

population of Southeast Asia. Thanks to the efforts put forth, in particular by a number of the neighbouring countries, the worst has not happened. In this regard, allow me to pay special tribute to the Government of Thailand which, through its policy of welcome, is continuing to give other countries of the world an admirable example of human solidarity. Our gratitude and admiration also go out to the United Nations agencies and to the International Committee of the Red Cross for the incomparable work they are carrying out. With that said, we are all aware that there is a great deal to be done. How could we ignore the desperate plight of millions of Kampuchean — those still in Kampuchea — as well as those who have fled to Thailand or to the temporary encampments along the border?

We have never underestimated the complexities and difficulties of the relief operation to be undertaken. Despite the efforts of all participants, blockages in the distribution system and deliberate diversions of foodstuffs are still being reported. While substantial improvements have been made, as reported by the Interagency Working Group, nonetheless numerous components of the distribution system will have to be reinforced and developed if we wish to reach the objectives set out for the rest of the year. We were encouraged to note that the new harbour facilities have been made available to the agencies, that more trucks, barges and tugs have been brought into operation and that vehicle maintenance programs have been set up. We are also glad that the Phnom Penh authorities have authorized an increase in the number of relief personnel in Kampuchea.

However, all the efforts, both multilateral and bilateral, will have to be increased considerably if the approximately 35,000 metric tons of food required each month are to reach their destination. When we realize that only 69,000 tons have reached Kampuchea since last autumn, it is easy to see the enormity of the task remaining to be carried out.

We are pleased that the excellent report by Sir Robert Jackson, as well as the statements of numerous delegates who have preceded me, have provided a whole range of practical suggestions for getting closer to our objective, if all parties are willing to lend their co-operation. We therefore give our fullest support to the many suggestions made for improving the supply lines to the Kampuchean people, whether by land, sea or air, so that international relief will finally reach the most deprived civilians, in particular in those provinces where the needs are most urgent. It is only through such a gradual re-establishment of the conditions of normal existence that hundreds of thousands of Kampuchean, currently in exile, will return voluntarily to their homeland — the only viable long-term solution.

It is sad to see that around the world there are numerous situations where hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to abandon their homes and seek asylum in neighbouring countries. The case of Kampuchea is not unique but its scope is such that it merits special attention. Seldom has the world seen a nation's very existence threatened in such a way. Certainly, we must meet the most pressing humanitarian needs immediately. But we cannot and must not postpone indefinitely a study of the fundamental causes of this unprecedented disaster, that is, the blatant attacks on the rights of people and the systematic denial of the most basic human rights. Above all