

Mr. Chairman,

We are meeting today in response to an international problem of the greatest urgency, namely, the massive refugee outflow from Indochina. This is a problem of grave humanitarian concern. Tens of thousands of lives may depend on whether we find a solution without delay; however, the problem is of such magnitude that only a concerted and systematic international effort can deal with it. It is a problem of concern to all countries which adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to its proclamation of the rights of every individual to life, liberty and security of person and of refugees to seek asylum in other countries. It seems particularly appropriate to recall these fundamental rights on the day following the thirtieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Human Rights Charter.

We are meeting here at the urgent invitation of the High Commissioner. Our first objective, based on a humanitarian concern, is to find solutions adequate to this tragic problem and to make certain that the High Commissioner will have at his disposal the means necessary to carry out fully his mandate as it relates to the refugees and displaced persons from South-east Asia. In the excellent note which he has prepared for us, the High Commissioner has correctly analysed the present plight of the refugees and displaced persons from South-east Asia, and the enormity and complexity of the problem they pose. According to the statistics in his report, more than 430,000 individuals have fled Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos since 1975. Thailand alone has received some 195,000 refugees including 51,000 this year alone. Of these 130,000 remain. More than 85,000 have fled Vietnam in small

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