



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

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RESETTLEMENT AS A SOLUTION TO THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

(Note prepared by the High Commissioner in co-operation with  
the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration)

Introduction

1. According to UNHCR estimates there will be on 1 January 1960 some 105,000 non-settled refugees in Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy and Turkey. At the same date there will also remain some 700 identified non-settled refugees in the Middle East, and an estimated 7,500 refugees of European origin in the Far East needing resettlement overseas.

2. Permanent solutions through resettlement or integration are being sought for non-settled refugees in the above mentioned European countries. In the implementation of resettlement, valuable assistance has been given to UNHCR by governments of countries of first and second asylum, by the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, the United States Escapee Program and by national and international voluntary agencies. Substantial support for resettlement efforts has also been given to the Far Eastern Programme.

Current resettlement opportunities

3. At the present time resettlement opportunities for refugees who meet normal immigration requirements are provided either within the framework of a government labour scheme or on the basis of a sponsorship for which responsibility may be accepted by the government, an agency or an individual person in the country of resettlement. The sponsorship arrangements may also apply to handicapped refugees, though to a much more limited extent.

4. Some overseas countries, particularly Australia, provide a continuing outlet under their labour schemes for an appreciable proportion of persons within the non-settled refugee caseload in Europe who meet normal immigration requirements. Furthermore several countries, especially Brazil and the United States give additional opportunities for the admission of an increased number of sponsored refugees.

5. Handicapped refugees have been admitted by the Governments of Argentine, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. During 1959 the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom have in several instances extended or initiated schemes for handicapped refugees as a contribution to World Refugee Year.

6. As a matter of special interest to the solution of the problem of handicapped refugees, mention should be made of the recent decision of the United States to authorize, under an amendment to Section 6 of Public Law 85-316, the extension to 30 June 1961 of the waivers of exclusion of certain aliens afflicted with tuberculosis. Under this new legislation waivers may be granted to relatives of refugees who have already immigrated to the United States as well as to close relatives of refugees who have received their immigration visas. The latter provision, which is new, is designed to avoid even a temporary separation of families and will be of great benefit to refugee families which include members suffering from tuberculosis.

#### Resettlement opportunities needed

7. Despite these opportunities already mentioned there is as yet no evidence that total resettlement needs are being met, when considering the known element within the overall non-settled refugee caseload which desires emigration as a solution. For example ICEM registration figures as at 1 July 1959 show that there were in Austria some 8,000 refugees (including 4,100 New Hungarians) and in Italy 4,580 refugees, seeking firm resettlement opportunities. At this stage, however, ICEM estimates that it will move approximately 2,770 refugees from Austria (including 1,250 New Hungarians) and 1,985 refugees from Italy to new homes in Europe and overseas during the period 1 July - 31 December 1959.

8. Ideally the solution to the problem of the non-settled refugees wishing to emigrate would be for governments either to initiate new immigration schemes or to increase existing ones, with particular emphasis on schemes for handicapped refugees, as a continuing feature. There is no doubt, for example, that given special attention by Governments the residual group of New Hungarian refugees in Austria desiring emigration could be solved. World Refugee Year might be regarded by governments as a challenge to take action along these lines. Governments which are not admitting refugees at present might consider as a first step the possibility of establishing small quotas under experimental schemes. UNHCR and ICEM could help to implement these pilot schemes, the results of which might then be evaluated by the governments and become the basis for admissions on a larger scale. Again, governments might provide for refugees to be given the same consideration as national migrants, at least during World Refugee Year. But such measures would only be effective if Governments at the same time broadened the criteria for normal immigration requirements and gave special opportunities for the handicapped category.

#### Broadening the bases of selection under normal emmigration requirements

Part of the problem of resettling refugees could be met if the criteria for acceptance under which refugees are admitted were broadened. For example, age limits imposed in respect of breadwinners might be raised by five or ten years. If limitations on the size of families were also eased, this would help to relieve the problem of families, whose children have been born in refugee camps. Reception countries might also consider the possibility of liberalizing occupational criteria and encouraging efforts for placement of individual refugees in professions. Such measures would solve the problem of the intermediate group of refugees who are not actually handicapped, but who have not yet been accepted under normal immigration schemes.

#### Special opportunities for handicapped refugees

10. The situation of handicapped refugees and their dependents who wish to emigrate constitutes one of the most difficult aspects of the resettlement problem to be met during World Refugee Year. Both UNHCR and ICEM are endeavouring to compile as much information as possible concerning these refugees. Much progress has been made, for example, in Austria towards identifying the handicapped caseload,

including tubercular and post-tubercular refugees. By 1 July 1959 ICEM had registered 7,100 handicapped refugees and dependents, 1,300 of whom had expressed a desire for emigration. Within both figures the tubercular and post-tubercular refugees constitute the largest numbers. Copies of the nominal roll of tubercular and post-tubercular refugees registered in Austria by ICEM have already been transmitted to a number of interested governments. In Italy ICEM, in co-ordination with UNHCR, USEP and the voluntary agencies, has begun a medical survey of all refugees living in camps in order to identify the handicapped cases.

11. As a first step towards tackling the problem of handicapped refugees, countries of resettlement might unreservedly encourage the reunion of relatives with their families. This applies particularly to dependent parents whose admission to date has been refused for such reasons as active tuberculosis. Governments are also asked to consider admitting small groups of handicapped cases. Two main types of scheme are required. The first is for families with dependent children where the breadwinner is handicapped. Until the children have grown up this type of family will need considerable support from public assistance. The second type of scheme is for families whose breadwinner is able to work, but for which resettlement opportunities are difficult to secure because the wife or children are handicapped. UNHCR and ICEM, in co-operation with the voluntary agencies, would be prepared to work out special schemes to meet the requirements of individual governments for the assimilation of such groups.

#### Identification of non-settled refugees wishing to emigrate

12. UNHCR and ICEM have been attempting to identify through the registration of refugees and other means the element within the non-settled refugees who wish to emigrate. Experience has proved that these registrations are effective in identifying the characteristics of the non-settled refugees, but are not reliable in measuring the desire for resettlement. This is because the refugee at the time of registration may be discouraged by previous rejections for resettlement and believe there is no other alternative for him than to remain in the country in which he now resides. At the time of registration there may also be only a limited number of resettlement opportunities or sponsorships available and the refugee sees no hope of emigration. Another important element influencing the indications received from refugees is the economic conditions prevailing in the countries of first asylum and the temporary personal situation of the refugee at the time of registration.

13. In Austria, in particular, registration data concerning the desire of refugees to emigrate fluctuate considerably. For example in the first six months of 1959, some 700 New Hungarian Refugees who had previously registered a desire to remain in Austria indicated that they wished to emigrate, and it was possible to resettle 241 of these refugees in the same period. Although there have been some changes in the opposite direction - i.e. refugees who had previously indicated a desire for resettlement changed to a wish to remain in Austria - such changes have not been significant.

14. It is, therefore, considered that the following data obtained from ICEM registrations in Austria and Italy should, because of the reasons previously mentioned and because registration data does not cover all refugees living outside official or unofficial camps, be regarded as indicating the minimum number of refugees in these countries who actively wish to be resettled.

Country and refugee group	Total registered	Refugees desiring emigration	Handicapped refugees <sup>a</sup>
<u>AUSTRIA</u>			
New Hungarian refugees	10,600	4,100	1,570
Other New Refugees	2,130	2,100	100
Old refugees	9,670	1,800	5,430
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,400</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>7,100</b>
<u>ITALY</u>			
New Hungarian refugees	90	80	...
Other New Refugees	3,800	3,800	...
Old refugees	800	700	...
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,690<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>4,580</b>	<b>...</b>

<sup>a</sup> Including accompanying dependents.

<sup>b</sup> As at 1 July 1959 there were some 870 refugees living in camps whose registration had not been effected.

Note: Information on handicapped refugees living in Italy will be available after completion of Medical Survey initiated at the end of September 1959.

15. Among the 8,000 refugees in Austria desiring emigration there are 1,300 handicapped cases and their accompanying dependents. However, it is believed that the total number of handicapped cases and dependents wishing to emigrate would be much higher if firm resettlement offers were forthcoming. For example in the early part of 1959 Norway and Sweden offered opportunities for aged, tubercular and other cases and among those recruited under these two schemes were a large proportion who had previously indicated they wished to remain in Austria because they had no hope of any other solution.

Summary of measures required to meet the needs of refugees desiring emigration

16. In promulgating World Refugee Year, governments have agreed that special efforts should be made to bring the refugee problem closer to a solution. These efforts must be directed to a great extent towards the satisfactory integration of refugees in their country of present asylum. However, when integration proved impossible owing to the conditions prevailing in the country of first asylum, or when the refugees themselves desire to emigrate, the Government of countries of resettlement can assume their share of the burden by making immigration opportunities available and ensuring that the largest possible movements of refugees are completed during World Refugee Year. To the extent that the maximum possibilities for resettlement are not realised in 1960, the full aim of World Refugee Year will not have been achieved.

17. The High Commissioner and the Director of ICEM believe therefore that the Governments of countries of resettlement could make a significant contribution during World Refugee Year if they would agree to consider reviewing administrative practices used in implementing their immigration policies, in order to determine which features might be modified, either to initiate or increase the admission of refugees. In this connexion, the following points are brought to the attention of Governments as a basis for any action which they might consider desirable:

- (a) Governments might agree, in principle to select suitable groups of refugees, including migrants broadly classified as refugees, under greatly liberalized occupational criteria.
- (b) Governments might extend the age limits now fixed for refugees accepted under Government schemes.
- (c) Governments might allow, in principle, a relaxation in the existing criteria for all cases of refugees who already have relatives in countries of reception and whose admission to date has been refused on health or occupational grounds.

(d) Governments might provide for the admission, first on an experimental basis and then desirably on a broad and continuing basis, of handicapped refugees both from Europe and the Far East for whom responsibility in the receiving countries would be assumed by the Government, Voluntary Agencies or individual sponsors.

(e) Governments might apply fully the principle of family migration in order to allow for the acceptance of large refugee families and also dependent parents together with their single or married children.

(f) Governments might examine the extent to which they could contribute towards the transportation costs of refugees whose admission is approved.

18. For their part, both UNHCR and ICEM would co-operate fully with each of the receiving countries in endeavouring to provide such data and assistance as may be required to ensure the successful implementation of any refugee schemes.

#### Special role of ICEM

19. Governments are aware of the complementary and essential function performed by ICEM in resolving the problem of refugees. Under the impact of World Refugee Year, resettlement opportunities have increased and it is hoped that they will be intensified and broadened by 1 January 1960. It is part of ICEM's responsibility to be associated with the processing of refugees and to undertake the movement of refugees. Consequently the attention of Governments is drawn to the fact that additional funds will be needed by ICEM for this purpose.