

their making and, furthermore, one that causes them enormous political, economic and social problems, they have responded to the limit of their means. That contribution should be recognized. Similarly, we commend those countries, particularly the United States, France and Australia, that have accepted refugees for resettlement, as well as those that have contributed financially to the High Commissioner's requirements. These countries have all assumed a share of the responsibilities incumbent upon them as members of the international community.

Canada is a country of long-standing humanitarian traditions. We have historically considered that a tragedy of great human proportions, whether it occurred in our region or elsewhere, whether it involved people with whom we had close historical links or otherwise, was nonetheless a matter of concern to us. We have considered that we have a responsibility to respond in the context of international efforts.

Besides being a country of immigration, Canada is also a country that has welcomed refugees and displaced persons. Furthermore, the new Canadian immigration act that came into effect earlier this year is reflective of our concern for refugees, as it incorporates the obligations we have assumed in acceding to the Refugee Convention and Protocol.

Canada is far from Southeast Asia. We have never had historical contact with the countries of the region. This has not, however, prevented us from taking an active interest in the tragic fate of the Indochina refugees. Since 1975, approximately 7,600 have resettled in Canada. This year we have initiated programs to accommodate 50 small-boat families and 20 overland families a month. We anticipate that we shall be able to continue to receive a significant number of refugees from this region. Recently, we played a significant role by accepting more than 600 refugees from the *Hai Hong*; these 600 were over and above our established resettlement programs. In all the regions of Canada where these refugees have started a new life, they have been warmly welcomed by Canadians.

While the effort to which the Canadian Government has committed itself rests on a national consensus, it does entail a considerable financial outlay. The decision to take in an additional 600 refugees from the *Hai Hong* required in itself a financial provision of \$2 million. The costs of resettling other refugees from Southeast Asia is in comparable proportions.

The Government program does not represent the totality of Canadian efforts. For example, a program has been established that would permit Canadian churches, non-governmental organizations, and indeed groups of five or more adults, to sponsor a refugee family's entry into Canada. Any such sponsored inflow would be above and beyond that sponsored financially by the Government. And I must say the response has been considerable. This new sponsorship program is only now being fully developed, but already the large number of Canadians participating is heartwarming.

The decision of the High Commissioner to convene this special meeting was taken in October in circumstances rather different from those that prevail today. In the two-

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