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CONFERENCE OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES
ON THE STATUS OF REFUGEES AND
STATELESS PERSONS

Dual Distribution

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING ARTICLE I OF THE DRAFT CONVENTION
RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES

Statement submitted by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, a non-governmental organization in consultative relationship with the Economic and Social Council.

The Executive Secretary has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with Rule 27 of the rules of procedure of the Conference.

Submitted: 4 July 1951.

Received: 5 July 1951.

Article I C in its present form excludes from the benefits of the Convention "persons who are at present receiving from other organs or agencies of the United Nations protection or assistance". The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs begs to submit the following comments for the consideration of the Conference:

- (i) The reference to "other organs or agencies" suggests that the Convention itself is an organ or agency of the United Nations. Some redrafting to omit the word "other" may contribute to clarity.
- (ii) It seems to the Commission that the exclusion for all time of persons "at present" (which is presumably the date of ratification)

receiving assistance or protection from what may be only a temporary agency of United Nations is an unfair discrimination against refugees whose condition as refugees may persist beyond the period of present assistance. It is suggested that the paragraph should be so redrafted as to make it clear that the period of exclusion should be only coincidental with a period of assistance and protection.

- (iii) Material assistance is not in itself a guarantee of protection and the Commission suggests that, if this clause is to stand, it should be amended to read "assistance and protection" rather than "assistance or protection".