



LIBRARY

MAY 19 1987

UN COLLECTION

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
5th meeting
held on
Friday, 10 October 1986
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KOUASSI (Togo)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 76: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

*This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate fascicle for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/41/SR.5
15 October 1986

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 76: INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO AVERT NEW FLOWS OF REFUGEES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/41/113, 117, 138, 324, 338 and Corr.1, 360 and Corr.1, 385, 460, 477 and 607, and A/SPC/41/L.5)

1. Mr. ADJOYI (Togo), speaking as Chairman/Rapporteur of the Group of Governmental Experts on International Co-operation to Avert New Flows of Refugees, introduced the report of the Group contained in document A/41/324. He briefly reviewed the work carried out by the Group since its establishment and drew attention to the change which had come about in its composition.
2. Chapter II of the report dealt with an analysis of mandate, including questions related to terms. The Group was convinced that its mandate related to coerced movements. Chapter III analysed the circumstances causing new massive flows of refugees, which were divided into man-made causes and factors and natural causes. The main political causes were the policies and practices of oppressive and racist régimes, as well as aggression, colonialism, apartheid, alien domination, foreign intervention and occupation. The socio-economic factors were many and varied and generally resulted from the prolongation of the state of underdevelopment inherited from colonialism and aggravated by a difficult economic environment. The natural causes were essentially natural disasters such as heavy floods, prolonged drought, soil erosion and desertification. The Group had noted that massive flows of refugees could be attributed to one or several causes and factors, political, socio-economic or natural, or a combination of them.
3. Chapter IV dealt with appropriate means to improve international co-operation to avert new massive flows of refugees. It contained an analysis of existing relevant international instruments, norms and principles and an analysis of international machinery and practices. The Group considered that the effectiveness of the United Nations system in averting new flows of refugees would be substantially improved if States were more active in taking advantage of the competence of its relevant organs and agencies. Chapter V of the report contained the conclusions and recommendations of the Group. The recommendations concerned the responsibility of States to respect their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and existing instruments, particularly in the field of human rights. The Group also urged the main organs of the United Nations to make fuller use of their respective competences under the Charter for the prevention of new massive flows of refugees and recommended that the General Assembly should encourage the Secretary-General to make full use of his competences in five specific areas.
4. The implementation of those recommendations was essential in order to prevent new flows of refugees and maintain international peace and security. All States must demonstrate the necessary political will to strengthen international co-operation in that regard in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.

5. Mr. BIRCH (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community, said that no one could fail to be concerned by the enormous suffering and misery of the millions of refugees throughout the world. The current refugee situation must be dealt with not only by providing international humanitarian assistance and tackling the underlying political and economic causes but also by preventing the situations which caused people to flee from their homelands.
6. The Twelve endorsed the view of the Group of Governmental Experts that, in addition to armed conflicts, acts of aggression, foreign intervention and occupation, violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments, had been and continued to be among the principal causes of massive flows of refugees, and they supported the call for States to fulfil the obligations they had freely undertaken in the United Nations Charter and international instruments in the field of human rights. That would not only prevent many new flows of refugees but would also help to create the conditions which would allow refugees to return home.
7. It was necessary to prepare for natural disasters through international co-operation so that their effects were alleviated and people did not need to flee to neighbouring lands. Fuller and more timely exchange of information was crucial.
8. The Twelve urged the Committee to support the resolution commending the report and adopting the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts as the recommendations of the General Assembly.
9. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that his country, because of its geopolitical position, history and humanitarian traditions, had become one of the most important transit points for refugees and immigrants since the end of the Second World War. Since 1955 Austria had been a country of first asylum for more than half a million refugees. His Government had supported from the outset the initiative taken by the Federal Republic of Germany to study the causes which gave rise to massive flows of refugees and explore ways to solve that complex problem by preventive measures.
10. His delegation was pleased to note that the Group of Governmental Experts had concluded its work and had adopted its report by consensus. The report, which dealt with a preventive approach to the refugee problem, constituted a "code of conduct" for States in coping with that problem. He commended the Group for the excellent job which it had done and pointed out that Austria was a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.5.
11. Mr. NGOVUKA (Zaire) said that when his country had become independent, many of its citizens had had to cope with the difficulties of refugee life in a number of neighbouring countries and elsewhere. Zaire had co-operated for more than 20 years with the United Nations in welcoming large numbers of African refugees to its territory. His country pursued an open and humane refugee policy in accordance with real African needs and the objectives fixed by the United Nations, and that had often caused it difficulties.

(Mr. Ngovuka, Zaire)

12. Although his delegation agreed with the premises and conclusions set forth in the report prepared in accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/166, the problems of African refugees were specific in nature. Owing to political and economic insecurity at home and the disregard for their civil and political rights and well-being, Africans in southern Africa were being forced to seek refuge in other countries, where they continued to be exposed to the barbarous acts of the forces of Pretoria. It was astounding how slow certain democracies had been in accepting the idea of mandatory sanctions against the apartheid Government aimed at bringing about needed political change in South Africa.
13. At the Eighth Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held recently at Harare, the heads of State and Government had reiterated that the main cause for the increase in the number of refugees and displaced persons in southern Africa was the apartheid régime's policy of military aggression and economic destabilization of the States and peoples of the region and had reaffirmed the right of the front-line States and other independent African States of the region to give refuge to apartheid victims.
14. As underlying causes for the critical situation in Africa he cited, inter alia, the ecological imbalance, the rural exodus, the collapse of the prices of raw materials, the external debt and exorbitant debt servicing conditions, the absence of a democratic dialogue for setting economic priorities and the protectionism of the industrialized countries together with their unwillingness to introduce a new international economic order.
15. An improvement in the living conditions of Africans was contingent upon the elimination of apartheid and neo-colonialism and the granting of massive international aid.
16. Zaire conducted an active policy to integrate refugees into its society and encourage refugees to return home of their own free will.
17. Count YORK (Federal Republic of Germany) introduced resolution A/SPC/41/L.5 on behalf of the sponsors. As stressed by the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, it was essential to face up to the political task of counteracting the causes of the flight and expulsion of refugees and to prevent racially and ideologically undesired minorities from being forcibly expelled by their Governments. That too was part of an active policy for safeguarding peace.
18. The experts had been mindful of the conclusions of the report that the task of averting new massive flows of refugees was a matter of serious concern to the international community as a whole, and there was a consensus that international co-operation must be improved so as to eliminate both the underlying and the immediate causes of the problem, mitigate the consequences of natural disasters and guarantee the right of refugees to return safely to their homelands.
19. It was necessary that States turn to the main organs of the United Nations at the earliest stage of situations engendering massive flows of refugees.

(Count York, Federal Republic of Germany)

20. The Group of Governmental Experts had concluded that there was no need for a new convention. What was lacking was compliance on the part of Member States with obligations deriving from the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations, existing international instruments in the field of human rights as well as relevant instruments providing norms for the prevention of new massive flows of refugees.
21. The Group of Experts had underscored that States should do all within their means to prevent new massive flows of refugees, should refrain from creating or contributing by their policies to causes and factors which generally led to massive flows of refugees and should be guided by the principles of the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of another State.
22. The report was a compromise. It was an appeal to transcend the usual East-West and North-South cleavages and offered a basis for revitalizing multilateral approaches for solving such problems.
23. The sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/41/L.5 hoped for its adoption by consensus. Paragraph 2 was the central paragraph in the draft. Because of their major importance, the main addressees of the recommendations had been mentioned in paragraphs 3 to 5 so as to draw their attention to the respective paragraphs of the Group's report. His delegation wished to request the Secretary-General in paragraph 6 to bring the report expressly to the attention of Member States. The same applied to all those relevant organizations, organs and programmes of the United Nations system to which the report referred in paragraph 72 when it asked them to give greater support to those that could help to prevent a new massive flow of refugees.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.