

**Statement by Amb. Koonjul on the situation in Angola –**  
**17 July 2002**

Let me; first of all, thank Under-Secretary-General Kenzo Oshima for his excellent briefing this morning. It has been extremely useful and very comprehensive.

The situation in Angola is at a very crucial stage at this point. After the signing of the peace memorandum, the country is about to start with a reconstruction programme. At the same time, it is also faced with a severe humanitarian situation stemming from the return of UNITA troops, internally displaced persons and refugees. Certainly, this is a situation in which the country needs the utmost assistance.

We agree with Mr. Oshima's remarks that it is the primary responsibility of the Government of Angola to take care of its people. We agree fully with that. But, as he has pointed out himself, the situation is overwhelming at this point. This is the time when the country will require all the efforts necessary from the international community to face up to the situation. We therefore believe that there is a need for very close cooperation between all the donors and the Government of Angola to enhance the capacity of the Angolan Government to face the problem it is having.

Obviously, we will have an opportunity to discuss all other matters when we receive the report of the Secretary-General. At this point in time, we think that there are certain issues which need to be emphasized. One is the need to look at the problem of the return and the resettlement of the internally displaced persons and the refugees. We note that there are approximately 4 million people involved, which is almost a third of the population of Angola.

Minister Brattskar has talked about the need for mine clearance. I think we should be able to discuss that problem when we discuss the report of Ambassador Gambari. It is absolutely important that the country be cleared of the mines in order to enable the refugees and the internally displaced persons to return to their normal functions.

We believe that there is also a need for humanitarian aid workers to have access to all areas, without hindrance. We have read some reports that there are certain areas which were not accessible because of the behaviour of certain people. I also note that the Government of Angola has recently decided to relieve one of governors of his functions. I do not know if Mr. Oshima can shed some light on whether that will help to provide humanitarian aid workers with the necessary access to certain areas. There is also the major problem of infrastructure — the lack of airstrips — which is also preventing aid from reaching the people most in need.

Despite the fact that the country has the ability and potential to come to the aid of its people, we think that this is the time when the international community should make a very special effort to assist the country to try to resolve this pressing problem, because the people of Angola deserve to see the dividends of peace. We fear that if we do not do it at this time, the situation may be reversed. We look forward to the report from Ambassador Gambari, and we hope to be able to discuss further the needs of Angola.