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REFUGEES AND STATELESS PERSONS

Financial implications of the draft resolutions
proposed by the Third Committee (A/1118)

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Dr. Maria Z. M. WITTEVEEN (Netherlands)

1. In accordance with rule 142 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and with the request of the President in his letter dated 19 November 1949 to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/C.5/359), the Fifth Committee, at its 230th meeting held on 29 November 1949, considered the effect on the budget estimates for 1950 of the two draft resolutions relating to refugees and stateless persons (A/1118 resolutions A and B) adopted by the Third Committee on 15 November 1949.
2. The Committee had before it a note by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/357) on the financial implications of these draft resolutions, and the twenty-sixth report of 1949 (A/1154) of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, which had considered the note by the Secretary-General, referred to it by the Fifth Committee at its 227th meeting.
3. Inasmuch as the date set in draft resolution A for the establishment of the High Commissioner's Office was 1 January 1951, the Secretary-General was of the opinion that no supplementary budget appropriations for the financial year 1950 would be needed on that account. However, should the Economic and Social Council, at its eleventh session, decide on the necessity for a small planning group in the late months of 1950, as envisaged by the Secretary-General in his report (A/C.3/527) and by the Advisory Committee (fifteenth report of 1949, A/1059),

/the Secretary-General

the Secretary-General might find it necessary to request a transfer of funds between sections of the budget or to have recourse to the Working Capital Fund with the concurrence of the Advisory Committee. The Secretary-General further pointed out that the precise budgetary consequences of this draft resolution would be considered in connexion with the 1951 budget estimates. In his opinion, the administrative expenses of the High Commissioner's Office in 1951, as envisaged in resolution A, would be in the order of \$400,000 (net).

4. The Advisory Committee had noted (A/1154) that the Secretary-General did not anticipate the need for an appropriation for 1950 with respect to the High Commissioner's Office. Should unforeseen circumstances call for special preparatory work during the latter part of 1950, the Advisory Committee would be prepared to concur in the transfer of funds between sections of the budget, or, at need, in an advance from the Working Capital Fund. It had further noted that, as regards the tentative estimate of expenditure during 1951 in respect of the High Commissioner's Office, the Secretary-General had had regard to the observations made in its previous report on this subject and that, in view of the definition of functions recommended by the Third Committee, the original estimate had been reduced from \$750,000 to \$400,000. The Advisory Committee had stated that the submission of precise figures at the present time was, of course, impossible but that when events could be foreseen more clearly, budget estimates would be prepared in consultation with the Advisory Committee, prior to the fifth regular session of the General Assembly.

5. In the course of the discussion in the Fifth Committee, the representative of Brazil raised the question of the potential financial implications in the future of the draft resolutions. In his opinion, the costs of possible material assistance to refugees, which might be considerable, should not be borne by the United Nations but should be covered from other sources. The resolutions proposed by the Third Committee should, therefore, in his view, be so amended as to make it clear that only administrative costs would be for the account of the United Nations in 1951 and thereafter. The majority of the members of the Committee, however, were of the opinion that the Brazilian proposal could not be entertained by the Fifth Committee and agreed that, in accordance with the letter from the President of the General Assembly, the mandate of the Committee related exclusively to the requirements of rule 142 of the rules of procedure, that is to say: that the Committee had to state the effect of the draft resolution on the budget estimates for 1950.

6. The representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics stated that, in the opinion of his delegation, the care of refugees did not fall within the competence of the General Assembly or of the Economic and
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Social Council as defined by the Charter. He, therefore, objected to the reports of the Advisory Committee and of the Secretary-General and announced that he would vote against any appropriation for the purpose.

7. The Committee noted that, inasmuch as the date set in draft resolution A for the establishment of the High Commissioner's Office was 1 January 1951, the Secretary-General did not anticipate the need for an appropriation for 1950 on that account. In connexion with the observation of the Advisory Committee concerning possible unforeseen circumstances calling for special preparatory work during the latter part of 1950, the Committee was informed by the representative of the Secretary-General that, should such expenses arise, they would not be likely to exceed \$10,000 - \$20,000, and that they would relate only to planning for the establishment of the High Commissioner's Office, and not to the actual operation of the Office.

8. The Committee was further informed that the draft resolutions provided for further consideration of the question of refugees and stateless persons by the General Assembly at its fifth regular session, and that budget estimates for the operation in 1951 of the High Commissioner's Office for Refugees, to be prepared in consultation with the Advisory Committee, would be submitted at that time.

9. The Fifth Committee decided, by 23 votes to none, with 4 abstentions, to recommend to the General Assembly that it should note that the adoption of draft resolutions A and B submitted by the Third Committee would have no effect on the budget estimates for 1950.
