



REPORT
of the
UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL RECORDS: EIGHTH SESSION
SUPPLEMENT No. 11 (A/2394)

NEW YORK, 1953

UNITED NATIONS

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NOTE

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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES¹

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report, which is submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 428 (V) of 14 December 1950, covers the period from June 1952 to May 1953. It will be recalled that I submitted to the General Assembly at its seventh session a report,² supplemented by an addendum,² containing information concerning the most important events relating to refugees within the mandate of my Office which took place between May and October 1952.

2. In the present report an attempt will be made to give as full an account as possible of the work which has been entrusted to my Office under the terms of its statute and the appropriate resolutions of the General Assembly, so that the Assembly will be in a position to take the decisions which are incumbent upon it under chapter I, paragraph 5, of the Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner (resolution 428 (V)), in which it is stated:

“The General Assembly shall review, not later than at its eighth regular session, the arrangements for the High Commissioner’s Office for Refugees with a view to determining whether the Office should be continued beyond 31 December 1953.”

3. A clear appreciation of the achievements of my Office and the tasks which still remain can, in my submission, only be obtained if there is a full realization of the nature of the functions which have been assigned to it by the General Assembly against the background of the actual conditions of refugees as they were left in various parts of the world at the end of the International Refugee Organization operations and the continuing aspects of the refugee problem.

4. For this reason I have included in the present report a short summary of the historical events which led to the establishment of my Office and also of the action taken by the General Assembly in connexion with the responsibility for the refugee problem which the United Nations assumed at the request of IRO before the end of the latter’s operations.

5. This short summary will, I hope, make it clear to all Members of the United Nations that, in setting up my Office and giving it responsibility not only for the international protection of refugees but for seeking permanent solutions as defined in article 1 of the Statute, the General Assembly of the United Nations took a new initiative in the history of international action for refugees. This initiative was made necessary by the many unsolved problems which remained after the end of IRO operations and, by the continued influx of new refugees, which were drawn to the attention of the General Assembly by the General Council of IRO. While it was

clearly the intention of the Assembly, in setting up my Office, not to create another operational organization, it was equally clear that the majority of governments represented at the General Assembly did not consider that the work of my Office should be restricted to the purely legal aspects of protection, which had been the function of several previous international organizations created by the League of Nations. For this reason, they included in the Statute the various functions outlined in article 8.

6. The determination of the majority of the governments represented at the fourth and fifth sessions of the General Assembly to ensure that any new United Nations office established to assume responsibilities for refugees should not restrict its activities to measures which might be held to perpetuate the refugee problem was shown in the decision of the Assembly, to create the new term of international protection, and to include in the definition of the functions of my Office responsibility for seeking permanent solutions, as defined in chapter I, paragraph 1, of the Statute.

7. Furthermore, the provisions of chapter I, paragraph 2, of the Statute, in which it is stated that the work of the High Commissioner “shall relate, as a rule, to groups and categories of refugees” emphasize the distinction between the functions entrusted to my Office and those given to previous organizations charged with the legal and political protection of refugees. These previous international organizations were essentially concerned with the protection of individual refugees, for whom, in many countries, in agreement with the governments concerned, they provided what have been called quasi-consular services.

8. The difference between the functions entrusted to my Office and those of previous international organizations concerned with the legal and political protection of refugees is justified by the nature of the refugee problems with which they were respectively faced.

9. After the First World War, international action on behalf of refugees was originally concerned with the so-called Nansen refugees of Russian origin, the Armenian and Assyrian refugees, and later with the refugees who fled from Nazi persecution in Germany. All these were specifically defined groups of refugees for whom individual protective functions were exercised by an international organization.

10. At the end of the Second World War, and after the termination of the operations of large-scale repatriation and resettlement by UNRRA and IRO, considerable numbers of refugees of different categories remained in Central Europe, in the Near East and in the Far East for whose economic problems no satisfactory solution had been found. Moreover, the definitions in the Statute of my Office show clearly the intention of the General Assembly to include within its mandate the new refugees of different nationality who were no longer able to avail themselves of the protection of their governments.

¹ Previously distributed as document A/2394, dated 25 May 1953.

² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventh Session, Supplement No. 16*, document A/2126 and Addendum).

11. Before the end of its operations, IRO made agreements with the governments of a certain number of countries for the transfer of the responsibility for care and maintenance, but in a number of areas this was not possible. At the sixth session of the General Assembly, I therefore requested the authorization of the Assembly to appeal for funds for the most needy groups of refugees within the mandate of my Office.

12. This authorization was given in General Assembly resolution 538 B (VI) of 2 February 1952, which also invited me to contribute to the promotion of activities in the field of the economic integration of refugees, paying due regard to the solution of voluntary repatriation, and at the same time appealed to States interested in migration to give to refugees every possible opportunity to benefit from migration projects.

13. In this resolution the General Assembly clearly expressed its concern for the unsolved economic problems facing many of the refugees within the mandate of my Office and entrusted specific functions to my Office in dealing with these aspects of their problems. For this reason, my Office has devoted considerable efforts towards the implementation of resolution 538 (VI) and, although it has not been possible to achieve all that was

hoped for, some positive results have been obtained in the field of economic integration. Moreover, the funds collected in answer to my appeals have made it possible not only to meet some very urgent needs of refugees in European countries and in the Near East, but also to continue the maintenance of the refugees of European origin in China for one year after the exhaustion of funds earmarked by IRO for this purpose.

14. These efforts have been an integral part of the general work of international protection which has been continued both at headquarters and in the various branch offices which have been established. Nor have they in any way lessened the importance which my Office attaches to migration as a possible solution for the problems of many refugees.

15. The different activities of my Office in all these fields will be described in chapter III of the present report which deals with the problems of refugees in the main countries in which they are resident. Chapter I will contain a brief summary of the proceedings in the United Nations which led up to the establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, and chapter II with the general activities which have been mainly the responsibility of the headquarters of the Office.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

16. It will be recalled that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner was established as a result of international action initiated in the Commission on Human Rights³ and in the General Council of the International Refugee Organization, which at its third special session in May 1949 considered a paper prepared by the Director-General of that organization on future international action for refugees. In this paper (document GC/81) the Director-General of IRO recommended that the General Council:

“should consider fully the question of the future international protection and, if it is in agreement with his conclusions, should so advise the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.”

In paragraph 57 of document GC/81, the Director-General indicated his views on the functions which might be performed by a successor agency, stating that:

“the precise nature of the responsibilities in the field of protection which a successor organization would undertake would of course ultimately depend upon the mandate given to it by governments.”

17. After considering the above-mentioned report by the Director-General, the General Council of IRO adopted a report (document GC/91/Rev.1) which it decided to transmit to the Economic and Social Council. In this report it was stated that the General Council had reached the following conclusions:

“(a) That international assistance in the protection of refugees should continue unbroken;

“(b) That an organ within the framework of the United Nations should be entrusted with this responsibility;

“(c) That it is not prepared to recommend a continuation of the life of IRO in order to undertake this responsibility;

³ Cf. document E/600, paragraph 46.

“(d) That the question of the establishment of an international fund to be administered by the organ mentioned above for such purposes as may appear necessary and desirable for the material assistance of refugees after the termination of the IRO programme should be determined by the Economic and Social Council.”

18. The Economic and Social Council, at its ninth session, adopted resolution 248 A (IX), in which it recommended that the General Assembly at its fourth session:

“Decide the functions and organizational arrangements within the framework of the United Nations necessary for the international protection of refugees after IRO terminates its activities”;

and called upon the Secretary-General to prepare a plan on this subject for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fourth session.

19. The report of the Secretary-General,⁴ which was submitted to the Assembly at its fourth session, made a full analysis of:

(a) The definition of the term “refugee” and the scope of the problem;

(b) The nature and extent of international protection functions;

(c) Organization and financial arrangements for the international protection of refugees.

20. On 3 December 1949, the General Assembly adopted resolution 319 A (IV) in which it recognized the responsibility of the United Nations for the international protection of refugees and decided:

“to establish as of 1 January 1951, a High Commissioner’s Office for Refugees”

⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourth Session, Third Committee, Annex*, document A/C.3/527 and Corr.1.

and requested the Economic and Social Council:

“to prepare, at its eleventh session, a draft resolution embodying provisions for the functioning of the High Commissioner’s Office for Refugees”

in the light of detailed draft provisions to be prepared by the Secretary-General.

21. In pursuance of the above resolution, the Economic and Social Council, at its eleventh session, considered the proposal submitted by the Secretary-General and adopted resolution 319 A (XI), with an annex containing the proposed Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees.

22. The draft Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner was further considered by the General Assembly at its fifth session and finally incorporated in resolution 428 (V) of the General Assembly. At the same session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 430 (V), in which it noted that the General Council of IRO had decided to continue its operations until 30 September 1951, and decided to postpone until its sixth session the examination of the problem of material assistance to refugees.

23. According to article 1 of the Statute of his Office, the High Commissioner for Refugees:

“shall assume the function of providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting governments and, subject to the approval of the governments concerned, private organizations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities.”

24. The method by which the High Commissioner shall provide for the protection of refugees falling under the competence of his Office is defined in article 8 of the Statute which states:

“The High Commissioner shall provide for the protection of refugees falling under the competence of his Office by:

“(a) Promoting the conclusion and ratification of international conventions for the protection of refugees, supervising their application and proposing amendments thereto;

“(b) Promoting through special agreements with governments the execution of any measures calculated to improve the situation of refugees and to reduce the number requiring protection;

“(c) Assisting governmental and private efforts to promote voluntary repatriation or assimilation within new national communities;

“(d) Promoting the admission of refugees, not excluding those in the most destitute categories, to the territories of States;

“(e) Endeavouring to obtain permission for refugees to transfer their assets and especially those necessary for their resettlement;

“(f) Obtaining from governments information concerning the number and conditions of refugees in their territories and the laws and regulations concerning them;

“(g) Keeping in close touch with the governments and inter-governmental organizations concerned;

“(h) Establishing contact in such manner as he may think best with private organizations dealing with refugee questions;

“(i) Facilitating the co-ordination of the efforts of private organizations concerned with the welfare of refugees.”

25. From the list of functions it will be seen that, in addition to the general legal functions outlined in subparagraphs (a) and (b), the Office of the High Commissioner is charged with a number of promotional tasks of varied character.

26. At its sixth session, the General Assembly in pursuance of resolution 430 (V) considered the report of the General Council of IRO on assistance to refugees,⁵ in the light of observations which I submitted in part III of my report to the sixth session.⁶

27. In setting out the reasons why I considered that a limited relief fund for refugees within the mandate of my Office should be established, I emphasized the emergency character of the situation in the Far East, the small numbers of refugees in the Near and Middle East, the difficult cases in Trieste, the need for the continued support of the activities of the voluntary agencies on behalf of refugees in Central Europe, and the problems which might arise from the influx of refugees into countries of first asylum.

28. I also stressed the importance of long-term plans designed to promote economic reconstruction measures which will be calculated to afford to residual groups in some areas possibilities of a normal livelihood; and, lastly, I urged the necessity for States willing to make a further international effort to promote migration to ensure that refugees within the mandate of my Office would receive a fair share in any opportunities for migration which would be provided.

29. After considering the report of IRO and my observations on the problems of assistance, the General Assembly adopted resolution 538 (VI), the terms of which have been mentioned above.

30. At its seventh session, the General Assembly adopted a further resolution (resolution 638 (VII) of 20 December 1952) on the integration of refugees, inviting me, in consultation with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to examine the situation “with a view to exploring with the governments directly concerned what sources might be available and the most effective means by which such funds might be utilized”.

31. The Statute as adopted by the General Assembly at its fifth session provides that “the Economic and Social Council may decide, after hearing the views of the High Commissioner on the subject, to establish an advisory committee on refugees”. Such a committee was in fact established under Council resolution 393 B (XIII) and has proved to be of great assistance, giving me the opportunity of consulting directly with the representatives of the governments which have demonstrated a particular interest in a solution of the refugee problem. A brief account of the proceedings of this Committee at its second and third sessions will be found in chapter VII.

⁵ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixth Session, Annexes, Agenda items 30 and 31*, document A/1948.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 19, page 6.

CHAPTER II
GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Section 1

International agreements affecting refugees

CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES,
28 JULY 1951

32. The most important instrument concerning the protection of refugees which has been negotiated during the lifetime of my Office is the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951, which was prepared by a Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Geneva in July 1951. My Office participated in the work of this Conference.

33. The Convention has been signed by Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, the Holy See, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia.

34. At its sixth session, the General Assembly, under resolution 538 A (VI), invited Member States and non-member States which have demonstrated their interest in the refugee problem to become parties to the Convention as soon as possible. The Convention has so far been ratified by Denmark and Norway. In most countries which have signed the Convention the constitutional procedure for ratification has been instituted. In some of them it is in an advanced stage and there is reason to hope that within the next few months the six ratifications necessary for the Convention to enter into force will be completed.

35. According to article 1 B of the Convention, each contracting State shall make a declaration, at the time of signature, ratification or accession, specifying whether for the purpose of the Convention the words "events occurring before 1 January 1951" shall be understood to mean "events occurring in Europe" or "events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951". The Governments of Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have declared that they intend to apply the meaning "events occurring in Europe or elsewhere". The Governments of France, Italy and Turkey have decided that they intend to apply the meaning "events occurring in Europe". The other signatory governments have not yet made a declaration in accordance with article 1 B.

36. As soon as the 1951 Convention enters into force it will supersede, in the countries ratifying it, previous international instruments relating to refugees. The most important of these are the Convention of 28 October 1933 relating to Nansen refugees, and the Convention of 10 February 1938 concerning the status of refugees from Germany.

UNIVERSAL COPYRIGHT CONVENTION

37. At the International Copyright Conference which considered the Universal Copyright Convention in Geneva in August-September 1952, my Office proposed that, in respect of the benefits of the Convention, refugees should be assimilated to the nationals of the country of their habitual residence. The Conference decided not to include the special provisions relating to refugees in the body of the Convention but adopted a Protocol providing for the assimilation of stateless persons and

refugees who have their habitual residence in a State Party to the Protocol, to nationals of that State. The Protocol, which is in accordance with the principles enunciated in article 14 of the 1951 Convention relating to the protection of the artistic rights and industrial property of refugees, has been signed by thirty-five States.

PROTOCOLS CONCERNING SOCIAL SECURITY NEGOTIATED
BY THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

38. The closest co-operation has been maintained with the secretariat of the Council of Europe in all questions relating to refugees and, in particular, in the negotiation of protocols relating to social security. On the initiative of the Belgian Government, the Council's Committee on Social Security adopted, in connexion with the European Interim Agreements, protocols on social security schemes by which the provisions of the Agreements would be extended to refugees as defined in article 1 of the 1951 Convention. These protocols are in accord with article 24 of the 1951 Convention under which the Contracting States undertake to:

"extend to refugees the benefits of agreements concluded between them, or which may be concluded between them in the future, concerning the maintenance of acquired rights and rights in the process of acquisition in regard to social security, subject only to the conditions which apply to nationals of the States signatory to the agreements in question."

39. Similarly, the Council's Committee of Experts on Social and Medical Assistance adopted a protocol by which the benefits of the European Convention on Social and Medical Assistance would be extended to refugees as defined in article 1 of the 1951 Convention. This is in conformity with the principle enunciated in article 23 of that Convention.

CONVENTION ON DECLARATION OF DEATH OF MISSING
PERSONS

40. In view of the special interest of certain groups of refugees within the mandate of my Office in the Convention on Declaration of Death of Missing Persons, I addressed a joint letter with the Director-General of IRO to governments expressing the hope that they would accede to the Convention. The Convention entered into force on 24 January 1952 after it had been ratified by China and Guatemala. It has since been ratified by Israel, and the Belgian Senate has approved ratification. The International Bureau for the Declaration of Death of Missing Persons provided for by the Convention was opened in Geneva on 1 October 1952 as a separate unit within the European Office of the United Nations.

ENFORCEMENT ABROAD OF MAINTENANCE OBLIGATIONS

41. My Office was represented at the meeting in Geneva in August 1952 of the Committee of Experts convened by the Secretary-General under Economic and Social Council resolution 390 H (XIII) to prepare the text of a model convention or a model reciprocal law on the question of the recognition and enforcement abroad of maintenance obligations. This problem is of particular interest to refugee families whose members are often dispersed in different countries, and in these cases the transferability of maintenance payments and

free legal aid are of the greatest importance. While the Committee did not incorporate any provisions concerning legal aid in the draft convention and model convention it prepared, it stressed in its report the need for arrangements for legal aid to claimants; it appealed to the non-governmental humanitarian organizations to continue their social services for indigent families and asked the Secretary-General to co-ordinate their activities in this field. The Committee elaborated a draft convention on recovery abroad of claims for maintenance and a model convention on the enforcement of maintenance obligations which will probably be considered by the Economic and Social Council at its sixteenth session.

HUMAN RIGHTS

42. My Office submitted a memorandum to the Commission on Human Rights at its eighth session suggesting that a clause relating to the right of asylum should be incorporated in the draft International Covenants on human rights. Although several delegations supported the inclusion of such a clause, the majority in the Commission considered that the matter was too complicated to be dealt with adequately in the text of the Covenants. In view of the fact that the Commission on Human Rights decided in 1947 to examine the question of the inclusion of the right of asylum from persecution in the international bill on human rights or in a special convention for this purpose, I venture to express the hope that it will still consider this problem.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

43. In its resolution 428 (V), the General Assembly called upon governments to co-operate with my Office, especially by:

“providing refugees with travel and other documents such as would normally be provided to other aliens by their national authorities, especially documents which would facilitate their resettlement.”

44. At the time of the setting-up of my Office, the so-called London Travel Document established by the London Agreement of 15 October 1946 had already received wide recognition.

45. Most countries which do not issue the London Travel Document issue under national regulations a special travel document to aliens who do not have a national passport, including refugees (aliens' passport, *laissez-passer*, etc.), but these documents, as distinct from the London Travel Document, do not as a rule entitle the holder to return to the issuing country without a visa.

46. At present the London Travel Document is issued by eighteen countries (Belgium, China, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, the German Federal Republic, Greece, India, Italy, Liberia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, the Union of South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Venezuela) and is officially recognized by fifteen other countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, Eire, France, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Portugal and Turkey). It is recognized *de facto* by a number of other countries.

47. Since the establishment of my Office, the German Federal Republic has become a party to the London Agreement, and the Government of Brazil, which had signed the Agreement earlier, has deposited its instrument of ratification.

48. In Austria, a *Reiseausweis* is issued only on quadri-partite consent. In practice, travel documents for refugees are issued by the Allied Authorities on a unilateral basis for each zone. It is hoped that the Austrian Government will be in a position to issue the travel document envisaged by the Convention when it is ratified.

49. Once the Convention is in force, the London Travel Document will, in countries parties to the Convention, be replaced by the travel document provided for under the Convention, which closely resembles the London Travel Document.

50. For refugees in Trieste, an agreement has recently been reached with the Italian authorities providing for the issue of London Travel Documents by the Italian Ministry of the Interior, through the *Questura* at Gorizia, which will transmit them to the Italian Political Adviser to the Allied Military Government. These documents will be held by the Allied Military Government, Trieste, until the refugee has obtained an immigration visa for another country, when the document will be issued to the refugee with a re-entry visa to the Free Territory of Trieste valid for one year.

51. In Hong Kong, arrangements have recently been made with the authorities under which refugees who are temporarily admitted to Hong Kong from China and who hold end destination visas may also be given the London Travel Document. In the absence of any other valid travel document, the governments of the countries of destination accept the certificate of travel formerly issued by IRO.

52. The so-called Nansen passport continues to be issued to Russian, Armenian and assimilated refugees in Belgium, France, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, and to Russian and Armenian refugees in Greece. A special certificate of identity is issued to Nansen refugees in Ireland and Italy. With the coming into force of the 1951 Convention, these documents will be replaced by the travel document provided for by that Convention.

Section 2

Relations with inter-governmental organizations

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

53. Close relations continue to be maintained with the International Labour Office on questions of migration, vocational training and the placement of refugee intellectuals. In September 1952, the Director-General, Mr. David Morse, agreed to act as Honorary Adviser in relation to the work of my Office connected with the Ford Foundation Grant for Refugees, and has contributed valuable advice on the proposed projects, especially those concerned with vocational training.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

54. Liaison is maintained with UNESCO in all spheres of its activity which are related to the problems of refugees, in particular those concerned with the preparation of scientific studies on the assimilation of migrants and various activities in the educational and cultural fields. UNESCO has agreed to supply my Office with technical advice on the selection and preparation of educational and cultural projects for refugees.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

55. Exchanges of information have taken place between WHO and my Office on the subject of placement of refugee doctors. All available information has been supplied for inclusion in a forthcoming report by WHO on the maldistribution of doctors and medical personnel.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

56. Close liaison has been established between my Office and the Council of Europe in its activities on behalf of refugees. In addition to the negotiation of protocols relating to social security mentioned above (paragraphs 38 and 39), the Council of Europe has given great assistance in mobilizing European support for the plan which was drawn up to provide housing in Western Germany to meet the emergency caused by the influx of refugees through Berlin. The plan which was drawn up has received the full support both of the Committee on Surplus Population and Refugees and of the Special Liaison Committee of the Council of Europe. The Special Liaison Committee drew particular attention to the necessity of measures being taken to facilitate the liquidation of refugee camps. The recommendations of the two Committees have been submitted to the Committee of Ministers for consideration.

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPEAN MIGRATION

57. Close relations are maintained with the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration on all questions affecting the migration of refugees. In addition to the joint operation which is being carried out on behalf of refugees in China, details of which are given in a later chapter of the present report, my Office and the Inter-governmental Committee have been in close consultation on the question of the settlement of the difficult cases in Trieste, and plans are being elaborated in conjunction with the voluntary agencies to use to the maximum benefit the Fund equivalent to \$1 million which was recently given in trust to the Committee to liquidate as far as possible the refugee situation in Trieste.

58. At the third session of the Inter-governmental Committee, my Office requested that the Committee should concern itself not only with the movement of refugees of European origin from Europe, but also with the movement of refugees of European origin from countries outside Europe where they could not be assimilated. The Committee has agreed that its technical services could be used for this purpose and that funds

other than those contributed by member governments could be used to finance the movement of these refugees.

59. According to the latest reports, the Committee has assisted in the movement of 31,326 refugees between 1 February 1952 and 31 March 1953. Of these, 18,754 have been moved to the United States under the now expired Displaced Persons Act. Of the remaining 13,000, 4,000 have been resettled in Canada, 3,500 in Australia and approximately 2,000 in Brazil.

ORGANIZATION FOR EUROPEAN ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

60. A working relationship has been established with OEEC on all matters which affect the economic integration of refugees in their countries of residence in Europe and problems connected with the intra-European movement of refugees. Arrangements have been made for an exchange of all information of mutual interest, and observers are sent to the meetings of both agencies when matters of mutual interest are under discussion.

Section 3

Relations with private organizations

61. A most important task entrusted to my Office has been the establishment of relations with the private organizations dealing with refugee questions and facilitating the co-ordination of their efforts. The continuation in Geneva of the Standing Conference of Voluntary Agencies working for Refugees has been of particular importance in the co-ordination of their work. This Conference, which already enjoyed consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, was granted a similar status with the Advisory Committee, as also were the individual voluntary agencies members of the Conference. In each of the countries where large numbers of refugees are resident, and where my branch offices are established, co-ordinating councils or conferences of the private organizations working on behalf of refugees have been established.

62. In connexion with the co-ordination of the work of the voluntary agencies, reference cannot be omitted to the Ford Foundation Grant, which has permitted a real co-ordination of effort on the part of the agencies in the particular fields of work for which the grant was made. The voluntary agencies have also been the principal channel for disbursing the funds collected in response to the appeals made for emergency aid for the most needy groups of refugees within the mandate of my Office in pursuance of resolution 538 (VI) of the General Assembly.

CHAPTER III

WORK OF THE BRANCH OFFICES AND SITUATION OF REFUGEES IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

63. The work of the branch offices has proved indispensable to the proper functioning of my Office and for the protection of the refugees. It has differed from country to country depending to a great extent upon the size of the refugee problem in each country and on existing conditions concerning the protection of refugees. Nevertheless, there have been some common features which characterize the work of all branch offices in countries where large numbers of refugees are resident.

64. Space would not permit a detailed description of all the representations made by each of the branch

offices to the competent authorities to ensure that refugees obtain recognition of their legal rights. These representations cover matters such as the determination of refugee status, regularization of residence, expulsion, the exercise of the right to work, public relief, travel documents, authentication of documentation, personal status, public assistance and social security.

65. An attempt will be made below to outline certain special features of the work of the branch offices in most of the countries where my Office is represented and to give some indication of the present situation of refugees

in a number of other countries where special problems have arisen.

Section 1

Northern and Western Europe

GENERAL

66. In several Western European countries there has been, since the time of the League of Nations, a continuous tradition of international assistance in the protection of refugees, based on a series of inter-governmental agreements concerned primarily with the determination of refugee status. This tradition was continued by IRO through its field missions, on lines very similar to those of previous international organizations concerned with refugees.

67. After the disappearance of IRO, three different factors caused a modification of the tasks carried out in the field of protection by my branch offices in Western Europe as compared with those performed by the representatives of previous international organizations. These factors were the changes in the attitude of some governments towards the respective competence of national and international authorities in the protection of refugees, the fundamentally new approach to the problem of protection contained in the Statute of my Office, which states that the work "shall as a rule relate to groups and categories of refugees" and, thirdly, budgetary considerations which have strictly limited the size of the branch offices.

68. The different tasks undertaken by the branch offices in Western Europe in respect of the determination and certification of refugee status are a reflection of the agreements concluded with individual governments relating to the establishment of the branch offices in their territories.

BELGIUM

69. In Belgium, there are 59,000 refugees within the mandate.

70. The branch office in Belgium continues to perform its function of protection and the certification of the status of individual refugees in accordance with the agreement of January 1952 between the Belgian Government and my Office. The office also continues the work formerly performed by the IRO field mission, under which documents issued to refugees by the office for Russian and Armenian refugees and authenticated by my representative are recognized in Belgium as official documents.

71. Under the law of 28 March 1952 concerning the aliens' police, which formed the subject of close consultation between the Belgian authorities and my Office, aliens who claim refugee status for the purpose of this law must produce a certificate issued by the Ministry of Justice or by my Office. In accordance with the wish of the Belgian authorities, my Office has so far assumed entire responsibility for this task, and has during the past year made eligibility decisions in approximately 2,500 cases.

72. On the basis of certificates of eligibility issued by my Office, persons who are recognized as refugees are accorded by the Belgian authorities the rights and benefits attached to refugee status in accordance with existing international agreements, Belgian law and administrative practice, in respect of residence, right to

work, social security, public assistance and travel documents.

73. Some hundreds of new refugees were admitted to Belgium during 1952, many of whom entered clandestinely, coming directly from their country of origin. As a rule, such refugees are granted a temporary residence permit on arrival, until their eligibility has been determined. This permit was hitherto issued for a period of two months, but, as a result of representations made by my representative, the period has been extended to three months, and the certificate delivered to the refugees is now a *certificat d'immatriculation* instead of the *sauf-conduit* granted previously.

74. In response to the appeals made by my Office on behalf of refugees in China, the Belgian Government has, since the beginning of 1952, granted permanent asylum to seventy refugees from Shanghai, including forty-nine old persons who are being looked after by the World Council of Churches. The Belgian Government has also granted a further thirty visas for old persons in China, who will be cared for in institutions under the auspices of the World Council of Churches, to whom a grant of \$12,000 has been made from the Refugee Emergency Fund. Furthermore, asylum has been granted to forty-one refugees from Trieste, who are to be cared for by the good offices of the *Aide aux personnes déplacées*.

75. The Belgian Government is at the present time engaged in the recruitment of a considerable number of miners from the refugee camp population in Germany and Austria. The branch offices in both these countries have requested the competent authorities to facilitate this recruitment, which would give an opportunity of resettlement to refugees and to their families who are suitable for this type of work.

76. A bill for the ratification of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees has been submitted to Parliament and has already been approved by both Chambers. Pending ratification of the Convention the authorities already grant to refugees in many cases the benefits covered by the Convention. With regard to the right to work, for example, the Belgian authorities have, since 1 January 1952, agreed to accord to refugees the benefits of article 17, paragraph 2, of the Convention giving them access to all wage-earning employments provided they have completed three years' residence in the country, or are married to a Belgian citizen or have one or more Belgian children. By this measure the many thousands of refugees who entered Belgium from the British and United States zones of occupied Western Germany between 1947 and 1949 to work in the mines have been given unrestricted access to the labour market.

77. Although the regulations concerning the status of refugees may leave room for improvement in some respects, the authorities have always adopted a comprehensive attitude towards representations made by my Office. For example, at the request of my representative the Belgian authorities agreed to remove from the residence permits of refugees who entered Belgium during the lifetime of the Inter-governmental Committee on Refugees and IRO, and who have been resident in Belgium for five years and have satisfied the authorities of their good conduct, the words "must emigrate", which emphasized the temporary nature of their stay in Belgium.

78. The law of 28 March 1952 also anticipates one of the provisions of the Convention, with regard to expulsion; this law provides for special safeguards against the expulsion of persons recognized as refugees. An expulsion order may only be issued against recognized refugees after the advice of a special consultative commission, of which my representative is a member, has been obtained.

79. Special mention should be made of the decision of the Belgian Government to grant an allowance to a certain number of refugee priests, to enable them to exercise their ministry among their refugee co-religionists. This generous gesture is typical of the liberal attitude adopted by the Belgian authorities towards the refugees in their territory.

NETHERLANDS

80. The number of refugees at present resident in the Netherlands is estimated at about 14,000, of whom 3,000 were recognized as refugees before the war. All these refugees are to a certain extent integrated into the economy of the country, and a large number can be considered as completely assimilated.

81. In the Netherlands the representative of the branch office for the Benelux countries has no direct functions connected with the determination and certification of the status of refugees. Refugees are normally granted temporary residence permits renewable each year. In most cases there are no difficulties with the renewal of these permits.

82. A problem with which my representative has been especially concerned is the regularization of the status of illegal entrants. After a recent discussion in the Netherlands Parliament on this question the Government has undertaken to review the existing regulations, and to attempt to make arrangements similar to those made by the Belgian Government concerning the regularization of the illegal entrants who have come from Germany.

83. It must be emphasized that in all questions concerning the regularization of residence or the expulsion of illegal entrants in countries in Western Europe, a distinction has to be made between the situation in those countries bordering on the countries of origin of refugees and other countries which traditionally grant asylum to victims of persecution coming directly from their countries of origin. These latter countries cannot undertake to accept indiscriminately refugees who have been given asylum previously in another country. This is a common problem to most Western European countries.

84. As regards the right to work, employers are required to obtain a labour permit for every foreigner whom they employ. Generally speaking, pre-war refugees are permitted to engage in any occupation they choose. Refugees recruited under the labour recruiting schemes in the British and United States zones of Western Germany had to give a written undertaking that they would stay at least for two years in the work assigned to them. Normally, permission to change their employer is granted only subject to their continuing in the same kind of employment as that for which they were engaged.

85. As a general rule, refugees receive the same treatment as nationals with regard to public assistance; this applies to unemployment benefit and to invalidity pensions. Among the 300 refugees belonging to the

category of "difficult cases" to whom the Netherlands granted asylum at the request of IRO, about fifty receive additional assistance from funds made available by that organization.

LUXEMBOURG

86. According to a recent evaluation made by my representative, the number of refugees at present resident in Luxembourg totals about 1,500, excluding children.

87. The Government of Luxembourg has signed the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which was approved by Parliament on 28 April. The promulgation of the ratification is expected shortly.

88. At the request of the Government of Luxembourg, upon the cessation of the activities of IRO, a representative of my Office was appointed to be responsible for liaison between the Government of Luxembourg and my Office through the branch office in Brussels.

89. This representative has the same functions in respect of the determination of refugee status as were formerly performed by the representative of IRO. Where refugees coming straight from their country of origin are concerned, the Ministry of Justice grants a residence permit to those who are determined eligible by my representative.

90. In view of the limited area of its territory, and the great increase in foreign population, the Luxembourg Government's reluctance to grant residence permits automatically to refugees arriving from another country of asylum is easily understood.

91. Authorization to employ any foreigner has to be obtained by employers from the *Office national du travail*. Such authorization is normally granted in respect of all refugees holding residence permits. Any refugee who is married to a Luxembourg citizen, or has children of Luxembourg nationality, is exempted from these conditions.

92. In matters of social security and public assistance, refugees have the same rights as nationals.

FRANCE

93. In France, where there are estimated to be 400,000 refugees within the mandate, the responsibility for the determination and certification of refugee status, which during its lifetime was carried out by the field missions of IRO under the Agreement of 13 January 1948 with the French Government, has now been assumed by the French authorities.

94. The French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, an autonomous body created by the law promulgated 25 July 1952, is charged with the legal protection of refugees in France. It determines the refugee status of persons coming within the mandate of my Office or within the scope of the 1951 Convention. In addition to quasi-consular functions, which were previously performed by IRO, the French Office is responsible for the carrying out of international conventions, agreements or arrangements concerning refugees.

95. The Director of the French Office is assisted by a Board consisting of representatives of the interested Government departments, a representative of the voluntary agencies, and my representative in France, who has consultative status. Under the law of 25 July 1952 an Appeals Commission is established, consisting of a member of the Council of State (*Conseil d'Etat*) as

Chairman, a representative of the Board of the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, and my representative.

96. This Commission will decide on appeals lodged by persons to whom the Office has refused recognition of refugee status, and give advice on appeals from refugees against whom measures have been taken as specified in articles 31, 32 and 33 of the 1951 Convention (expulsion, *refoulement*, refusal of residence permission and assigned residence). Execution of such measures is suspended, pending the appeals. This procedure furnishes the guarantees prescribed by the Convention against arbitrary administrative action in the matter of residence, which is of great importance for the refugees.

97. The branch office was established in Paris shortly after the adoption of the above-mentioned law. The fact that my representative is a member of the Appeals Commission will, as soon as these arrangements come into effect, greatly facilitate the general function of co-ordination and control entrusted to my representative under the terms of the law.

98. On 11 September 1952, the French Government signed the 1951 Convention. Its ratification, which is being considered by Parliament, is expected to take place soon.

99. The situation of refugees in France has not been subject to any important change during the last year. The number of refugees has, however, increased considerably during that period, partly owing to the arrival of new refugees, and partly owing to the addition of a number of persons who had not previously claimed refugee status, or who were considered outside the mandate of IRO, but who come within the wider definitions of the Conventions or the Statute of my Office.

100. Refugees in France continue to benefit from the very favourable legislation in the field of social security and public assistance which practically assimilates them to nationals in these matters. A sum of 350 million francs was provided in the 1952 budget for special assistance for the benefit of refugees. The same amount has been provided for in the budget of 1953. These sums enable assistance of various kinds to be given to the most needy cases among the refugees, monetary allowances, allowances in kind, loans, scholarships, etc., and at the same time permit contributions to be made to voluntary societies for the equipment or purchase of premises for the accommodation of refugees. Experience shows, however, that as far as assistance is concerned, the needs are greater than the resources, and the voluntary agencies frequently have to alleviate cases of hardship among the refugees from their own funds.

101. The position of the aged, the chronically sick and the infirm among the refugees is particularly difficult when they have no friends or relatives in France to assist them. It is very hard for them to subsist on the allowance which they receive, even when they are supplemented by contributions from the voluntary agencies.

102. This situation, which is in part the consequence of the very liberal policy adopted by France in admitting refugees seeking asylum, irrespective of their age or state of health, is aggravated by the housing shortage which naturally affects the refugees even more acutely than nationals.

103. While the refugees who have been in France for a considerable period can be considered on the whole to be assimilated from the economic and social point of view, new arrivals find it difficult to become integrated into the French economy, owing to the numerous difficulties which exist at a time when unemployment is again becoming a problem. The difficulties encountered by refugees in obtaining employment are in general due to their lack of professional qualifications or to the fact that they are intellectuals or exercise a profession which is overcrowded or from which they are excluded in France.

104. A further problem arises from the fact that refugees are generally only allowed to follow a particular occupation in a defined area. It is often extremely difficult for them to change their occupation and to obtain permission to work in an area other than that to which they have been assigned.

105. In order to assist refugees to find suitable work, the Ministry of Labour set up in 1948 the *Bureau d'orientation et de placement des réfugiés étrangers en France*. This Bureau, which has eight branches in the provinces and which works in close liaison with the public and private bodies interested in the refugee question, attempts to place refugees in employment in branches which are not overcrowded, and which at the same time are close to the professions which they exercised previously.

106. If suitable employment cannot be found, or particularly if a refugee is totally unqualified, or if the only professions for which he is physically suited are those where there is unemployment, this Bureau directs him to one of the centres for vocational training which functions under the control of the Ministry of Labour. The refugees placed in these centres receive a maintenance grant which, in the case of the disabled or unfit, is generally made by the *Service social d'aide aux émigrants*, the French branch of the International Social Service, from the assistance funds placed at its disposal by the French Government.

107. The *Service social de la main-d'œuvre étrangère*, which is also in close relationship with the Ministry of Labour, supervises through social workers in most of the *Départements* the application of laws and conventions on public assistance matters, and the adaptation of foreign workers and particularly refugees.

108. The branch office is in close contact with and submits proposals to these various services. It also maintains contact with the numerous voluntary agencies (of which there are at least sixty) which give advice and reception facilities to new arrivals, as well as helping them, in their relations with the official authorities, to find work.

109. In order to help solve the refugee problem existing in China, the *Secours catholique* has recently agreed, at my request, and with the agreement of the French Government, to receive, in the homes of the Little Sisters of the Poor, twenty old persons from Shanghai, in addition to the old persons from Germany and Austria who have already been received in these homes.

110. The French Government, on the proposal of my representative, has recently given its agreement in principle to the recruitment of agricultural and building trade workers among the refugees at present in the camps in Greece. The details of this operation, which would cover a maximum of 250 workers, have now been worked out.

ITALY

111. The number of refugees registered with the Italian authorities is some 20,000. It is believed that there may be almost 15,000 other refugees in Italy who, for various reasons, have not registered, which would bring the total to some 35,000.

112. Of these refugees, over 4,000 are in seven camps, two of which are administered by the Ministry of the Interior. Of the other five camps previously maintained by IRO, four have been transferred to a semi-governmental organization, the *Amministrazione Aiuti Internazionali*, and one to a private organization, the *Associazione Missionarie della Pace*. In accordance with agreements concluded with IRO, the Italian Government has undertaken to match funds contributed by IRO and pays to the above-named organizations 350 lire per person daily towards the maintenance of the refugees in these camps.

113. On 2 April 1952, an Agreement was negotiated between the Italian Government and my Office for the establishment of a branch office in Rome. A subsequent arrangement to implement the Agreement was negotiated in July 1952. Under the Agreement, it was provided that my Office would, at the request of the Italian Government, co-operate in the determination of eligibility and issuance of documentation to refugees.

114. The eligibility of refugees is determined by a joint committee consisting of two representatives of the Italian Government and two representatives of my Office, with rotating chairmanship; one of the representatives of my Office acts as rapporteur; in the case of equal votes, the Chairman's vote is decisive.

115. This arrangement has put an end to the serious problem created by the cessation of the activities of IRO, whose office in Italy previously issued a document to refugees within its mandate which, when counter-stamped by the Italian authorities, served as residence permit. The Italian authorities agreed to extend the validity of these documents until 31 December 1952, so that the situation of those refugees already admitted was less urgent than that of newly arrived refugees, who were, in general, placed in government centres intended in principle for undesirable or suspect aliens.

116. However, before the new arrangements actually entered into force, the Italian authorities, at the request of my representative, took steps to ameliorate the conditions of and give more freedom to the persons confined in these centres.

117. Newly arrived persons who claim to be refugees receive a provisional residence permit, which enables them to await the decision of the joint committee, to whom their case is immediately presented. Those who can establish their identity to the satisfaction of the authorities and give evidence of being self-supporting, may live freely in Italy; otherwise they are sent to a Government collecting centre.

118. *Bona fide* refugees are issued with the usual residence permit given to foreigners, with the endorsement "eligible under UNHCR", valid for four months, which is automatically renewed. Furthermore, they receive a travel document which, if an opportunity for migration occurs, enables them to obtain an emigration visa for an overseas country with the minimum of delay. Without awaiting the ratification of the 1951 Convention, which is at present before the Italian Parliament, the Italian Government has issued the travel document provided

for by that Convention, which will shortly be issued to all refugees in Italy within the mandate of my Office.

119. The Italian Government has frequently emphasized that the economic and social situation of Italy, where over-population and unemployment constitute a serious problem, makes it impossible to consider the integration of refugees as a possible solution. On signing the 1951 Convention, the Italian Government declared that it was obliged to consider article 17, relating to wage-earning employment, only as a recommendation. Whenever necessary, the branch office intervenes with the competent authorities to obtain a work permit for any refugee who has a possibility of employment, or who has accepted work without first obtaining the necessary authorization.

120. Although some refugees manage in this way to obtain temporary employment, the majority cannot, in the circumstances, contemplate remaining indefinitely in Italy, and regard emigration as the only solution to their problem. The branch office takes all possible steps to ensure that refugees are always included in all emigration programmes in Italy, in respect of which the Italian Government has given its assurances that refugees will be treated on equal terms with Italians.

121. The voluntary agencies operating in Italy also do their best to see that refugees have a fair share of emigration opportunities. Between 1 February 1952 and 31 March 1953, 1,359 refugees left Italy for overseas destinations, under the auspices of the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration.

122. In order to facilitate the task of all public and private organizations working for the emigration of refugees, my representative has taken the initiative of establishing an index containing all useful particulars about potential workers and their families. This should enable every advantage to be taken of resettlement possibilities which may occur.

123. The voluntary agencies are providing material assistance to many refugees in Italy both in and out of camp. A sum of 18,500 dollars has been contributed from the United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund to help the voluntary agencies assist the most needy cases, and supply milk to the children.

124. In order to facilitate the co-ordination of the various voluntary agencies working for refugees, my representative has sponsored the creation of a Liaison Committee which meets periodically, together with representatives of the Italian Government.

125. Mention should be made of the decision of the Italian Government to accept forty tubercular refugees from Trieste, in addition to the numerous institutional cases which it took in charge at the termination of IRO's operations.

TRIESTE

126. The number of refugees in Trieste has remained fairly constant during the last year at about 4,000, the number of departures being roughly equal to the number of new arrivals.

127. The Allied Military Government has made great efforts to improve, within the means at its disposal, the living conditions of the refugees. A new centre is being constructed to accommodate 900 refugees, which will make it possible to close one of the most inadequate and unhealthy of the camps.

128. The opening of a new sanatorium for TB cases has facilitated their medical treatment and at the same time lessened the risk of contagion with which other refugees living in crowded conditions were previously faced.

129. Since the investigation into the state of the health of the camp population in Trieste was carried out at my request in November 1951 under the auspices of WHO, there has been a considerable fall in the number of active TB cases, which was 279 when the late Dr. Mark Daniels carried out his investigation in such a devoted manner. This number fell to ninety at the end of 1952. About 150 inactive TB cases continued to receive special attention, and a scheme of systematic examination of refugees has made it possible to detect new cases and give them the appropriate treatment.

130. It was possible to place at the disposal of the Allied Military Government 20,000 dollars from the Refugee Emergency Fund, of which 5,000 dollars were earmarked for urgent requirements in the new sanatorium, 10,000 dollars for the additional diet for the sick and convalescent and 5,000 dollars for the purchase of clothing.

131. During 1952, due to the combined efforts of the Allied Military Government, the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration and the voluntary agencies, 2,000 refugees were able to emigrate from Trieste. One of the most difficult problems in this area has been the number of refugees requiring special care, the sick, the old and children. The Governments of Switzerland, Norway, Sweden and Belgium have made special efforts to help these cases and have received a number of them within their own territories. Furthermore, the Italian Government has stated its willingness to give permanent asylum to twenty cases in this category which will permit the other members of their family to emigrate. It is hoped that other governments will follow the generous initiative set by those mentioned above.

132. In their efforts to resettle the cases requiring institutional care, the Allied Military Government has been considerably helped by the grant of 200,000 dollars made to it during 1952 from the IRO residual assets. Furthermore, a sum of \$1 million has now been given in trust to the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration to liquidate as far as possible the refugee problem in Trieste, paying special attention to the cases requiring institutional care. My Office is in close consultation with the Migration Committee concerning the implementation of plans to realize the purposes of the trust.

133. A special allocation from the Ford Foundation Grant for Refugees has made it possible to establish vocational training schemes for a number of refugees with a special view to training them for trades which may be required in countries of resettlement.

UNITED KINGDOM

134. There are some 260,000 refugees in the United Kingdom.

135. The main function of the branch office in the United Kingdom is to maintain liaison with the British Government, as well as with some of the Commonwealth Governments; the British Government has continued to show its interest and concern not only for the refugees within the United Kingdom but also for the more

general aspects of the refugee problem, particularly in Austria, Germany, Trieste and China.

136. There are few restrictions on the employment of refugees resident in the United Kingdom. Such restrictions which do exist are mostly confined to the regulations of certain craft and professional bodies. There is very little unemployment among the refugee population. In conformity with the general common law principle of basing status on residence, existing social legislation does not make any distinction between nationals and foreigners who have been admitted to residence. Consequently, refugees are treated in matters of social welfare in the same manner as British subjects.

137. Protection in the United Kingdom consists mostly of advice and guidance to refugees, many of whom speak little English and have very few second generation compatriots to whom to turn for help. Furthermore, the branch office has also been able to give advice on a number of legal questions concerning refugees, especially refugee seamen, whose problems are often extremely complicated.

138. The branch office has established cordial relations with the numerous voluntary agencies working in England on behalf of refugees, and, together with the British Council for Aid to Refugees, has played a considerable part in the establishment of a new Standing Conference of voluntary societies which are concerned with refugee problems both at home and abroad.

139. The establishment of this new Standing Conference will, it is hoped, bring a greater measure of co-ordination in the activities of the voluntary societies, which have, in the past, made and which continue to make considerable contributions towards the alleviation of the material problems of refugees in many countries.

SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

140. Refugees in the Scandinavian countries of Denmark (1,150), Norway (2,000) and Sweden (approximately 45,000) traditionally enjoy satisfactory legal and economic status. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees has been ratified by Denmark and Norway, and is in the process of ratification by Sweden. Asylum is granted to political refugees in all three countries which, in a very humane gesture, have also accepted numbers of incapacitated, blind and tubercular refugees from other areas. Most generously, they have also given substantial material aid for refugees in less favourable areas. Few obstacles, other than the natural desire of some of the refugees eventually to return to their own countries, exist in the path of the assimilation of refugees in these countries.

141. My Office does not maintain any branch office in the Scandinavian countries. However, very close and satisfactory relations are maintained with the three Governments, with the Danish Red Cross, the Norwegian Refugee Council of Norwegian Aid to Europe and the Swedish Red Cross and with other private organizations, on all matters relating to refugees.

Section 2

Central Europe

GENERAL

142. In the countries of Central Europe which were occupied by the Allied Powers after the Second World War, the status and protection of alien refugees was

originally controlled completely by the Occupying Powers. There has been a gradual transfer of some responsibilities for alien refugee matters to the national governments, which has also affected the functions of protection to be carried out by the international authority under the mandate of the United Nations.

AUSTRIA

143. In Austria, there are some 228,000 refugees within the mandate of my Office, of whom 193,000 are *Volksdeutsche* refugees and 30,000 to 35,000 of non-German ethnic origin. Of these refugees, 46,835 are living in eighty-three government camps, 38,510 of the camp population being *Volksdeutsche* and 8,325 of different ethnic origin. A further 10,000 refugees are living in 131 unofficial camps and a great number of refugees who are not in camps are living in accommodation which is below a decent living standard.

144. The situation of the refugees at the termination of the operations of IRO was particularly difficult in that the Austrian Government at the time the camps were handed over had undertaken no commitments in respect of the status of refugees who remained on Austrian territory. Since the establishment of my branch office in Vienna in November 1951 a number of important measures have been taken to improve the legal and economic status of the refugees in Austria. The difficulties facing the two groups of refugees — the foreign refugees and the *Volksdeutsche* refugees — who are now for the first time under an international mandate — have been of a different character, and different progress has been made in respect of their solutions.

145. The Federal Government of Austria has signed the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, but with important reservations. It is hoped that within a short period the consent of all the competent authorities will be obtained to permit an early ratification of the Convention, with a modification, if possible, of the reservations made at the time of signature.

146. The ratification of the Convention is of the greatest importance for the residual group of the IRO refugees and for the new refugees whose legal position in a number of matters is unsatisfactory and uncertain. No over-all law exists in Austria concerning the status of foreign refugees similar to the Law on the Status of Homeless Foreigners enacted by the Federal Government of Germany. For this reason the early entry into force of the Convention in as liberal a form as possible is vital to stabilize the legal position of the foreign refugees.

147. In contrast with the position of the foreign refugees, considerable progress has been made in connexion with the improvement of the legal position of the *Volksdeutsche* refugees. This may in part be due to the fact that for the first time the *Volksdeutsche* refugees in Austria have been recognized to be within the mandate of an international organization. The Allied Authorities, the branch office and the *Volksdeutsche* Refugee Advisory Council have all followed closely the various legislative steps which have been taken to improve the legal position of the refugees.

Right to work

148. The right to work is fundamental in any programme for the assimilation of refugees into the community. Foreign refugees have to apply for a work

permit in all cases. After 7 March 1951, *Volksdeutsche* refugees were exempted from obtaining a work permit provided that they sought a new job in the same category of employment.

149. On 30 January 1952, the *Volksdeutsche* refugees were given the same rights to work as Austrian employees and labourers. This was a great step forward and one which has helped considerably the Austrian economy and the *Volksdeutsche* refugees. The foreign refugees were not included in this measure.

Trades and handicrafts

150. To exercise a trade or handicraft as self-employment, it is necessary for a foreigner to receive permission from the *Land* authorities. It is hoped that this necessity will be withdrawn for all refugees. The law which prohibited free exercise of trades and handicrafts, if general competition did not permit such exercise, has now been repealed. This repeal has greatly benefited Austrians and refugees who could acquire the appropriate permission from the competent trade organizations.

Liberal professions

151. Measures have been taken to permit groups of *Volksdeutsche* lawyers and of doctors to practise their professions. It is hoped that they will be extended to foreign refugees. Measures are now being studied to give *Volksdeutsche* former officials, particularly teachers, the same rights as Austrian officials to exercise their professions.

General status of Volksdeutsche refugees

152. Although it can be seen that considerable progress has been made in the equalization of the status of *Volksdeutsche* with that of Austrian nationals, there still remain some questions to be solved. Many *Volksdeutsche* teachers find that their certificates are not yet accepted in every *Land* of Austria. *Volksdeutsche* war widows and orphans do not yet get any assistance, nor have all the necessary regulations been issued by the various Ministries concerning the equalization of the right to work.

Pensions

153. My Office has given considerable attention to the question of aged and indigent *Volksdeutsche* refugees who would have been entitled to civil service, old age or invalid pensions in their country of origin but which have not been paid to them. Negotiations which recently took place between the Austrian and German Governments in this matter have led to an agreement. The Austrian Government will pay these pensions on the same scale as pensions from Austrian institutions, and the German Government will reimburse the Austrian Government for payments to *Volksdeutsche* refugees who were German citizens on 8 May 1945 and had acquired such pension rights.

Joint Committees

154. In all the *Länder* of the three Western Zones of Austria, *Land* committees have been established, consisting of representatives of the Austrian authorities, the refugees and the voluntary agencies, which are attended on occasion by my representative. When these committees meet, matters concerning refugees are discussed with complete freedom. In addition, a Federal Committee, consisting of representatives of the Federal

Government, the voluntary agencies and my Office, has also been set up for the same purpose. These Committees have all proved to be of very great value.

Economic integration

155. Some progress has been made in Austria in respect of the economic integration of refugees. Support has been given from the Ford Foundation Grant to many valuable local schemes of house-building, agricultural settlement, small business development and vocational training which have been implemented by refugee societies and both Austrian and international voluntary agencies.

156. The total amount allocated to date from the Ford Foundation Grant to projects in Austria reached, at the end of March 1953, a total of 560,000 dollars. This contribution has been matched by an equivalent of 750,000 dollars contributed by the Austrian federal and local authorities, by the voluntary agencies and, to a certain extent, by refugee groups.

157. The projects mentioned above are mainly of a pilot character and it is hoped that financial conditions will permit their further development.

158. A pilot programme for the integration of a few hundred refugee families into the Austrian agriculture is being implemented by the Austrian Government within the framework of recommendations made previously in a report prepared by my Office on the economic integration of refugees in Austria. This programme, which is open to both *Volksdeutsche* and foreign refugees, is financed from a sum of 10 million chillings which has been released from counterpart funds through the good offices of the United States Special Mission for Economic Co-operation in Austria.

159. At the request of the Austrian Government, the Food and Agriculture Organization sent in the autumn of 1952 a mission of experts to investigate in a detailed manner the possibilities of large-scale integration of refugees in the Austrian agriculture. According to the information at my disposal, the report, which has recently been submitted for consideration to the Austrian Government, fully supports that section of the recommendations made by my Office for the integration of refugees in the Austrian agriculture.

160. Information has been received that the competent Austrian authorities are working on a larger programme for the integration of refugee farmers, with the hope that it will receive favourable consideration by the competent international financial organizations.

GERMANY

161. In Germany, there are some 200,000 refugees within the mandate of my Office, of whom 41,465 are living in 123 camps.

162. In Germany, since 1945, both under the military occupation and under the Occupation Statute, responsibility for non-German refugees was a subject reserved to the Occupying Powers.

163. Before the entry into force of the Law on the Status of Homeless Foreigners, the status of non-German refugees was largely regulated by the occupation legislation. After the entry into force of the Occupation Statute certain responsibilities for non-German refugees were delegated to the Federal Government which, when it submitted the draft Law on the Status of Homeless Foreigners to the German Parliament,

declared its willingness to co-operate with the appropriate agencies of the United Nations in all matters affecting refugees and displaced persons.

164. The Contractual Agreement which was signed on 26 May 1952, and is expected to be ratified in the near future, will bring about the last steps in the transfer of responsibilities for non-German refugees from the Occupying Powers to the Federal Government.

165. Under this Agreement, the Federal Government has undertaken:

(a) To implement the Homeless Foreigners Law of 21 April 1951;

(b) To ratify the Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees;

(c) To issue appropriate legislation concerning the admission and distribution of new refugees;

(d) To continue the operation of the International Tracing Service;

(e) To issue satisfactory legislation concerning compensation to victims of Nazi persecution;⁷

(f) To assume the care of the graves of displaced persons and non-German refugees.

166. The provisions of the Contractual Agreement make all the more necessary and desirable the continuation of the close collaboration which has been established between the Federal Government and my branch office in Germany. This branch office was established in September 1951 and, with the agreement of the Allied Authorities, entered into direct relations with the Federal Government.

Law concerning the Status of Homeless Foreigners

167. The status of non-German refugees who had their residence in Germany before 30 June 1950 is regulated by the Law concerning the Status of Homeless Foreigners, which was passed on 25 April 1951. It applies to foreigners who furnish proof that they are under the protection of the international organization which is charged by the United Nations with the responsibility for displaced persons and refugees. For this purpose, refugees had originally to furnish evidence that they were under the protection of IRO.

168. At the request of my Office, a circular was issued by the Ministry of the Interior in June 1952, to the effect that the definition of this law now applies to refugees within the competence of my Office who satisfy the "residence" qualification. Most of the provisions of the Law are more favourable, or at least as favourable, to refugees as those of the 1951 Convention.

169. In order to provide satisfactory documentation for refugees within the mandate of my Office, my branch office requested, and the Federal Government agreed, that the London Travel Document (and, after the entry into force of the 1951 Convention, the travel document provided for in that Convention) would be issued to all refugees within the mandate of my Office.

170. The Federal Republic of Germany has signed without reservation the 1951 Convention. The Bill for its ratification has been submitted to the *Bundestag* and has received its first reading. It provides that the Convention shall enter into force in Germany one month

⁷ A Bill is at present under consideration by the *Bundestag*. My Office, anxious to make every effort to protect the interests of refugees, has engaged in continuous consultations with the German authorities on all aspects of the Bill, which is expected to be approved shortly.

after its ratification, without waiting for the deposit of six ratifications or accessions which are required by article 43 of the Convention for its entry into force. After that date, all refugees within the mandate of my Office who do not benefit from the provisions of the Law on the Status of Homeless Foreigners because they arrived in Germany after 30 June 1950, will be entitled to benefit from the provisions of the Convention.

171. The regularization of the legal position of these new arrivals has been the subject of close consultation with the competent Government Departments.

Asylum

172. A new Ordinance on Asylum was promulgated by the Federal Government on 9 January 1953. According to its provisions, foreigners who cross the frontier without entry permits and seek asylum as non-German refugees are to report to a collecting centre. Foreign refugees who entered Germany after 30 June 1950 and who are permitted to stay are also to report to the collecting centre when required to do so.

173. Refugees are to remain in the collecting centre pending the determination of their status.⁸ Refugee status is to be determined in accordance with the criteria laid down in article 1 of the 1951 Convention, by a Committee consisting of three members after pre-examination by the Chairman of the Committee. A person whose claim for recognition of refugee status has been rejected may apply to an Appeal Commission of three members. The members of the Committee and of the Commission are appointed by the Minister of the Interior. My Office in Germany is called upon by the Ordinance to attend the meetings of both the Committee and the Appeal Commission.

174. There is a considerable backlog of cases which have not been dealt with, as the Ordinance came into force only in January 1953. It is estimated that the Committee will have to sit continuously for two years at the reception centre at Nürnberg to investigate all these cases. My Office is expected to attend the investigations and to give the Committee its advice and interpretation of the Convention. Every effort will be made to find a way of overcoming the budgetary difficulties in order to carry out this vital function concerning the protection of newly arrived refugees.

Information concerning the legal status of refugees

175. A great deal of work has been done by my branch office in Germany in drawing the attention of the competent *Länder* authorities to the federal provisions concerning the legal status of refugees and ensuring their implementation in the *Länder*.

176. In this connexion, very considerable efforts have also been made to acquaint refugees with their rights and duties in Germany. To this end, my Office, in conjunction with the Federal Ministry for Refugees, has composed a hand-book for refugees containing all the necessary information concerning relevant legislation and existing organizations working on behalf of refugees. The hand-book has been given wide distribution.

177. In addition, my Office circulates a monthly bulletin which contains up-to-date information concerning

⁸ Persons recognized as refugees are distributed to the various *Länder* by a Federal Commissioner, in consultation with the *Länder*, in accordance with a distribution scheme determined by the Federal Council.

new legislation and regulations affecting refugees. The bulletin is sent to all voluntary agencies and national committees, and extracts are published in the refugee newspapers.

Unaccompanied children

178. The branch office in Germany has undertaken considerable work in connexion with the protection of unaccompanied children. In the British and French zones of Germany, decisions concerning the local settlement of unaccompanied children were taken administratively by the United Kingdom and French High Commissioners. It was then the responsibility of IRO to ensure that adequate legal arrangements were made for the guardianship or adoption of unaccompanied children left in Germany.

179. In the United States zone the decision on repatriation, resettlement or local settlement of unaccompanied children was taken by a United States Court established by the United States High Commissioner on 5 October 1950. Under the law establishing the Court, the international organization entrusted by the United Nations with the responsibility for displaced persons and refugees is made a necessary party in interest in addition to the nearest blood relations of the child, the foster parents, the respective child welfare agency and the local youth office.

180. Since the establishment of the branch office in Germany, my Office has been represented in some thirty-five cases before the United States Courts. Since June 1952, negotiations have been carried on between the Allied Authorities and the German Government on the question of handing over the responsibility for unaccompanied children to the German authorities.

181. After the ratification of the Contractual Agreement, cases concerning unaccompanied children will be decided by the German Courts. A special committee of representatives of all interested Ministries will be set up to advise the German Courts on such cases. It is hoped that budgetary considerations will not prevent my Office from being represented in any cases affecting the welfare of unaccompanied children.

182. It is expected that many complicated questions of private international law will arise in relation to these cases after the transfer of responsibility to the German authorities, and in my opinion it is essential that the international interest in these cases should not be disregarded.

Refugee Councils

183. The branch office has devoted considerable efforts to the creation of joint Refugee Councils (*Beiräte*), consisting of the representatives of the German authorities and of the refugees and in some cases of the voluntary agencies. These Councils now exist in most of the *Länder* and are attended, whenever possible, by a representative of my Office. They meet regularly and provide an excellent occasion for discussion of matters of official interest to refugees. They have proved of very great value in ensuring mutual understanding of their respective problems by the German authorities and the refugees.

Indemnification

184. The branch office in Germany has been in continuous consultation with the competent German

authorities on all aspects of the draft law on compensation for victims of Nazi persecution, which it is expected will shortly be submitted by the Government to the Federal Parliament.

Economic integration

185. Considerable efforts have been made by the branch office in Germany to promote the economic integration of those non-German refugees for whom there are no chances of resettlement. The right to work for these refugees is guaranteed both under the Law concerning the Status of Homeless Foreigners and the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

186. Figures available for the camp population show that approximately 50 per cent of the refugees are living mainly from unemployment and other public allowances. This percentage appears also to apply to the out-of-camp population in the northern and southern states of the Federal Republic, whereas in other parts of Germany unemployment among refugees within my mandate appears not to exceed 20 per cent. It should, however, be added that a large number of these working refugees are employed in labour units of the Allied Forces and cannot therefore be considered as integrated into normal labour conditions.

187. The problem of employment for refugees within the mandate is not only related to the industrial development in Germany, which has on the whole made rapid progress in recent years, but is also very much related to vocational and psychological deterioration of the labour ability and preparedness of refugees, due to long years of abnormal camp life. Vocational training and psychological re-education on an individual basis are necessary in order to improve their present situation. The branch office maintains close relations with the appropriate German authorities and also with the voluntary agencies on this problem.

188. In various areas, limited numbers of refugees have succeeded in establishing themselves in small businesses and professions. This process has been furthered to some extent by the valuable activities of the Special Department for Non-German Refugees of the Bank for Expellees and Victims of War-Damage in Bad Godesberg. This Special Department was created by an IRO grant of DM 1-1/2 million. Since then, the Liquidator of IRO has made a further grant of DM 3,300,000. In addition, the German Federal Government has made a grant of DM 2 million, bringing the capital at the disposal of the Special Department to the level of nearly DM 7 million.

189. The Bank grants small loans at low interest to refugees who can provide little or no security, to enable them to set up small businesses. At the end of March 1953, little more than DM 2 million had been distributed. My Office has requested the competent authorities to accelerate the granting of loans. Available figures indicate a total amount of some DM 50 million would be required to meet the existing credit needs of the refugee population.

190. Efforts have been made by my Office to promote the building of houses for refugees by the German Federal and *Land* Governments. In the course of the last year, the German Federal Government has been able to provide an amount of some DM 90 million for the building of approximately 7,000 apartments for refugees within my mandate. A large number of the buildings have been erected in Bavaria. The Federal Government has further constituted a special fund of DM 2 million

in order to enable the supplementary financing of house-building.

191. Support has been given from the Ford Foundation Grant for Refugees to many valuable and local schemes of house-building, vocational training, youth homes, etc. which have been implemented by refugee societies and both German and international voluntary agencies. The total amount allocated from the Ford Foundation Grant to projects in Germany reached, at the end of March 1953, the sum of \$850,000. This contribution has been matched by an equivalent of \$6,255,000 contributed by the German Federal and local authorities, by the voluntary agencies and, to a certain extent, by refugee groups.

Transfer of assets

192. The transfer of the assets of refugees abroad is inevitably restricted by current currency and customs regulations. However, some progress has been made in this matter.

193. The German authorities have issued a circular to their diplomatic missions abroad stating that further payments may be made to persons abroad who had German nationality but who had lost it as a result of measures taken by the National Socialist régime, and also to those who are entitled to compensation under the Restitution Law and who are unable to make their own living abroad. These payments will be made regardless of whether the persons concerned have acquired a new nationality or not.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

194. Both in Germany and Austria, IRO was able to maintain considerable staffs of refugee lawyers who provided legal assistance to refugees. At the end of IRO, arrangements were made with the voluntary agencies to take over some of the responsibilities in connexion with legal assistance. A few of the voluntary agencies have lawyers on their staffs and others have recourse to indigenous lawyers when in need of legal advice.

195. It is regretted that budgetary considerations do not at the present time make it possible to provide any other help in this field except that which can be given by one legal adviser in each of the branch offices in Bonn and Vienna. To meet these difficulties, the branch office in Austria is in the course of preparing a refugee hand-book similar to that already published with the assistance of the branch office in Germany, giving all the information as to the rights, duties and status of refugees in Austria.

Section 3

South-eastern Europe

GREECE

196. During the last year, there has been little variation in the number of refugees in Greece within the mandate, which remains between 16,000 and 17,000, the number of departures being compensated by the number of new arrivals.

197. The branch office in Greece has concerned itself to a great extent with the material conditions of refugees, many of whom are living in difficult circumstances, although the majority of the pre-war refugees, who represent approximately one half of the total, live in reasonably satisfactory conditions.

198. During the past year, a number of the camps have, with the help of the Greek and United States authorities and the voluntary agencies, been improved, but the limited number of opportunities for employment makes it inevitable that many refugees have no fixed occupation. In the Athens Piraeus area a number of refugees live in "centres" which are not recognized as official camps and, for this reason, they do not receive any regular relief from the Greek authorities and are therefore forced to fend for themselves.

199. In view of the extremely difficult circumstances of a number of refugees in Greece, special attention has been paid to the organization of material assistance in the form of an improvement of camps and centres, distribution of food and clothing, medical care, and help to students. This work has been financed to a large extent by the Greek authorities with the help of the Refugee Service Committee, the various Greek and other voluntary agencies working in Greece, and, to a limited extent, supported by contribution from the Refugee Emergency Fund which it is regretted could not be larger.

Resettlement

200. Two hundred and thirteen refugees were resettled from Greece through the good offices of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration between 1 February 1952 and 31 March 1953. Close contact is maintained between the branch office and the local representative of the Migration Committee to ensure that refugees are given a fair opportunity to enjoy the benefits of any emigration schemes. A scheme is now being put into operation for the resettlement in France of 200 agricultural workers from the refugees in Greece.

Economic integration

201. As long as the rate of resettlement of refugees from Greece cannot be increased, attention must be given to the problem of the economic integration of those refugees who are unlikely to emigrate. The number of refugees who either do not wish or are not able to emigrate and are not yet assimilated is estimated to be from 7,000 to 8,000, consisting of approximately 2,500 families mainly of Greek ethnic origin.

202. The Greek Government has drawn up various plans for the local establishment of refugees, but financial difficulties have prevented to a large extent their implementation. At the beginning of this year, I submitted to the Greek Government a study concerning the whole problem of the integration of refugees into the Greek economy, with certain concrete proposals. From the study it appears that some financial assistance from outside is indispensable if a satisfactory solution is to be found for the integration of those refugees who are unlikely to be resettled.

203. On 10 April 1952, the Greek Government signed the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, with certain reservations. The ratification of the Convention is at present under study. The entry into force of the Convention will bring about an improvement in the legal status of the refugees in Greece and will remove some of the differences which exist at present between the treatment accorded to refugees of Greek ethnic origin and to other groups.

204. At the end of its operations, some 700 refugees within the mandate of IRO remained in Turkey. Since then, many refugees, mainly from Bulgaria and Albania, have sought refuge in Turkey. In addition, there is a fairly large group of persons who refuse to return to their countries of origin and have therefore become refugees *sur place*. Although the precise number of refugees within the mandate of my Office in Turkey has not been established, from a first rapid survey it would appear that the number is considerably greater than that of the refugees who were within the mandate of IRO.

205. At the end of its operations, IRO established a Refugee Service Committee and endowed it with funds to provide assistance to the remaining refugees. Subsequently, the Committee was reorganized into two groups, which work very closely with voluntary agencies and local authorities.

206. The Turkish authorities, in spite of the fact that they have been faced with the serious problem of the resettlement of more than 150,000 refugees of Turkish ethnic origin from Bulgaria, have taken a liberal view in all matters concerning the foreign refugees in Turkey. The Turkish Red Crescent is working very closely with the reorganized Refugee Service Committee and with the World Council of Churches, giving them all possible assistance in their activities.

207. The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which has been signed by the Government of Turkey, will shortly be sent to Parliament for ratification. An Amendment to the Passport and Nationality Law is now under discussion in Parliament which will enable the Turkish authorities to deliver special passports to refugees wishing to travel or emigrate.

208. Small grants have been allocated from the United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund to carry out programmes to help needy cases, and an additional grant of \$20,000 has been made to the World Council of Churches for a farm scheme to resettle a number of these refugees.

YUGOSLAVIA

209. Since my Office has for some time been concerned with the problem of reuniting the family members of Yugoslav refugees abroad and since, moreover, the Yugoslav Government had presented to my Office a report on foreign refugees in Yugoslavia, I decided to visit that country in order to make contact with the Government and the refugees.

210. At present, there are about 4,300 foreign refugees in Yugoslavia who come under the mandate of my Office. The largest group consists of refugees from Albania and nearly all of them left their countries after 1948.

211. The Yugoslav Government is making considerable efforts to accommodate these refugees who, as soon as they have been screened in one of the reception centres, are allowed to live in Yugoslavia without special refugee identity papers being given to them.

212. On the whole, the situation of these refugees is satisfactory and, for all practical intents and purposes, they have the rights provided in the 1951 Convention, the ratification of which is at present on the agenda of the Yugoslav Parliament.

213. I was officially assured by the Yugoslav Government that no obstacles would be put in the way of

foreign refugees who want to leave Yugoslavia or of family members of Yugoslav refugees abroad who want to obtain exit permits to leave the country.

214. The Yugoslav Government is very much concerned with the problem of financing the repatriation of Yugoslav refugees who have expressed their desire to come back to Yugoslavia, and of the tracing and repatriation of Yugoslav children who, after the Second World War, were not reunited with their parents in Yugoslavia.

215. In both matters, the Yugoslav Government has urgently requested the co-operation of my Office, which is at present examining what contribution to the solution of these problems can be made within the limits of the Statute of the Office.

Section 4

Near and Middle East

GENERAL

216. The Governments of the countries of the Near and Middle East are faced with serious problems of their own ethnic refugees. Nevertheless, they have afforded great attention to the problems of the refugees within the mandate of my Office who were not resettled by IRO at the end of its operations.

217. In Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt, the considerable number of Arab refugees is necessarily a primary preoccupation of the Governments.

218. As a result of missions carried out by members of my Office, it is clear that there are in these countries a certain number of refugees who, owing to economic difficulties and other reasons, are unlikely to find employment. For this reason, the attention of the voluntary agencies working for refugees has been drawn to the problems of the refugees in these areas. Working in close co-operation with the governments concerned, the agencies have established branch offices in various cities in the Middle East for the processing of refugees who wish to emigrate and for the promotion of resettlement possibilities. A number of refugees have already been enabled to emigrate.

EGYPT

219. The number of refugees in Egypt is greater than in any other part of the Middle East. Although the precise number of refugees within the mandate of my Office has still not been established, it appears that it is approximately 3,000. This includes refugees who arrived before and after the Second World War.

220. The Egyptian Government has shown great interest in the problem of the refugees within the mandate of my Office. When a representative of my Office recently visited Egypt to examine the situation of these refugees and to ascertain what measures could be taken to find permanent solutions for their problems, the Government gave every possible assistance and co-operated closely with him to establish a working arrangement for the future.

221. In view of the considerable number of Arab refugees in Egypt and the relatively difficult economic conditions, it is unlikely that many of the refugees within my mandate will be able to find employment. Every effort must therefore be made to promote resettlement opportunities for these people.

222. A small grant has been made from the Refugee Emergency Fund to help the needy cases among the refugees who are the concern of my Office.

ETHIOPIA

223. An Agreement which was concluded in March 1950 between IRO and the Government of Ethiopia provided for the resettlement of refugee agriculturalists and specialists in Ethiopia. Some 250 refugees were admitted into Ethiopia in pursuance of the Agreement. A number of these refugees subsequently left at their own request and, according to available information, there are now some 180 refugees who are the concern of my Office. To these should be added some fifty to sixty stateless persons and refugees who went to Ethiopia independently of IRO.

224. In order to have first-hand information on the situation of the refugees within the mandate of my Office, I recently sent one of my staff members on a mission to Ethiopia. The Ethiopian authorities, who have shown a great interest in the problems of the refugees, gave him every possible assistance and fully co-operated with him to find solutions for a number of cases.

225. The great majority of the refugees are working for the Government and can be considered to be well established. The Government has renewed the contracts of many of them and has the others under consideration for renewal.

226. The Refugee Service Committee which was established during the lifetime of IRO has been re-organized into an Ethiopian Welfare Committee for Refugees with the help of leading Ethiopian and European personalities in Addis Ababa. The Committee should be of considerable assistance to the refugees in Ethiopia.

IRAN

227. No new development has occurred in Iran since my last report, where I stated that the Iranian Government had taken a humanitarian attitude towards the problems of refugees coming within the mandate of my Office.

228. Two international voluntary agencies working closely with the Iranian authorities have made it possible for many refugees wishing to emigrate to leave the country.

229. A small allocation from the Refugee Emergency Fund has been made to meet the most urgent needs of some of the destitute refugees in Iran.

JORDAN

230. In December 1949, the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan granted citizenship to most of the post-war refugees who were in the country. The number of refugees now within the mandate in Jordan does not exceed seventy persons. The largest group is that of stateless White Russians who entered the country gradually after 1922.

231. Two international voluntary agencies are working in Jordan for the benefit of the refugees, and an allocation has been made from the Refugee Emergency Fund to the agencies jointly to provide emergency aid to the most needy.

232. The Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan has always shown great understanding of

the problems concerning the refugees within the mandate of my Office and has stated that it will co-operate in every possible way to find a final solution.

LEBANON

233. The number of refugees in Lebanon who are the concern of my Office does not exceed 150. They are mostly post-war European refugees, plus a small number of White Russian and Circassian refugees who arrived around 1922, who have not acquired Lebanon citizenship or been integrated into the local economy.

234. The majority of the Second World War European refugees were repatriated in 1945, 1946 and 1947. The British Government continues to assume certain responsibilities for the Polish refugees who form the largest single group remaining. At one time, their number reached 4,000, but it is now less than fifty.

235. Despite the difficulties caused by the large number of Arab refugees, the Lebanese authorities have adopted a very liberal attitude towards the refugees within the mandate of my Office. They have always co-operated closely with the Refugee Service Committee, established by IRO at the end of its operations, and with the voluntary agencies working for refugees.

236. A certain number of the refugees, in particular the aged, are in need of assistance and a small allocation has been made from the Refugee Emergency Fund to the Refugee Service Committee and the World Council of Churches for the most needy cases in Beirut. The latter agency is, in addition, considering a plan for the establishment of an old people's home near Beirut which would help to solve the problem of cases requiring institutional care in the Middle East.

SYRIA

237. The number of refugees within the mandate of my Office in Syria does not exceed 300. They are mainly post-Second World War refugees with the exception of a group of stateless White Russian and Circassian refugees who came to Syria long before the War.

238. Owing to the fact that a fairly large number of Arab refugees are living in Syria, it is unlikely that the refugees who are the concern of my Office will find possibilities of employment. For this reason, particular attention is paid to the emigration of these refugees.

239. To meet the tragic situation of some of the refugees, an allocation has been made from the Refugee Emergency Fund for their most urgent needs. Other plans are being studied with the voluntary agencies and the local authorities to find a lasting solution to the problems of the more needy groups.

240. The Syrian Government has always shown great understanding of the problems of the refugees within the mandate of my Office and has given every assistance to my representatives who visited Syria.

Section 5

Far East

ESTABLISHMENT OF BRANCH OFFICE FOR THE FAR EAST

241. The Deputy High Commissioner undertook an extensive tour of the Far East in November 1952 to inquire into the refugee problems in that area. He visited Pakistan, India, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Taiwan, where he met

members of the governments, senior officials and leading personalities working in the field of refugees.

242. Later, I appointed Mr. Aamir Ali to be my representative in the Far East. The Governments of Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, France (for French dependent territories), Japan, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Netherlands (for the Dutch dependent territory of New Guinea), Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Kingdom (for British dependent territories) were accordingly advised.

243. Mr. Ali, an Indian national, formerly Assistant to the Director-General of the International Labour Office, left Geneva on 1 December 1952 to take up his duties in the Far East. Mr. Ali visited India, Pakistan and Burma, where he had the opportunity to explain the mandate of my Office to the different Governments. He studied the refugee problem in various areas and subsequently reported that he had been very impressed with the arrangements made by these Governments for the refugees on their territories.

244. With the approval of the Government of Thailand, the Far East office has been provisionally established in Bangkok, where full advantage can be taken of the existing facilities provided for other United Nations offices already represented in that country.

Section 6

Countries of resettlement

GENERAL

245. "The promotion of the admission of refugees, not excluding those in the most destitute categories, to the territories of States" is one of the most important functions of my Office. This is one of the main reasons why I considered the establishment of branch offices in the United States and in Latin America of the first importance, and why I urged the General Assembly, at its sixth session, to pass a resolution inviting States Members to ensure that refugees were given a fair share in any opportunities for migration. Furthermore, in the international proceedings preliminary to the establishment of the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration I emphasized to all the governments participating in the proceedings the absolute necessity of special provision being made for refugees in any new inter-governmental organization which might be created.

246. The solution for this aspect of the problem lies not so much in the provision of funds, which at the present time appear available, but in a decision of the governments of the countries of immigration to make special provision for refugees in their immigration legislation. This question has been emphasized at every possible occasion by my Office in the proceedings of the various United Nations bodies concerned with research and planning in the field of migration.

247. The special situation of refugees of European origin outside Europe was drawn by my Office to the attention of the governments members of the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration. These governments decided that the appropriated Committee funds could not be used, but authorized the Committee to give its technical facilities for the movement of refugees from areas outside Europe, and to finance such movement out of any other funds which were or might become available to the Committee from other sources.

248. Close liaison has been established with the secretariat of the Migration Committee and also with the headquarters of the United States Escapee Program working in Frankfurt. In addition, effective co-operation has been established between the respective representatives in all the countries where these organizations are represented, and in particular in countries such as Italy and Greece where over-population and unemployment make the resettlement of refugees of extreme importance.

249. Allocations amounting to \$140,000 have been made from the Ford Foundation Grant to the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the World Council of Churches for the establishment in Latin America and Canada of a number of area offices, the purpose of which will be to pursue and develop resettlement opportunities.

250. In addition, my Office has made several appeals to governments to allocate both alternate and end visas for refugees of European origin in China, and has collaborated closely with the Migration Committee in the joint operation now carried on by the two organizations on behalf of these refugees.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

251. The branch office in the United States of America is concerned not only with liaison with United Nations Headquarters, the United States Government and the headquarters of the voluntary agencies working for refugees, but also with certain aspects of international protection, especially in so far as it relates to questions affecting the admission of refugees. The liaison with the United States Government is of special importance considering the prominent part played by that Government in a number of programmes designed to give assistance to refugees.

252. Under the Constitution and the laws of the United States, all aliens who have been legally admitted to residence enjoy the same rights as citizens, and there is no fundamental differentiation of treatment for aliens in general who have entered the United States under normal immigration quotas and refugees who have entered under special legislation.

253. The work of the branch office in connexion with the international protection of refugees resident in the United States has been concerned mainly with problems arising under the immigration and nationality laws of the United States. These problems are dealt with both on a general basis and individually.

254. In dealing with problems of individual refugees the voluntary agencies have been able to give great assistance to the branch office in following up the cases, especially those who were given sponsorship by the agencies themselves under the now expired United States Displaced Persons Act.

255. The branch office has done considerable work in connexion with the appearance of individual refugees before the Board of Immigration Appeals. The favourable decisions given in the cases of refugees assisted by the branch office have often set precedents for numerous cases of the same kind. It has also been able to advise on questions of law when some individual refugees have been threatened with deportation.

256. A number of refugees resident in the United States have applied for assistance to the branch office in matters affecting claims under the indemnification and

restitution laws which are in force in Germany and Austria.

257. In addition to the liaison which the branch office maintains both with United Nations Headquarters and the United States Government, the representative of the branch office, who is located in New York, maintains the closest relation with the Ford Foundation and with the headquarters of the American voluntary agencies which have played a very considerable part in organizing assistance for refugees in many countries.

LATIN AMERICA

General

258. The branch office for Latin America is located in Bogota, Colombia. During the past year, my representative has paid official visits to the governments of most of the Latin-American countries and has established valuable relations with the various competent authorities and private agencies concerned not only with the admission of refugees but also with the welfare of those who have been received as immigrants.

259. In all countries in Latin America no differentiation is made between refugee immigrants and other foreigners. The legal position of the refugees is governed by legislation relating to aliens in general. The Governments of Brazil and Colombia have signed the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and it is hoped that ratification will take place soon in these two countries. My representative has not only discussed the question of accession to the Convention with the governments of Latin-American countries, but has also invited them to consider the adoption of a standard travel document for refugees, as provided for in the 1951 Convention or in the London Travel Document Agreement of 1946 in place of the various documents which are now in use.

260. In most countries my representative has discussed with the competent authorities the establishment of services to provide legal assistance to refugees and has recently concluded an agreement with the Legal Aid Section of the Brazilian Red Cross, under the terms of which it will furnish legal aid to refugees in Brazil. Generally speaking, most of the refugees who were resettled in Latin America have been integrated into the economies of the countries to which they have been admitted.

Argentina

261. There are in Argentina some 33,000 refugees resettled by IRO and, in addition, 15,000 ex-servicemen of Polish origin who were taken under an agreement with the Government of the United Kingdom.

262. Immigration to Argentina is at present restricted mainly to technicians, agricultural workers and stock farmers. Preference is accorded to persons of Spanish, Italian and German origin. Argentina has recently joined the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration and it is reported that a number of new emigration projects are under study, some of which will undoubtedly afford new opportunities of resettlement for refugees.

263. No special agency for the protection of refugees has been established. This task is entrusted to the various government departments which play a very active part in the field of social welfare.

Brazil

264. There are in Brazil some 40,000 refugees, most of whom were resettled by IRO. Owing to its vast potentialities for the absorption of migrants, Brazil now ranks among the major resettlement countries.

265. During the past year, considerable openings for refugees have been found by a number of international voluntary agencies, who have organized schemes for the promotion of resettlement partly with the aid of grants made from the Ford Foundation Grant for Refugees. Particular mention should be made of the fact that between 1 February 1952 and 1 May 1953, 511 refugees of European origin from China were resettled in Brazil and a very considerable number of additional visas has been promised to one voluntary agency.

266. A Bill has recently been presented to Congress creating an Institute of Immigration and Colonization which will assume over-all responsibility for immigration into Brazil and will centralize in a single authority all the functions previously exercised by various Government departments in the field of immigration, placement and colonization.

267. On the initiative of the Brazilian Red Cross, a new Committee for Aid to Refugees has been established. This Committee has direct access to the competent federal authorities on matters affecting the welfare of refugees in Brazil.

Chile

268. There are in Chile some 5,000 refugees resettled by IRO, the majority of whom have been satisfactorily assimilated and enjoy a reasonable measure of prosperity.

269. Refugee migrants are assisted by a number of private and governmental agencies, foremost amongst which are the Government Office of Social Aid and the Young Men's Christian Association.

270. Preference is generally accorded to government-sponsored migrants of Latin and German stock and, apart from sponsored cases, the possibilities of immigration for refugees appear for the time being to be limited.

Paraguay

271. Excluding the large Mennonite and Jewish colonies, there are approximately 6,000 refugees in Paraguay, mostly resettled by IRO. The majority of these have been satisfactorily assimilated.

272. The Institute of Agrarian Reform is charged with all questions relating to immigration and colonization and operates 126 agricultural colonies.

273. There are at the present time under study a number of ambitious colonization projects which, with technical aid under the United States Point Four Program and other foreign capital, envisage the settlement of approximately 10,000 Italian and 15,000 German families on State lands controlled by the Institute of Agrarian Reform.

Peru

274. The situation of the approximately 2,350 refugees resettled by IRO is generally satisfactory and the great majority have found suitable employment.

275. The prospect of mass immigration to Peru appears limited at the present time, but opportunities exist for small numbers of specially trained workers admitted under contract to local employers.

Uruguay

276. In Uruguay, there are approximately 1,500 refugees, mostly resettled by IRO, who enjoy extremely good conditions of life.

277. With its exceptional stability and prosperity Uruguay offers good inducements to prospective migrants. An average of about 6,000 aliens, mostly of Spanish and Italian origin, are admitted annually. However, the country's capacity to receive any considerable increase in the number of migrants is limited by an already concentrated population and the small area of land available for cultivation.

Venezuela

278. There are in Venezuela some 18,000 refugees, resettled for the greater part by IRO. Venezuela continues to be one of the most important countries of resettlement in Latin America and the great majority of the refugees admitted to date have succeeded in becoming firmly established.

279. During a recent visit to Caracas, my representative had the opportunity to discuss with senior governmental officials certain questions affecting refugees, in particular the strengthening of the Inter-governmental Committee for Refugees, with a view to giving the Committee broader representation by including members of the Venezuelan Red Cross, the Arch-diocesan Bureau for Refugees and heads of national groups, thereby making its work more effective for individual refugees.

280. The two principal forms of immigration to Venezuela are by private sponsorship or under various programmes operated by the Agrarian National Institute which contains several large agricultural colonies and is in a position to give initial support to migrants to facilitate their establishment.

Section 7

Refugees of European origin in China

GENERAL SITUATION AND DEVELOPMENTS

281. Since my last report to the seventh session of the General Assembly, the situation of European refugees in China has continued to be one of the most urgent problems with which my office is faced.

282. When the office of the Joint Special Representative of the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration and my office was established in Hong Kong on 1 February 1952, the situation of the refugees who had not been resettled by IRO was already very difficult and with each passing month it became increasingly clear that only a very small fraction of even the number registered by IRO could be resettled within the five-months' period for which limited funds had been made available by IRO.

283. The situation was further complicated both by the unforeseen administrative difficulties in processing these refugees through Shanghai and the retarded rate of resettlement through Hong Kong. In view of the urgency and critical nature of this problem it was agreed, in consultation with the Migration Committee, that every effort should be made to continue the operation to the extent that funds could be made available.

284. To this end, stringent administrative economies and sharp reductions in the already insufficient cash

assistance grants were imposed in order to make possible an extension of the joint operation for an additional three months until 1 November 1952.

285. With the exhaustion of the IRO funds, the only funds available to provide emergency assistance to the refugees were the limited resources of the Refugee Emergency Fund. An amount of \$450,000 has had to be earmarked to meet this situation at the expense of other needy groups of refugees in certain parts of Europe and the Near East.

286. Of the approximately 4,000 registered refugees in Shanghai on 1 March 1952, close to 2,000 were receiving emergency assistance at the rate of 45 US cents per day. The average monthly costs of the operation in 1952 amounted to \$28,000.

287. Between 1 March and 31 December 1952, there was a reduction in the amount of emergency assistance given; but there is a probability that the number of destitute refugees requiring assistance will increase and that the monthly requirements for subsistence in 1953 will rise to \$25,000 at the rate of 37 cents per day.

288. The total medical costs for 1952 amounted to approximately \$28,000. For the year 1953 the cost is expected to rise as high as \$55,000. This expense covers the following services: medical supplies, doctors' consultation fees, X-rays, medical examinations, emergency provisions for hospitalized cases, treatment of special residual cases and examinations for migrants.

289. In the course of the fourteen-months' period of operation from 1 February 1952 to 1 April 1953, it has become clear that the refugee population, which is the concern of my Office, is in the region of 15,000 persons, the majority of whom are living in Northern China in the area of Harbin. Of this number, approximately only 3,400 were registered with IRO, of whom 1,300 are at present receiving emergency assistance.

REFUGEES REQUIRING INSTITUTIONAL CARE

290. There are being treated in hospitals and institutions in Shanghai a total of 214 persons in the category of special residual cases needing institutional care. This group composes the most critical element of the entire China operation and includes the following categories: chronic sick, TB cases, the mental, aged, blind and handicapped.

291. There is a further group of 244 refugees in the special residual category who, although not in need of immediate hospitalization, are, because of age, infirmity or other handicaps, outside the normal immigration criteria of receiving countries and consequently require special negotiations for their placement.

292. In appealing to governments to give asylum to limited numbers of these refugees, I must continue to stress the suffering and plight of the refugees requiring special care. The sympathetic understanding of this aspect of the refugee problem in China, which has been shown by the Governments of France, Belgium and Israel, encourages me to hope that other Members of the

United Nations will concern themselves with this situation and agree to accept limited numbers of these people for permanent institutional care.

RESETTLEMENT

293. In 1952, the Office of the Joint Special Representative resettled a total of 878 refugees, mostly to Australia, Brazil, Canada and Israel.

294. For the first three months of 1953, 416 refugees were resettled, principally to Brazil, Australia, Canada, Israel and Turkey. This rate of resettlement reflects an encouraging increase over the same period for 1952, yet it will still take several more years to bring about a final solution of this problem unless other governments are willing to make available greater numbers of visas.

295. The major operational difficulties facing the Office of the Joint Special Representative in Hong Kong are the lack of visa facilities within China and the present restrictions on entry into Hong Kong. There are at the present time only five countries of immigration which maintain consular offices in Shanghai: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

296. To overcome these difficulties, a system has been evolved whereby five countries — Australia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland — have agreed to issue fifty alternate visas which permit refugees to be brought into the territory of Hong Kong for processing to a country of immigration, such as the United States or Canada. As soon as the recipient of an alternate visa leaves for a country of resettlement, the alternate visa becomes available for another refugee and thereby permits his entry into Hong Kong. Although this procedure enables a limited number of refugees to be resettled, it cannot be considered to be satisfactory as a method of solving the problem of the refugees of European origin in China.

297. Although no funds have been made available to my Office by the Liquidator of IRO to continue to finance this programme of emergency assistance, a trust fund has been established, from residual funds of IRO, which is administered by the Migration Committee and can be used for the movement of limited numbers of the refugees from China.

298. With these funds, and with the sums available in the Refugee Emergency Fund, it will be possible to continue this joint programme of assistance and resettlement at least through the remaining months of 1953. Beyond that date, however, neither my Office nor the Migration Committee have any assurance that funds will be available to carry on the programme.

299. In the light of these considerations, therefore, I feel that it is incumbent upon me to appeal once again to the Members of the United Nations which have demonstrated their continued interest and concern for the fate of refugees, to give their wholehearted support to the joint efforts of my Office and the Migration Committee to bring about a final solution of the problem of European refugees still remaining in China.

CHAPTER IV

REFUGEES REQUIRING INSTITUTIONAL CARE

300. Special mention is made in article 8 of the Statute of my Office of the most destitute categories of refugees. A considerable number of refugees requiring institutional

care were settled by IRO in institutions in a number of countries in Europe. My Office has taken over from IRO responsibility for the supervision of all agreements

relating to this category of refugees where provision was made for the transfer of supervisory responsibilities. Periodic visits are made by the representatives of my branch offices to institutions where such cases have been placed in the countries in which they are accredited.

301. In October 1952, an allocation from the Ford Foundation Grant was made to the American Joint Distribution Committee for the resettlement in Norway, Sweden and other countries of eighty-seven tubercular patients and their dependants. A grant has also been made from the Refugee Emergency Fund to the World Council of Churches to place in institutions in Belgium

refugees from China requiring institutional care. Negotiations are also proceeding for the settlement in France of a number of other cases.

302. My Office has also made considerable efforts to help in finding a solution for the difficult cases in Trieste and in China.

303. The continuing character of the problem of destitute refugees requiring institutional care necessitates, in my opinion, a co-ordinated approach to the whole problem—otherwise there is a danger that opportunities of placement may be given to refugees only from the areas where they can be most easily resettled.

CHAPTER V

REFUGEE EMERGENCY FUND

304. During its sixth session the General Assembly adopted resolution 538 B (VI), which was subsequently endorsed in resolution 639 (VII), authorizing me to appeal for funds for the purpose of enabling emergency aid to be given to the most needy groups of refugees coming within the mandate of my Office.

305. Despite the generosity of a number of governments, which will be seen from the table at the end of the present section, the response to my appeal cannot be considered satisfactory. Nevertheless, the amounts contributed so far have enabled my Office to maintain the refugees of European origin in China for one year after the exhaustion of the IRO funds allocated for this purpose. Furthermore, a number of small projects to the value of \$114,000 for the most needy group of refugees have already been implemented in Austria, Germany, Italy, Trieste, Belgium, Greece, Turkey and the Middle East.

306. At the present time there are no international funds available to continue the maintenance of European refugees in China after the end of 1953 and, unless there is a general improvement in the situation of refugees, the need for emergency aid in a number of areas will continue to be urgent. Many cases of great hardship and of complete destitution are constantly brought to my notice by the branch offices and the voluntary agencies working on behalf of refugees.

307. Plans were made to launch public appeals in the Netherlands and Belgium at the beginning of this year, but the appeal in the Netherlands was suddenly brought to a close by the flood disaster. For the same reason, an appeal which had been authorized by the Belgian Government had to be abandoned.

308. It seems unlikely that further general appeals to the public can be organized in the immediate future, and I am therefore compelled to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that, unless further governmental contributions are received before the end of the year, there is a danger that the funds at my disposal will be completely exhausted, leaving many cases requiring emergency aid in great distress.

309. In urging Members of the General Assembly to give consideration to my reiterated appeal for emergency aid to the most needy groups of refugees, I must draw to their attention that the voluntary agencies working for refugees depend to a great extent on subscriptions

from the general public and that, in most countries, a situation must be avoided whereby appeals for contribution to the United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund would directly or indirectly compete with appeals made by these agencies.

310. Account should also be taken of the fact, which has been stated frequently by the representatives of the agencies themselves before the competent committees of the United Nations, that the resources of the agencies are already fully committed to their present programmes of relief and rehabilitation, and that any diminution in their income would have the most serious consequences for refugees.

311. Contributions to the United Nations Refugee Emergency Fund, 31 March 1953:

I. Contributions in cash to 31 March 1953 converted into US dollars

GOVERNMENTAL		
Germany	13,095	
Luxembourg	970	
Sweden	19,492	
Norway	14,104	
Switzerland	69,284	
United Kingdom	280,000	
Denmark	14,607	
Greece	1,000	
Australia	55,833	
Netherlands	10,000	
Austria	1,923	480,308
OTHER OFFICIAL CONTRIBUTIONS		
IRO trust fund for Shanghai...	236,698	
United Kingdom Control Commission for Germany.....	2,832	239,530
PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS		19,874
		<u>\$ 739,712</u>

II. Pledges of cash

GOVERNMENTAL		
Balance from Netherlands (guilders 95,000)...	25,000	
France (F. frs. 30,000,000)	85,714	
Canada (\$ Cdn. 100,000)	101,000	
Belgium (B. frs. 200,000)	40,000	
		<u>\$ 251,714</u>
PLEDGES RESULTING FROM PUBLIC APPEALS		
Norway	70,000	
		<u>\$ 321,714</u>

FORD FOUNDATION GRANT FOR REFUGEES

312. As was mentioned in the addendum to document A/2126,⁹ through the generosity of the Ford Foundation my Office has been able to support a number of activities carried out by the international voluntary agencies, designed to promote the social assimilation and resettlement of refugees.

313. The Ford Foundation Grant of \$2,900,000 has, in my opinion, been of the greatest importance in enabling work to be done which has demonstrated to governments and voluntary agencies all over the world that the social assimilation of refugees is a problem for which solutions can be found.

314. It has enabled the voluntary agencies to undertake pilot projects in the field of social assimilation in all countries of Europe where there are large numbers of refugees. These projects will, I hope, provide concrete proof of the possibility and importance of integration projects for refugees, which will stimulate the competent authorities in each country to initiate larger programmes in this field.

315. Most of the projects which have so far been approved relate to vocational training, the construction of youth centres and social assimilation through the settlement of refugees in houses or on farms.

316. For the period covered by the present report, i.e., up to 31 March 1953, an amount of \$1,667,311 has been allocated; this amount has been used in conjunction with additional financial support from governmental and private sources, which has meant a total of \$7,204,911.

317. Of the total allocated from the Grant, \$962,363 were allocated to projects for social assimilation, \$678,256 for youth training, \$100,000 for the construction of youth centres and \$8,567 for cultural activities.

318. The international voluntary agencies carrying out these projects in close co-operation with their national counterpart agencies are the following:

- World Council of Churches;
- National Catholic Welfare Conference;
- American Joint Distribution Committee;
- Lutheran World Federation;
- Young Men's Christian Association;
- American Friends Service Committee.

319. According to the terms of the Ford Foundation Grant, work carried out with support from the Grant should promote the integration of refugees in the communities in which they live, as well as provide new resettlement opportunities abroad, and as far as possible should concentrate on the younger generation of the refugees.

⁹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventh Session, Supplement No. 16*, pages 15 and 19.

320. In order to promote resettlement opportunities for refugees, as mentioned previously, an allocation has been made from the Ford Foundation Grant to the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the World Council of Churches amounting to \$140,000 for the establishment in Latin America and Canada of a network of agency representatives whose task it is to promote resettlement opportunities for refugees. An allocation from the Ford Foundation Grant was also made to the American Joint Distribution Committee for the resettlement in Norway, Sweden and other countries of eighty-seven tubercular patients and their dependants.

321. In all this work only a beginning has been made and it will inevitably take some time before suitable machinery is created to derive the maximum benefit from these operations. It would be unrealistic to hope that a grant of \$2,900,000 would make it possible to liquidate these problems entirely, but it may be that the invaluable experience that will be gained through these projects may point the way for governments and voluntary agencies to a complete solution of these problems.

322. Through the Ford Foundation Grant, I was able to initiate a plan, designed in the first instance to be carried out by the voluntary agencies, to provide housing and temporary accommodation in Western Germany to meet the emergency created by the great influx of refugees into that region at the beginning of this year.

323. Most of these refugees, after being given temporary accommodation in Berlin, were flown into Western Germany by the Federal authorities. There was a grave danger that, unless housing accommodation was immediately provided, the great influx of refugees would seriously retard the integration of the refugees within the mandate of my Office. It appeared that the shortage of accommodation would result in overcrowding in the camps, with the result that the provision of housing and employment for refugees within the mandate of my Office would become even more difficult than it now is.

324. For this reason, I took the initiative in drawing up a comprehensive plan to mobilize international support to meet this extremely serious emergency. A number of governments have made contributions towards the execution of a plan in which my Office plays no operational role. The accommodation which, under the plan, will be made available for refugees in Western Germany will, in accordance also with the wishes of the Federal Government, benefit not only newly arrived refugees from Berlin but also other categories of refugees, including the homeless foreigners still in camps in Western Germany.

CHAPTER VII

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON REFUGEES

325. The United Nations High Commissioner's Advisory Committee on Refugees, which was established under Economic and Social Council resolution 393 B (XIII) to "advise the High Commissioner at his request in the exercise of his functions", held its second

and third sessions in Geneva in September 1952 and April 1953 respectively.

326. The following States are members of the Committee: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, the Holy See,

Israel, Italy, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Venezuela.

SECOND SESSION (15-19 SEPTEMBER 1952)

327. The three main items under discussion were: economic integration of refugees (A/AC.36/13); refugees from Bulgaria admitted into Turkey (A/AC.36/12); emergency aid to refugees, with special reference to problems of co-operation and the situation of refugees in China (A/AC.36/11).

Economic integration of refugees

328. At its first session, the Advisory Committee had expressed the view that the drawing up of long-term plans for the assimilation of refugees in their present countries of residence was an appropriate means of contributing to the solution of the refugee problem, and had requested me to make an urgent approach to the competent organs of the United Nations for this purpose. At the second session of the Committee, I outlined the studies I had initiated concerning the economic integration of refugees in Austria, Germany and Greece (A/AC.36/13), and expressed the conviction that financial assistance on an international scale would be essential if integration were to be carried out satisfactorily.

329. After a full discussion, the Committee adopted a recommendation in which it agreed that, inasmuch as refugees could not be resettled elsewhere, their integration in their present countries of residence was, in the present circumstances, the most important and urgent method for the solution of their problem. It was stressed that the problem was primarily of an economic nature. The Committee therefore invited me to pursue my efforts with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in the spirit of General Assembly resolution 538 B (VI) and to investigate with the Bank all possible ways for granting loans for concrete plans for economic integration of refugees in any country where such assistance was indispensable.

Refugees from Bulgaria admitted into Turkey

330. The representative of Turkey, at the first session of the Committee, had raised the question of assistance to the refugees of Turkish ethnic origin expelled from Bulgaria into Turkey. In order to be able to advise me on their eligibility under the terms of the Statute of my Office, the Committee invited me to examine and report on the status and conditions of these refugees.

331. A detailed report on the problem (A/AC.36/12) was duly submitted to the second session and, after examination, the Committee endorsed the conclusions contained in the report on the question whether or not these refugees came within my mandate. The Committee unanimously recognized the gravity of the economic problem raised by the presence of the refugees in Turkey and felt that it should receive the full attention of the competent international bodies. Admiration was expressed for the efforts made by the Turkish Government to achieve the integration of the refugees concerned.

Emergency aid

332. Despite the generous response of certain governments to my appeal for funds, authorized at the sixth session of the General Assembly, to enable emergency

aid to be given to the most needy groups of refugees within my mandate, the response to my appeal could not be considered satisfactory. In view of the growing urgency of the situation of the needy refugees in many parts of the world, especially in China, I considered it important to have the advice of the Committee on what steps should be taken to raise the necessary funds. I also requested the Committee's advice on the problems of co-ordination raised by the disbursement of international funds for refugees through different agencies and the problems of co-ordination raised by national programmes for certain categories of refugees outside their own territories.

333. After studying my report (A/AC.36/11), the Committee agreed that the refugees in China should be given priority for assistance from the Refugee Emergency Fund and concluded that for a final solution of this problem it would be necessary for governments to give sympathetic consideration to the granting of more alternate and end visas for these refugees. At the invitation of the Committee, I again sent an appeal to governments requesting their support in dealing with the problem of the refugees in China.

334. The Committee emphasized the necessity of paying particular attention to the problems of co-ordination of programmes on behalf of refugees, and expressed the view that co-ordination was required at all levels between inter-governmental organizations as well as between voluntary agencies concerned with refugees.

THIRD SESSION (27-30 APRIL 1953)

335. The three items discussed at the third session of the Committee were reports prepared by my Office on the international protection of refugees (A/AC.36/23), the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong (A/AC.36/25) and the review by the General Assembly of the arrangements for the Office of the High Commissioner (A/AC.36/24).

International protection

336. The report on the international protection of refugees was designed to meet the request made by the Advisory Committee at its second session for information on the activity of my Office in the field of protection. Considerable interest was shown in the status of signatures and ratifications of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The Committee was unanimous in paying high tribute to voluntary agencies for the contribution they were making to the solution of the refugee problem. Expressing their appreciation, the Committee decided to take note of the document, and several members suggested that it should be used as a basis of the present report.

Chinese refugees in Hong Kong

337. The question of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong was raised by the representative for China at the sixth and seventh sessions of the General Assembly and at the 378th and 470th meetings of the Third Committee; certain interested voluntary agencies had also drawn this problem to the attention of my Office. In view of the many complicating factors inherent in this refugee problem, I considered it my duty to present to the Advisory Committee the information at my disposal and to request its guidance as to the action which my Office should take (A/AC.36/25). In submitting the

report, I stated that, as far as could be ascertained, Chinese refugees enjoyed, in practice, the same facilities as the indigenous Chinese population; the problem was therefore not so much one of protection as of seeking a permanent solution. To achieve this, it would be necessary for a detailed investigation to be made in order to delimit accurately the categories of people involved and to assess the true magnitude of the problem.

338. At the invitation of the Committee, the observer representing the Government of China made a statement (A/AC.36/SR.23). He described the nature and urgency of the present situation and appealed to the Committee to authorize my Office to undertake the investigation which I had suggested. After consideration of financial and other aspects involved, the Committee recommended that an investigation of the position and of the possibilities for the solution of the problem of the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong should be made by my Office, in co-operation with the authorities in Hong Kong, from its own budgetary resources or other resources available for the purpose, and that a report should be submitted to the Committee as soon as practicable.

Review by the General Assembly of the arrangements for the Office of the High Commissioner

339. According to chapter I, paragraph 5, of the Statute, arrangements for my Office are to be reviewed not later than at the eighth session of the General Assembly. I considered that it would be useful, in view of the special interest which the members of the Advisory Committee have demonstrated in the refugee problem, if the opinion of the Committee on this matter could be made available to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly. I therefore prepared a short report on the continuing aspects of the

work of my Office (A/AC.36/24) in the hope that it would be of assistance to governments in considering the future of United Nations action on behalf of refugees.

340. The Committee did not adopt a formal decision on the subject, but was unanimous in agreeing in principle to continuing the High Commissioner's Office after the end of 1953. Most delegates were of the opinion that the extension should be for a period between three and five years, while others favoured an indefinite period, with provision for a review of the arrangements for the High Commissioner's Office during that period. Several delegations did not suggest a definite period of extension but considered that it should be as long as possible.

341. Opinions were divided on possible modifications to the terms of reference of the Office, but the majority of the Committee expressed the opinion that the task of the High Commissioner could most usefully be continued within the scope of the present Statute. Several delegations agreed with me that the task of the Office should remain non-operational as had originally been intended. In this connexion, the need for co-ordination of activities on behalf of refugees was stressed.

342. The views of the Committee on the prolongation of the mandate of the Office were strongly supported in a statement made by a representative of the voluntary agencies. In the statement a warm plea was made for continued international assistance to refugees and for flexible criteria which would take into account the constantly changing composition of the refugee population.

343. The various views expressed by members of the Committee on this question are contained in paragraphs 22 to 32 of document A/AC.36/28.

CONCLUSIONS

344. The above account of the work carried out by my Office gives some indication of how much more still remains to be done with a view to arriving at permanent solutions to refugee problems. At the same time, it shows, I would submit, that an Office of the United Nations charged with the international protection of refugees and which has no operational functions can do useful work to discharge the responsibilities which were assumed by the United Nations after the termination of the operations of IRO.

345. The assumption of responsibility by the United Nations in establishing the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees was, for the refugee population, some compensation for the disappearance of the organization which was in a position to finance their maintenance and their resettlement overseas. To the refugees it meant that they would not be abandoned by the international community, although most of the countries of residence had accepted the basic responsibility for their maintenance. Despite the fact that a number of individual countries have made great efforts to provide some permanent solution for the problem of refugees within the mandate of my Office, there remains a continuing need for some central international organization concerned with the problems of refugees.

346. If there is a real desire to ensure that the best possible use is made of the various international funds

which are made available to help refugees, then this central organization must have some say in the allocation of the funds. Serious difficulties in present international action for refugees are created by the disbursement of international funds through a number of separate organizations without adequate co-ordination. This has led in a number of instances to a certain duplication of effort. In the field of activities on behalf of refugees, rather than the establishment of new machinery, closer co-ordination and therefore more efficient use of existing machinery is needed.

347. The responsibility which has been given to my Office by the United Nations is, in my opinion, appropriate in the light of the many unsolved problems which were left at the end of the operations of IRO and of the continuing aspect of the refugee problem. To assume that the many thousands of refugees still living in camps in various parts of Europe and the unsolved cases in the Near East and the Far East can wait for the ordinary processes of economic development to solve their problem is a dangerous illusion. The problem of the refugee camps in Europe is still one of the most urgent of contemporary social problems, and deserves the urgent attention of governments.

348. There is no one solution to the refugee problem. Continued efforts must be made not only in the direction of resettlement but also in that of repatriation and

integration. By this, I do not imply in any way that there is a need for an international organization with operational functions to deal with the present refugee problem which is the concern of my Office. The responsibilities of the United Nations in providing international protection and seeking permanent solutions should, at the present time, mainly be the promotion and co-ordination of operations on behalf of refugees.

349. It is, however, essential that, if the General Assembly decides to prolong the arrangements made for the Office of the High Commissioner in accordance with the terms of the existing Statute, a period should be fixed which would make it possible for the Office to devote its efforts entirely to the needs of refugees and not after a very short period, be concerned with all the administrative problems which necessarily arise towards the end of the lifetime of any agency.

350. For this reason, I would venture to recommend that if the General Assembly decides to prolong the Office it should be for a period of not less than five

years and that any subsequent review should take place at least one year before the termination of the five-year period.

351. In addition to the question of the prolongation of the Office it is urgent for the General Assembly to give renewed attention to the continuing problem of emergency aid to the most needy groups of refugees within the mandate of my Office. As I have pointed out in the preceding chapters of the present report, there are still a number of unsolved problems of emergency aid, especially those of the refugees in China and in the Near East, and also the cases requiring institutional care for which no government has accepted full responsibility. Some means must be found to prevent a tragedy occurring to these refugees.

(Signed) J. G. VAN HEUVEN GOEDHART
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

15 May 1953

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