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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE  
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Second Session

FAR EASTERN PROGRAMME

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

A. INTRODUCTION

1. During the first seven months of 1959, 1041 refugees arrived in Hong Kong from the mainland of China under the joint UNHCR/ICEM Far Eastern Operation. As of 31 July 1959, 1004 refugees had been moved for permanent settlement and 267 refugees were in transit in Hong Kong.
2. On 31 July 1959 the total caseload on the mainland of China was estimated at approximately 8000 refugees of whom 4200 were in possession of visa assurances. Of the 4200 visa holders, 2600 held Hong Kong transit visas and needed only exit permits in order to proceed to Hong Kong.
3. On 31 July 1959 funds were available to ICEM for the movement of a further 2800 refugees. Of the total pledge of \$670,000 made by the United States Government to ICEM for 1959 on a 45% matching basis, an amount of \$215,000 is still unmatched. In addition the United States Government has made available \$730,000 on the occasion of the World Refugee Year. If matching contributions against these two amounts are forthcoming from other governments, a further \$1,155,000 will become available, making a total of \$2,100,000. Since the total amount required by ICEM to carry out the movement of the remaining caseload has been estimated at \$3,200,000, an amount of \$1,100,000 will still be needed.
4. It will be recalled that under the joint operation, UNHCR finances supplementary aid to destitute refugees on the mainland of China, the maintenance of refugees in transit in Hong Kong, the placement of difficult cases in institutions and the provision of resettlement grants. At its first session the Executive Committee approved an amount of \$665,000 for 1959 to be allocated as follows:

(a) Care and maintenance in Hong Kong	\$150,000
(b) Administrative expenses of Hong Kong Office	25,000
(c) Supplementary aid	108,000
(d) Resettlement of difficult cases	267,000
(e) Resettlement grants	115,000
	<u>\$665,000</u>

5. Care and maintenance expenses for the first six months of 1959 have totalled 118,490 owing to the fact that it has not proved possible to keep the caseload of refugees in transit in Hong Kong at an average of 250 persons. On 31 July the caseload included approximately 180 refugees who for consular, medical or other reasons are temporarily held up in Hong Kong. Determined efforts are being made to reduce the size of this group which constitutes a heavy drain on UNHCR funds. The group includes, in particular, 18 refugees belonging to the sect of Old Believers, who were brought to Hong Kong for movement to Brazil to join their compatriots in a colony established in Paraná by the World Council of Churches, but who were subsequently rejected because each family has a handicapped member. UNHCR is negotiating with several governments in the hope of arranging the admission of this group. Another group of 21 refugees have recently had their visas revalidated by Venezuela and should depart shortly for that country from Hong Kong.

6. From the UNHCR allocation of \$108,000 for supplementary aid, monthly grants of \$8 have been given to 1,000 destitute refugees on the mainland of China. In addition, thanks to generous contributions from CORSO of New Zealand and from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, UNHCR has been able to provide monthly grants of \$6 to a further 1,200 refugees.

7. The allocation of \$267,000 for the settlement of difficult cases has already been entirely committed or earmarked for projects in the course of implementation or preparation. These projects provide for the placement of some 215 cases, including many chronically sick refugees, in institutions in Australia, Belgium, France and Switzerland.

8. A striking feature of the last seven months has been the substantial increase in offers of placement by both governments and agencies for difficult cases among the refugees from China. Most of these offers were made as a contribution to the World Refugee Year but some of them can only be taken up when more funds become

available for placement grants. Every effort is being made to obtain these funds in order to take up before 1960 placement offers made for an additional 480 refugees.

9. Difficult cases who received visas for placement under earlier projects have been leaving Hong Kong at the rate of 20 to 30 a month, in many instances taking advantage of the free flights offered by governments and agencies.

10. 451 difficult cases with 44 dependants still awaiting settlement were registered as at 30 June 1959. Registration of difficult cases in the age group of 60 to 65 which had not previously been covered has now started. In addition, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of older refugees registering for placement with the Special Representative in Hong Kong.

#### B. PROGRAMME FOR 1960

11. It will be recalled that at its first special session the Executive Committee approved a World Refugee Year target of \$1,470,000 including an immediate planning target of \$1,100,000, for the UNHCR part of the Far Eastern Operation in 1960.

12. The overall target was based on the assumption that out of the total caseload of 9,100 reported on 1 January 1959, 3,000 refugees would be resettled in 1960. Within the first seven months one thousand have departed from Hong Kong, leaving some 7,000 persons still to be resettled. It is at present impossible to determine the rate of future movements and I would therefore propose that the World Refugee Year target of \$1,470,000 be retained.

13. The following programme is based on the immediate planning target of \$1,100,000. Projects for the balance of \$370,000 will be submitted at a later stage.

#### Project FE/M.1/60

Cost to UNHCR: \$235,000

#### Maintenance of refugees in Hong Kong

14. Under this project a contribution of \$235,000 is requested in order to provide 3,500 refugees with maintenance in Hong Kong for an average period of four weeks at an individual cost of \$67. As explained in paragraph 5 past experience has shown that a three week transit period is too short and it is therefore proposed to increase the period to four weeks.

#### Project FE/A/60

Cost to UNHCR: \$25,000

#### Administrative costs of the Joint Office in Hong Kong

15. A contribution of \$25,000 is requested towards the administrative costs of the Joint Office in Hong Kong for 1960.

Projects FE/S.1/60, FE/S.2/60, FE/S.3/60

Cost to UNHCR: \$93,000

Assistance through voluntary agencies

16. Because of the general economic situation it is felt that assistance given through the three voluntary agencies concerned should be kept at the same level as in previous years. Additional funds would be sought from non-governmental sources to assist refugees who might not be provided for under the following proposed allocations.

Project FE/S.1/60

Cost to UNHCR: \$78,600

17. Under this project a contribution of \$78,600 is proposed for the continuation in 1960 of project FE/S.1/59. This project would provide individual monthly allowances of \$8 to approximately 820 refugees living in destitute circumstances on the mainland of China.

Project FE/S.2/60

Cost to UNHCR: \$7,200

18. Under this project a contribution of \$7,200 is requested for the continuation in 1960 of project FE/S.2/59. This contribution would provide individual monthly grants of \$8 to 75 refugees on the mainland of China.

Project FE/S.3/60

Cost to UNHCR: \$7,200

19. Under this project a contribution of \$7,200 is requested for the continuation in 1960 of project FE/S.3/59. This contribution would provide individual monthly grants of \$8 to 75 refugees on the mainland of China.

Project FE/S.4/60

Cost to UNHCR: \$12,000

Medical Care

20. Efforts will be made to continue financing this project from non-government sources. It provides for medical and hospital care for an estimated group of 100 refugees.

Project FE/D/60

Cost to UNHCR: \$635,000

Resettlement of handicapped cases

21. Under this project a contribution of \$635,000 is requested to provide permanent settlement for handicapped refugees and their dependents.

22. Grants for the placement of difficult cases and their dependents in homes and institutions in different countries vary from between \$500 and \$1,500, according to the type of case and accommodation provided. Handicapped refugees who are not in need of institutional care may also be resettled under this project, with the help of standard installation grants similar to those paid for this category of refugees in other areas. It is estimated that a total of 500 refugees will benefit under the project.

Project FE/G/60

Cost to UNHCR: \$100,000

Resettlement grants

23. Under this project, authority is requested to spend \$100,000 to provide individual grants averaging \$175 for the settlement in agriculture of 580 refugees from the mainland of China.