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AGENDA ITEM 50

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

(a) Report of the High Commissioner (A/6711);

(b) Question of the continuation of the Office of the High Commissioner (A/6703 and Corr.1, chap. XIV, sect. I; A/6711 and Add.1; A/6801; A/C.3/L.1493)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to submit the report of his Office (A/6711).

2. Prince Sadruddin KHAN (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) said that the work of his Office depended on its getting support from all Governments and that in order to do so it needed the General Assembly's guidance. The aims of its work were to ensure the effectiveness of economic contributions to the refugee programmes and at the same time to eliminate causes of tension and discord.

3. The main problem centres in the refugee field were in Asia and Africa and the connexion between refugee problems and development should be noted. There could be no effective action in Africa unless all forms of multilateral development aid were co-ordinated with the High Commissioner's programmes.

4. The function of the High Commissioner was purely humanitarian and social, but he could not ignore the political context because his work could help to prevent or mitigate the political difficulties caused by the presence of refugees in the countries which gave them refuge. Likewise, although his work was basically palliative—because the Office was unable to take action on the actual causes of the problems—the right kind of action and contacts made it possible for him to contribute to the fundamental solution, namely, voluntary repatriation, in accordance with the wishes expressed by Governments and the refugees themselves.

5. The general refugee problem as a whole had not undergone any dramatic changes in the past year, although it had been affected by events in the Middle East and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which

had influenced the relevant programmes of the High Commissioner. The number of refugees in Africa had risen since the beginning of the year from 740,000 to some 800,000, but, unfortunately, the Office's efforts had not resulted in any large-scale repatriation movement, since the necessary political, economic and social conditions were not yet present.

6. The work of the Office of the High Commissioner had been characterized in 1967 by consolidation in all fields.

7. With regard to international protection, the Protocol to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees had already entered into force and the number of Parties to the Convention would reach fifty-three with the accession of Madagascar. The adoption by the Sixth Committee of a draft Declaration on Territorial Asylum (A/6912, para. 70) was an important step in the international protection of refugees. The Council of Europe had also adopted a resolution in June 1967 in which it had invited member Governments to apply the principles governing the right of asylum and to show a spirit of solidarity and collective responsibility in that connexion.

8. As far as European efforts to give international protection to refugees were concerned, new legislation in preparation in various countries, including Austria and the United Kingdom, would make provisions governing refugees more liberal. Negotiations with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on compensations for refugees persecuted by the Nazi régime for reasons of nationality were making progress and would shortly produce tangible results.

9. Regarding international protection in Africa, mention should be made of the Conference on the Legal, Economic and Social Aspects of African Refugee Problems, held in Addis Ababa in October 1967. The High Commissioner had attended this Conference which had made recommendations of great importance on all the main aspects of the problems of African refugees. It was notable that the African countries had accepted with spontaneity and awareness ideas which had been slow to bear fruit in Europe. At the meeting of the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments of the Organization of African Unity held in Kinshasa in September 1967, steps had been taken to encourage accession to the 1951 Convention and its Protocol and to deal with the problem of the transit of refugees from territories which had not yet gained their independence and the elimination of sources of friction between the host country and country of origin. Stress had been laid on the role of the OAU as an intermediary in facilitating voluntary repatriation. At the International Seminar on Apartheid, Racial Discrimination and Colonialism in Southern

Africa held in Kitwe, Zambia, in July-August 1967, attention had been given to the question of the travel documents and transit facilities that should be granted to refugees from South Africa^{1/} and he welcomed the consensus of views on the need to provide travel documents, which would make his work of protection easier.

10. In Latin America, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights had approved on 20 October 1967 a resolution in which it had recommended member States to accede to the 1951 Convention and its Protocol.

11. Finally, it was to be hoped that the celebration of International Year for Human Rights in 1968 would give many States an opportunity to accede to those international instruments relating to the status of refugees, such as the 1951 Convention and its Protocol, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and the 1957 Agreement relating to Refugee Seamen. The High Commissioner was playing an active part in preparations for the International Year.

12. On the general situation with regard to the refugee problem in the different continents, he stated that consolidation had been particularly necessary in Africa because of the magnitude of the problems, and also because considerations of internal and external security had led countries such as Uganda and the Central African Republic to move numbers of refugees and it had been necessary to reorganize various programmes. Of 800,000 refugees, 500,000 were in a position to attend to their immediate needs themselves, while the remainder were still dependent on the emergency aid provided by the Office and by the World Food Programme and the United States food programme, but, except for some groups in the regions affected, they were all covered by projects that were already under way.

13. Another problem was currently making itself felt in Africa with regard to students and persons engaged in other than agricultural occupations who were concentrated in urban areas. At the Addis Ababa Conference a recommendation had been adopted on the establishment of an office under the Organization of African Unity to centralize all information on entry into educational establishments in Africa and on placement opportunities in urban centres. The office would work in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner, the Economic Commission for Africa, the ILO and UNESCO and with certain non-governmental organizations and would try to secure effective placement of students by finding new countries to give them refuge.

14. In Latin America, the main problem was presented by old and handicapped refugees, who, if they had no family and insufficient resources, had to bear conditions of extreme misery. They were not very numerous and it had been possible to create 660 places in asylums and other suitable institutions for those who were mentally ill. Assistance had also been given in the repatriation of refugees who wished to return to their

countries of origin, but had encountered bureaucratic or financial difficulties.

15. As for Asia, there were at present some 50,000 Tibetan refugees in India, of whom 20,000, who were employed in road building, were in the process of being settled. The number of Tibetan refugees in Nepal was 7,000 and their situation had improved considerably through the efforts of the Nepalese Government and Red Cross and Swiss technical assistance. The black spot in the situation in Asia was Macao, where the political situation had created problems for the programmes for Chinese refugees. Nevertheless, the vocational training centres in Taipa and Coloane had been completed and the hostel for young girls was operating normally. The High Commissioner still maintained his office in Macao.

16. In Europe, the present programme was sufficient to meet the needs, but it was important to keep open the possibility of emigration as an essential safety valve. The extension to refugees of measures adopted for the benefit of countries' nationals under certain regional agreements facilitated and accelerated a positive trend, which reflected the improvement in the economic and social situation of the European countries and in relations between them. With regard to the European refugee campaign, despite the fact that only a small part of the sum collected—\$18 million—had actually been contributed to the High Commissioner's programme, it had helped to wipe out the deficit of over \$1.5 million and had revived interest in the problem of the refugees in Asia and Africa.

17. The most successful solution that had been found to the problem of the integration of the refugees in Africa was their resettlement in agricultural occupations. In that connexion, two points were worth noting: first, the interdependence between the problem of the refugees and the problem of development, an interdependence which came to the fore particularly in the consolidation phase of integration but which was a reality that must be taken into account from the very beginning, so that maximum economy could be achieved in the use of resources; second, the need to ensure co-ordination between the assistance furnished by the Office of the High Commissioner and the relief that other United Nations organs could provide. It was essential to co-ordinate efforts and to apply the emergency procedure to requests for development programmes made by the countries of regions in which there were refugees. With that aim in view, the Office of the High Commissioner had expanded its contacts with United Nations development organs and had reached the conclusion that development plans which disregarded the presence of large numbers of refugees in the midst of the indigenous population were doomed to failure. Co-operation between the Office of the High Commissioner, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the specialized agencies was a practical and imperative necessity. That kind of co-operation was exemplified by the World Food Programme's contribution of \$6 million since the beginning of his Office's efforts in Africa. It was also worth mentioning that the United States food programme had contributed more than \$1.5 million in 1967. Without those funds, he would not have been able to discharge his responsibilities as

^{1/} A/6818 and Corr.1, para. 123, sect. XIX.

High Commissioner. Mention should also be made of the experimental programme in Burundi, covering one fifth of the country's territory.

18. Interagency relations would be strengthened if the General Assembly approved the suggestion made by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1253 (XLIII), and the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (A/6711, app. para. 138) to the effect that the High Commissioner should be invited to attend meetings of the Inter-Agency Consultative Board of UNDP. He requested the representatives of the Governments that were members of the specialized agencies to bear in mind the existence and needs of the refugees, and he emphasized how necessary it was, for reasons of efficiency, that the African Governments submit their requests for assistance to the competent organizations as early as possible.

19. Referring to the part played by the refugees in their host countries, he said that the objective should be to enable them to make a positive contribution to the economic and social progress of those countries. A case in point was the Central African Republic which, for that purpose, had decided to include the refugees automatically in its development programme.

20. His Office enjoyed excellent co-operation with UNESCO, which had recently assigned one of its officials to help organize the Office's educational activities. He expressed his gratitude to the Scandinavian countries, for the important contributions they had made in that field.

21. The sole exception to the general and steady progress being made in his Office's activities was the financing of the programme. The 1967 deficit of \$1.8 million had been only partly offset by the proceeds of the European refugee campaign, leaving a net deficit of \$300,000. The prospects for the future were disquieting: the Executive Committee had just approved an amount of \$4,631,000 for 1968, which presupposed a minimum programme. But unless contributions, which now represented approximately 60 per cent of the programme, were substantially increased, a deficit of \$1 million could be expected. He therefore appealed to all Governments to increase their contributions to cover at least 80 per cent of the programme, with a view to more sustained action and better results. If the costs of the minimum programme were met by Governments, he could devote his attention to more important problems instead of having to concentrate to a large extent on financial matters.

22. It was not to be expected that the European Refugee Campaign, carried out in 1966, from whose total proceeds the sponsors had allocated \$1.3 million to projects included in the programme of his Office, could be repeated every year. The organizations which had taken part in the campaign, and whose contributions to international activities on behalf of the refugees were vital, did not feel that, for the purpose of financing a programme whose sole aim was to cover essential needs of an immediate nature, the efforts of Governments should be altogether replaced by their own efforts. Governments could hardly congratulate themselves on the work done by his Office in finding a solution for serious refugee

problems and at the same time stand aloof when it was a question of financing a programme that was intended for that very purpose. There was a contradiction there which must be resolved. In that connexion, he drew attention to the Executive Committee's decision to hold only one regular session a year instead of two as had been its practice; and he pointed out that the decision had been taken for reasons of economy and efficiency and would help to confirm the conviction of Governments that the funds made available to the High Commissioner would be used in the same spirit.

23. The main task was to see refugee problems in their true proportions, to limit their effects on the countries most directly concerned—the countries of origin and that the countries of asylum—and to alleviate as far as possible, the sufferings of the refugees themselves. It was also necessary, however, to adopt a common approach, not only on the technical and practical level, as in the case of inter-agency co-operation, but on the political level as well. What was necessary were common principles and joint action based on universally accepted ideals and standards. He had in mind, for example, asylum, which should be a humanitarian rather than a political gesture, facilities for repatriation freely consented to, which was the best solution to refugee problems, and the endowment of refugees with a status which would safeguard their basic rights as human beings. Those were ideals which had been recently reaffirmed by the Organization of African Unity, the Council of Europe, and the Organization of American States. To put in practice a joint programme of action of this nature was the task with which the High Commissioner had been entrusted; he hoped that all would share in it.

24. His Office would not have fully achieved its objective until its activities had won truly universal recognition expressed in the tangible and whole-hearted support of all States Members of the United Nations. Such was the contribution which his Office could and should make to the cause of peace and good relations among peoples, together with the return of the refugees to their countries of origin or their peaceful resettlement in the countries of first or second asylum.

25. Mr. KUEI (China) congratulated the High Commissioner for his lucid statement, which reflected not only his deep understanding of the problems of refugees but also the devotion and competence with which he had been dealing with them.

26. His delegation had studied the High Commissioner's report (A/6711) with mixed feelings, because it noted, on the one hand, that considerable progress had been made in assisting refugees, particularly in Europe and Africa, and, on the other hand, that the situation remained grave, particularly in Asia.

27. In Europe, his delegation had been gratified to note that the remaining refugee camps had been finally closed and that some countries, like Sweden, had withdrawn their reservations to article 24 of the 1951 Convention, while others, such as Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, were enacting legislation in favour of the refugees.

28. In Africa, an increasing number of countries had acceded to the 1951 Convention, and close co-ordination was being maintained between the countries concerned and the High Commissioner's Office. Furthermore, the establishment of branch offices of the High Commissioner in the Central African Republic and Zambia, and the extension of UNHCR activities to Gambia and Nigeria would greatly strengthen the work for refugees in the African region.

29. There were, however, other developments in Africa and Asia which caused grave international concern. In Africa, new refugee movements were occurring, although, due to the joint efforts of the High Commissioner and the neighbouring countries, measures were being taken to meet the problem. The situation was less encouraging in Asia because of the chaotic situation in mainland China, from which there was a continuous flow of refugees seeking asylum in the neighbouring territories. According to the High Commissioner's report (A/6711, para. 184), there had been some 73,000 Chinese refugees in Macao at the beginning of 1966, and an estimated total of about 74,000 at the end of that year.

30. His delegation was most disturbed by the fact that many of the refugees had been forcibly returned to mainland China. Furthermore, an agreement had been signed in January 1967 between the Portuguese authorities in Macao and the Chinese communist authorities concerning the return of refugees seeking to enter Macao from the Chinese mainland. Such acts constituted a flagrant violation of the right of asylum and the principle of non-refoulement. Portugal was a party to the 1951 Convention, and no declaration on the scope of application of the Convention could be considered an excuse for violating the principle of non-refoulement. His delegation was glad to note that the High Commissioner had drawn the attention of the Portuguese authorities to that universally accepted principle, and it hoped that the High Commissioner's Office would continue to follow closely the development of the situation with a view to rectifying it. At the same time, he hoped that the programmes for assisting the refugees in Macao would continue to be carried out as a humanitarian task, without regard to political pressures. He also expressed his delegation's appreciation for the assistance given to the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong and to the Tibetan refugees in Nepal and India; he hoped that the High Commissioner and the Executive Committee would give greater emphasis to programmes for assisting those refugees in the years to come.

31. His delegation was in favour of continuing the High Commissioner's Office for another five years, beginning in 1969; he observed that, while much had been accomplished by the High Commissioner, much remained to be done, particularly in Asia and Africa. In conclusion, he emphasized that the success of the work for refugees depended on the goodwill and co-operation of all Member States, and he expressed the hope that all countries, and particularly the industrialized countries, would redouble their efforts in support of the High Commissioner's programme.

32. Mr. HOVEYDA (Iran) said that, unfortunately, the subject which the Committee was discussing had

become one of the standing items on its agenda. Everyone agreed that mankind was now in the most amazing period of its history; it was preparing to conquer space and transform the oceans into a source of wealth, yet at every turn groups of human beings were encountered who had been driven out of their countries and were obliged to live in precarious conditions in far-off lands, their only recourse being to international charity.

33. He congratulated the High Commissioner and his staff on their untiring humanitarian efforts to solve the difficult problems of hundreds of thousands of displaced persons.

34. Some of the information in the current report (A/6711) was quite encouraging: for example, in 1966, the programme for clearing the European refugee camps had been completed, thus putting an end to one of the gravest social and humanitarian problems of the post-war era. The report likewise described the progress made in settling the so-called "old" refugees and stated that the number of newly recognized European refugees was smaller than in previous years. Another encouraging feature of the report related to Africa. Despite the influx of new refugees in several countries of that continent, the High Commissioner had been able to make considerable progress in their integration or repatriation. The atmosphere of understanding which had characterized the activities of the High Commissioner's Office in Africa was particularly noteworthy.

35. Despite certain difficulties, the picture with regard to refugee problems in other regions was also more positive. In addition, the action carried out jointly with other United Nations bodies or with non-governmental organizations gave grounds for optimism. In that connexion, note should be taken of the agreement with UNESCO, for education was one of the most vital factors in achieving genuine integration of the younger generation of refugees. Relations with the United Nations Development Programme should also be emphasized, for they showed that the integration of refugees was not an exclusively humanitarian question but could and should contribute to development in general. In the view of his delegation, co-operation with the ILO, FAO and the other specialized agencies should be intensified; he associated himself with the Executive Committee's recommendation (A/6711, para. 138) that the High Commissioner should be invited to attend the meetings of the Inter-Agency Consultative Board of UNDP.

36. It was encouraging to note that certain States had increased their voluntary contributions or had offered to receive a larger number of refugees. Despite those welcome developments, however, the serious problems which still existed should not be forgotten. Although there was reason to be satisfied with the results of the European refugee campaign for 1966, there was still a considerable discrepancy between the financial targets of the programme and the contributions received, a discrepancy which could seriously jeopardize the work of assistance carried on by the High Commissioner's Office. The High Commissioner's appeal to Governments to increase their contributions to the programme should be heeded, and the increasingly diversified character of the refugee

problem should be borne in mind. In addition, if it was desired that the High Commissioner should be able successfully to continue his humanitarian activities and to attain his main objective—the achievement of permanent solutions to the problems of refugees—he should have at his disposal not only financial resources but other means, including those relating to legal protection. Thus the adoption at the General Assembly's current session of the Declaration on Territorial Asylum would constitute a notable advance.

37. The scope and diversity of the High Commissioner's tasks had increased since the time when his post had been established. Moreover, the High Commissioner was helping not only to solve a problem which was the source of much human suffering but also to eliminate what would otherwise constitute a cause of world tension. His delegation therefore considered that the vital importance of the High Commissioner's humanitarian work should be reflected in his rank in the Secretariat.

38. The refugees would not be overlooked in organizing activities for the International Year for Human Rights, and the occasion would be taken to publicize the work of the High Commissioner's Office still further.

39. His delegation, in accordance with its traditional policy, gave its full support to the work of the United Nations in that field, and it hoped that the time would come when the word "refugee" would cease to be in common use. Until then, the Office of the High Commissioner would have to be continued, so that the United Nations could deal successfully with the many problems to which the existence of refugees gave rise.

40. Mr. BENJAMIN (United States of America) observed that the plight of the refugee touched upon almost every aspect of the work of the United Nations: the refugee was both a result and a cause of political instability; he could gravely affect the economic development of the country which offered him asylum; and—surpassing both those problems—was one of human rights—the need to guarantee to the refugee those rights to which he, as a human being, was entitled from the day of his birth.

41. The report presented by the High Commissioner evidenced the talent and energy of Prince Saddrudin Khan. The funds at the disposal of the High Commissioner were very limited; he worked in an area fraught with political difficulties; he needed continuing cooperation from the United Nations family and other organizations. And yet the report indicated that it had been possible in the period covered to make further progress. Priority should be given by the High Commissioner to securing international protection for refugees. The High Commissioner's first task was to ensure liberal asylum policies and practices so that no refugee would be returned against his will to a country where he feared persecution on political, racial, religious, or nationality grounds. Once asylum was assured, the High Commissioner's protection mandate was the most important means for assuring adequate rights and status for refugees to whom asylum had been granted, to enable them to become self-supporting and live in dignity. Examples of these rights were the right to hold gainful employment, to

acquire property, to travel within and between countries, to participate in the benefits of national education and social security programmes and to have access to the courts and be protected by them. Without the exercise of those rights, the assistance programmes could degenerate into permanent welfare programmes, which would have deleterious effects on the refugees and expose them to political manipulation.

42. The High Commissioner carried out his function of protecting refugees in many ways. While providing funds and personnel, he often served as a co-ordinator of governmental and voluntary agency action and as a catalytic agent in mobilizing the interest and resources of the international community. He also sought the co-operation of the technical staffs of other organizations within the United Nations Development Programme: the ILO, FAO, UNESCO and the World Food Programme. The leadership of Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands of the European Refugee Campaign for 1966 for which the Prince had received the Nansen medal, was deeply admired and appreciated. The Organization of African Unity was playing an important part in the effort to solve the refugee problem in Africa. The United States Government had noted with interest the important decisions reached by the Conference on the Legal, Economic and Social Aspects of African Refugee Problems held by the Organization of African Unity at Addis Ababa in October 1967. So far as concerned the High Commissioner's work in Europe, his delegation was pleased to note that the large accumulation of mandate refugees had been successfully reduced.

43. Lastly, the United States delegation supported the continuation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, since there was every indication that refugee problems would continue to arise. Unfortunately, the High Commissioner's report showed that the number of refugees and the geographical scope of the problem had expanded. His country strongly supported the activities of the High Commissioner as a means of promoting peace and the right of nations and of all individuals to live in freedom and dignity.

44. Mr. ASTEN (Australia) observed that it was an inescapable fact that refugees were human beings who had the right to ask the United Nations, through the Office of the High Commissioner, to extend to them the means of alleviating their distress and promoting their future well-being. His delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's remarks concerning his co-operation with Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, for it continued to adhere to the principle that the High Commissioner's task should be to act as a stimulator, catalyst and co-ordinator in a much broader endeavour, of which his programme was often only the nucleus. His Government had supported that policy of the High Commissioner, considering that it was essential, through modest financial contributions of a supplementary nature, to stimulate international action and the provision of follow-up aid on a bilateral and multilateral basis. The role of the Office of the High Commissioner should not be to act as an aid agency but to provide immediate assistance which would allow for flexible solutions so that broader programmes, financed by the countries of asylum,

the United Nations Development Programme, the specialized agencies and voluntary organizations, could be initiated.

45. His delegation welcomed the Economic and Social Council's endorsement, in its resolution 1253 (XLIII), of the recommendation (A/6711, app. para. 138) that the High Commissioner should be invited to attend meetings of the Inter-Agency Consultative Board of UNDP; that should make it possible to extend the High Commissioner's work to its logical conclusion, namely a complete solution of individual refugee problems within the framework of over-all development.

46. It was regrettable that at the end of March 1967, according to the High Commissioner's report (A/6711, para. 212), a total of only \$2,521,737 had been paid or pledged towards the financing of UNHCR's current programme for 1967, leaving a deficit of more than \$2 million. Moreover, the High Commissioner had much more serious misgivings concerning the probable financial situation in 1968, and, although UNHCR's close co-operation with other United Nations bodies might help to overcome some of its financial problems, the report indicated that, at the end of March 1967, only fifty-two Governments had made a contribution to the 1966 programme and only thirty-six to the 1967 programme. There was a pressing need to assist the High Commissioner's programme with more widely shared voluntary contributions. His Government would have great difficulty in accepting successively higher budget targets if the cost of the proposed programme was likely to exceed the level of funds being contributed by Governments and voluntary organizations; he would therefore consider it unwise for the High Commissioner to extend his activities either into new areas or into new fields of work such as aid programmes or the assumption of over-all responsibility for the welfare of refugees.

47. His delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's remarks concerning the significant role of voluntary organizations and other non-governmental organizations working for refugees. The success of the campaign conducted in Australia in 1966 and the warmth of the public response had led the organizers to set up a more permanent organization which would continue to operate in support of government assistance to the High Commissioner's programme. Lastly, he wished to reaffirm his delegation's support for the efforts being made in the field of refugee relief, which his Government demonstrated by maintaining its annual contribution of \$150,000 to the High Commissioner's programme; his delegation fully supported the proposal to continue the Office of the High Commissioner for a further period of five years as from 1 January 1969.

48. Mr. A. A. MOHAMMED (Nigeria) thanked the High Commissioner for his statement, which provided an excellent supplement to his report. While many of the questions dealt with in the Committee were of a theoretical nature, the refugee problem was a highly practical matter. It was a problem which a moral and humanitarian organization like the United Nations could not avoid. The role which the High Commissioner for Refugees played in the world was similar to the rôle played in a city by the Fire Department, to

whose vehicles everyone else had to yield the right of way.

49. The refugee problem was assuming increasing importance in Africa. The situation was a result of the colonialism and oppression which were practised on the African continent, and many countries had to contend with those difficulties while they strove to achieve development. Ultimate responsibility for the refugee problem rested with the Governments which had created it, and it was those Governments which contributed the least to its solution. The refugee aid programmes should be financed by all countries in proportion to their relative economic capacity. The oppressor countries should be compelled to make financial contributions.

50. Speaking on behalf of the sponsors, he wished to introduce the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1493), which called for continuing the Office of the High Commissioner and strengthening the role which it played. The draft took an affirmative position regarding the Economic and Social Council's recommendation that the High Commissioner should be invited to attend the meetings of the Inter-Agency Consultative Board of UNDP. Since the General Assembly had seen fit to establish the Office of the High Commissioner, it should give it sufficient funds to carry out its functions; that matter was dealt with in operative paragraph 5. Operative paragraph 6 of the draft resolution called upon Member States to accede to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and to the Protocol thereto, which were extremely important instruments. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously.

51. Mr. ROSSBACH (Norway) thanked the High Commissioner for his interesting and encouraging statement. With regard to the High Commissioner's co-operation with other members of the United Nations system and other international organizations, he recalled that, in October 1966, the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme had recommended that provision for the settlement of refugees should, in so far as possible, be included in projects of the United Nations Development Programme. General Assembly resolution 2197 (XXI) had endorsed that recommendation and referred to the importance of inter-agency co-operation for the work of the High Commissioner. His delegation welcomed the information concerning the exchange of views between the High Commissioner and the Administrator of UNDP, which had resulted in an understanding that UNDP would, wherever possible, lend support to the High Commissioner in connexion with projects which affected both refugees and the local population. That point of view should be expressed in the institutional arrangements for consultation and co-operation within the United Nations family, and it was reflected in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, which his delegation had joined in sponsoring.

52. The voluntary organizations were an essential element in international aid to refugees. He wished to make particular mention of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, which co-ordinated the activities of many different organizations and formed a necessary link between them and the international

governmental organizations. His delegation was glad to note that the High Commissioner had given special attention to the question of educational assistance to refugees, particularly in Africa. Both the Norwegian Government and the Norwegian Refugee Council had contributed to the High Commissioner's special educational account, which had provided assistance to more than 3,700 refugees. It was hardly necessary to stress the fundamental importance of education among the measures required in order to achieve lasting solutions to refugee problems; for that reason, his delegation also welcomed the High Commissioner's co-operation with the United Nations Secretariat and UNESCO in connexion with the educational programmes for South West Africans and refugees from other territories in southern Africa.

53. Although his delegation agreed that the international community should concentrate its main efforts on refugee problems in Africa and Asia, there were some handicapped refugees in Europe who still required attention. During the past year, the High Commissioner had issued an appeal in which a number of countries, including Norway, which over the years had admitted several groups of handicapped refugees, had been asked to receive an additional number of cases in that category. His Government had, in consultation with the Norwegian Refugee Council, decided to receive such a group at about the end of 1967; he hoped that a similar response would be forthcoming from other Member States for the benefit of those unfortunate people.

54. His delegation was glad to note that six countries had already acceded to the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees; it also welcomed the draft Declaration on Territorial Asylum adopted by the Sixth Committee at the present session (A/6912, para. 70). At the last session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, a number of delegations had announced that they would increase their financial contributions for 1968; among those delegations had been his own, which, subject to parliamentary approval, had announced an increase of 25 per cent over its 1967 contribution. Despite the increased contributions which had been pledged, a sizable shortfall would remain in the High Commissioner's current programme; he therefore hoped that more Member States would support that important humanitarian work and that many of those which were already making contributions would be able to increase them in 1968.

55. Mr. PAOLINI (France) congratulated the High Commissioner on his excellent report (A/6711), which provided a very encouraging balance-sheet on the humanitarian work which he had carried out in such a flexible and effective manner during 1967.

56. The legal protection of refugees had been given new impetus by the entry into force of the Protocol to the 1951 Convention, which marked the gradual completion of a process that had begun with the various international conventions adopted between the two world wars. The recent adoption by the Sixth Committee of the draft Declaration on Territorial Asylum (A/6912, para. 70) was, in its turn, evidence of the spirit of solidarity and sense of responsibility demonstrated by the United Nations in that field; in that

connexion, he also welcomed the results achieved by the African countries at the conference recently held at Addis Ababa. Interest in the refugee problem had shifted to the activities being undertaken in Africa, where some 500,000 refugees had been resettled thanks to the generosity of the countries which had received them and to international assistance provided mainly by the High Commissioner. He noted, in that connexion, the important progress which had been made in the matter of co-operation with the specialized agencies, particularly in agriculture and education.

57. The connexion established between the problems of the refugees and those of development was extraordinarily important, for the existence of a refugee problem was enough in some cases to make possible the initiation of emergency measures for the adoption and application of regional development programmes. It was thus one of the functions of multilateral development aid to enable emergency aid programmes started by the High Commissioner to be carried on without a break. With a view to strengthening that co-operation, the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolution 1253 (XLIII) asking that the High Commissioner should be invited to attend the meetings of the UNDP Inter-Agency Consultative Board. Furthermore, an appeal had been addressed to the member Governments of the Executive Committee of the Programme to give the refugee problem special consideration in 1968, which was the International Year for Human Rights. The French Government had agreed to a fairly considerable increase, amounting to a total of \$100,000, in its contributions for 1967.

58. As to the continuation of the High Commissioner's Office for a further period of five years, his delegation unreservedly supported the proposal, and it would therefore vote in favour of the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1493).

59. Mr. ERALP (Turkey) congratulated the High Commissioner on his outstanding work, which had contributed greatly to the solution of the most difficult problems. The High Commissioner's excellent report (A/6711) clearly reflected the difficulties raised by the refugee problems which had recently arisen in the African continent. Unfortunately, the report showed that those problems could hardly be solved within a short space of time. His delegation therefore believed that, now more than ever before, the High Commissioner's Office deserved the continued and vigorous support of all Governments.

60. His delegation supported the continuation of the High Commissioner's Office for a further period of five years, or for a longer period if the High Commissioner considered it necessary. The mere continuation of the Office would be meaningless, however, unless it was accompanied by the provision of sufficient means, both financial and moral, which would be particularly necessary for the activities in Africa.

61. It must be admitted, therefore, that additional funds would have to be provided for the High Commissioner's Office; and the High Commissioner's appeal to all countries, and particularly to the more affluent ones, to increase their contributions to the programme was therefore quite justified. The Turkish

Government, for its part, had doubled its modest voluntary contribution as a token of its appreciation of the difficulties with which the High Commissioner's Office was faced.

62. His delegation was in general agreement with the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, which purported to remove the restrictions established by the 1951 Convention and to adapt the Convention to present-day realities. The Turkish Government would shortly accede to the Protocol.

63. One of the most encouraging aspects of the report was the information it supplied on the growing co-operation between, on the one hand, the High Commissioner's Office and, on the other hand, the United Nations specialized agencies and other bodies, particularly UNESCO and the United Nations Development Programme. The report highlighted the effects which that co-operation had already had on the assistance rendered to African refugees and their final resettlement; and he therefore supported the recommendation of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme that the High Commissioner should be invited to the meetings of the UNDP Inter-Agency Consultative Board.

64. He also supported the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on the development and utilization of human resources^{2/}, in which the refugees were regarded as a positive and constructive factor in economic and social development. The adaptation of the refugees to their new environment and their integration in the country of asylum through education was a humanitarian obligation; and he therefore welcomed the close co-operation between the High Commissioner's Office and UNESCO.

65. Mr. BENGTON (Sweden) expressed his full support for the High Commissioner and for the dynamic and imaginative way in which his Office was discharging the functions that had been entrusted to it.

66. He expressed satisfaction that the various refugee problems in Europe had now been essentially settled, and that the number of such refugees was dwindling. They included the most difficult cases, but he noted that a solution of the problem of handicapped refugees seemed to be within reach. That was particularly welcome to his country, where special attention had always been given to such cases.

67. He also expressed his satisfaction at the entry into force of the Protocol to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which would serve to remove possible discrimination between different categories of refugees due to the definitions that had so far been applied; and he appealed to all States to establish the necessary conditions for accession to the Protocol as soon as possible.

68. Expressing his concern at the insecure basis for the financing of the programme, he observed that, though the financial problems of the 1967 programme seemed to have been solved, that had been possible owing to the use of extraordinary means—such as the resources obtained from the European campaign—which could not be counted on in 1968, when the

shortage of funds would be felt. The only way of solving that problem in the long run was through substantially increased government contributions and, in that connexion, the Swedish Government had decided to increase its regular contribution in 1968 from \$200,000 to \$250,000; it might also make an extra contribution.

69. He approved the High Commissioner's programme as a whole, and regarded as sound the educational policy it propounded, which was that a special education account should be placed at the High Commissioner's disposal. He noted with disappointment, however, that so far only Nordic countries had contributed to the education account. If the reason for that was the view that refugee education above the primary level should not be the concern of the international community, he wished strongly to disassociate himself from such a standpoint. Both for humanitarian, and for social and economic reasons, education was desirable to enable the refugees to make a greater contribution to the development of their new country of residence. In many cases, however, the provision of such post-primary education would place an intolerable economic burden on the country of asylum, and it was therefore the international community which should assume responsibility for the financial aspects of such education. Neither UNESCO nor the United Nations Development Programme was in a position to furnish the necessary funds. The Swedish Government was considering the possibility of increasing its contribution for the scholastic year beginning in the autumn of 1968, and it hoped that its attitude would be shared by other Governments.

70. The Swedish Government warmly supported the continuation of the High Commissioner's Office, and it hoped that the joint draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1493) would be unanimously adopted.

71. Mr. MELOVSKI (Yugoslavia) thanked the High Commissioner for the report on the work of his Office (A/6711), which contained some very interesting information on the results achieved in seeking a solution of the refugee problem, and on the difficulties encountered.

72. He also considered it important that a solution had finally been found for the problems of the refugees from Europe; for that would enable the High Commissioner to concentrate on other, more urgent problems, such as the problem of the refugees in Africa, whose number was constantly increasing and who were a burden on the countries of first asylum, which were unable to devote more resources to the solution of the problem. The High Commissioner's Office was therefore confronted with the urgent and imperative task of making a maximum effort to solve the problem of those refugees and give the countries concerned its support. Although important results had already been achieved, much remained to be done, since the number of refugees would probably keep on rising due to the situation in southern Africa, where the colonialist racist régimes were subjecting the local population to renewed persecution and pressure.

73. The results so far achieved would have been greater if the Office had had more funds. A greater effort by the international community, to which his

^{2/} Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Forty-third Session, Annexes, agenda items 2 and 8, document E/4353.

Government would willingly contribute within the limits of its resources, was therefore very necessary.

74. The High Commissioner had continued his co-operation with a growing number of Governments and many governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions; and he had encouraged the development of co-operation between the Governments of countries of first asylum and other countries of immigration.

75. His delegation therefore approved the proposal that the High Commissioner's Office should be continued for a further period of five years; it was pleased to be among the sponsors of the draft resolution to that effect which had been submitted (A/C.3/L.1493).

76. Lastly, he stressed the willingness of his Government to continue, as in the past, its co-operation with the High Commissioner's Office.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.