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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Assistance to student refugees in southern Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

1. Basic education is one of the main forms of assistance provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to refugees. The overall aim is to equip young refugees with the basic knowledge and skills needed to make them productive and self-reliant in their countries of asylum, and also to prepare them to assume leadership roles in various fields of competence upon their return to their countries of origin.

2. In the southern African context, refugee children are assisted to study at various levels up to "O" levels, i.e., at the primary and lower secondary levels. Beyond this, higher education for Namibian and South African refugees is funded by the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa under the Agreement of Understanding between that office and UNHCR. Student refugees of other nationalities studying at the higher education levels continue to be assisted financially by UNHCR.

3. In addition to arrangements within the southern Africa region, some South African and Namibian refugee students receive assistance from UNHCR to study in schools in other African countries, mainly in West Africa. During the 1987/88 academic year, some 708 South African and Namibian students were assisted to study at the lower secondary school both in and outside of the region. The figure for the 1988/89 academic year and thereafter is however expected to be lower, owing to the expected voluntary repatriation of some of the Namibian students as part of the Namibian independence process now under way.

* A/44/150.

4. The following figures represent UNHCR financial assistance to student refugees for 1988 and 1989:

1988 obligation	\$627 087
1989 appropriation	\$489 000
