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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mrs. Moussokoro SANGARE-KABA (Guinea)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 23 September 1983, the General Assembly decided to include in its agenda the item entitled:

"Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

- (a) Report of the High Commissioner;
- (b) Assistance to refugees in Africa: report of the Secretary-General".

At its 4th meeting, on the same day, the General Assembly decided to allocate that item to the Third Committee.

2. The Committee considered this item at its 42nd to 46th, 54th, 56th, 57th and 59th meetings, from 14 to 16 November and from 28 November to 1 December 1983. An account of the discussion of the Committee is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/38/SR.42-46, 54, 56, 57 and 59).

3. The Committee decided to consider item 98 together with the relevant chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council (item 12) pertaining to specific cases of providing assistance to refugees.

4. In connection with item 98, the Committee had before it the following documentation:

- (a) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; 1/
- (b) Report of the Economic and Social Council, chapter III, section F, and chapter IV, section A; 2/
- (c) International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa: report of the Secretary-General (A/38/526);
- (d) Letters dated 2 February and 4 April 1983 from the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General (A/38/85-S/15593 and Add.1);
- (e) Letter dated 1 April 1983 from the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General (A/38/134-S/15677);
- (f) Letter dated 14 April 1983 from the Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General (A/38/158-S/15706);
- (g) Letter dated 21 April 1983 from the Permanent Representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and Thailand to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting the text of the Joint Declaration of the Fourth Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the States Members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the European Community, held at Bangkok on 24 and 25 March 1983 (A/38/168-S/15736);
- (h) Letter dated 15 July 1983 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting the text of the joint communiqué of the sixteenth Ministerial Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, held at Bangkok on 24 and 25 June 1983 (A/38/302-S/15875).
5. In connection with the relevant chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council pertaining to specific cases of providing assistance to refugees, the Committee had before it the following documentation:
- (a) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on humanitarian assistance to refugees in Djibouti (A/38/399 and Corr.1);
- (b) Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on assistance to refugees in Somalia (A/38/400 and Corr.1);
- (c) Report of the Secretary-General on the situation of refugees in the Sudan (A/38/427 and Corr.1);

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/38/12) and Supplement No. 12A (A/38/12/Add.1).

2/ To be issued as Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/38/3).

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on assistance to displaced persons in Ethiopia (A/38/428 and Corr.1);

(e) Report of the Secretary-General on assistance to student refugees in southern Africa (A/38/429 and Corr.1);

(f) Letter dated 21 September 1983 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting the joint statement issued by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (A/38/441-S/15999).

6. At its 42nd meeting, on 14 November, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees made an introductory statement.

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.24

7. At the 54th meeting, on 28 November, the representative of Sierra Leone, in his capacity as Chairman of the African Group for the month of November, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/38/L.24) entitled "International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (ICARA II)".

8. At the 57th meeting, on 30 November, the representative of Sierra Leone orally revised the draft resolution by adding, at the end of the last preambular paragraph, the words "as well as for efforts to address the causes of refugee situations".

9. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.24, as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 12, draft resolution I).

B. Draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.34

10. At the 54th meeting, on 28 November, the representative of Denmark introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/38/L.34) entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", sponsored by Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, Madagascar, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the United States of America and Venezuela as well as Bolivia, the Congo, Germany, Federal Republic of and Zaire, subsequently joined by Honduras.

11. At the 57th meeting, on 30 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/38/L.34 without a vote (see para. 12, draft resolution II).

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

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

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

International Conference on Assistance to Refugees
in Africa (ICARA II)

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa (A/38/526) and the chapters on Africa contained in the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1/

Recalling its resolutions 37/197 of 18 December 1982 on the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa and 38/5 of 28 October 1983 on co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity,

Bearing in mind resolution AHG/RES.114 (XIX) on the Conference adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its nineteenth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 6 to 12 June 1983,

Gravely concerned at the persistent serious problem of large numbers of refugees on the African continent,

Aware of the economic and social burden borne by African countries of asylum on account of the presence of these refugees and its consequences for their national development and of the heavy sacrifices made by them, despite their limited resources,

Recognizing the universal collective responsibility of sharing the urgent and overwhelming burden of the problem of African refugees through effective mobilization of resources to meet the urgent and long-term needs of the refugees and to strengthen the capacity of countries of asylum to provide adequately for the refugees while they remain in those countries, as well as to assist the countries of origin in the rehabilitation of voluntary returnees,

Recognizing that the achievement of durable solutions to refugee problems, in particular voluntary repatriation and local integration, calls for generous humanitarian and developmental assistance to the affected countries, as well as for efforts to address the causes of refugee situations,

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplements No. 12 and 12 A (A/38/12 and Add.1).

1. Notes with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on preparations for the International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa;
2. Approves the proposed Conference arrangements contained in paragraph 17 of the report of the Secretary-General;
3. Requests the Secretary-General to invite all States, relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to participate in the Conference at a ministerial and high level;
4. Appeals to the international community, all States, specialized agencies and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide the utmost support for the Conference with a view to offering maximum financial and material assistance to refugees in Africa and to ensuring the success of the Conference;
5. Expresses its deep appreciation to the countries of asylum for the generous contribution and sacrifices that they are making to alleviate the plight of refugees;
6. Commends those countries which are supporting programmes for refugees and returnees for their continued assistance, and calls upon them as well as other States and international organizations to assist and co-operate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the promotion of durable solutions;
7. Calls upon the Secretary-General, in close co-operation with the Organization of African Unity and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to ensure that, in the period leading up to the Conference, all appropriate measures are taken so that Member States, and in particular principal donors, are kept fully informed of the priority needs of the affected countries and that contacts are undertaken in the capitals concerned to mobilize the necessary support and resources;
8. Notes with satisfaction the action taken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to initiate public information programmes to increase public awareness of the refugee situation in Africa and the objectives of the Conference;
9. Requests the United Nations Department of Public Information, as well as other competent bodies within the United Nations system, to co-operate closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to ensure that the maximum amount of publicity is given to the refugee situation in Africa, as well as to the Conference and its objectives;
10. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of his Office, 1/ as well as the report of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme on its thirty-fourth session, 2/ and having heard the statement made by the High Commissioner on 14 November 1983, 3/

Recalling its resolution 37/195 of 18 December 1982,

Reaffirming the eminently humanitarian and non-political character of the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner,

Noting with deep concern that problems of refugees and displaced persons of concern to the High Commissioner remain acute in all parts of the world, notably in Africa, Asia and Latin America,

Stressing the fundamental importance of the High Commissioner's international protection function and the need for States to co-operate with the High Commissioner in the exercise of this essential function,

Expressing serious concern over the difficulties encountered by the High Commissioner in the exercise of his international protection function in the face of continued violations of the basic rights of persons of concern to his Office,

Deeply concerned that in various regions the safety and welfare of refugees and asylum-seekers have been seriously jeopardized on account of military or armed attacks, acts of piracy and other forms of brutality,

Acknowledging with appreciation the note of the Executive Committee on the strengthening of the UNHCR's management policy submitted by the High Commissioner 4/ and the High Commissioner's efforts to strengthen the management of his Office,

Noting that the Executive Committee has requested the High Commissioner to undertake a comprehensive study of the full financial and practical

1/ A/38/12.

2/ A/38/12/Add.1.

3/ A/C.3/38/SR.42.

4/ EC/SC.2/15/Add.1.

implications of inclusion of Arabic, Chinese and Spanish as official and working languages of the Executive Committee,

Noting with deep appreciation the valuable support extended by many Governments to the High Commissioner in carrying out his duties,

Welcoming the increasing number of accessions by States to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees,

Emphasizing that voluntary repatriation is the most desirable durable solution to problems of refugees and displaced persons of concern to the High Commissioner,

1. Commends the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and his staff for the valuable work they perform on behalf of refugees, returnees and displaced persons of concern to the Office of the High Commissioner;
2. Reaffirms the fundamental nature of the High Commissioner's function to provide international protection and the need for Governments to co-operate fully with him to facilitate the effective exercise of this essential function, in particular by acceding to and fully implementing the relevant international and regional instruments and by scrupulously observing the principles of asylum and non-refoulement;
3. Deplores all violations of the rights and safety of refugees and asylum-seekers, in particular through military or armed attacks against refugee camps and settlements, other forms of brutality and failure to rescue asylum-seekers in distress at sea;
4. Urges States, in co-operation with the Office of the High Commissioner and other competent international bodies, to take all measures necessary to ensure the safety of refugees and asylum-seekers;
5. Reaffirms the principle of international solidarity and burden-sharing in responding to the refugee problem, particularly in view of the heavy burden borne by receiving countries on account of the presence of large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers;
6. Expresses deep appreciation for the valuable material and humanitarian response of receiving countries, in particular of many developing countries which give asylum to or accept on a temporary basis large numbers of refugees;
7. Commends all States which facilitate the attainment of durable solutions, accept refugees for resettlement and contribute generously to the High Commissioner's programmes;
8. Urges all States to support the High Commissioner in his efforts to achieve durable solutions to refugee problems, primarily through voluntary repatriation, including assistance to returnees as appropriate, or, wherever

appropriate, through integration in countries of asylum or resettlement in third countries;

9. Notes with appreciation the continuing support given to the High Commissioner by agencies of the United Nations system, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in carrying out his humanitarian task and requests the High Commissioner to continue the co-ordination of his efforts with those organizations and agencies;

10. Calls upon all States to promote durable solutions and to contribute generously to the High Commissioner's humanitarian programmes in order to assist refugees, displaced persons and returnees in a spirit of international solidarity and burden-sharing.
