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Chairman: Mr. Salvador P. LOPEZ (Philippines).

AGENDA ITEMS 34 AND 82

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/4771/Rev.1 and Add.1, A/4820 and Corr.2, chapter VI, section IV, A/C.3/593)

Problem raised by the situation of Angolan refugees in the Congo (A/4846 and Add.1-2, A/C.3/L.960)

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider agenda items 34 and 82 together; the limited number of meetings the Committee was able to allocate to them was in itself a sufficient reason for dealing with them in that way. A similar procedure had been followed at the fifteenth session in taking up the problem of Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco. Moreover, the Government of Togo had asked (A/C.3/593) that the problem of refugees in its territory should be examined in conjunction with the High Commissioner's report, and that gave additional grounds for considering the problem of the Angolan refugees in the same context.

2. He recalled that the practice of the Third Committee was to consider the questions transmitted to it purely from the humanitarian angle. He accordingly appealed to members to broach refugee problems from that standpoint alone and to avoid as far as possible dealing with the political problems which were the underlying cause of the existence of refugees in the world.

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

3. Mr. SCHNYDER (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), in introducing his report for the period 1 May 1960 to 31 March 1961 (A/4771/Rev.1), drew particular attention to two salient features. These were: first, the progress that had been made in all the traditional spheres of action of the High Commissioner's Office, owing, in particular, to World Refugee Year; and second, the developments which, within the framework of General Assembly resolutions 1388 (XIV) and 1499 (XV), had led the Office to

extend its scope to new groups of refugees outside Europe. In a constantly changing world, a body which had been given the task of alleviating human suffering could not remain passive and aloof from the problems of the day. The General Assembly, in adopting the resolutions he had mentioned, had undoubtedly wished to confirm the essentially dynamic character of the High Commissioner's Office and to call to mind its universal mission. In order, however, to translate that mission into reality, the Office had had to adapt itself to the new tasks facing it, with the consent and support of the international community from which it held its mandate.

4. The basic task of the Office was to ensure international protection for refugees coming within its mandate and to assist them to find a permanent solution. Experience had shown, however, that sometimes the objective could be fully attained only if international protection was accompanied by material assistance. However, the international community had also laid down rules and fixed limits and conditions for the part it was to play, based on the principle that the primary responsibility for the welfare of refugees lay with the Governments of their countries of residence. The material assistance that the High Commissioner's Office might grant was therefore meant to stimulate, round off and complete, and not to replace, the work undertaken by Governments. Moreover, the action of the Office should essentially be constructive and hence had to be aimed at solving the problems of refugees rather than at perpetuating them.

5. The first solution to hand was voluntary repatriation. It was not easy to give exact figures on the number of refugees returning to their own countries, as not all cases were reported to the Office. Repatriation work had, however, proceeded in a satisfactory manner and the Office had co-operated in individual cases, particularly by bearing part of the cost of the return journey where refugees were not in a position to meet the full cost.

6. With regard to programmes of material assistance, the Office's first target had been the clearance of refugee camps. Owing to World Refugee Year and the exceptional effort it had generated among Governments, public and private agencies and the general public, funds had been forthcoming to cover almost in their entirety the Office's regular programmes for 1960, the total budget for which had been set at the exceptionally high figure of \$12 million, to include the final stage of the camp clearance programme. The implementation of those programmes was being continued. During the first half of 1961, 2,330 refugees had been able to leave the camps for resettlement and seven camps had been closed: five in Austria, one in the Federal Republic of Germany, and one in Greece. As of 30 June 1961, only 8,360 of the refugees eligible under the programme were still in camps,

including 6,860 in Germany, 1,100 in Austria and 380 in Italy.

7. In view of the priority accorded to camp clearance, much still remained to be done for non-settled refugees living outside camps, more especially for the physically and socially handicapped among them. The difficulty of finding suitable solutions for the handicapped refugees was growing in inverse ratio to the continuing reduction in their number and was accentuated by the particular complexity of the cases that remained. There could be no final solution to that problem unless Governments gave it special attention. He had therefore been highly gratified at the action taken by some Governments in deciding to admit a number of handicapped refugees for rehabilitation and resettlement. That action, which had been taken mainly within the framework of World Refugee Year, was proof of the radical change that had taken place in the attitude of many countries, and particularly the big countries of immigration whose rules had hitherto precluded the admission of that class of refugees. It was essential that their policy in future should continue to be animated by the same generosity.

8. The integration of refugees in countries of asylum had been greatly facilitated by the favourable economic conditions obtaining in Europe. If that situation continued, there was every reason to hope that the programme for non-settled refugees living outside camps could be brought to its conclusion. He intended to submit to the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, at its 1962 spring session, a comprehensive plan designed to bring to an end the substantial programmes of material assistance to refugees in Europe. Governments and voluntary agencies would be asked to make a final effort with a view to ensuring that those programmes would be fully effective and would be implemented as speedily as possible. It was also his intention to inform the Executive Committee of current needs that might still have to be met, although at substantially lower cost.

9. During the period under review, very encouraging progress had also been made as regards the international protection of refugees. Colombia and Argentina had adhered to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;^{1/} in the case of Turkey, only the formality of depositing the instrument of ratification remained to be compiled with. Furthermore, the Government of Niger had declared that it regarded itself as bound by the Convention, to which thirty States, exclusive of Turkey, were now contracting parties. The 1957 Agreement relating to Refugee Seamen would enter into force on 27 December 1961, following its ratification by the Federal Republic of Germany. That country had also adhered to the European Agreement on the Abolition of Visas for Refugees, which was now applicable to eight countries in Europe. The United Nations Conference on the Elimination or Reduction of Future Statelessness had adopted a Convention, on 29 August 1961 (A/CONF.9/15), which had already been signed by the Governments of Israel, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The purpose of that Convention was to enable children who would normally have remained stateless to acquire a nationality. A recommendation had also been adopted, inviting signatory States to treat persons who were

de facto stateless—usually refugees—as stateless de jure.

10. With respect to the relief programme for Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia, the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies had decided that the League's participation in the joint operation with the High Commissioner's Office would be prolonged at least until 30 June 1962. Moreover, a further prolongation, until the meeting of the Executive Committee of the League scheduled for September 1962, had been left to the discretion of the League's President and Secretary-General. The decision, however, had been taken on the explicit understanding that the High Commissioner's Office would take over the financing of the relief programme to the extent that it depended on cash contributions. It had proved possible to assure that funds would be available for that purpose for the year 1961. He would not, however, have been in a position to guarantee continuance of the operation, had he not been able to draw on the Emergency Fund.

11. The relief operation on behalf of refugees from Algeria in Morocco and Tunisia involved essentially the distribution of food, milk for children and clothing, and some ancillary services, in the field of health, for example. The number of persons benefiting from the operation was at present approximately 300,000, of whom more than half were children. He recalled in that connexion the emergency programme which UNICEF had launched to facilitate his task at a time of financial difficulty.

12. All the refugees in question seemed anxious to return to normal living conditions as soon as circumstances permitted them to return to their homes. The development of the situation gave grounds for considering their wish as fully realistic, and it was on that basis that the modest amount of \$250,000 had been included in the 1962 budget; that should enable the High Commissioner's Office to assist in the repatriation of the refugees. Nevertheless, even if the end of the operation could be foreseen in a not too distant future, it was necessary in the meantime to make plans to ensure its continuation. His Office had therefore drawn up an operational budget for 1962 which amounted to \$8 million, of which about \$6 million were expected as contributions in kind and \$2.2 million in cash. He hoped that Governments would continue to assist him in ensuring the financing of that emergency relief operation.

13. Turning to the problem of refugees from Angola, he recalled the circumstances in which his Office had been led to concern itself with the matter and the first steps it had taken. He also recalled how the Government and people of the Congo (Leopoldville) had received the refugees, who were bound to the Congolese population by ethnic and other ties.

14. The first refugees, arriving in the Congo in March 1961, had received assistance from the population of the border villages, but they had soon outnumbered the local inhabitants. After a survey of needs, several voluntary agencies, in co-operation with the local authorities, had organized, in April 1961, the distribution of food, blankets, medicine and other supplies brought from the outside. With the continued influx of refugees, however, the assistance had become inadequate, and in May 1961, in response to the Government's request, the United Nations in the Congo (ONUC) had made fifty tons of relief sup-

^{1/}United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, held at Geneva, Switzerland, from 2 to 25 July 1951, Final Act and Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 51.IV.4).

plies available to the voluntary agencies, thus enabling them to satisfy the immediate needs of the refugees, who had numbered 148,500 by 6 November 1961. Thanks to the co-operation of all concerned, the problem of material assistance had been met up to the end of 1961. Work had been facilitated by the fact that local conditions made it possible to build dwellings with materials found on the spot.

15. His Office's programme was aimed at assisting the Congolese authorities to meet the needs of the refugees until a final solution to the problem became possible. That solution remained voluntary repatriation, but in the meantime the refugees must be enabled to become self-supporting as soon as possible. Some steps had been taken towards that end, in agreement with the central and local authorities of the Republic of the Congo (Leopoldville), the main objective being to further agricultural activities, as the refugees were predominantly of agricultural background. The local authorities of several communities had offered the necessary tillable land, while in other areas, where no land was available, steps had been taken to facilitate the relocation of refugees to other regions. The agricultural programme, financed from various sources, had supplied refugees with corn, beans and peanuts for planting, and with tools such as machetes and hoes. Corn planted in October 1961 should be ready for harvest in January 1962.

16. Expecting the refugees from Angola to be in a position to provide for their own needs by the beginning of 1962, the agencies engaged in the operation had decided to bring the general relief programme to a halt at the end of 1961. They intended, however, to continue to meet special situations or individual needs resulting from crop failures or from other exceptional circumstances. Supplied with land, seeds and tools and able to plant subsistence crops, which grew very rapidly in the Congo, the refugees who chose to remain in the area would be in the same economic situation as the Congolese. For those refugees who chose to return to their homes, the Portuguese Red Cross had established, on the Angolan side of the border, ten reception centres to provide food and lodging. The centres would shortly be inspected by two representatives of the League of Red Cross Societies.

17. The fact that the majority of the assisted refugees were children raised special problems of care, nutrition and education; these had been drawn to the attention of UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO, agencies which were already making their services available to the Congolese population. Special classes had been set up in refugee areas where Angolan children were taught in their tribal language.

18. The Office of the High Commissioner had set aside \$100,000 from its Emergency Fund to strengthen the action of the League of Red Cross Societies in providing immediate relief; one-fourth of the sum had been used to meet a shortage of transportation vehicles. Since the scope and character of the material assistance programme were subject to change, according to circumstances, and since full-scale assistance to the refugees was assured by the agencies concerned only until the end of the year, it seemed desirable for the Office to remain in close contact with the situation. Consequently, after consultations with the Congolese Government and ONUC, he had sent to Leopoldville a "chargé de mission" who would be in permanent contact with all those dealing with

the refugees from Angola. His Office would in that way be able to play a useful role by offering its experience of refugee problems and by helping to co-ordinate and stimulate the required efforts. His Office in no way intended, however, to take the place of the existing infrastructure, which along could ensure in an effective manner and within the more general framework of the assistance provided to the Congolese population, the relief work undertaken on behalf of the refugees.

19. With respect to the several thousand refugees at present in the Republic of Togo, he had recently sent one of his collaborators to undertake a preliminary investigation on the spot and was consulting with the Togolese Government on such measures as might be taken to meet the immediate needs of the refugees and ensure their integration into the country's economy. Several Governments had shown their interest in the matter and one of them had announced its readiness to participate in future relief operations.

20. He referred next to the refugees from Ruanda-Urundi in Tanganyika and Uganda, whose situation was soon to be examined, at the request of the Governments concerned, by a member of his Office.

21. The distinction that must be drawn between new refugee problems and the problems of the earlier refugees was not merely one of chronology but also reflected deeper differences. In the case of European refugees, the large programmes of assistance were approaching their completion and greater importance was being assumed by the problem of legal protection. In contrast, the new groups of refugees created essentially a problem of material assistance. It would be tempting therefore to draw a parallel between the appearance of new groups of refugees in parts of the world where the High Commissioner's Office had had no reason to intervene before, and the recent evolution characterized by the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 1388 (XIV) and 1499 (XV). However, one development had not necessarily influenced the other, nor was there necessarily a link between the mandate and the old refugees on the one hand, and the good offices and the new refugees on the other. If, indeed, problems of legal protection arose in any of the new situations, he would not hesitate to examine them in the light of his mandate. What was important, in reality, was that his Office's work should be exactly adapted to the needs to be met. The aforesaid resolutions allowed potentially for the flexibility which was indispensable to the action of his Office. Those resolutions, together with the mandate, formed a coherent whole into which it should be possible to integrate such divergent situations as those concerning the old and the new refugee problems.

22. With regard to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Emergency Relief Fund, he recalled that it was maintained through the repayment of loans and that its ceiling was fixed at \$500,000. Apart from the recent allocation of \$100,000 for the Angolan refugees in the Congo, the Fund had practically never been drawn upon. In fact, its limited size prevented its being used in the ordinary way as a basis for the financing of relief operations. On the other hand it was an indispensable working tool since it made it possible at once to meet immediate and limited needs and to deal with new and unforeseen situations. Moreover, its existence had frequently ensured the success of negotiations for the starting of a relief operation, the financing of which had in

the end been possible without actually calling upon the Fund. With regard to the utilization of the Fund, it was of course necessary to take account of General Assembly resolutions 1388 (XIV) and 1499 (XV) and to give to resolution 1166 (XII)—which had established the Emergency Fund in 1957—an interpretation in accordance with the actual situation as it had developed, with respect both to the law and the facts.

23. In conclusion, he recalled the scope and limits imposed upon any action taken by the High Commissioner's Office. The Office could on no account engage in any large-scale operations without first consulting the international community through its competent organs. Also, since the High Commissioner's Office could not act in the place of sovereign Governments, it could not assume entire and exclusive responsibility for the well-being of the refugees to whom those Governments gave asylum in their territory. Lastly, since the Office had not been provided with the administrative apparatus which would enable it to direct and take full charge of assistance operations of any magnitude, it was necessary for it, to a certain extent, to remain behind the scenes and simply to act as intermediary between the international community and the other public or private agencies equipped with the requisite machinery for undertaking operational tasks.

24. Although the part which the High Commissioner's Office could play was by definition modest, yet it was of real value. It was in fact an initiator, as well as a catalytic element, and capable of mobilizing and making the best use of the energies and resources available. It must also take action at times to co-ordinate the efforts of Governments and voluntary agencies on behalf of refugees. It was at the same time essential that it should be able to work in close liaison with the technical assistance services and the services of the various United Nations specialized agencies.

25. Thus defined, the role of the High Commissioner's Office appeared to be in perfect accord with the idea of "good offices" and to permit the fusion of its present and past activities without any change either in its structure or in its initial objectives. The main task of the High Commissioner's Office was in fact to evoke and maintain, in its allotted sphere, that spirit of international co-operation that was a prerequisite to the solution of so many problems of the day. To the extent that it did not fall short of its task and succeeded in preserving the strictly humanitarian and social character conferred upon it by its terms of reference, the High Commissioner's Office could continue usefully to serve the cause of refugees and to provide the services which the international community expected of it.

GENERAL DEBATE

26. Mr. DERICOYARD (Congo, Leopoldville) explained that, when his Government had decided to bring the question of the Angolan refugees to the attention of the General Assembly, it had in no way intended to confuse that matter with the fate of Angola itself. Whatever the connexions between them, those two matters were separate and ought to be dealt with separately before different organs of the General Assembly. The Congolese Government would like the question it had brought before the Third Committee to be considered from a strictly humanitarian and social angle.

27. Since the beginning of 1961 the Congo had accepted nearly 150,000 refugees from Angola. Despite the great generosity of the people of the frontier areas, it had soon realized that it could not meet the needs of those refugees unaided. As a result of its appeal to the United Nations, it had been able to arrange for the distribution of food with the help of the League of Red Cross Societies and other agencies.

28. The granting of asylum to the Angolan refugees was, of course, temporary. Nevertheless until they could return to their own land they must be given the opportunity of earning their own livings and of participating in the economic life of the country, lest they should lose their self-respect through having to rely solely on the charity of others. As was made clear in the draft resolution submitted by his delegation on that subject (A/C.3/L.960), that was essential both from the point of view of the physical and mental health of the persons concerned and from that of the reactions of the local population.

29. The Government of the Republic of the Congo was grateful to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the advice and assistance he had been so good as to give. His Government could keep useful and constant contact with the High Commissioner's Office through its representative at Leopoldville.

30. The Congolese delegation was aware of the limits imposed upon the activities of the High Commissioner's Office as well as of the need not to upset the work of material assistance already organized under the auspices of ONUC, by the League of Red Cross Societies together with the Congolese Red Cross and other voluntary agencies. That was why, in its draft resolution, it had stressed the importance of the role of ONUC. The relief work undertaken on behalf of the Angolan refugees in the Congo ought to remain part of the larger operation being conducted by the Organization.

31. He expressed the hope that his delegation's draft resolution would be supported by the Committee and that the countries which had already shown their interest in the relief work being done for the Angolan refugees would continue to help his country in carrying it out.

32. Lady TWEEDSMUIR (United Kingdom) commended the High Commissioner on his very full report, which bore witness to the energy and devotion he, like his predecessor, had brought to his task.

33. The report showed that an increasing number of Governments were taking a direct part in the solution of the refugee problem. The strong financial support given to the High Commissioner's programmes and the resettlement opportunities offered the refugees had, among other things, enabled the High Commissioner to finance the camp clearance programme in Europe and to turn his attention to the question of the non-settled refugees living outside the camps and, especially, to that of handicapped refugees, who presented a very difficult task.

34. Progress had also been made in the matter of international protection, and her delegation welcomed the new accessions to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the conclusion in New York, in August 1961, of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

35. That renewed interest and activity on behalf of refugees had been due in large measure to the World Refugee Year, of which the United Kingdom was happy to have been the instigator. The Year had, moreover, encouraged many Governments to relax the regulations governing the admission of refugees to their territories and had thus speeded up the resettlement of many refugees. The United Kingdom, for its part, had accepted nearly 250,000 refugees since the war; it had, in particular, in connexion with the World Refugee Year, accepted 1,100 handicapped persons and their families, all of whom benefited from the extensive security and welfare advantages provided for United Kingdom citizens. It was not possible for a country as small and crowded as the United Kingdom to maintain that rate but it would nevertheless continue to receive refugees under its normal immigration procedures.

36. She agreed with the High Commissioner that responsibility for the refugees could not fall entirely upon the High Commissioner's Office. She believed that it would be advisable to defer till later the consideration of the function of the High Commissioner's Office as a catalytic element. It would in fact seem essential to complete the work now in hand before extending the activity of the High Commissioner's Office into new fields, all the more as that might encourage the appearance of new problems. On the other hand, she considered that the States, which had been generous enough to accept refugees into their territories, ought to bear the final responsibility for them. That was a point which the Committee ought to take into account in considering the future of the High Commissioner's Office at the seventeenth session, as also the reduction in staff contemplated in the ninth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.^{2/} She hoped that the High Commissioner would give his Executive Committee a very detailed report on those various matters, so that the Third Committee might discuss them thoroughly at the seventeenth session.

37. With respect to the assistance given by the High Commissioner to refugees outside his direct mandate, the United Kingdom delegation was glad that he had been able to overcome the immediate difficulties connected with the execution of the programme on behalf of refugees in Morocco and Tunisia, thanks to the participation of the League of Red Cross Societies, which was assured for the best part of 1962, and to the contributions made by many countries, including the United Kingdom, which had agreed to give 10 per cent of cash contributions by all other Member States up to a reasonable ceiling.

38. The problem of the refugees in the Congo should also be viewed from a purely humanitarian and not from a political standpoint. She paid a tribute to the Congolese Government and people for the generous assistance they had given to those refugees despite the complexity of their own problems; she also thanked all the voluntary organizations which had given them assistance. She fully approved the course taken by the Office of the High Commissioner in sending a "chargé de mission" to the Congo. Although she was not yet in a position to take any decision on the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of the Congo (Leopoldville), that proposal seemed, at first glance,

calculated to facilitate a reasonable and permanent solution of the problem.

39. Lastly, she realized the difficulties which Togo faced in caring for a large number of newcomers, since it was a relatively small country which had to deal with many problems of economic and social development. She would like to hear the opinions of other delegations, as well as the further views of the High Commissioner, but she saw no objection to the latter lending his good offices in the present case.

40. Mr. SILVA (Portugal), after congratulating the High Commissioner on his able statement, said that some half a million inhabitants of north-western Angola had been forced to leave their homes as a result of the situation which had prevailed in that area for some months. The number of Portuguese nationals, who were in the Congo (Leopoldville) as a result of that situation, was estimated at 148,200, of whom very few were able-bodied men and at least 70 per cent were women and children. They were in need of every possible assistance. The problem, therefore, was of a purely social and humanitarian nature; it had rightly been allocated to the Third Committee, where he felt free to discuss it in the spirit of co-operation which characterized that Committee.

41. Those who had taken refuge in the other parts of Angola had now been able to return to their homes, with the assistance of the provincial committee, which had been set up by the Government in May 1961 to help displaced persons. In order to assist those who had gone to the Congo (Leopoldville), Caritas and the Portuguese Red Cross had sent food, medicines and clothing to the corresponding organizations in the Congo, and they would continue to give every possible assistance to those unfortunate persons in order, first, to provide them with the primary necessities of life and later to help them to resume their normal lives in their homeland, as they undoubtedly wished to do.

42. For that purpose, the Portuguese Government had already established reception centres along the frontier, each of which could accommodate about a thousand persons and which had the necessary first aid staff and equipment; they were also equipped with ambulances and other vehicles which, like the centres, were identified by the Red Cross emblem, and whose security was guaranteed by the regional authorities. The situation in Angola had returned to normal and its inhabitants could therefore return without fear, except for those few who had committed criminal acts rendering them liable to prosecution.

43. He was glad to find that the opinion of the representative of the Congo (Leopoldville) seemed to coincide with that of his own delegation. He wished to thank that Government, as well as the United Nations, the Red Cross and other voluntary organizations for the humanitarian efforts which they had made on behalf of the people concerned. His delegation would study the Congolese draft resolution with great interest and in the spirit of co-operation which befitted the humanitarian character of the problem. He was unable to comment on the proposal at that stage, but he was glad to note that it contained provisions designed to ensure a just and speedy solution of a situation which his Government considered it desirable not to prolong.

44. Mr. FREITAS (Togo) said that he had referred to the problem of the refugees in his country in the General Assembly (1026th plenary meeting). The

^{2/}Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Supplement No. 7 (A/4814).

number of refugees had steadily increased during the past year and now totalled 6,000. Although the Togolese people had at first been able to shelter and feed them like brothers, they had subsequently had to call on the Government, which had furnished the necessary food, clothing and medical care, but had then itself been overwhelmed by events and, on 23 March 1961, had had to apply for help to the High Commissioner. The latter, who had just given a brief account of the situation, had sent one of his staff to the country to study that situation in greater detail.

45. While continuing to furnish emergency assistance, Togo hoped that it could carry out a settlement programme, already in the planning stage, which would make the refugees self-supporting and integrate them into the country's economy. Under that programme, it would be necessary, among other things, to move the 5,000 refugees concentrated in the already overpopulated area of Klouto-Akposso to other parts of Togo which were more suitable for their resettlement. Since Togo's technical and financial resources were very limited, he hoped that the Third Committee would recommend that the Office of the High Commissioner and the other relevant organs of the United Nations should give his country the necessary assistance to carry out that humanitarian project. He wished to thank the High Commissioner for the understanding which he had shown of the problem confronting the Togolese Government and he felt sure he could count on the Committee's support.

46. Mr. QUAISON-SACKEY (Ghana) congratulated the High Commissioner on his excellent report, as well as on the social and humanitarian work which he was carrying out. He was reluctant to introduce political considerations into the debate; he wished however to make it clear that, although the statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Togo appeared at first glance to be innocuous and reasonable, it must be considered against the background provided by the communication which the latter had addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/C.3/593) and by his statement in plenary meeting, when he had given the reasons which, in his opinion, accounted for the presence in Togo of alleged Ghanaian refugees.

47. It was not, in fact, a question of refugees but rather of a daily and seasonal population movement which could be observed all over West Africa. His Government had always advocated the elimination of the artificial frontiers fixed by the colonial Powers which separated peoples linked by ethnic and often by family ties.

48. The alleged refugees in Togo were of two categories: first, there were those who had refused to accept the results of the 1956 plebiscite—by which western Togo had been united with Ghana—who had attempted to revolt and who had then been compelled to flee to Togo—which at that time had been French Togoland—in order to evade the measures taken against them by the Ghanaian Government; second, there were many smugglers with whom the Ghana Government had to deal severely in order to protect its customs revenue. The Togolese Government, which had no obligation to admit the people it described as refugees, appeared, on the contrary, to be encouraging the formation of Ghanaian groups in Togo.

49. Togolese—as well as nationals of other African States—were living in Ghana, where they were welcomed as brothers and not as refugees, because there

were close ties and in many cases family connexions between the inhabitants of the two countries.

50. The Angolan refugees, who had been driven out of their country by war, were in an entirely different situation and it was the duty of the United Nations to consider their case; on the other hand, there was no point in placing new and unnecessary burdens on the High Commissioner or in adding to Africa's already numerous problems.

51. It would set a dangerous precedent to treat as refugees the nationals of one African country who were living in another, since the free movement of populations which had been going on for years in West Africa might then give rise to a vast problem.

52. He appealed, first, to the Togolese Government to approach the Ghanaian Government with a view to settling the problem on a regional rather than an international level and, second, to the High Commissioner to consult the Ghanaian Government before taking any further action. He also hoped that the Committee would do its best to avoid aggravating the situation between two nations which were brothers.

53. Mr. FREITAS (Togo) regretted that the representative of Ghana had found it necessary to make the question of refugees in Togo a political issue. There were several political committees in the United Nations to which the Togolese case might have been submitted but he had refrained from taking such action; it was not the right moment, when Togo had to face the urgent practical problems of feeding, clothing and sheltering 6,000 persons, to raise the political aspects of the question. In his previous statement he had not once mentioned Ghana by name; but he now wished to clear the matter up, in view of the attempts made by the representative of that country to create confusion in the minds of the members of the Committee. The representative of Ghana had referred to migratory movements in connexion with the refugees. It was true that there were such movements: Ghanaians went to Togo and Togolese to Ghana, looking for work. But the present case was entirely different. The reports of the observer sent to Togo by the High Commissioner, of the representative of the Technical Assistance Board and of the representative of WHO all led to the same conclusion—there were refugees in Togo. He would take his stand on that undeniable concrete fact and would not allow himself to be drawn into a political discussion.

54. Mr. WHARTON (United States of America) congratulated Mr. Schnyder on his election to the post of High Commissioner and on the energetic and tactful manner in which he had since carried out his humanitarian tasks. The High Commissioner's report on the progress achieved in the various branches of aid to refugees was a source of real satisfaction to the United States delegation. The basic task of providing international protection for refugees had been carried out effectively, with the close co-operation of the Governments of the host countries.

55. As far as the refugees in Europe were concerned, the situation showed a marked improvement. As a result of strong financial support, largely provided by the World Refugee Year, the Camp Clearance Programme was certain of completion, the refugees being firmly settled when they left the camps. The programmes for assisting non-settled refugees living outside the camps were also progressing satisfactorily; some refugees succeeded in solving their prob-

lems without international help: others, including handicapped persons, were settling in new countries. Not only did the countries of asylum co-operate in the work of the High Commissioner, but they also undertook programmes of their own. Owing to their efforts, the time had almost come when it would be possible to solve the residual problem without international assistance. That was why the United States supported the High Commissioner's plan to establish a time-limit for the completion of programmes on behalf of non-settled refugees living outside camps.

56. With regard to other aspects of the High Commissioner's programme, the contributions made from the Emergency Fund to Algerian refugees in Tunisia and Morocco, and to Angolan refugees in the Congo, had proved helpful. His delegation approved of the sentiments underlying the draft resolution of the Congo (Leopoldville) and would support it.

57. He did not wish to end his statement without paying a special tribute to the many private organizations throughout the world which had contributed so generously to refugee programmes and without whose help the accomplishments reported by the High Commissioner would not have been possible.

58. Mr. MARIZ (Brazil) congratulated the High Commissioner on the important work he had accomplished during the previous year. As a country which had a constant flow of immigrants from all parts of the world, Brazil had followed his efforts with the keenest interest.

59. The problems presented by refugees recurred endlessly and required infinite patience and considerable funds. Nevertheless, the High Commissioner's report was an optimistic and encouraging document, in that it showed the constructive efforts made by the United Nations in that field.

60. His delegation commended those Governments which had helped the High Commissioner to solve the difficult problem of handicapped refugees, particularly by relaxing their immigration regulations. Brazil itself had frequently taken such measures and it ranked fourth in the world in the number of refugees admitted since 1945.

61. He wished to point out, however, that Brazil was obliged by its economic development needs to lay down certain conditions for the admission of refugees to its territory. However, the Brazilian delegation would be in a position to make an important contribution to the Third Committee's forthcoming debate on the draft declaration on the right of asylum; Brazil, indeed, had had great experience in that field. The declaration would help to solve many painful problems for exiles and refugees.

62. His delegation invited voluntary organizations to increase their assistance to the High Commissioner, whose work in certain parts of the world must not be stopped or even slowed down on the ground that a more dramatic situation had arisen elsewhere.

63. Brazil was disturbed by the influx of Angolan refugees into the Congo, a country which already had enough problems of its own. The Congo should be given financial help in settling the Angolan refugees. His delegation was firmly in favour of the draft resolution of the Congo (Leopoldville). On the other hand, Cambodia would soon need more substantial assistance and the operations undertaken in Morocco and Tunisia should be maintained at the same pace. He, therefore,

hoped that the High Commissioner would do his utmost to secure the necessary funds.

64. His delegation appreciated the High Commissioner's efforts and the measures taken to protect refugees, particularly those who were handicapped. It was ready to support a draft resolution which recognized the progress made in assisting refugees, which stressed the need to improve their status and which encouraged Member States to contribute to the programmes of assistance undertaken by the High Commissioner.

65. Mr. THOMAS (Liberia) congratulated the High Commissioner on his lucid and interesting report. Because of its own history, Liberia had always felt sympathy for persons forced to flee their country and take refuge in foreign lands, and it had endeavoured to aid them as much as possible. His delegation, therefore, welcomed the efforts made to help Angolan refugees in the Congo (Leopoldville) and would support the draft resolution.

66. Refugees were a distressing and world-wide problem, which would probably not be solved for a long time. After Europe, it had spread to the Middle East, the Far East and Latin America. It had now arisen in Africa, with the refugees from Algeria, the Congo, Angola and South West Africa, and there were at present 1,350,000 refugees living in over forty countries. As the High Commissioner's report showed, the refugee problem had many different aspects.

67. In reading the report, one could not but be struck by the extent of the humanitarian work which had been accomplished without resort to political solutions. It was extremely important that the Third Committee should study the problems revealed in the report in a humanitarian, dispassionate and objective spirit.

68. Finally, he recalled the ideas put forward in the General Assembly by President Tubman on 23 October 1961 (1041st plenary meeting), and expressed the hope that the combined efforts of the international community, as represented in the United Nations, would lead to positive results.

69. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) paid a tribute to the High Commissioner for his interesting and constructive report. He would, however, like further information on certain points. The sphere of competence of the High Commissioner's Office had been expanded since the Office had first been established. It had initially concentrated on European refugees and had later also concerned itself with the refugees in Hong Kong; now, in addition to the Algerians, the refugees from Angola and Ghana and those in Cambodia required its attention; the Palestine refugees came under a different body. Although he sympathized with the plight of the refugees, he feared that, if the range of activity of the High Commissioner's Office were extended, it might lose some of its effectiveness, might sometimes find itself in a delicate legal situation and might indeed even encourage the appearance of refugees.

70. He drew particular attention to the fact that the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, like the IRO, had been established strictly for Europeans displaced as a result of the Second World War. In spite of the fact that both the Algerian and the Angolan refugees were not French or Portuguese, juridically they were considered so, in view of the attitude of the metropolitan Powers towards those refugees. Five years or so ago the delegate of Saudi Arabia had

stressed that the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees should not become an umbrella for institutionalizing this issue of refugees in the whole world; inasmuch as the High Commissioner, under his original mandate, should deal with European refugees, he was progressively dealing with other refugees outside his jurisdiction. Without prejudice to the welfare of refugees wherever they might be found, the delegate of Saudi Arabia did not think that the Office of the High Commissioner should become a standby office for refugees from all over the world; certain Governments might then be tempted to use this office for their own purposes, to provoke migration into neighbouring countries and to attempt other political manoeuvres.

71. He would be grateful if the High Commissioner could give him some information on those various points, and in particular, if he could state when he thought that the problem of refugees in Europe would be finally settled, whether he envisaged a change in his statute to cover his new activities and how he expected to obtain additional funds.

72. Mr. SCHNYDER (High Commissioner for Refugees) said that he would answer the questions put to him at the next meeting.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.