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STATELESSNESS

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE DRAFT PROTOCOL
RELATING TO THE STATUS OF STATELESS PERSONS

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith the communication received from the Belgian Government in reply to the letter addressed by the Secretary-General in accordance with General Assembly resolution 629 (VII) of 6 November 1952, to all the governments invited to the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons (held at Geneva in July 1951) with a view to obtaining their comments on the draft protocol relating to the status of stateless persons.

BELGIUM

Letter of 17 December 1952 to the Secretary-General from the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Belgium

"The Belgian Government considers that the problem of statelessness is essentially different from that of refugees. While refugees are the victims of political regimes which violate freedom and human dignity, the fact that non-refugee stateless persons have no nationality is in most cases the result either of their own express wishes or of their negligence.

"In these circumstances, the Belgian Government does not consider that there are grounds for granting such stateless persons the privileged treatment established on behalf of refugees by the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951. It would, however, be prepared to guarantee them the treatment enjoyed in Belgian territory by aliens in general.

"The problem to which, in the opinion of the Belgian Government, attention should be directed and which has already been considered by the International Law Commission of the United Nations is that of reducing the causes of statelessness by making appropriate changes in existing legislation."