated in the work of the Executive Committee, and, as a country of transit, was making every effort to improve the position and protection of refugees in its territory, including their health care and social protection, with special assistance to disabled and elderly refugees.

25. Mr. MAPALALA (Swaziland) said that he wished to place on record his Government's firm conviction that no effort should be spared in the search for suitable mechanisms to avert new flows of refugees. Despite the vital role of international and voluntary agencies providing humanitarian relief, it was necessary, in order to find durable solutions, to look into the root causes of refugee problems, which were further complicated by a lack of political will. His Government hoped that appropriate machinery would be devised to give warning of situations likely to lead to an exodus of refugees.

26. In his country and neighbouring countries the refugee problem, aggravated by drought and floods, was assuming alarming proportions. While his country accepted the principle of voluntary repatriation or, where that was not possible, settlement in the country of asylum, it was premature to emphasize such measures until the root causes were addressed. Voluntary repatriation was impossible in his region on account of military aggression, which had been followed by a renewed influx of

(Mr. Mapalala, Swaziland)

refugees. Such problems, and the need for UNHCR to work within, and abide by the laws of, the States concerned - which in most cases were themselves the basic reason for the exodus of refugees - undermined the efficiency of UNHCR operations.

27. With the assistance of UNHCR and non-governmental organizations, the Government of Swaziland had established social and economic infrastructures for refugees and introduced self-help measures. However, with the growing refugee population, resources had become inadequate and his Government called for the strengthening of UNHCR activities in the region.

28. He reiterated his Government's commitment to its obligations under the 1951 Convention and to granting asylum to refugees provided they did not use the national territory to carry on subversive activities against other States.

29. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that the most important reason for the flows of refugees was the violation of human rights in their countries of origin. A matter of particularly serious concern to Costa Rica was the pursuit of refugees across frontiers into countries whose territory was violated with impunity.

30. Her delegation shared the view that UNHCR programmes should be adequately funded and an effort made to extend financing sources. Equally important was international solidarity and burden-sharing. It was also vital to improve the legal principles governing refugee protection. Her delegation agreed with the Chairman of UNHCR's Executive Committee that it was essential to continue to link refugee assistance to support for communities receiving refugees in third-world countries. It also attached great importance to closer co-operation between organizations dealing with movements of persons and to examining ways of establishing a system of consultation and information to forecast involuntary mass movements. It was extremely important to promote support to countries of first asylum and to stress the link between assistance to refugees and development.

31. Costa Rica welcomed the substantial assistance it had received from UNHCR as a result of the heavy influx of refugees in the past decade, first from Cuba and later, to a greater extent, from Nicaragua, but also from other countries of the region. Her country, a democracy which had always offered its citizens living conditions of a high standard, had encountered serious difficulties in receiving so great a number of refugees, and had been helped out of that precarious situation by UNHCR. It therefore offered its continuing support to UNHCR's activities in alleviating the suffering of refugees and seeking practical and durable solutions.

32. Mr. BIRABHONGSE KASEMSRI (Thailand) said that natural disaster and war had forced 12 million people throughout the world to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. In South-East Asia, the refugee problem was one of the most tragic consequences of the Indo-Chinese conflict. Since 1975, more than 700,000 people had sought refuge in Thailand, and 130,000 of them were still living in camps and holding centres. Since the invasion of Kampuchea in 1978, a further quarter of a million Kampuchean refugees had fled to Thailand.

(Mr. Birabhongse Kasemsri, Thailand)

33. The most durable solution was to eliminate the root causes of the flight of refugees so that they could return to their homelands. The success of voluntary-repatriation programmes depended to a large extent on the factors which had caused the refugees to flee. The rate of return in areas such as southern Africa or South-East Asia was low because the people had fled from alien domination and could not return home while the situation persisted.

34. Where repatriation was not possible, resettlement in third countries was a viable alternative. The countries of first refuge should not be asked to do more than they were already doing; the countries of the "North" must also play their part in sheltering refugees. It was not necessarily better to resettle refugees in a country near their own; factors such as tribal enmity must also be taken into account. His country considered that it had done more than its fair share by granting temporary asylum to refugees and thus giving the international community time to seek a durable solution.

35. Every effort must be made to facilitate the safe and voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons to their homelands. There must also be efforts to increase resettlement in third countries, and all resettlement countries should make their selection criteria less strict. The countries of first refuge should be assisted in their humanitarian efforts, and measures must be taken to prevent attacks on refugees in the countries where they had settled. Such attacks had taken place both in southern Africa and along the Thai-Kampuchean border. UNHCR's Orderly Departure Programme (ODP) had saved over 100,000 Vietnamese refugees from the dangers of escape in small boats and the possibility of pirate attacks. The Thai Government's anti-piracy programme had been renewed in June 1986. The international community must seek to eliminate the root causes of the refugees' flight, and increase co-operation to avert massive new flows of refugees. His delegation supported the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees, which had been submitted to the Special Political Committee.

36. Mr. HISSEIN-MI (Chad) said that the situation of refugees still gave cause for grave concern, despite the commendable efforts of the international community to meet their needs. The refugee problem was due essentially to armed conflict brought about by the expansionist policies of some States, which carried out acts of aggression against peaceful peoples and countries.

37. The situation of refugees in Africa deserved particular attention. Their plight in some areas had become alarming, and urgent and coherent action was needed on the part of the international community. His country, among others, had received swift and effective assistance from the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), and it hoped that the Office's powers would be increased.

38. Many people who had fled from his country to neighbouring States after the Libyan invasion of 1980 had now returned. His Government now faced the problem of reintegrating them into society. Chad, beset by economic crisis and desertification, by the needs of hundreds of thousands of refugees and, above all, by the criminal war waged by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, had called upon the

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(Mr. Hissain-Mi, Chad)

international community for assistance in achieving the reintegration and self-sufficiency of the returnees. His country hoped that the proposed UNHCR technical mission to Chad (A/41/531, para. 19) would take place soon.

39. His Government was also deeply concerned about the situation of people living in the zone occupied by Libyan forces. It urged the international community to help the refugees who had fled the area and to demand the immediate withdrawal of Libyan troops and mercenaries. His delegation would submit a draft resolution on emergency assistance to returnees and displaced persons in Chad, and he hoped it would be adopted by consensus.

40. Mr. Mugume (Uganda) took the Chair.

41. Mr. ABDEL RAHMAN (Sudan) said that his country, where refugees made up almost 10 per cent of the population, had first-hand knowledge of the potentially explosive nature of the refugee crisis. For a quarter of a century, refugees from various political, social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds had been coming to the Sudan and settled in many different areas.

42. The report of the inter-agency mission to the Sudan (A/41/264) clearly illustrated the extent of the problem. In some areas, social services were collapsing and large-scale damage had been done to the environment. Other consequences, less measurable in financial terms, created friction in the country's relations with neighbouring States and threatened its stability, development and national coherence. Nevertheless, the Sudan continued to provide shelter, food, employment, education and health services to hundreds of thousands of refugees. Most of all, it had given them a sense of security. But no country could be expected to care for such numbers when, owing to the economic crisis, it had difficulty in providing for the basic needs of its own people. The Sudan had always hoped that the refugees would be able to return to their homes, but that did not seem likely in the near future. They and the Sudanese themselves should not be allowed to suffer because the country did not have the resources to provide for them.

43. The large number of refugees and their dispersion throughout eastern Sudan made it difficult to adopt a traditional project-oriented approach; it was essential to ensure the general development of the entire area. The proposal to send a World Bank/UNDP/UNHCR expert planning team to draw up integrated development plans for such areas would help the international community to take on its share of the refugee burden. In fact, less than half the refugees in the Sudan received assistance through UNHCR. The Government made regular budgetary allocations for refugee assistance, and appealed to donor nations to include their aid to refugees in their regular budgets, which would guarantee a steady flow of resources and help UNHCR in its budget planning.

44. His delegation commended the continued financial support given to UNHCR by different nations, especially in the light of the African emergency. It was also pleased to see the importance which UNHCR attached to co-operation and co-ordination in its relations with other United Nations organs.

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(Mr. Abdel Rahman, Sudan)

45. There was now a clear consensus that the ultimate objective of all international efforts to assist refugees should be the achievement of durable solutions. Voluntary repatriation was no doubt the most cherished because of the refugees' desire to return to their homes. The Palestinian refugees were the clearest example of that. While seeking to find durable solutions, the international community should address the root causes of refugee flows in an enlightened and responsible manner. The need for the political will to seek solutions was nowhere more urgent than in the area of international co-operation to avert new massive flows.

46. The plight of refugees was an international responsibility and his delegation regretted the restrictive or selective policies adopted in some countries. It also regretted the erosion of the principle of non-refoulement. The Sudan believed that nations should spare no effort to guarantee the protection of refugees wherever they might be. In addition, refugee camps and settlements should be made accessible to representatives of UNHCR to ensure that they were not used for purposes incompatible with international law.

47. Ms. NGUYEN BINH THANH (Viet Nam) said that her country was upholding humanitarian principles in order to alleviate the plight of refugees and to promote good-neighbourliness and co-operation among States. Her delegation was pleased to see that UNHCR had reaffirmed the non-political and purely humanitarian character of its activities. An essential basis for the solution of the problem was scrupulous observance of the principle of non-politicization. In addition, refugees must in no way be used for political purposes detrimental to the independence and sovereignty of States.

48. The movement of refugees had changed greatly since the end of the Second World War. Most of the countries of origin and of asylum were developing countries and the burdens created by those flows were excessive. Her delegation believed that a solution required goodwill and co-operation.

49. History had shown that imperialist and hostile forces had always sought to shift the responsibility for refugee flows on to the Governments of the countries of origin. It was well known who had waged wars of aggression against newly independent and progressive countries and were carrying out policies of bleeding their economies. An appropriate solution demanded an understanding of the specific conditions in the countries concerned and full respect for the refugees' aspirations, in conformity with international law. For some refugees, especially those in South-East Asia, resettlement in other countries was the most feasible and appropriate answer. Many had stayed in camps for many years and desperately needed a chance to resume a more meaningful existence.

50. Her delegation had for many years expressed its concern about the exclusively civilian and humanitarian nature of refugee camps and about the safety of refugees. In South-East Asia and elsewhere the presence of combatants in refugee camps had jeopardized the interests of refugees and regional stability. Refugee camps should therefore be located well away from areas of conflict and well inside the territory of the country of asylum in order to ensure that refugees would not be manipulated for political purposes.

(Ms. Nguyen Binh Thanh, Viet Nam)

51. The root causes of the Indo-Chinese refugee situation were the wars of aggression waged by the imperialist and colonialist forces over the past 40 years. The Vietnamese people had been the victims of the most barbarous wars in history, the consequences of which still imposed great burdens on the economy, social order and national reconstruction of the country. Even so, Viet Nam had engaged in effective co-operation with UNHCR in facilitating legal departures from Viet Nam and had taken measures to prevent illegal departures. It highly appreciated the efforts of those countries that had generously continued their admission policy. What was now needed was bilateral co-operation between Viet Nam and each receiving country in order to expedite the departure of those awaiting resettlement. The problem could not be solved at its source without the co-operation of all States concerned. Her delegation therefore called on the international community to redouble its efforts to contribute to peace and stability in South-East Asia.

52. Mr. SISWANTO (Indonesia) said that his delegation shared the concerns expressed about the continuing financial constraints faced by UNHCR. Despite economic difficulties Indonesia had contributed \$25,000 to UNHCR for its general programmes, apart from its annual contribution.

53. Indonesia believed that voluntary repatriation was the preferable solution to the refugee problem. However, that was wholly dependent on a change in the circumstances which had prompted the refugees to seek asylum. The root causes needed to be addressed. For instance, in southern Africa, despite the turmoil affecting the region, the number of people seeking asylum was relatively low. However, as violence in South Africa continued to rise and as the South African and Namibian peoples stepped up their struggle for equality and independence, the number of refugees could be expected to rise rapidly.

54. The second method advocated by UNHCR, namely, local integration into the countries of first asylum, was not a viable alternative to voluntary repatriation since most countries of first asylum were developing countries unable to assume the burden of a permanent settlement of a large refugee population. The third method, resettlement in third countries, provided a more acceptable alternative and would more equitably distribute the burden among the entire international community.

55. To accommodate the large influx of refugees, Indonesia had several years earlier established a refugee-processing centre on the island of Galang. It was Indonesia's earnest hope that, while the international community embarked on the systematic search for solutions, countries would assume an equal burden by willingly accepting refugees for resettlement.

56. Mr. INGLES (Philippines) said that his delegation viewed with grave concern the continuing mass exodus of refugees in various parts of the world. In addition, there was the continued occurrence of armed attacks on refugee camps, acts of piracy against "boat people" and sexual abuse of refugee women. The Philippines joined other nations in condemning such acts. However, condemnation alone was futile; what was needed was the concerted action of Governments and of international and non-governmental organizations to protect and assist refugees and to find durable solutions.

(Mr. Ingles, Philippines)

57. His delegation shared the view that voluntary repatriation, whenever feasible, was the most desirable solution. The Philippines therefore again called on Viet Nam to withdraw from Kampuchea and to reconsider its position on the proposal of the coalition Government of Kampuchea for a political solution to the conflict.

58. Local integration or settlement in the country of asylum was not the most practical solution in South-East Asia because most of the first-asylum countries were undergoing an economic crisis and the integration of thousands of refugees into their societies might wreak havoc on their economies. That, in the long run, would not serve the interest of the refugees themselves. Thus, in South-East Asia resettlement was still the most acceptable and practical solution. His delegation called on potential resettlement countries to display a spirit of international burden-sharing and humanitarianism.

59. The international community must also condemn human rights violations, which tended to produce new refugees. As early as 1976, when large groups of Indo-Chinese refugees had started to seek haven in other lands, several thousands had found their way to Philippine shores. The Filipino people had welcomed them with compassion and had initiated programmes for transforming the refugee into a person well prepared for life in his country of final destination. The Philippines had also given assistance to refugees in Africa and had sponsored resolutions on that question.

60. UNHCR could not accomplish its mission without the help of the international community. The Philippines appealed to all concerned to support UNHCR in its efforts to alleviate the suffering of refugees and to seek durable solutions.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.