

In this context, we believe the United Nations is, without question, the proper instrument for whatever role or roles an international mechanism is required. No other organization commands the same authority in providing guarantees. No other organization has the necessary machinery in place to move quickly to implement agreements once they are reached. No other organization spans as effectively the interlinked security, humanitarian and economic agenda of this conference. We are aware that other options have been proposed, such as the creation of a control commission. In our experience those are highly imperfect instruments, especially if they do not have an appropriate reporting authority or an integrated mission structure. We know these views are widely shared among participants.

We also know that several participants have, up to now, expressed reservations about the UN on the basis of both Cambodian representation in the General Assembly and the annual resolution on Cambodia. Those problems will surely fall away if an internal settlement is reached. If there is no internal settlement, an international control mechanism will be of little value. We therefore urge those participants to look to the future rather than to the past. Early consensus that the UN as an institution must play a central role would give real momentum to this conference and significantly increase the chance of its success. It would also allow the UN to accelerate preparations, including undertaking a technical survey to Cambodia that would let us get an operation up and running quickly in the event of a comprehensive agreement. This is vital in view of the daunting infrastructure, resource, medical geographic and other challenges that will have to be faced in Cambodia, challenges probably only equalled by those faced by the UN in the Congo.

Earlier this year I said, and today I confirm, that if a comprehensive settlement can be reached, Canada will consider any request from the conference to participate in an international control mechanism. In making our decision we will be guided by the criteria to which I have alluded earlier. It will also be clear from what I have said that a decision in favour of a UN force would greatly reassure us.

This conference will address two other questions of central importance to a settlement in Cambodia; those of refugee resettlement and of reconstruction. Canada will participate in both discussions with attention and sympathy. Canadians are deeply aware of the plight of the hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons who have been living in camps outside of Cambodia for many years. We have welcomed 130,000 Indochinese refugees in Canada over the past decade of whom some 20,000 have been Cambodians.