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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Report of the Third Committee

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 1939th meeting, on 25 September 1971, the General Assembly allocated to the Third Committee agenda item 58 entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees". The Committee considered the item at its 1874th and 1875th meetings, on 17 November 1971 (see section II). The Committee devoted its 1876th, 1877th and 1879th meetings, on 18, 19 and 22 November to the consideration of United Nations assistance to East Pakistani refugees through the United Nations focal point and the United Nations humanitarian assistance to East Pakistan and heard statements of the United Nations humanitarian assistance to East in his capacity as the focal point and the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the United Nations relief operation in East Pakistan (see section III).

2. At its 1874th meeting, the High Commissioner made a statement<sup>1/</sup> on his normal functions supplementing the written report which he had submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.<sup>2/</sup> He noted that the problems of a majority of refugees of concern to his office had been solved in one way or another. He underlined the consequences, including the financial consequences, of the increase in the number of refugees in Africa. He appreciated the growing support of the work of his office and the increasing number of Governments contributing to the programme of assistance and adhering to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol to the Convention. The fact that his office was associated with country programming and with the elaboration of development projects in regions where refugees were accommodated and that the office could, where necessary, participate financially in these projects, would facilitate the consolidation of rural settlement of refugees in Africa and enlarge the field of co-operation with other competent bodies of the United Nations system.

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<sup>1/</sup> A summary of the statement is contained in the summary record of the meeting (A/C.3/SR.1874).

<sup>2/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/8412) and Supplement No. 12 A (A/8412/Add.1).

II. REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER  
FOR REFUGEES

A. General debate<sup>3/</sup>

3. Delegations expressed to the High Commissioner their satisfaction regarding his efforts to help bring about permanent solutions to refugee problems and their full confidence in the manner in which he carried out his humanitarian work of assistance to and protection of refugees. Emphasis was laid on voluntary repatriation and on the role that the High Commissioner may be called upon to play, through the exercise of his good offices, in order to facilitate the rehabilitation, in the country of origin, of groups of refugees who have returned voluntarily to their homeland.

4. Delegations stressed the importance they attached to the protection function of the High Commissioner. Some delegates welcomed the new accessions to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol defining the legal status of refugees. Many delegations expressed the wish that this task would be continued in the humanitarian spirit which characterized the work of the High Commissioner.

5. The increase in the number of refugees in Africa, particularly those coming from colonial territories, was noted with regret. While recognizing that it was not within the competence of the High Commissioner to deal with the causes of the problem of refugees, many delegations expressed the hope that the colonial system that produced these refugees be ended.

6. Mention was made of the constructive role of the Bureau of the Organization of African Unity for the placement and education of African refugees working in liaison with the social services established with the assistance of the High Commissioner's Office, in the search for solutions to the special problems of individual refugees, particularly in the urban regions. The High Commissioner's active interest in the education of refugees was appreciated and the importance of the co-operation of non-governmental organizations acting in good faith and without political motivations for the accomplishment of the High Commissioner's humanitarian task was underlined.

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<sup>3/</sup> See A/C.3/SR.1874 and 1875.

7. Delegations expressed their satisfaction in regard to the increase in the number of countries contributing to the financing of the assistance programme as well as in regard to the increased contributions from some of them. Some delegations reiterated the wish that the programme might be entirely financed from governmental sources.

#### B. Draft resolution

8. During the debate, a draft resolution was introduced by Denmark on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Iran, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Republic, Nepal, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, the Sudan, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Yugoslavia and Zaire (A/C.3/L.1883). Later, Belgium, Dahomey, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Togo, Tunisia and Uganda also became co-sponsors. The representative of Ghana orally introduced an amendment, which he later withdrew. The representative of Denmark, speaking on behalf of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution, accepted, with a slight alteration, the amendment introduced by Saudi Arabia (A/C.3/L.1884). The draft resolution, as revised, was adopted at the 1875th meeting (see paragraph 18, draft resolution I).

### III. UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE TO EAST PAKISTANI REFUGEES THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS FOCAL POINT AND UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO EAST PAKISTAN

#### A. Debate<sup>4/</sup>

9. Upon concluding its consideration of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on his normal activities, the Third Committee, at its 1876th meeting on 18 November, heard a statement by the High Commissioner in his capacity as the focal point for the co-ordination of assistance from and through the United Nations system to East Pakistani refugees in India. The Committee also heard at its 1877th meeting on 19 November, a statement by the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the United Nations East Pakistan relief

<sup>4/</sup> See A/C.3/SR.1876-1879.

operation. The 1876th to 1879th meetings of the Committee were devoted to the comprehensive consideration of these two operations.

B. Draft resolutions

10. During the 1877th meeting, the representative of the Netherlands introduced a draft resolution A/C.3/L.1885 on behalf of the Netherlands and New Zealand. Subsequently, Sweden also joined as co-sponsor of the draft resolution, which read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Noting the report made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on his activities as focal point in co-ordinating international relief assistance for refugees from East Pakistan in India,

"Noting also the report made by the Secretary-General on the United Nations programme of relief assistance to the people of East Pakistan,

"Wishing to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Refugees, and their staffs, for the work they have done in difficult conditions,

"Deeply concerned at the magnitude of the human suffering to which the crisis in East Pakistan has given rise and at its possible consequences,

"Concerned also at the heavy burden imposed on India and at the disturbing influence of the general situation on the process of economic and social development in the area,

"Noting with appreciation the prompt and generous response of the international community to the needs that have arisen from the crisis, including the efforts of non-governmental organizations to raise funds for the relief of the suffering,

"Recognizing that voluntary repatriation is the only satisfactory solution to the refugee problem and that this is fully accepted by all concerned,

"Believing that the voluntary repatriation of the refugees can be brought about only if a climate of confidence is created,

"Convinced that further large-scale international assistance is required to meet the needs of the refugees in India and of the people of East Pakistan,

/...

"1. Expresses its profound sympathy with those who have suffered from the situation in the area;

"2. Appeals to Governments, intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations to intensify their efforts to assist, directly or indirectly, in relieving the suffering of the refugees in India and of the people of East Pakistan;

"3. Appeals to the Government of Pakistan to intensify its efforts to create conditions that would restore the climate of confidence indispensable for the promotion of voluntary repatriation;

"4. Appeals to the Government of India to continue to promote an atmosphere of good-neighbourliness that would diminish tensions in the area and encourage the refugees to return to their homes;

"5. Requests the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to continue their efforts to co-ordinate international assistance and to ensure that it is used to the maximum advantage to relieve the suffering of the refugees in India and of the people of East Pakistan."

11. The representative of Saudi Arabia submitted an amendment (A/C.3/L.1890) suggesting the replacement of paragraphs 3 and 4 of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1885 by the following:

"Appeals to all concerned and involved in the area to promote an atmosphere of good-neighbourliness and to restore a general climate of confidence indispensable for the promotion of the voluntary repatriation of refugees."

12. The representative of Nigeria introduced oral proposals and amendments to the draft resolution at the 1878th meeting of the Committee. These were subsequently presented in document A/C.3/L.1891 and read as follows:

"Proposals

"There should be:

"I. A discussion and no summation of any kind.

"II. A summation by the Chairman of the Third Committee at the end of the discussion.

"III. The adoption of the draft recommendation submitted by Tunisia in document A/C.3/L.1887.

"Amendments

"1. Following operative paragraph 1 add a new paragraph 2 as follows:

'Endorses the mandate given by the Secretary-General to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to render assistance to the Pakistani refugees in India.'

"2. In operative paragraph 2 replace the words 'directly or indirectly' by the words 'With the collaboration of the Governments concerned'.

"3. Delete operative paragraph 3.

"4. Operative paragraph 4 should be amended to read:

'Appeals to the Governments of India and of Pakistan to continue to promote an atmosphere which would encourage the speedy return of the refugees to their homes.'

"5. The operative paragraphs as amended should be numbered as follows:

(a) following the new suggested operative paragraph 2, the present operative paragraph 5 will be operative paragraph 3;

(b) the present operative paragraph 2 will become operative paragraph 4;

(c) the present operative paragraph 4 as amended will become operative paragraph 5."

13. The amendments submitted by Nigeria and Saudi Arabia regarding operative paragraphs 3 and 4 of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1885 were subsequently withdrawn in favour of an amendment orally introduced by the representative of Somalia and which the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1885 agreed to insert in their text. This amendment would replace operative paragraphs 3 and 4 of the draft resolution by the following:

"Urges all Member States in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter to intensify their efforts to bring about conditions necessary for the speedy and voluntary repatriation of the refugees to their homes."

14. The representative of Nigeria orally amended the text of his new paragraph to be added after the first operative paragraph as follows:

/...

"Endorses the designation by the Secretary-General of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to be the focal point for the co-ordination of assistance to East Pakistani refugees in India from and through the United Nations system as well as the Secretary-General's initiative in establishing the United Nations East Pakistan Relief Operation."

15. The co-sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1885 agreed to add to the text of paragraph 2 the words "and in collaboration with the Governments concerned". They also agreed to re-number the operative paragraphs as suggested in the amendment submitted by Nigeria.
16. The draft resolution, as revised and amended, was adopted unanimously at the 1879th meeting (see paragraph 18, draft resolution II A).
17. At the 1878th meeting, the representative of Tunisia orally presented a recommendation for adoption by the Third Committee, which would have the General Assembly recommend that the President of the General Assembly should make a statement on the subject. The recommendation was subsequently submitted in the form of a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1887/Rev.2). At its 1879th meeting the Committee unanimously adopted the draft resolution submitted by Tunisia (see paragraph 18, draft resolution II B).

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

18. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

##### DRAFT RESOLUTION I

##### Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees<sup>5/</sup> concerning his current activities and having heard his statement,

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<sup>5/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/8412 and Supplement No. 12 A (A/8412/Add.1)).



Noting with appreciation the results obtained by the High Commissioner in the accomplishment of his humanitarian task of providing international protection to refugees within his mandate and promoting permanent solutions to their problems,

Considering the increasing and fruitful co-operation between the High Commissioner and the other members of the United Nations system in the field of rural settlement, education and training of refugees in developing countries, particularly in Africa, which results in a better co-ordination of action and a greater efficiency of the United Nations system as a whole,

Noting with satisfaction the recent decision of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme to approve the participation of the High Commissioner in the new country programming system adopted by the United Nations Development Programme and his association, where necessary, with any efforts made by Governments, with the assistance of the Programme, to develop regions where large groups of refugees are being settled with the assistance of the High Commissioner,

Recognizing the importance of voluntary repatriation as a permanent solution to the refugee problem and the useful role that United Nations bodies and non-governmental agencies can play in facilitating the rehabilitation of groups of refugees who have voluntarily returned to their countries of origin,

Noting with satisfaction the increasing number of Governments contributing to the High Commissioner's assistance programme and the substantial increase in some of these contributions,

Commending the growing number of accessions to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol to the Convention,

1. Expresses its deep satisfaction for the efficient manner with which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and his staff continue to accomplish their humanitarian tasks;

2. Requests the High Commissioner to continue to provide international protection and assistance to refugees who are his concern, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions and the directives of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme;

3. Requests the High Commissioner to continue his efforts, in co-operation with Governments, United Nations bodies and voluntary agencies, to promote permanent and speedy solutions to the problems of refugees who are his concern through voluntary repatriation, integration in countries of asylum or resettlement in other countries;

4. Urges Governments to continue to lend their support to the High Commissioner's humanitarian action by:

(a) Facilitating the accomplishment of his task in the field of international protection;

(b) Co-operating in the promotion of permanent solutions to refugee problems-

(c) Providing the necessary means to attain the financial targets established with the approval of the Executive Committee.

#### DRAFT RESOLUTION II

United Nations assistance to East Pakistani refugees  
through the United Nations focal point and United  
Nations humanitarian assistance to East Pakistan

#### A

The General Assembly,

Noting the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on his activities as focal point in co-ordinating international relief assistance for refugees from East Pakistan in India,<sup>6/</sup>

Noting also the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations programme of relief assistance to the people of East Pakistan,

Wishing to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General and to the High Commissioner, and to their staffs, for the work they have done in difficult conditions,

Deeply concerned at the magnitude of the human suffering to which the crisis in East Pakistan has given rise and at its possible consequences,

Concerned also at the heavy burden imposed on India and at the disturbing influence of the general situation on the process of economic and social development in the area,

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<sup>6/</sup> See A/C.3/SR.1874.

Noting with appreciation the prompt and generous response of the international community to the needs that have arisen from the crisis, including the efforts of non-governmental organizations to raise funds for the relief of the suffering,

Recognizing that voluntary repatriation is the only satisfactory solution to this refugee problem and that this is fully accepted by all concerned,

Believing that the voluntary repatriation of the refugees can be brought about only if a climate of confidence is created,

Convinced that further large-scale international assistance is required to meet the needs of the refugees in India and of the people of East Pakistan,

1. Expresses its profound sympathy with those who have suffered from the situation in the area;

2. Endorses the designation by the Secretary-General of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to be the focal point for the co-ordination of assistance to East Pakistani refugees in India, from and through the United Nations system, as well as the Secretary-General's initiative in establishing the United Nations East Pakistani relief operation;

3. Requests the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner to continue their efforts to co-ordinate international assistance and to ensure that it is used to the maximum advantage to relieve the suffering of the refugees in India and of the people of East Pakistan;

4. Appeals to Governments, inter-governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations to intensify their efforts to assist directly or indirectly, with the collaboration of the Governments concerned, in relieving the suffering of the refugees in India and of the people of East Pakistan;

5. Urges all Member States in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations to intensify their efforts to bring about conditions necessary for the speedy and voluntary repatriation of the refugees to their homes.

B

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the large-scale efforts undertaken for humanitarian reasons to meet the unprecedented problems confronting the international community,

/...

Aware of the urgency and extreme seriousness of the situation of the refugees, which is assuming dangerous proportions,

Recommends that the President of the General Assembly should make a statement indicating:

(a) The concern of the international community, which has seldom been confronted with a refugee problem of such enormous dimensions as that of the refugees from East Pakistan in India;

(b) That the voluntary participation of Governments and organizations should be continued and intensified with a view to assisting the Secretary-General and his representative, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees acting as the focal point, in their meritorious humanitarian action for the relief of the suffering of the refugees and of the population of East Pakistan;

(c) That the only solution to this grave refugee problem is the safe return of the refugees to their homes and that this requires a favourable climate which all persons of goodwill should work to bring about in a spirit of respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

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