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STATEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL ON SUEZ CANAL CLEARANCE

In the report to the General Assembly on the Canal clearing it was stated that the Secretary-General, in case the General Assembly approved that the United Nations should assist in the clearing of the Canal, would negotiate the necessary arrangements with such private firms as might speedily and effectively undertake the task and intended to address himself to firms in countries outside the present conflict. The proposals by the Secretary-General were approved by the General Assembly. It follows that the General Assembly has given priority to the use of resources from private firms from countries outside the conflict.

Negotiations conducted by Lt. General Wheeler, whose great experience and competence in this field is generally recognized, have led to the building up of a United Nations salvage fleet, able to begin operations immediately and expeditiously. General Wheeler is working in close contact with Headquarters and on the basis of instructions issued in strict conformity with the position of the United Nations.

The Secretary-General trusts that all parties will cooperate with the United Nations so as to facilitate the vital task entrusted to the Organization. In due time a full report will be given on the arrangements made. The Secretary-General believes that this report will allay doubts which recently have been expressed in some quarters.

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