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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Fuad M. AL-HINAI (Oman)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 5th plenary meeting on 23 September 1977, the General Assembly decided to allocate to the Third Committee agenda item 87 entitled:

"Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

(a) Report of the High Commissioner;

(b) Question of the continuation of the Office of the High Commissioner."

2. The Third Committee considered the item at its 45th to 49th meetings, from 14 to 16 November. The summary records of these meetings (A/C.3/SR.45-49) contain the views expressed by the representatives of Member States on this item.

3. The Committee had before it the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council, 1/ which was supplemented by his oral statement at the Committee's 45th meeting (A/C.3/32/SR.45, paras. 1-9). The Committee also had before it an addendum containing the report of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme on its twenty-eighth session. 2/

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/32/12 and Corr.1).

2/ Ibid., Supplement No. 12A (A/32/12/Add.1).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

A. Draft resolution A/C.3/32/L.26

4. At the 46th meeting, on 14 November, the representative of Norway introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/32/L.26), entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", sponsored by Angola, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Iceland, India, Iran, Italy, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Senegal, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, the United Republic of Cameroon, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

5. At its 49th meeting on 16 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/32/L.26 by consensus (see para. 14 below, draft resolution I).

B. Draft resolution A/C.3/32/L.27

6. At the 46th meeting, on 14 November, the representative of Norway also introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/32/L.27) entitled "Question of the continuation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", sponsored by Angola, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, the Central African Empire, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Iceland, Iran, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Senegal, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

7. At its 49th meeting, on 16 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/32/L.27 by consensus (see para. 14 below, draft resolution II).

C. Draft resolution A/C.3/32/L.29

8. At the 47th meeting, on 15 November, the representative of Pakistan introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/32/L.29), entitled "Expression of appreciation to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees", sponsored by Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, the Central African Empire, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Iceland, India, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, New Zealand, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar,

Senegal, Somalia, Spain, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, the Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

9. At its 49th meeting, on 16 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/32/L.29 by acclamation (see para. 14 below, draft resolution III).

D. Draft resolution A/C.3/32/L.30

10. At the 47th meeting, the representative of Denmark introduced a draft resolution (A/C.3/32/L.30), entitled "Assistance to refugees in southern Africa", sponsored by Angola, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, the Central African Empire, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, Somalia, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Republic of Cameroon, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zambia.

11. At its 49th meeting, on 16 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/32/L.30 by consensus (see para. 14 below, draft resolution IV).

12. In the course of the debate, a number of speakers referred to the question of a draft Convention on Territorial Asylum. The Chair noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3456 (XXX) of 9 December 1975, a Conference of Plenipotentiaries was held at Geneva from 10 January to 4 February 1977. The Conference was not able to carry out fully its mandate within the allocated time and recommended that consideration be given by the Assembly to the question of convening, at an appropriate time, a further session of the Conference.

13. The statements made in the Committee indicated that, while there was a need to reconvene the Conference, it was equally clear that careful and detailed preparation was required. On the basis of information provided by the High Commissioner that consultations with Governments were continuing in this regard, the Chairman proposed that the High Commissioner keep the Secretary-General informed of progress made in these consultations so that, at its next session, the General Assembly might have more information available to it to decide on the appropriate time to reconvene the Conference. Since the Committee was not seized with a proposal for a formal decision or resolution, the Chairman proposed that her statement summing up the situation be appropriately reflected in the report of the Third Committee. As there was no objection, it was so decided.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

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

DRAFT RESOLUTION I

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the activities of his Office 3/ and having heard his statement, 4/

Recalling its resolution 31/35 of 30 November 1976 and taking into account the additional responsibilities assumed by the High Commissioner in different parts of the world for the benefit of an increasing number of refugees and displaced persons,

Recognizing the eminently humanitarian character of the various activities of the High Commissioner and the importance of permanent solutions being promoted by his Office, including voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement in other countries,

Concerned by infringements of the basic human rights of refugees and the urgent need on the part of Governments to ensure their effective and continued protection,

Recognizing the need for further accessions to and effective implementation by Governments of the relevant international instruments, including in particular the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 5/ and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, 6/

Commending the increasing number of Governments contributing to the High Commissioner's programmes and emphasizing the need for a wider sharing of the financial burden to provide the vital humanitarian assistance required by refugees and displaced persons,

3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/32/12 and Corr.1) and Supplement No. 12A (A/32/12/Add.1).

4/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Third Committee, 45th meeting, paras. 1-9.

5/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545, p. 137.

6/ Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791, p. 267.

1. Expresses its deep satisfaction at the efficient manner in which the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and his staff continue to accomplish their humanitarian tasks;
2. Requests the High Commissioner to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons of concern to his Office, including those in urgent need of help in Africa, Asia and Latin America;
3. Further requests United Nations agencies and programmes to render the fullest possible support to the High Commissioner's humanitarian tasks;
4. Urges Governments to extend the necessary co-operation to the High Commissioner in promoting permanent and speedy solutions to the problems facing his Office through voluntary repatriation and assistance in rehabilitation of returnees, integration in countries of asylum or resettlement in other countries as needed;
5. Further urges Governments to facilitate the efforts of the High Commissioner in the field of international protection, inter alia, by:
 - (a) Considering accession to the relevant international and regional instruments established for the benefit of refugees;
 - (b) Elaborating appropriate procedures at the national level for the effective implementation of the provisions of these instruments;
 - (c) Following humanitarian principles with respect to the granting of asylum and ensuring that these are scrupulously observed, including the principle of non-refoulement of refugees;
6. Calls upon Governments to contribute generously towards the financing of the High Commissioner's humanitarian activities in view of the universal character of the problems facing his Office and the need for a wider financial support of the programmes being undertaken by him.

DRAFT RESOLUTION II

Continuation of the Office of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2957 (XXVII) of 12 December 1972, in which it decided to review, not later than at its thirty-second session, the arrangements for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees with a view to determining whether the Office should be continued beyond 31 December 1978,

Recognizing the need for concerted international action on behalf of the increasing numbers of refugees and displaced persons of concern to the High Commissioner,

/...

Considering the outstanding work which has been performed by the Office of the High Commissioner in providing international protection and material assistance to refugees and displaced persons as well as in promoting permanent solutions to their problems,

Noting with deep appreciation the effective manner in which the Office of the High Commissioner has been dealing with various essential humanitarian tasks entrusted to it,

1. Decides to continue the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a further period of five years from 1 January 1979;

2. Decides to review, not later than at its thirty-seventh session, the arrangements for the Office of the High Commissioner with a view to determining whether the Office should be continued beyond 31 December 1983.

DRAFT RESOLUTION III

Expression of appreciation to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The General Assembly,

Noting with deep regret that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will shortly be relinquishing his duties,

Recognizing the progress achieved under his guidance in promoting humanitarian solutions to the problems of refugees and displaced persons in various parts of the world,

Considering his unrelenting efforts to alleviate human suffering through the special humanitarian tasks entrusted to him in addition to the original functions of his Office,

1. Expresses its sincere appreciation and thanks to Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan for the effective and dedicated manner in which he has performed his functions as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

2. Extends its good wishes to him for success in his future undertakings.

DRAFT RESOLUTION IV

Assistance to refugees in southern Africa

The General Assembly,

Noting the information provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for

/...

Refugees on the assistance activities of his Office on behalf of refugees in southern Africa, 7/

Noting with deep concern the increasing number of refugees from Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe and recognizing the burden thus imposed upon the receiving countries,

Noting the continuing efforts of the High Commissioner to extend adequate assistance to these refugees, particularly in neighbouring African States,

Recognizing the close co-operation existing between the Organization of African Unity and the High Commissioner,

1. Commends the programmes of assistance already being implemented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and requests him further to strengthen measures for the benefit of refugees in southern Africa;
2. Urges Governments to contribute generously towards the programmes of the High Commissioner and to provide him with the necessary facilities required to assist the refugees in southern Africa, inter alia by providing opportunities for local settlement, education and vocational training;
3. Requests United Nations agencies and programmes, non-governmental organizations and voluntary agencies to extend maximum support to the High Commissioner in his efforts;
4. Requests the High Commissioner to continue his co-operation with the Organization of African Unity and to keep it currently informed of these assistance activities.

7/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/32/12 and Corr.1), chap. III.