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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Twenty-fourth Session

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVENTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva  
on Friday, 12 October 1973, at 10.40 a.m.

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. BARTON	Canada
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. ARIM	Turkey
<u>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:</u>	Prince Sadruddin AGA KHAN	
<u>Secretary of the Committee:</u>	Mr. ASSCHER	

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Financial Statements, Report of the Board of Auditors and Report  
on Investments for 1972 (agenda item 5(a))

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N.B. Participants wishing to have corrections to this provisional summary record incorporated in the final summary record of the meeting are requested to submit them in writing, preferably on a copy of the record itself, to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4021, Palais des Nations, Geneva, within forty-eight hours of receiving the provisional record in their working language.

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IMMEDIATE RELIEF PROGRAMME IN SOUTH SUDAN (agenda item 7)

The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that the United Nations Immediate Relief Programme in south Sudan entailed the voluntary repatriation of thousands of Sudanese refugees. The High Commissioner, who had been asked by the Secretary-General to co-ordinate the programme, had reported on the situation to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council. At its fifty-fifth session, the Council had adopted, on 30 July 1973, resolution 1799(LV), in which it had taken note "of the extension, until 31 October 1973, of the arrangements made by the Secretary-General at the request of the Government of Sudan for the co-ordination of relief, resettlement and rehabilitation operations by the High Commissioner for Refugees and of the fact that this extension is not to affect the launching of the country programme for Sudan adopted by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme at its 373rd meeting (E/5365, para. 17) in respect of longer-term assistance", and had requested "the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to submit a final report on the situation to the Economic and Social Council at its fifty-sixth session". The item had been included in the agenda of the Committee's current session for information purposes.

Mr. JAMIESON (Senior Adviser, Special Projects) drew the Committee's attention to the illustrated report entitled "Nursing a miracle" published by UNHCR, which contained a detailed description of the role of the High Commissioner in the Immediate Relief Programme in south Sudan. UNHCR's responsibility was of particular importance, since it meant assisting in the voluntary repatriation of about 180,000 Sudanese who had fled to neighbouring countries - Ethiopia, Uganda, Central African Republic, Zaire. In carrying out that task, UNHCR had become involved in projects that were not normally part of its programme: providing food, materials for road repair, transport and communications. Basic educational and health facilities had also been provided with a view to encouraging the refugees to return to their country. At first, there had been many, even in the Sudanese Government, who had wondered whether the refugees would in fact choose to return to Sudan or to remain abroad. It was due above all to the co-operation of the Sudanese Government that the problems which had made the refugees reluctant to return had been resolved in an acceptable manner, and the vast majority of the 180,000 refugees had been able to return to their

homes. There was still a group of refugees in Uganda. At a meeting held at Juba on 2 October 1973, arrangements had been made for the repatriation of that group, the precise number of which was difficult to determine since the refugees were scattered (the Sudanese Government's estimate was 30,000).

The resettlement of such a large number of refugees in south Sudan would of course take time. The Sudanese Government was making energetic efforts to resettle them but it recognized that the task would be difficult. The programme would end on 31 October 1973 and after that date responsibility for future activities would be transferred to UNHCR branch offices in the countries concerned.

Four projects were still in course of execution: the bridge over the Nile at Juba, the construction of which had just begun and was scheduled for completion in Spring 1974; the furnishing of engines for barges, which would probably be delivered in November 1973; and the educational and health projects being implemented in collaboration with the World Lutheran Federation and the Swiss Red Cross. He would be visiting the Sudan on 3 November 1973 to settle pending problems, particularly the Juba bridge project.

In conclusion, he paid tribute to the Government of Sudan on the remarkable way in which it had carried out such a mass repatriation.

Mr. CALLWAY (United Kingdom) and Mr. ARIM (Turkey) expressed satisfaction with the happy solution to the problem of the Sudanese refugees and congratulated the Government of Sudan, UNHCR and the organizations and Governments that had contributed to the success of the programme.

Mr. EL-AMIN (Observer for the Sudan), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, offered UNHCR his Government's deep gratitude for the remarkable results it had achieved in the Sudan and the role it had played in the repatriation of the refugees of south Sudan.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee's report would reflect the satisfaction that had been expressed with the results and would stress the important role that voluntary repatriation could play, when coupled with development aid to the country of repatriation, in the re-establishment of national unity and regional stability.

REPORT ON THE RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES (agenda item 6(b)) (A/AC.96/492 and Corr.1)  
(concluded)

Mr. ONU (Assistant-Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity for Political Affairs), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, welcomed the co-operation established between UNHCR and OAU as also the special interest that UNHCR was taking in the problems of African refugees.

There were now almost 2 million refugees in Africa and their number was increasing despite the efforts of African Governments and the international community to deal with the problem. Like all developing countries, the African countries that played host to the refugees possessed limited human and material resources and without international support it would not be easy for them to extend assistance in the long term without jeopardizing their national economic and social development programmes. Nevertheless, they had done and would continue to do all in their power to make the refugees' stay as bearable as possible.

The most important of OAU's refugee activities in 1973 would be the holding in November, at Addis Ababa, of a seminar to be attended by representatives of international organizations, a number of voluntary agencies, various African States, and of African liberation movements and by various experts. The seminar would be called upon to tackle all the practical issues relating to African refugees, and he hoped that the participants would consider the possibility of strengthening co-operation between OAU's Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees, its national correspondents and the local committees, and that they would review the relations between the Bureau and the international organizations and voluntary agencies that co-operated with it.

Of the 2 million African refugees, 1,060,300 were known and were receiving assistance from UNHCR and other bodies. The Bureau would report to the seminar's participants on the work it had done since 1968 and the difficulties encountered in carrying out its task.

States members of OAU had recently adopted two resolutions dealing with the problems of African refugees. By resolution CM/266, OAU invited its member States to make annual provision for employment opportunities and scholarships for refugees and called for the strengthening of the Bureau and the expansion of its role. By resolution CM/296, OAU designated an annual "Refugee Day" in Africa.

Since its establishment, the Bureau had endeavoured to improve the lot of refugees with respect to employment, education, legal and social protection and settlement.

The Bureau still gave priority to placement, particularly in urban areas. It even sought employment possibilities outside Africa and, in that regard, it had approached the United Nations Secretary-General, the specialized agencies and the various voluntary agencies connected with development projects.

Since January 1973, the Bureau itself had succeeded in placing 21 refugees. Its correspondents, too, had placed refugees in Senegal, Cameroon, Liberia and Algeria - both in government work and in the private sector. The Bureau was holding discussions with the authorities in a number of African countries, such as Nigeria, the Niger, the Sudan, Uganda, Algeria and Mauritania, where job opportunities existed. The Bureau was also endeavouring to assist refugees in becoming economically independent, by arranging loans from charitable institutions or development banks that would enable them to set themselves up in their own business in countries where that was permitted by national legislation.

The difficulties encountered by the Bureau between 1968 and 1971 were due neither to indifference nor any ill-will on the part of African States but rather to the fact that the latter had immense political, social and economic problems to solve. Although African countries had material and human resources at their disposal, it was essential that they should be able to attract investments that would enable them to create the necessary jobs. The employment and education of refugees should therefore be seen in the general context of the problems facing OAU Member States in those fields.

As to education, refugees were, as far as possible, dealt with on the same footing as the nationals of their country of asylum. Only such equality of treatment would enable refugees to lead a normal life and cease to be a burden on the African community. Nevertheless, the ideal solution would continue to be voluntary repatriation to their country of origin.

OAU had also understood the need to direct the education and training of refugees in a manner suited to Africa's needs for qualified personnel as well as to available employment opportunities. There were plans for re-training refugees in fields where there was a demand. A number of African countries were now willing to grant scholarships to refugees and even to finance their studies in countries other than their country of residence.

In 1973-1974, the Bureau had secured 42 scholarships for refugees, 24 of which were for university studies in English-speaking countries and 18 in French-speaking countries. WHO had offered scholarships to medical schools. Some African countries had gone to the extent of making available to refugees a fixed percentage -- 10 to 20 per cent -- of the scholarships that their Governments granted annually to their own nationals.

He thanked the various United Nations bodies and the voluntary agencies that had facilitated the task of the Bureau in the fields of refugee placement and education.

With regard to protection, he was happy to announce that the OAU Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa had been ratified by 11 African States: Central African Republic, Congo, Dahomey, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sudan, Togo and Zaïre. He also wished to point out that whenever measures to expel refugees had been brought to the attention of his secretariat, the Bureau had taken action with a view to having such measures deferred until a second country of asylum could be found.

In conclusion, he stressed the need for the Bureau to maintain and even to strengthen its collaboration with UNHCR.

Mr. SOW (Senegal) said that he had listened with great interest to the statement by the Assistant Secretary-General of OAU. The organization and methods of work of the Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees and the energy of its officers ought, in theory, to make it a very effective body. Unfortunately, it did not have the necessary means to accomplish its task. Its work would be greatly facilitated, for example, if every African country were to reserve for refugees a given number of posts in government and in the private sector. His own Government would welcome any initiative that would enable the Bureau to play its full role.

#### FINANCIAL QUESTIONS:

- (b) STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND OVERALL FINANCIAL SITUATION FOR 1973 AND 1974  
(A/AC.96/494 and Add.1; A/AC.96/495) (agenda item 5)

Mr. MOUSSALLI (Acting Director, Administration and Management Division) said that the financial situation, as set out in table V of the report on the status of contributions to UNHCR voluntary funds and on the over-all financial situation for 1973 and 1974, as at 15 September 1973 (A/AC.96/494), was rather encouraging and it was reasonable to expect that the 1973 Assistance Programme would be fully financed and would probably show a surplus.

That situation was due to two factors. First, the investments made by UNHCR would earn in 1973 an unprecedented \$900,000, which was explained by the very sharp increase in interest rates and by the high average amount invested. Secondly, the net gain on exchange operations amounted to about \$1,000,000. UNHCR's financial policy had borne fruit in that sphere. UNHCR received contributions and made payments in all currencies. Amounts received in hard currencies, if not immediately required, were converted and the investment was held as long as was considered profitable. Contributions received in soft currencies, or currencies which were liable to go down in value, were immediately converted into a currency required for payments.

The surplus as at 31 December 1973 was estimated at \$550,000, which would be used towards the financing of UNHCR's 1974 Programme.

It should be stressed that the 1973 situation was most unusual and that such a favourable forecast could not be made for 1974. It could not be foreseen that the interest yields would be as high since it seemed unlikely that interest rates would remain for long at current levels, nor could reliance be placed on exchange profits. Although fluctuations in exchange rates had produced a gain in 1973, it was quite possible that losses might be incurred in 1974.

Mr. VOLPING (Director, External Affairs Division) said that 1974 looked like being difficult for fund-raising. The target approved by the Committee for the 1974 Assistance Programme on 11 October was \$900,000 higher than what had been approved for the current financial year. Any profits on exchange operations in 1974 could not be expected to be as high as in 1973. It was therefore essential to plan on new contributions amounting to at least \$500,000, even taking into account the carry-forward to 1974 of the expected surplus at the end of 1973.

Tables II, III and IV of the document before the Committee gave details of the contributions received for projects outside the normal Assistance Programme or for emergency operations. In that connexion, he expressed UNHCR's gratitude for the fact that the necessary contributions had been received in time for UNHCR to assist Asians of undetermined nationality from Uganda and to finance the Emergency Relief Programme in the South Sudan.

In 1973, UNHCR had had to mobilize substantial funds at short notice while continuing to finance the annual Programme and its normal outside Programme activities. The latter still required enormous sums. The High Commissioner had therefore made an appeal for \$14.3 million to finance the repatriation of over 200,000 persons now in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

He hoped that the financing of the latter operation would not be at the expense of the essential contributions to the regular 1974 Programme. Although the financing of the 1973 Assistance Programme was now assured, a note of caution must be sounded for 1974. Several Governments had already indicated the contributions they intended to announce at the Pledging Conference to be held in New York at the end of November. He expressed the hope that as many Governments as possible would announce increased contributions towards the 1974 Programme.

Mr. CHRISTIANSEN (Denmark) announced that his Government was ready to pledge, subject to approval by the Danish Parliament, a contribution of 4 million Danish kroner, equivalent to \$700,000, which would be paid immediately into UNHCR's account in Copenhagen. Moreover, his Government would be prepared to consider making a supplementary contribution in respect of the repatriation programme on the sub-continent, if that proved necessary.

Mr. WESTERLIND (Sweden) announced that Sweden would make a contribution to UNHCR, in respect of repatriation on the sub-continent, of 3 million Swedish kroner - equivalent to \$720,000.

Mr. ROSENBERG POLAK (Netherlands) announced that his Government had decided to make a payment of 1 million guilders - \$400,000 - in respect of the repatriation operation on the sub-continent.

Mr. VON HARPE (Federal Republic of Germany) welcomed the fact that UNHCR had endeavoured to diversify its holdings in the major world currencies and expressed the hope that that financial policy, as a result of which the investment income would reach a record figure of \$900,000, would be pursued so long as the monetary situation remained unstable.

He observed that a reduction in the rate of increase of administrative and operational budgets would encourage Governments to give more generous support to the High Commissioner's humanitarian task.



Mr. OPDAHL (Norway) said that his Government had been able to pledge a contribution of 1 million Norwegian kroner to continue the airlift on the sub-continent. That figure was the highest figure the Government could offer by royal decision without a debate in Parliament, which was now in process of formation. The Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs had stated that the new Government would consider favourably any request for supplementary aid in connexion with that operation.

Norway's contribution to the 1974 Programme would amount to 4.5 million Norwegian kroner, part of which would be allocated to the Education Account in accordance with Norway's usual practice. His Government was also ready to discuss with UNHCR the possibility of making an additional contribution if circumstances so justified.

Norway had always shown particular interest in projects outside the Programme. It intended to continue that policy and would give favourable attention to any request it received relating to special activities.

Mr. EL-AMIN (Observer for Sudan), speaking at the invitation of the Chairman, said that his Government intended to make a contribution of 3,000 Sudanese pounds in the next few days. It was a token contribution, since the Sudan's real contribution was made in other ways.

A figure of 180,000 Sudanese pounds had been approved for UNHCR activities in Sudan's 1973-1974 budget. That sum would make it possible to meet the administrative expenses of projects, since the cost of services was borne by various ministries. For example, 20,000 Sudanese pounds would be spent on education and 12,900 pounds on health. The granting to refugees of vast tracts of land was another form of aid not reflected in the figures.

The Sudan was all too familiar with the various aspects of refugee problems and wished to reiterate its willingness to do everything in its power to alleviate the sufferings of refugees.

Mr. KYEMBA (Uganda) said that his Government had made a contribution of 35,000 Ugandan shillings in September 1973. That contribution was largely symbolic, since Uganda's contribution to UNHCR's activities was of a different kind.

Prince Saddrudin AGA KHAN (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) thanked, on behalf of UNHCR, those Governments that had announced increased contributions or the payment of a special contribution. In particular, he requested the delegations of Norway, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands to convey his thanks to their Governments. He stressed that it was vital to continue the repatriation

operation on the sub-continent, without slackening the pace and reminded the Committee that that objective could only be achieved if contributions were forthcoming from Governments.

The CHAIRMAN read out the following draft decision, which the Committee might in due course decide to include in its report:

The Executive Committee:

1. Took note of the report submitted by the High Commissioner on the status of contributions to UNHCR voluntary funds and the overall financial situation for 1973 and 1974 (A/AC.96/494), as well as the note on the UNHCR long-playing records scheme (A/AC.96/495)

2. Took note of the fact that in addition to the requirements of the Annual Assistance Programme, the High Commissioner had been called upon in 1973 to mobilize substantial funds for special assignments often of an emergency character;

3. Was gratified that despite those urgent requirements for extra-Programme assistance, increased governmental support had been received in 1973;

4. Expressed the hope that substantially increased contributions would be made by Governments in 1974, in order to permit the full financing of that year's Assistance Programme;

5. Took note of the income and allocations in the long-playing records account for the period 1 July 1972 to 31 August 1973 (A/AC.96/495, annex).

(a) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, REPORT OF THE BOARD OF AUDITORS AND REPORT ON INVESTMENTS FOR 1972 (A/AC.96/489 and Corr.1, 496 and Add.1 and 490) (agenda item 5)

Mr. MOUSSALI (Acting Director, Administration Management Division) introduced document A/AC.96/489 and Corr.1. He stressed the fact that in the financial report the increase in the total amount under the heading "Cash and deposits" in the "Assets" column (\$12,493,626 in 1972, as against \$8.4 million in 1971) was due to the funds allocated for the operation in South Sudan and the repatriation operation on the sub-continent. The same applied to the "Governmental contributions pledged" under the heading "Accounts receivable - short-term", also in the "Assets" column (\$2,566,888 in 1972, as against \$252,000 in 1971).

With regard to Statement II, the new breakdown of "Expenditure" had been chosen because it gave a more accurate picture of the situation. He informed the Committee that of the figure of \$167,976 at the juncture of the column "Other funds" under "Trust funds" and the sub-heading "Other obligations" (schedules 5, 6 and 7) under "Expenditure", \$86,000 had been made available to

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UNHCR for "junior professional officers". It involved an arrangement between UNHCR and the Governments of Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden, under which the latter Governments seconded junior officers to UNHCR, who, after a short course in Geneva, were sent to UNHCR field offices in Africa or Asia, where they served for periods of from one to three years. Their salaries were drawn from trust funds supplied by their respective Governments.

He explained that in Statement II, under "Trust funds", the South Sudan Operation had been shown separately because of its size.

Mr. CALIWAY (United Kingdom) said he was glad that the term "Funds set aside" had been replaced by the term "Working capital and guarantee fund", as his delegation had suggested.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should take note of the documents that had just been considered, and that that fact should be reflected in the draft report.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.