



ADDENDUM
TO THE
REPORT
OF THE
UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 12A (A/9012/Add.1)

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New York, 1973

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
IN MEMORIAM		1
<u>Chapter</u>		
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 8	2
A. Election of officers	2	2
B. Representation on the Committee	3 - 6	2
C. Introductory remarks by the Chairman	7	3
D. Adoption of the agenda - decision of the Committee	8	3
II. GENERAL QUESTIONS	9 - 32	5
A. Statement by the High Commissioner and general debate	9 - 31	5
Decision of the Committee	32	9
III. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION	33 - 42	11
Conclusions of the Committee	42	12
IV. UNHCR REGULAR ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES	43 - 75	14
A. UNHCR Assistance	43 - 56	14
Decision of the Committee	57	16
B. Resettlement of refugees	58 - 74	16
Decision of the Committee	75	19
V. IMMEDIATE RELIEF PROGRAMME IN SOUTH SUDAN	76 - 81	20
VI. FINANCIAL QUESTIONS	82 - 101	21
A. Financial statements, report of the Board of Auditors and report on investments for 1972	82 - 84	21
Decision of the Committee	85	21
B. Status of contributions and over-all financial situation for 1973 and 1974	86 - 100	21
Decision of the Committee	101	24

CONTENTS (continued)

ANNEXES

	<u>Page</u>
I. Opening statement by the High Commissioner to the twenty-fourth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme	25
II. Summary of approved allocations under the UNHCR Assistance Programme for 1974	34

IN MEMORIAM

At the beginning of the session, the Executive Committee paid a solemn tribute to the memory of Mr. Odd Nansen, great humanitarian and a distinguished member of the Nansen Medal Award Committee, and to Dame May Curwen, C.B.E., recipient of the Nansen Medal and former Chairman of the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee also paid a solemn tribute to the memory of Mr. Wilfred Jenks, Director-General of the International Labour Organisation, whose death occurred during the twenty-fourth session of the Committee.

REPORT ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME*

(Geneva, 8-16 October 1973)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme held its twenty-fourth session from 8 October to 16 October at the Palais des Nations, Geneva.

A. Election of officers

2. Under rule 10 of the rules of procedure, which provides that officers shall be elected for the whole year, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman:	Mr. A. Herbst (Federal Republic of Germany)
Vice-Chairman:	Mr. W. H. Barton (Canada)
Rapporteur:	Mr. R. Arim (Turkey)

It was suggested by some members that, at future sessions, the Committee should give consideration to wider geographical distribution in the election of its officers.

B. Representation on the Committee

3. The following /Governments/ members of the Committee were represented at the session:

Algeria	Holy See
Australia	Iran
Austria	Israel
Belgium	Italy
Brazil	Lebanon
Canada	Netherlands
Colombia	Nigeria
Denmark	Norway
France	Sweden
Germany, Federal Republic of	Switzerland
Greece	Tunisia

* Previously issued under the symbol A/AC.96/497.

Turkey
Uganda
United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania

United States of America
Venezuela
Yugoslavia

4. The Governments of Argentina, Bangladesh, Burundi, Chile, Cuba, Dahomey, Ghana, India, the Khmer Republic, Liberia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Republic of Viet-Nam, Rwanda, Senegal, the Sudan, Zaire and Zambia, were represented by an observer, as was the Sovereign Order of Malta.

5. The United Nations system was represented as follows: the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO).

6. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by an observer: the Commission of the European Communities, the Council of Europe, the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), the League of Arab States, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

C. Introductory remarks by the Chairman

7. In welcoming the representatives, the Chairman drew attention to the main questions to be discussed by the Committee and recalled the humanitarian and non-political character of the work of international assistance to refugees.

D. Adoption of the agenda - decision of the Committee

8. The Executive Committee decided to adopt the following agenda:

(1) Election of officers.

(2) Adoption of the agenda (A/AC.96/488/Rev.3).

(3) Statement by the High Commissioner and general debate (A/AC.96/493).

(4) International protection (A/AC.96/491).

(5) Financial questions:

(a) Financial statements, report of the Board of Auditors and report on investments for 1972 (A/AC.96/489 and Corr.1, A/AC.96/496 and Add.1, and A/AC.96/490);

(b) Status of Contributions and Over-all Financial Situation for 1973 and 1974 (A/AC.96/494 and Add.1, and A/AC.96/495).

- (6) UNHCR regular assistance activities: a/
 - (a) UNHCR assistance (A/AC.96/487 and Add.1 and 2, A/AC.96/498); b/
 - (b) Report on the resettlement of refugees (A/AC.96/492).
- (7) Immediate Relief Programme in south Sudan.
- (8) Any other questions.
- (9) Consideration of the draft report on the session.

a/ The report on UNHCR regular assistance activities, submitted to the Executive Committee in document A/AC.96/487, groups the information which was formerly contained in three separate documents; the UNHCR report on current operations, the proposed UNHCR programme for the following year, and new and revised projects. The statistical data pertaining to UNHCR assistance activities have been issued as addendum 1 to document A/AC.96/487, and the maps of a number of countries in Africa, as addendum 2.

b/ The information documents relating to allocations from the Emergency Fund in 1972 are listed in document A/AC.96/487/Add.1, table VI, and those in 1973 are listed in A/AC.96/498.

II. GENERAL QUESTIONS

(Agenda item 3)

A. Statement by the High Commissioner and general debate

9. The High Commissioner in his opening statement to the Committee, said that, although during the past three years special assignments entrusted to his Office had, either by virtue of their size, the status of the persons concerned or the complex nature of the task involved, tended to overshadow the regular work of UNHCR, it should not be assumed that those traditional tasks had lost any of their importance or urgency. On the contrary, they still called for as much energy, resources and imagination as in the past. At this session of the Committee, in place of the usual systematic review of the activities of his Office, the High Commissioner wished to focus attention on problems which inherently linked together protection and material assistance, since in any case these two functions could not in practice be separated.

10. Giving a few examples of some of these refugee problems, the High Commissioner first referred to the recent events in Chile and gave details of the measures taken by his Office with a view to ensuring the fullest possible protection of the refugees in that country. Following the contacts he had made with the Chilean authorities immediately after the change of régime and upon receipt of disturbing reports, assurances were received from the Foreign Minister that refugees would receive the protection to which they were entitled. Furthermore, a National Committee for Aid to refugees had been established by the churches with the support of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Within the framework of this Committee emergency reception centres were set up to provide shelter for refugees. Resettlement opportunities would be found for those who might wish to leave the country. Furthermore, sizeable funds were likely to be needed for emergency relief.

11. With regard to the action undertaken by UNHCR upon the request of the Secretary-General to assist Asians of undetermined nationality who had had to leave Uganda in the latter part of 1972, the High Commissioner said that the evacuation of these persons had been carried out in agreement with the Ugandan authorities under the auspices of the Secretary-General, and in co-operation with the United Nations, ICEM and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Transit facilities for some 4,500 persons had been provided by the authorities in Austria, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco and Spain, while approximately 3,200 had left Uganda directly for final settlement in Canada, India, Pakistan and elsewhere. Twelve Governments had contributed a total of \$3.4 million to cover the costs of this operation. Resettlement opportunities were urgently required for some 200 persons still remaining in the centres.

12. In Africa, UNHCR continued to assist refugees from colonial territories. However, a serious problem had arisen from the continuing influx of new refugees from Burundi into Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire, who now numbered over 85,000 in these three countries. These refugees were absorbing a considerable part of UNHCR resources. The High Commissioner was in regular contact with the Administrative Secretary-General of OAU on this subject and he trusted that the necessary action would be taken to bring about a climate of understanding so as to prevent further increases in the number of these refugees.

13. Referring to the problems of individual refugees, for whom settlement on the land was not possible, the High Commissioner said that those difficulties which had been and still were experienced in settling such cases in Europe were naturally far greater in developing countries where the economic potential was much smaller. While appreciating the difficulties facing the Governments of those countries, he stressed that it was essential for them to facilitate UNHCR's task by applying humanely and generously the provisions of the international legal instruments to which they were parties. He pointed out that material assistance was of little avail unless it was accompanied by an adequate legal status, in particular the right to residence and protection from expulsion to their country of origin. He said that most refugee problems were inevitably linked to political developments. UNHCR would continue to discharge its responsibilities in accordance with the terms of its mandate. It was, however, in no position to influence political events in any country, and could moreover only function within the limits of the means at its disposal.

14. With regard to the special assignments carried out by UNHCR outside the traditional framework of the mandate and regular programme, the High Commissioner said that the United Nations immediate relief programme in south Sudan was now in its final phase. The majority of the Sudanese refugees had now returned to south Sudan from neighbouring countries. Considerable assistance had been provided to the southern region of the Sudan in close co-operation with other organizations of the United Nations system. Large financial contributions totalling nearly \$20 million had been received from the international community to finance this operation.

15. Referring to the South Asian subcontinent, the High Commissioner said that following the Delhi Agreement of 28 August 1973, and acting as executive agent for the Secretary-General, he was now engaged in arranging for the repatriation mainly by air of over 200,000 persons from Pakistan and Bangladesh. This operation was the continuation of the earlier limited operation involving movement between Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The High Commissioner had addressed an appeal to Governments to provide financial assistance for this repatriation operation at a cost of some \$14.3 million.

16. The members of the Committee expressed their appreciation for the significant and thought-provoking introductory statement made by the High Commissioner. They noted the considerable results that had been achieved both in respect of the High Commissioner's regular activities and his special assignments. They also noted that although the High Commissioner had been asked to undertake considerable new tasks in addition to his Office's regular activities, the latter had not been adversely affected. There was awareness of the flexibility needed by the High Commissioner to enable him to follow the present course.

17. Several representatives referred to the growing number of tasks entrusted to the High Commissioner. They agreed that the High Commissioner had neither the mandate nor the possibility to prevent refugee problems from arising. When they arose, he could, as it were, only act as the conscience of the international community. The representatives who spoke on the subject agreed that there were definite limits to preventative diplomacy, and that in the last analysis it was for the Governments themselves to help to avert the emergence of new refugee problems, and through their liberal practices to facilitate the admission of refugees to their territories and the achievement of permanent solutions for them. One representative drew attention to the fact that the financial requirements

of the High Commissioner's special assignments were greater than those of his other activities.

18. In endorsing the general policy followed by the High Commissioner, several members of the Committee stressed that the attainment of UNHCR's objective was largely due to the careful, strictly non-political, humanitarian and unbiased approach observed by the Office in dealing with refugee problems which themselves were often of a highly complex and delicate nature. In the course of the debate considerable emphasis was placed on the eminently human aspects of the problems of refugees and on the High Commissioner's major role in safeguarding their rights and interests. Many representatives drew attention to the paramount importance of international protection and especially to the need for liberal asylum practices and for the strict application of the principle of non-refoulement, which are dealt with in more detail in chapter III of the present report.

19. With regard to the question of Asians from Uganda, members of the Committee noted with appreciation from the statements made by the High Commissioner, and by the Director of the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration, the arrangements that had been made to ensure resettlement and care and maintenance, where necessary, for those of undetermined nationality. The Committee paid tribute to the countries which had generously accepted members of the group either in transit or for permanent resettlement on their territory. Several representatives stated that they shared the High Commissioner's concern that resettlement opportunities still had to be found for a number of these persons, and hoped that these would soon materialize. In reply to the views expressed in respect of the nationality of Asians from Uganda, the High Commissioner emphasized that those assisted under his auspices were of undetermined nationality. This was, in his view, a human rather than a legal problem and it was because many of the persons concerned had no country to go to that UNHCR had become involved.

20. The Observer for India drew attention to the plight of some 3,000 Asians who had left Uganda for India in the latter half of 1972, and who later found themselves without valid passports. Approximately 1,000 of this group had no roots in India and wished to join their families, now resettled in Europe and North America. He urged the High Commissioner to do whatever he could to facilitate the reunion of members of this group with their families.

21. Several speakers noted with satisfaction that the Immediate Relief Programme in the south Sudan was now on the verge of completion. They were pleased to learn that an estimated 145,000 refugees had so far returned to their homes from the neighbouring countries which had generously sheltered them during a number of years. It was pointed out, however, that a substantial number of Sudanese refugees had still to be repatriated from Uganda. One representative stressed the importance of a smooth transition to the long-term programme to be put into effect by the United Nations Development Programme.

22. Several representatives noted with interest, from the statements made by the High Commissioner and the Observers for Bangladesh and Pakistan that, following the Agreement signed in New Delhi in August 1973, the High Commissioner, upon the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, was acting as executing agent to facilitate the repatriation, mainly by air, of over 200,000 persons, comprising non-Bengalis from Bangladesh and Bengalis from Pakistan. The members of the Committee appreciated that in view of the principle of simultaneity contained

in the Delhi Agreement, whereby the movement of these persons was linked to the repatriation of prisoners of war from India, it was essential for repatriation to be completed as rapidly as possible, and recognized that a speedy and generous response from the international community to the High Commissioner's appeal for funds was necessary in order to achieve this. In the course of the session, a number of representatives announced important contributions in cash, in kind and in services, for this purpose. These are listed in chapter VI of the present report.

23. Members of the Committee were pleased to find that, in carrying out the special assignments entrusted to him, the High Commissioner was receiving the full support of the United Nations agencies concerned, i.e. UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, ITU, and others, of the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration and of the non-governmental organizations.

24. With regard to the regular assistance activities of UNHCR, the Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that the largest part of UNHCR's programme had been devoted to assistance to refugees on the African continent. Several representatives felt that the continuing influx of refugees from Burundi into neighbouring countries, which were already sheltering large numbers of refugees, was a source of concern, and welcomed the close contacts which the High Commissioner was maintaining with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity on the subject. They expressed the hope that the Governments concerned would make every effort to resolve this problem.

25. The representatives of African countries drew attention to the situation of refugees from various parts of southern Africa, who constituted more than half of the UNHCR caseload in Africa. They recalled the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2980 (XXVII) of 14 December 1972, on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations. They urged that ways and means be found to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration and of other relevant resolutions of the United Nations and especially resolution 2980 (XXVII). They emphasized the need to implement paragraphs 8 and 9 of resolution 2980 (XXVII) relating to concrete proposals for specific programmes for all possible assistance to the peoples in colonial territories. They furthermore recommended that increased assistance be given to refugees from colonial territories.

26. The Committee noted from a statement by the High Commissioner that during recent years considerable allocations had been earmarked for assistance to refugees from colonial territories, both in the UNHCR Programme and under trust funds including the Education Account, and that further provisions for assistance to them had been included in the 1974 Programme. The Committee also heard, from statements made by representatives of UNESCO, FAO and WHO, of the action taken by these agencies pursuant to resolution 2980 (XXVII) and other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

27. Attention was drawn to the fact that many European countries which maintained a close interest in the refugee problems on other continents were still facing such problems themselves.

28. Many speakers expressed deep concern at the situation of refugees in Chile, following the developments which had recently taken place in that country. They

fully endorsed the action taken by the High Commissioner with a view to safeguarding the rights and interests of refugees coming within his mandate in that country. They noted with appreciation the arrangements that had been made for their assistance and those that were envisaged for their resettlement through migration to other countries. The Committee decided to give its full support to the action undertaken by UNHCR, by addressing an appropriate communication to the Chilean Government. The representatives of Sweden and Switzerland stated that their Governments would be prepared to admit refugees who expressed the wish to settle in their respective countries. The representative of Sweden added that his country would also be prepared to accept a number of Chileans seeking asylum. The representative of France stated that, within the framework of multilateral action, the French Government was willing to make its contribution by seeking countries of asylum and accepting refugees from Chile. The hope was expressed that the necessary opportunities would be made available and that the High Commissioner would also be able to pursue his present efforts to ensure the adequate legal protection of refugees in Chile, as mentioned in more detail in chapter III of the present report.

29. The Committee noted from statements by the Observers of the Khmer Republic and from the Republic of Viet-Nam that over 25,000 persons of Khmer origin who had sought refuge in the Republic of Viet-Nam, where they had been assisted by the Government and by the Viet-Nameese Red Cross, required assistance pending their return to their homes in the Khmer Republic. The Observer for the Republic of Viet-Nam supported the request by the Khmer Republic to UNHCR to grant assistance to the group concerned. Several representatives supported the view that this group should be assisted, and one representative said that his Government would be prepared to consider the possibility of earmarking a contribution through UNHCR for this purpose. The High Commissioner replied that assistance had previously been provided for refugees from the Khmer Republic in Viet-Nam, whose Red Cross Society had been in touch with UNHCR in recent years. He stated that a new effort would be made by UNHCR to assist the group concerned in the near future.

30. The Chairman of the Committee of Refugees and Migration of the International Council for Voluntary Agencies, speaking in his capacity as Observer for that organization, made a statement in which he stressed that the notion of refugees had acquired a wider meaning in recent years and there was a new type of refugee who usually had no official refugee status, often because he had not asked for it, but was nevertheless in need of assistance. These refugees constituted a heavy charge on the voluntary agencies that were prepared to assist them. The Observer for the voluntary agencies also underlined the importance of international protection. He also stated that the agencies fully supported the new "Ten or More Plan", which was submitted to the Committee under the item "Resettlement".

31. In the course of the session, many speakers highlighted the important role which the voluntary agencies were playing in the field of assistance to refugees.

Decision of the Committee

32. The Executive Committee:

(1) Expressed its appreciation to the High Commissioner for the way in which he was accomplishing his increasingly complex tasks, and paid tribute to the results achieved;

(2) Noted with satisfaction that the High Commissioner had been able to carry out his regular activities as well as the special assignments entrusted to him under the terms of General Assembly resolution 2956 (XXVII) of 12 December 1972;

(3) Reaffirmed its support of the good offices concept, which enabled the High Commissioner to contribute to the solution of humanitarian problems;

(4) Emphasized the humanitarian and non-political character of the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

(5) Reaffirmed the paramount importance of international protection of refugees;

(6) Expressed its concern regarding the situation of refugees in Chile and its appreciation to the High Commissioner for the immediate action he had taken, and requested the High Commissioner urgently to continue his efforts with a view to ensuring the protection, assistance and, where necessary, resettlement of these refugees;

(7) Further noted with concern the continuing influx of new refugees into certain areas in Africa;

(8) Took note with satisfaction of the assistance provided by the High Commissioner to refugees from colonial territories, and expressed the hope that this help would be increased in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

III. INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

(Agenda item 4)

33. Introducing document A/AC.96/491, the representative of the High Commissioner drew attention to the progress achieved in strengthening the legal framework of principles defining the basic standards for the treatment of refugees and described the progress recorded towards the establishment of a convention on territorial asylum. He recalled that the High Commissioner had been requested by the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session to consult Governments on the desirability of convening a conference of plenipotentiaries to consider the proposed text, and observed that the majority of the substantive replies so far received were favourable.

34. On the negative side, he drew attention to the fact that a large number of States, many of which were confronted with refugee problems, had not yet acceded to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 1/ nor to the 1967 Protocol thereto, 2/ that the rate of accessions to these and other basic international instruments designed to protect the rights and interests of refugees had declined in recent years. Above all, he regretted the inadequate implementation in certain countries of some of the standards laid down for the treatment of refugees. There had again been cases of refoulement, and refugees who had resided for some time in their country of asylum had been subjected to expulsion measures on grounds which were not in keeping with international legal standards. Such refugees had in certain cases been placed in detention if, even through circumstances outside their control, they were unable to find a country of resettlement. He felt that these problems could largely be avoided if Governments would pay increasing heed to their essentially human aspect and if they viewed them in a spirit of international solidarity. He expressed the hope that there would be some very real progress to report to the Committee at its next session.

35. In conclusion, the High Commissioner's representative stated that in an effort to make better known the cause of refugees to the widest possible representation of the legal profession, the Sixth World Conference on World Peace through Law, which had recently been held in Abidjan from 26 to 31 August 1973, had adopted several resolutions on the protection of refugees. He expressed appreciation for the initiative taken by Mr. Charles S. Rhyne - a former representative on the Committee - in placing this question on the agenda of the Conference.

36. During the ensuing discussion and in the course of the general debate, many representatives stressed the support given by their Governments to the efforts of the High Commissioner to ensure the international protection of refugees. It was recalled that this had initially been his essential task, and continued to form the basis of the activities of his Office. One representative questioned the adequacy of the allocations for protection staff and legal services, and asked that this

1/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, No. 2545.

2/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 606, No. 8791.

matter be reviewed in order to ensure that requisites in the area of protection were met.

37. A majority of representatives confirmed that their Governments were in favour of the preparation and adoption of a convention on territorial asylum under the auspices of the United Nations which would embody the principle of non-refoulement. Several speakers stressed the need for a new and more widely recognized definition of the right of asylum which should be embodied in the proposed Convention. Some speakers stated that the legal status of asylum seekers should at the same time be clearly defined, so as to avoid differences in the treatment accorded to them in various countries. Many representatives stressed that careful preparation would be necessary to ensure the widest acceptance of the proposed convention. The latter should be so conceived as to take realities fully into account. Several speakers agreed with a suggestion made by the representative of the Netherlands to the effect that it might be opportune first to convene a group of Government experts to be entrusted with the task of reviewing the text of the draft convention prior to the convening of a conference of plenipotentiaries which might take place in 1975 rather than in 1974.

38. Several representatives expressed their concern regarding the lack in certain countries of effective implementation of standards defined in legal instruments concerning refugees, particularly as regards asylum and non-refoulement.

39. During the discussion and in the course of the general debate, a number of representatives expressed their Governments' deep concern regarding the situation of refugees within the mandate of UNHCR in Chile, following recent events in that country. The Committee noted that every effort was being made by the High Commissioner in co-operation with representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and of non-governmental organizations to ensure the effective protection of refugees in Chile in accordance with established international standards. In response to a request by the representative of Sweden, the High Commissioner also undertook to seek clarification from the authorities concerned in respect of the interpretation of the term "offence", in the context of offences for which refugees in Chile could be prosecuted. The High Commissioner assured the Committee that the question of protection of the refugees in Chile would continue to receive his closest attention.

40. On the subject of the reunion of separated refugee families, several representatives confirmed that their Governments accorded a high priority to this question, and would give every assistance in the reuniting of refugee families.

41. A number of representatives and observers informed the Committee in the course of the session of the legal measures already taken or envisaged by their Governments for the benefit of refugees. These measures included accession to and implementation of some of the intergovernmental legal instruments directly or indirectly related to the status of refugees.

Conclusions of the Committee

42. The Executive Committee:

(1) Underlined the paramount importance of the international protection of refugees;

(2) Expressed the hope that many more States could accede to the

1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto, while appreciating the fact that some further progress had been made in respect of accession to these basic legal instruments;

(3) Welcomed with appreciation the prospect that the OAU Convention concerning Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969 3/ and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness 4/ were likely to come into force in the near future;

(4) Stressed the vital need for the practical implementation of these and other international legal instruments for the benefit of refugees;

(5) Expressed the hope that preparations for an international convention on territorial asylum would be actively pursued;

(6) Urged that liberal and uniform asylum practices should be followed and that the principle of "non-refoulement" should be strictly applied;

(7) Noted with particular satisfaction that the High Commissioner was making every effort to ensure the protection of refugees in Chile, and that he would closely follow developments in this respect; the Committee agreed that the following telegram should be addressed by the Chairman to the Chilean Government:

"The Executive Committee has considered the situation of the refugees under the mandate of the High Commissioner in Chile. With reference to the contacts which have taken place and arrangements made between your Government and the High Commissioner in view of the humanitarian aspects involved, the Committee has expressed the hope that Your Excellency's Government will, in continued co-operation with the High Commissioner, and in conformity with the international conventions to which Chile is a party, promote rapid solutions for these refugees, taking fully into account their need for protection and assistance.";

(8) Expressed the hope that family reunion would be facilitated through a more liberal practice on the part of States;

(9) Took note of the work done by the Conference on World Peace through Law which had taken place in Abidjan from 26 to 31 August 1973.

3/ Organization of African Unity document CM/267/Rev.1.

4/ A/CONF.9/15.

IV. UNHCR REGULAR ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

(Agenda item 6)

A. UNHCR Assistance

43. Presenting the report on UNHCR activities in the field of assistance in 1972, 1973 and 1974 (A/AC.96/487 and Add.1 and 2), the representative of the High Commissioner observed that the new and consolidated presentation of this document was based on a breakdown according to country programmes, in line with the recommendations of the United Nations Administrative Management Service. The report would be further modified following the adoption by UNHCR of the programme-budgeting procedure.

44. He said that the principal developments which had occurred in 1972 and the first part of 1973 in the field of assistance activities included: the repatriation of large numbers of refugees to the Sudan and the corresponding reduction of regular assistance to them in the countries of asylum; massive aid to the new refugees from Burundi arriving in Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zaire; measures to meet the new problems caused by the influx of some 5,000 to 6,000 refugees from Rwanda into Burundi, Uganda and Zaire; and the need for emergency and resettlement assistance to refugees in Chile.

45. Commenting on the financial target of \$US 8,739,000 proposed to the Committee for the 1974 programme, he explained that the most significant allocations were those intended for Burundi refugees (\$US 2,200,000) and for projects in the Middle East (\$US 750,000). As in previous years, the programme comprised country allocations and over-all allocations for specific types of assistance. It sought above all to promote permanent solutions to the problems facing refugees.

46. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the report in its new form, a presentation which made it easier to compare the UNHCR's current and past assistance activities and those planned for the year to come.

47. Several representatives noted that UNHCR assistance activities continued to be mainly directed to the African continent, where the largest number of refugees within the competence of UNHCR was to be found. During the discussion and in the course of the session, the Committee heard statements by the representatives of Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania and by the Observers for Senegal, the Sudan, Zaire and Zambia, giving details on the situation of refugees within those countries and on assistance measures already taken or required to meet their problems. The Committee complimented these Governments on their participation in the work of assistance to refugees, which often imposed an additional burden on their economies, at a time when several countries in Africa were facing the results of prolonged drought. The Committee noted from statements by the representative of the High Commissioner and of the World Food Programme the restrictions which were likely to be imposed on food aid projects of WFP, owing to an unprecedented shortage of cereals - the staple commodity - and a sharp increase in world food prices. The Committee was informed that, as a result, it

might be necessary for UNHCR to purchase food for assistance to refugees during the next few months.

48. The representative of Uganda drew attention to the fact that although there had been a sizeable decrease in the number of refugees in his country following the large-scale repatriation to the Sudan, there remained some 25,000 to 30,000 Sudanese refugees in Uganda, in addition to considerable numbers of refugees from other countries. He described the measures taken by his Government to meet their needs, and the progress which had been achieved. He drew special attention to the help needed from the international community in providing adequate educational facilities for them and expressed the hope that a higher allocation would be included in the 1975 programme.

49. The Observer from Zaire stressed that the facilities made available by the authorities of his country to refugees who were arriving in increasing numbers, notably from colonial territories, constituted a heavy burden on the national economy for which appropriate aid from the international community was necessary. He considered that the number of refugees as given in the report on assistance activities was an under-estimate and hoped that a reassessment of the situation would be made by UNHCR in co-operation with his Government.

50. Welcoming the increase in the number of repatriated refugees which emerged from the report, one member suggested that the installations they had used during their stay might be left to the Government of the country of asylum, as a gesture of acknowledgement of the hospitality they had received.

51. Several representatives pointed out that whenever possible refugees should be transferred from the border areas of the countries of asylum to locations inland, as was being done in many cases.

52. The Committee noted from statements by representatives of countries in Europe that in some of these countries the number of asylum seekers had increased; there had been, on the other hand, a decline in resettlement opportunities and a slowdown in selection and processing of refugee migrants. UNHCR's presence in these countries, therefore, should be maintained at at least its present level.

53. In reply to a question, the representative of the High Commissioner explained that a study was to be undertaken in co-operation with ILO experts to determine the loss of purchasing power suffered by aged and handicapped refugees in receipt of annuities. Interim measures to meet the needs of these refugees were being envisaged under the 1974 programme.

54. He also explained that the over-all allocations for counselling and for the treatment and rehabilitation of the handicapped did not reflect the total amounts allocated for these types of assistance, to which UNHCR attached high priority, since funds for this purpose were included in a number of projects contained in the programmes for various countries.

55. As regards funds for assistance to refugees in Chile, the representative of the High Commissioner said that the Office expected to be able to meet needs until the end of 1973 from the Emergency Fund, or from the Programme Reserve, if need be.

56. The Committee noted from statements by the representatives of the Office of

the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, UNICEF, WFP, the ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO and from a message transmitted to it by WMO, the close co-operation which had developed between these organizations and UNHCR in their respective fields of activity.

Decision of the Committee

57. The Executive Committee:

- (1) Took note with satisfaction of the results achieved in respect of assistance to refugees in 1972 and of the preliminary results reported in respect of the first months of 1973;
- (2) Authorized the High Commissioner to implement, in the frame of the 1973 programme, the new project outlined in paragraphs 85 and 287 and the revised project outlined in paragraph 283 of the report on UNHCR activities in the field of assistance in 1972, 1973 and 1974 (A/AC.96/487);
- (3) Approved the financial target of the UNHCR Assistance Programme for 1974 in an amount of \$US 8,739,000;
- (4) Approved the allocations within the 1974 programme as set out in annex II to the present report;
- (5) Authorized the High Commissioner, where additional funds were required for certain projects, to use the Programme Reserve or to adjust the approved allocations by transfers between allocations or parts of allocations, subject to their being reported to the Committee at its next session;
- (6) Approved the allocations made from the Emergency Fund during the period from 1 October 1972 to 30 September 1973;
- (7) Authorized the High Commissioner to use savings in the Assistance Programme for 1973 to cover the cost of projects for repatriation of Sudanese refugees from the neighbouring countries, under the United Nations Immediate Relief Programme for the southern Sudan.

B. Resettlement of refugees

58. The representative of the High Commissioner, introducing the report on the resettlement of refugees (A/AC.96/492), outlined some of the basic criteria for the successful resettlement of refugees. These criteria concerned, in particular, effective counselling leading to realistic planning, the availability of appropriate and varied resettlement opportunities, prompt response from Governments to resettlement applications and appropriate social services in the countries of resettlement, in order to facilitate integration. Concerning the resettlement of handicapped refugees, she suggested that Governments might consider the possibility of accepting an annual quota of 10 or more handicapped refugees, and drew attention in particular to the plan, referred to as the "Ten or More Plan", proposed in section D of the report.

59. In submitting this new plan, the High Commissioner wished to pay special

tribute to Switzerland, which through regular schemes had been accepting at least 80 handicapped refugees annually since 1954, and continued generously to accept handicapped refugees for permanent settlement on an ad hoc basis, as had also Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden. These countries had accepted a total of 247 handicapped refugees in 1972. The "Ten or More Plan" aimed at building on this pattern of generous ad hoc offers and responses to a series of individual requests while attempting to overcome some of the disadvantages inherent in the present arrangements. It would introduce an element of systematic planning designed to ensure a prompt response to the immediate and anticipated needs of handicapped refugees. This would give refugees a choice and the sense of security they badly needed, since each of them would know that if several countries pledged willingness to accept handicapped refugees for resettlement, the chances would be high that one of the countries to which he wished to go would be prepared to admit him. Through this plan countries of resettlement could continue to select the refugees whom they considered as having reasonable chances of successful integration. The representative of the High Commissioner also underlined the need for resettlement opportunities in Europe for refugees who were not strictly speaking handicapped, but who could not qualify for normal immigration or did not wish to resettle overseas.

60. The representative of the High Commissioner said that UNHCR continued to give close attention to the resettlement of African refugees for whom resettlement opportunities were urgently required. A seminar of correspondents of the OAU Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees would be held in Addis Ababa in November 1973 and would give special attention to this problem.

61. In a statement to the Committee, the Director of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), Mr. John F. Thomas, said that there appeared to be a regrettable decline in interest in the work of resettlement through migration, even on the part of some countries with a long tradition in the admission of refugees.

62. He was, however, pleased to note that the partnership which had long existed between UNHCR and ICEM in Europe was now effective in other parts of the world. He referred to the operational experience which ICEM had been able to make available in the transportation and resettlement of Uganda Asians of undetermined nationality. Although most of this group had now found new homes, thanks to the understanding attitude shown by a number of Governments, there remained a small, residual group for whom special efforts were required. Technical assistance was also provided by ICEM for the repatriation operation in the South Asian subcontinent.

63. In Chile, a programme for resettlement of foreign refugees was currently being worked out by UNHCR and ICEM, at the request of the Chilean authorities, and in consultation with the newly-created National Committee to which reference had been made earlier. Although it was not yet possible to estimate how many persons would be covered by this programme, it was already obvious that resettlement offers would be urgently needed.

64. Mr. Thomas described briefly the part played by ICEM in certain aspects of the High Commissioner's regular activities over the past year. He pledged the continuing support of ICEM, and warmly recommended that favourable consideration be given to the proposed "Ten or More Plan".

65. In a statement to the Committee, the representative of the Organization for African Unity, referring to the forthcoming seminar of correspondents of the OAU Bureau for the Placement and Education of African refugees, said that the purpose of the seminar was to provide an opportunity for a wide-ranging exchange of views between representatives of organizations and agencies which sought to bring assistance to refugees, and more particularly to strengthen the co-operation between the Bureau, its national correspondents and the local committees.

66. He described the efforts deployed by the Bureau since its inception in 1968 to provide African refugees with educational and employment opportunities both within and outside Africa. Severe economic and social problems which beset many African countries continued to make this task extremely difficult. However, he was pleased to inform the Committee of the positive results achieved through the practical implementation of resolution CN/266 recently adopted by OAU, inviting member Governments to make annual provision for employment opportunities and scholarships for refugees. He also referred to resolution CN/296, designating an annual "Refugee Day", and inviting those member States not directly confronted with the problem of refugees to consider the possibility of accepting each year a number of refugees as a token of their solidarity.

67. In the field of protection, the Bureau had continued its efforts to find alternative countries of asylum in cases where refugees were threatened with expulsion.

68. The representatives who spoke paid a warm tribute to ICEM, UNHCR and the voluntary agencies for their successful achievements in the resettlement of refugees and of the Uganda Asians of undetermined nationality and expressed their Governments' full support for this vital aspect of assistance to refugees. They were, however, concerned that, although some 55,000 refugees had been resettled in 1972 through the joint resettlement machinery, of whom 10,000 with UNHCR assistance, opportunities for resettlement appeared to be decreasing. In view of the continuing influx of refugees into countries of asylum, this would eventually lead to a prolonged waiting period in the reception centres. Many representatives pledged their Governments full support for this vital task.

69. The representatives who spoke welcomed the High Commissioner's proposals for a quota system for the admission of handicapped refugees, and a number of representatives said that their Governments would be glad to participate in the "Ten or More Plan" within the limits of their possibilities. Such a plan, carried out in co-operation with the social services of the receiving countries would, they believed, facilitate the rapid resettlement of handicapped refugees. The members of the Committee endorsed the suggestion that the High Commissioner should submit the plan, together with supporting documentation, to Governments for their consideration.

70. Attention was drawn to the humanitarian aspects of resettlement for handicapped refugees, and several representatives said that their Governments would continue their traditional policy of admitting seriously handicapped refugees. The Committee noted with interest from the statement on some of the particular difficulties facing handicapped refugees, made by Dr. C. Schon, Chief of the ICEM Medical Service.

71. One representative drew attention to the great care required in selecting and counselling refugees for resettlement in order to ensure that their resettlement

did in fact improve their situation, and in particular that they were resettled into an environment to which they could adapt themselves. He emphasized that the viability of the family unit as a whole should be the determining factor, rather than the viability of any particular member of it.

72. A number of representatives reaffirmed the importance of family reunion.

73. One representative noted the modest results of the activities of the OAU Bureau for the Placement and Education of African refugees in resettling refugees in Africa and appealed to Governments in Africa to give their full support to the Bureau, in particular by making employment opportunities available.

74. The Committee received information from a number of representatives on the admission of refugees to their countries and of their plans to admit further numbers in the future, details of which may be found in the summary record of the 246th meeting.

Decision of the Committee

75. The Executive Committee:

(1) Expressed appreciation of the efforts made by the High Commissioner in co-operation with Governments, the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration and the voluntary agencies in facilitating the resettlement of refugees;

(2) Noted that in spite of the considerable efforts made by a number of countries, increased resettlement opportunities were required in order to meet the needs of refugees, in particular the handicapped;

(3) Noted with interest the plan put forward by the High Commissioner for the resettlement of handicapped refugees and requested the High Commissioner to submit this plan with all necessary details to Governments for their rapid and sympathetic consideration;

(4) Recommended that the system of admission of refugees for durable settlement on a quota basis be extended to African refugees on the African continent, and that it should be promoted by the High Commissioner in co-operation with the Organization of African Unity and in particular with its Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees.

V. IMMEDIATE RELIEF PROGRAMME IN SOUTH SUDAN

(Agenda item 7)

76. The High Commissioner's Adviser on Special Projects, Mr. Thomas Jamieson, gave a brief account of the activities of UNHCR in co-ordinating the United Nations Immediate Relief Programme in south Sudan, on which the High Commissioner had reported to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council (E/5261 and E/5378), and which was now nearing completion.

77. He recalled how in May 1972, following the request by the United Nations Secretary-General to co-ordinate the Immediate Relief Programme, the High Commissioner's first aim had been to assess requirements. From the outset, UNHCR had devoted its attention to facilitating and encouraging the repatriation of Sudanese refugees from the neighbouring countries where they had been living for some years, and to assisting the Sudanese Government in the urgent reconstruction work necessary for their integration. This had meant providing food, transport and communications (including road repairs, radio links, etc.), health and educational facilities. The Adviser made special reference in this context to the essential role played by the airlift which brought vital supplies to key areas.

78. Describing the present situation, the Adviser on Special Projects informed the Committee that the return movement was now nearing completion. There remained one sizeable group of refugees wishing to return from Uganda: their repatriation was planned to take place before the end of October, when UNHCR was to transfer responsibility for longer term development aid in south Sudan to the United Nations Development Programme, in accordance with the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 1799 (LV) of 30 July 1973. After that date, uncompleted projects initiated by UNHCR within the framework of the operation would be followed by the UNHCR Branch Office in the Sudan. Such projects mainly included the construction of a bridge over the Nile at Juba, scheduled for completion in 1974, and certain educational and health projects.

79. The Adviser on Special Projects paid tribute to the Government of the Sudan for the courage with which it had confronted the difficulties involved in reintegrating such large numbers of its population. He also acknowledged the invaluable services rendered within the operation by other organizations of the United Nations system and by voluntary agencies.

80. Following this statement, and in the course of the general debate, the Committee noted with appreciation the results achieved through the Immediate Relief Programme. It stressed the importance which it attached to voluntary repatriation as the ideal solution for refugees whenever feasible, and noted with satisfaction that in the case of the south Sudan, this return, coupled with development aid in the country itself, had made an important contribution to the re-establishment of peace in the area.

81. The Observer for the Sudan conveyed to the Committee his Government's profound gratitude for the generous help given to the Sudan by the international community through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

VI. FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

A. Financial statements, report of the Board of Auditors and report on investments for 1972 (A/AC.96/489, A/AC.96/496 and Add.1, and A/AC.96/490)

82. In presenting these reports to the Committee, the representative of the High Commissioner explained that the apparent increase under "ASSETS" in Statement I (Balance Sheet) of the Accounts for 1972 (A/AC.96/489) was due to the funds made available to the office for the south Sudan operation and for assistance to Asians of undetermined nationality from Uganda. Without these funds, the total figure would have stood at approximately \$8.9 million, a figure roughly comparable to that of the previous year.

83. He pointed out that, with a view to greater clarity, the presentation of Statement II (Income and Expenditure) had been modified in order to distinguish between operational expenses and those relating to programme support and administration. Expenditure on the south Sudan operation had been shown separately under trust funds, so as to give a clear indication of the sizable amounts involved.

84. Also on the subject of trust funds, he explained that the sums appearing under "Others" included the salaries of junior professional officers made available to UNHCR for specific assignments by the Governments of Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden, an arrangement which had produced encouraging results.

Decision of the Committee

85. The Executive Committee:

(1) Took note of the accounts for the year 1972 and the financial statistics for the period 1968-1972 (A/AC.96/489), and of the report of the Board of Auditors and of the ACABQ submitted in respect of the financial year 1972 (A/AC.96/496 and Add.1).

(2) Noted with satisfaction the report on investments for the year ended 31 December 1972 (A/AC.96/490).

B. Status of contributions and over-all financial situation for 1973 and 1974

86. The representative of the High Commissioner introducing the report on the status of contributions (A/AC.96/494 and Add.1) and the note on the UNHCR Long-Playing Records scheme (A/AC.96/495) pointed out that whereas it was expected that the 1973 assistance programme would be fully financed and might even show a surplus, this was unlikely to be the case for the 1974 programme. The exceptionally large sum of \$900,000 earned on investments in 1973 was mainly due to the sharp increases in interest rates and to the high average amounts invested as a result of the

sizable funds made available for the relief programme in south Sudan and for assistance to Asians of undetermined nationality from Uganda. Another factor contributing to this favourable situation - in this year of wide monetary fluctuation - was the net gain on exchange estimated at about \$1,000,000. This was a result of the High Commissioner's policy to accept contributions in any currency, and a careful planning and timing of exchange operations. The representative of the High Commissioner emphasized that 1973 had thus been an exceptional year and a similar situation could not be predicted for 1974. It was anticipated that difficulties would be encountered in 1974 in raising the funds required to carry out UNHCR's assistance programme, in view of the fact that the target was \$900,000 more than in 1973. Taking into account the transfer of surplus funds from 1973, it was expected that additional contributions of \$500,000 would be required for the 1974 programme. The representative of the High Commissioner expressed the hope that the contributions to be announced by Governments at the forthcoming annual pledging conference would reach the target for the 1974 programme.

87. The Committee welcomed the announcements of contributions, including increased or special contributions from representatives of Governments, members of the Committee or observers as shown in detail below. 5/

Denmark

88. The representative announced that his Government had approved a contribution of \$700,000 (Dan. Kr. 4,000,000) to the subcontinent operation, and would be willing to consider a further contribution, should this be needed.

Germany, Federal Republic of

89. The representative announced that his Government had decided to maintain its contribution to the Assistance Programme for 1974 at DM 2 million (\$800,000), the same amount as in 1973.

Netherlands

90. The representative of the Netherlands announced that his Government had decided to contribute Fl. 1,000,000 (\$400,000) to the subcontinent operation.

Norway

91. The representative of Norway informed the Committee that his Government had already pledged Nor. Kr. 1,000,000 (\$180,000) to the subcontinent operation.

92. The Government of Norway, subject to parliamentary approval, would contribute Nor. Kr. 4,500,000 (\$830,000) to the UNHCR Programme for 1974 and to the Education Account for that year. This contribution represented an increase of \$170,000 over that for 1973. The amounts to be allocated to the Programme and the Education Account would be the subject of discussions between the Government of Norway and UNHCR.

5/ Dollar amounts mentioned are either equivalents agreed by the Governments concerned or are given at the rate of exchange prevailing at the time of announcement.

93. In addition the Government of Norway would continue to give sympathetic consideration to specific submissions for the High Commissioner's extra-programme assistance activities in Africa, as on past occasions.

Sudan

94. The Sudanese Government had now confirmed its contribution of Sud.£ 3,000 (\$8,616) to the UNHCR Assistance Programme for 1973. This was a token contribution, however, since the real contribution of the Government was in the form of services and amenities of various kinds provided to refugees, of which the value was substantially higher.

Sweden

95. The representative announced that the Government of Sweden would contribute an amount of \$1,300,000 for the year 1974, an increase of \$100,000 over 1973. In 1975, the Swedish contribution would amount to \$1,400,000 and in 1976 to Sw. Kr. 6,900,000 in fully convertible currency. The King-in-Council had further approved a contribution of Sw. Kr. 3,000,000 (\$720,000) to the subcontinent operation.

Turkey

96. The representative announced that the Government of Turkey would contribute a minimum of \$10,000 to the subcontinent operation, subject to parliamentary approval.

Uganda

97. The Government of Uganda had made payment of the sum of Ug. Sh. 35,000 (\$5,000) as contribution to the UNHCR Assistance Programme for 1973. This was a token payment since the actual contribution of the Government in the form of practical assistance was very much higher.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

98. The Government of the United Kingdom was giving favourable consideration to the possibility of providing RAF aircraft for use by UNHCR in the subcontinent operation.

United Republic of Tanzania

99. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania was contributing Tanzanian shillings 27,000 (\$3,913) to the programme for 1973, an increase of Tan. Sh. 1,000 over the 1972 contribution. This increase would be maintained in 1974.

100. The High Commissioner expressed his sincere thanks for the announcement of these contributions. He also recalled with gratitude the generosity which Governments had shown during 1973, in ensuring the full financing of his normal assistance activities, including those financed from Trust Funds, while responding generously to his special appeals for the south Sudan operation and for assistance to Asians from Uganda. He earnestly hoped that the target for 1974 would also be fully met. As regards the needs of the special repatriation operation in the

subcontinent which had been discussed in the general debate, he recalled that the swift response of Governments in pledging their contributions was vital in ensuring the successful conclusion of this operation, which affected the lives of so many people.

Decision of the Committee

101. The Executive Committee:

(1) Took note of the report submitted by the High Commissioner on the status of contributions to UNHCR voluntary funds and the over-all financial situation for 1973 and 1974 (A/AC.96/494 and Add.1);

(2) Took note of the fact that in addition to the requirements of the annual Assistance Programme, the High Commissioner had been called upon in 1973 to mobilize substantial funds for special assignments often of an emergency character;

(3) Was gratified that despite these urgent requirements for extra-programme assistance, increased governmental support had been received in 1973;

(4) Expressed the hope that substantially increased contributions would be made by Governments in 1974, in order to permit the full financing of that year's Assistance Programme;

(5) Took note of the income and allocations in the long-playing records account for the period 1 July 1972 to 31 August 1973 (A/AC.96/495).

ANNEX I

Opening statement by the High Commissioner to the twenty-fourth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme

Mr. Chairman, I should like, also on behalf of all my colleagues, to extend my warmest congratulations to you on your election as Chairman of this session of the Executive Committee. I would also extend my warmest wishes to my friends, Ambassador Barton of Canada, who has just been appointed Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Arim of Turkey, our distinguished Rapporteur. I feel confident, Mr. Chairman, that under your wise and stimulating guidance, we shall have a very constructive and useful session.

As we meet today, we are once more confronted through the mass media with the rumblings of war from the Middle East. In fact, it may in terms of humanitarian problems to a certain extent overshadow some of the situations which we will be reviewing here together from today on. This confirms the idea that the international community has an ongoing assignment to solve refugee problems as quickly as possible because, while hoping that the refugees in the area will not be too much affected, the fact that for so many years no solution has been found to refugee problems in the Middle East adds to the risk of conflict.

With regard to events overshadowing certain aspects of our work, it has to be noted that, in the past three years, and this last year is no exception, large operations and special events, not strictly speaking relating to refugees within the mandate or connected with the current Material Assistance Programme implemented by this Office, have to some extent tended to overshadow our regular work. This is because these problems have been of considerable size, as in the case of our focal point activities for refugees from Bangladesh in India, or because of the status of the people concerned, as in the case of the Ugandan Asians, or because of the complex and very technical nature of the work that had to be done, as in the case of the challenge which we have faced in the repatriation of refugees to the south Sudan and their rehabilitation. Because of the size, the widely-published nature of the events and the novelty of some of the initiatives that we have had to take, it may seem that our traditional work is less important. Certainly the amount of publicity given to these huge assignments has tended to give this impression. However, it would be quite wrong to assume that our regular functions have lost any of their importance or urgency, or that they can be dealt with by applying long-established methods without much thought.

I should like to try to show you that the traditional problems with which we are confronted require as much energy, as many resources, as much soul-searching and the most imaginative approaches which we can muster. My purpose, here this morning, is not systematically to review the protection and assistance activities of UNHCR. My colleagues will do this in the course of the session, as they introduce the items on the agenda. I would rather today speak to you of problems which inherently link protection and material assistance together - for these functions cannot be divorced - which should serve as examples of the difficulties that we have faced and of their legal and material implications.

I should like to begin by speaking of the recent tragic events in Chile. As members of the Executive Committee are aware, UNHCR has been helping refugees in that country since 1971. These are Latin American refugees, not those refugees of European origin who, after the war, found resettlement opportunities in Latin America. On 13 September, immediately after the change of régime, I addressed a cable to the Foreign Minister of Chile, expressing concern at the news that refugees within the mandate of UNHCR were threatened, that they feared for their lives and for their safety. I appealed for protection for them and stressed that refugees should be treated in accordance with the provisions of the conventions and legal instruments which Chile had ratified. On 16 September, I received a reply from the Foreign Minister, giving assurances that those refugees who had entered Chile in a regular way and who had not committed offences would be treated in accordance with the instruments to which I had referred. Those who had committed offences would be tried in Chile and, if found guilty, would not be threatened with expulsion or forced repatriation to their countries of origin. On 20 September, my representative in Latin America, Mr. Oldrich Haselman, who directs our Regional Office in Buenos Aires, managed to get to Santiago. I had hoped that he could get there earlier. However, as there were no flights, he had to wait until that date to board a special United Nations chartered plane to bring him to Santiago. On 21 September, Mr. Haselman had a meeting with the Foreign Minister, Vice-Admiral Ismael Huerta, during which he reiterated my appeal, stressing the responsibilities of the Government of Chile, and the role of UNHCR. Following this meeting, Mr. Haselman had a second audience with the Foreign Minister on 24 September. I must say at this point that, had it not been for the invaluable assistance which Mr. Haselman received from Mr. Enrique Iglesias, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America, and Miss Joan Anstee, the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Santiago, his job would have been much more difficult. I am grateful to them for the support which they gave my regional representative, and for the fact that they were present throughout the audience with the Foreign Minister. During these discussions, my representative was able to establish with the Foreign Ministry and with the Ministry of the Interior working modalities relating to the refugees in Chile, the way in which they should be identified and their status regularized, and the way in which they should be interviewed to find out what should be done in the future if they were unable or unwilling to remain in Chile. Throughout these negotiations, my representative was able to maintain very close contact with the diplomatic missions in Santiago, with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and with the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration. He also had contacts with national and international voluntary agencies which will continue to have an important role to play in Chile.

The priority obviously was to assure as far as possible the protection and the safety of the refugees within my mandate. On 21 September, I sent another cable to the Foreign Minister expressing concern at alleged reports that a group of Bolivians had been returned against their will to their country. On 24 September, the Foreign Minister denied this allegation in a telex which was sent to all Chilean embassies abroad. Later the ILO seconded a staff member who proceeded to Arica in northern Chile to investigate another such allegation which, I am happy to say, proved to be unfounded.

In order to put into effect measures of individual protection, to counsel the refugees towards durable solutions including the regularization of their documentation and to distribute emergency relief supplies, since the situation in Santiago created a real problem for many of the foreigners and refugees, the

Government authorities authorized a National Committee for Aid to Refugees to function in Chile for a period of three months, with subcommittees in Santiago and throughout the country. Set up by the churches and supported by members of international and national organizations and agencies, these committees and sub-committees will be able to create emergency reception centres ("centres d'accueil provisoires"). These are now being set up, mostly on religious premises with a status comprising some of the characteristics of diplomatic asylum so well known in Latin America. Refugees who feel insecure or unprotected or those awaiting emigration may find shelter in these centres. Data are being collected on those refugees within my mandate in Chile who wish to leave the country, and for whom emigration is the only possible solution. As of today, approximately 1,500 people are registered with the National Committee for Aid to Refugees and 360 to date have found shelter in these sanctuaries. We shall of course have to see how these centres will work, and, since they are very new, it is difficult for the time being to report to the Executive Committee as to whether they will fulfil the purpose which I trust they will succeed in achieving. We have to hope that the sanctuaries will be respected and that the standards which prevail in Latin America in respect of diplomatic asylum will also prevail in the centres. As soon as more precise details are available, I intend to appeal to the Governments of those countries where the refugees wish to be resettled. In the meantime, my Regional Office in Latin America has been maintaining close contacts on the spot, and many of the embassies there may already have been informed of some of the developments regarding resettlement. Some groups, over 200 persons in fact, have already left Santiago, mainly for Argentina. These were refugees who had received diplomatic asylum in foreign embassies, in line with the Latin American tradition. This, obviously the safest course for many during the crisis, will no doubt create many problems in the future since these people cannot stay in the foreign embassies in Santiago. It remains to be seen what UNHCR's role will be in this respect.

As regards emergency relief, after my regional representative's contacts with the authorities I am aware that my Office will have to face sizeable financial requirements. This is bound to have repercussions on our Programme in Latin America.

I should like to add that my regional representative for Latin America was in Geneva until yesterday for consultations, and informed me fully on the situation. We are giving consideration to the possibility of strengthening our presence in Chile, if necessary.

To sum up, I hope UNHCR has done what could be expected of it, in these circumstances, that is, to safeguard the rights of the refugees and to ensure their physical safety. But the problem does not end there. Apart from funds which are likely to be needed for material assistance, UNHCR may well find itself in the familiar situation of having to search for permanent resettlement opportunities, should the countries where the refugees first find asylum when they leave Chile, be reluctant to keep them. This places my Office in an untenable position, which, with due regard to the difference in the size and the geography of the problem, is reminiscent of the situation created by the expulsion of Asians from Uganda. With your permission, I should like at this stage to open a parenthesis and report in some detail on this latter problem, although you are aware, of course, that this did not fall within the framework of my Office's regular activities.

There is no need to recall the events which required the departure of a substantial number of Asians from Uganda on 7 November last year. The vast majority

of them were British passport holders and as such were allowed to proceed forthwith to the United Kingdom. There were, however, a number of people of undetermined nationality who also had to leave by 7 November. This created a considerable problem, for clearly these people were not within our mandate since they were not yet refugees, but people of undetermined nationality living in their country of habitual residence. It was the Secretary-General who, at the request of the Government of Uganda and with the co-operation of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration made the necessary arrangements in Kampala under his auspices to promote the departure of this group. ICEM assumed the main responsibility for the organization of transportation financed by HCR of these persons and the ICRC helped a great deal by making documents available to those who had to leave. My role here at the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, was to appeal to Governments to provide either permanent or temporary asylum so that people could be moved out by the deadline, and to appeal for funds, so that this operation could be smoothly carried out. I am happy to say that the response was immediate and that we very rapidly received indications from Austria, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, and Spain, that they would be willing to place temporary transit facilities at the disposal of UNHCR. It was found subsequently that there was no need to accept the offers of Greece and Morocco, since the Asians had been accommodated in other countries. Some of the Uganda Asians of undetermined nationality also left directly from Kampala for other destinations. I would fail in my duty if I did not stress the fact that 1,400 had left from Kampala for Canada, in addition to the 4,500 British passport-holders and others whom Canada had already accepted. I should like to extend appreciation to the Government of Canada for the generous way in which it accepted these Uganda Asians of different background. In fact Canada continues to attach the greatest importance to the principle of family reunion, and still allows many Uganda Asians to go to Canada.

In addition to the number accepted by Canada, approximately 1,800 proceeded to India, Pakistan and elsewhere. The total number of Uganda Asians of undetermined nationality came to approximately 8,000 persons. We succeeded in raising \$3,400,000 for their transport, resettlement and care and maintenance whilst in transit. Twelve Governments contributed to this appeal.

Now what conclusions can be drawn from this? True enough, five countries generously granted transit facilities; true enough over \$3,000,000 were contributed to UNHCR for this special assignment. We succeeded in resettling 3,900 persons, and today, as I report to you, we have only 164 persons for whom permanent resettlement places have to be found, largely as a result of the generosity of some Governments which have agreed to keep many of those people who originally came simply in transit. Here I must pay a special tribute to the Government of Austria, which made it clear at a very early stage that those Uganda Asians who were not able to go elsewhere and who wished to remain in Austria could do so. There are at present 265 still in that country. This is not the end of the problem, however, because these 164 persons are not alone. There are still about 1,500 persons in need of resettlement, 500 heads of families, with wives and dependants elsewhere, and nearly 1,000 dependants, amongst whom are many hardship cases, who would like to be reunited with their bread-winners.

It has been an agonizing year; an agonizing year during which we have wondered every day where we would be able to place these people and give them permanent new homes. It has been an agonizing problem also to know where the funds would come from to ensure the care and maintenance of these people while in transit. It is

clear that one must appeal to Governments to show understanding towards those people who still wish to be reunited with their family. Can one blame a man when he wishes to be reunited with his wife and his children? Can one blame him for wanting to join them, if they happen to be in a country where he expects to achieve a measure of economic self-sufficiency, rather than to have them join him in a country where he knows for certain that they would starve? This is a problem which we will have to follow for some time to come.

This operation shows, I believe, that the world is not yet ready to face emergencies of this kind, which arise suddenly in areas very far away from the countries which have accepted people in transit. This presents the international community with new problems. I can only say that prevention is better than cure, and that I must hope and believe that we are not going to be faced with problems of this kind in the future.

Turning now to a more classical example of the work of UNHCR, which is within our traditional terms of reference, I wish to speak of the problem of refugees from Burundi in Africa. We are of course continuing assistance to refugees from territories under colonial administration, who constitute a very large proportion of the refugees in Africa, and here I should like to extend a tribute to those who help us in this ongoing task, particularly to agencies such as the Lutheran World Federation which do so much for refugees from colonial territories. But in addition we have a large new problem, a serious new problem of refugees from Burundi. As you will note, in 1972 \$1,200,000 were reserved in the Programme for these new refugees from Burundi. In 1973, this figure was increased to \$2,200,000 and now in the Programme which is being submitted for your approval, of which the total target is \$8,700,000, again \$2,200,000 are earmarked for refugees from Burundi. This means that over the period 1972-1974 we have had to earmark, from UNHCR sources alone, \$5,600,000 for this purpose and the numbers continue to grow. Today the new refugees from Burundi added to those who came earlier, number over 85,000. There are 10,000 in Rwanda, 42,000 in the United Republic of Tanzania, and some 35,000 in Zaire. The solution here of course has been land settlement, and I am happy to say that we have not had any major protection problem with the refugees from Burundi, because the African host countries which I have mentioned have granted them the rights and responsibilities provided for by the 1951 Convention. However, this situation has had very serious financial repercussions on our work, and in addition we are never sure that new incidents may not give rise to a new influx of refugees from Burundi. This is the reason why I have maintained very close contacts with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and senior officials and with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, particularly during the last summit meeting in Addis Ababa. This is also why I view with very great attention and hopes the efforts of the Heads of the African States concerned, particularly of the President of the Conference of Chiefs of States and Governments of OAU, General Gowon of Nigeria, who has been following this problem, so that somehow it can be solved. There is a need here for a global approach, taking into account regional, demographic, economic and social problems. The United Nations system is ready to do its part, but in this problem, as in others in the area, there is no hope unless the African Governments themselves come to grips with what remains a highly explosive situation.

Turning now to another problem which cannot be solved through land settlement, I would refer to the question of individual cases. In our United Nations jargon, individual cases are people for whom land settlement is not possible, people who live in cities, people who need new, imaginative solutions to their individual

problems. I have reported about individual cases to the Committee in the past, and in a way, what was the Major Aid Programme in Europe except the sum total of individual measures for individual cases? However, they lived in Europe, in developed countries with advanced social services, and a sophisticated infrastructure to take care of them. Yet, is it not indicative of the complexity of the problem that even in Europe, international funds channelled through UNHCR were needed, and that, after 20 years of work for refugees, we still have handicapped individual cases there today? Should we be surprised then that the problem should be compounded tenfold in countries which have a much smaller economic potential?

I hope and believe that the counselling services now established in many African capitals will produce results. This we hope will supplement the efforts which, though extremely positive in intention, have not produced the results which we had hoped - I refer here to the Bureau for the Placement and Education of Refugees, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity.

One cannot blame the host countries for not guaranteeing that refugees from abroad shall be given the opportunity of education, work and a solid roof over their heads, when they cannot ensure those advantages for their own people. But it is absolutely essential that Governments should not make it impossible for UNHCR to help. If a refugee is not granted permanent residence and UNHCR is suddenly informed that the refugee has to leave the country by a certain date, and if no country wishes to admit this refugee from the country where he has been given only temporary transit then a completely absurd deadlock ensues. If residence is refused de jure but granted de facto, which is the case quite frequently, then the refugee lives constantly in an illegal position and under the continuous threat of penal sanctions if the authorities should suddenly decide that they must take notice of his case. This is a problem with which UNHCR is confronted everyday in many parts of Africa. We have to conjure up imaginative solutions under constraints which make mockery of the quest for a solution. If I stress this, it is because in this example of individual cases, it seems to me that protection and material assistance are intimately linked. Indeed, assistance, even very generous assistance, which we have to give refugees because they are not allowed to work, and must live from charity unless they have pride and decide to live by other means, which are not legal either, will never produce a permanent solution, unless accompanied by protection. Unless one can guarantee a fair legal status to refugees, no solution will be forthcoming. And although in the process of administering and implementing the international instruments which are my responsibility, such as the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, we can occasionally take up the problems of individual cases, of prohibited immigrants, of people who have been given de facto residence but not de jure recognition, in the final analysis our effectiveness is limited and the ultimate responsibility rests with States. The States are the only authorities responsible for granting protection and I would suggest that the learned, legal discussions which take place frequently here and in many other places in the world, are no substitute for human understanding, or for a generous policy which must be imposed from the top levels of Government. The plain truth is, that the policy itself must be right, but that too often it is not, even in some countries where daily tribute is paid to human solidarity.

What are the conclusions to be drawn from the examples which I have given? One is that political events in any country either affecting individuals or large groups are inevitably linked very closely with refugee problems. There is nothing UNHCR can do - for that matter nothing which UNHCR is supposed to do - to change

political developments or political events in countries from which refugees come. There is a limit to "preventive diplomacy". Refugees who have left their country need another country to settle in, they need a place to stay. But unfortunately in the situation that we face much too frequently today, the countries to which refugees would like to go are restricted by real or supposed financial or internal political considerations. If these are valid and we have to recognize it, then the new refugees are often as unwanted in the countries where they wish to settle as they were at home. At an abstract point in space and time, stands UNHCR, UNHCR which is not supposed to be concerned with politics, UNHCR which is non-political, humanitarian, UNHCR which is supposed to be endowed with some magical capability to assume responsibility for those groups, and to find permanent solutions for them.

Unfortunately, we operate in a very real world. We operate in a world where UNHCR does not engineer miracles, whatever the appearances may be. I am not saying this because I wish to shrug off our responsibilities. We have our responsibilities and our terms of reference, and we will continue of course to do our best. But between one's duty to try and one's ability to solve the problem at hand there may exist a very large gap. One has to explode the myth that it is enough for Governments to hand over their embarrassments, their problems with minorities, and difficulties with internal or external politics, to UNHCR or to the United Nations. I am not saying this at all in bitterness. I think I share my colleagues' pride in the achievements that we have been able to bring about in many areas. But if UNHCR is not to over-extend itself in the future, with its limited resources in staff and funds, if we are not to spread ourselves too thin, before this Executive Committee and the General Assembly of the United Nations, then it seems to me that the Governments must understand where our breaking-point lies. They must treat minorities fairly, and not simply expel people whom they regard as unwanted. They should also make sure that refugees are allowed to stay as far as possible in the country to which they have fled, and not merely allow them to remain in transit for a very short period of time. In this connexion, I think experience shows that the principle of asylum has to be strengthened, and my colleague, the Director of our Protection Division, Mr. Dadzie will be reporting to you in due course on what progress we have made in the field of territorial asylum, and on other instruments relating to the status of refugees. Finally, if the creation by Governments of artificial groups of refugees is to be avoided the rights which their nationality and their citizenship would normally guarantee them should be fully recognized and respected.

I do not wish to conclude on a harsh note, and I have better news to bring to the Executive Committee, to which I would like to turn, in the field of UNHCR's special operations.

I am very happy to say that in the case of south Sudan the great majority of the refugees have not safely returned home. This took place without any particular major problem and it was largely due to the invaluable co-operation which was extended by the Government of the Sudan, and by the countries of asylum where the refugees had resided for many years until they could return to their homeland. In some countries we have been able to close our branch offices. In the Central African Republic, we no longer have need for a representative, and all the installations in the centre where the Sudanese refugees were residing have been turned over to the Government of the Central African Republic. I was myself at the border between the Central African Republic and the Sudan when the last group of refugees came from M'boki and I met them not far from Tambura in south Sudan, and this was certainly a most encouraging and wonderful sight. As you know, apart from

the repatriation proper, very substantial assistance was given to south Sudan through UNHCR. This resulted from the request from the Secretary-General that UNHCR should co-ordinate this action, a bold step clearly beyond the mandate. We received a very substantial contribution from the international community, some \$20,000,000 in fact, and I should like at this stage to express gratitude to all the Governments, many of which are represented around this table today, who have generously contributed, and through their contributions have helped to establish conditions of peace and to restore normalcy in south Sudan. I should also like to say that in this very difficult job we should never have succeeded without the invaluable and constant support of the United Nations system. I think the amount of response we received from the specialized agencies, already geared to this interagency work in the days of the focal point when we were helping refugees in India, proves that when all the combined resources of the United Nations system are properly co-ordinated and applied, it can become an invaluable instrument in the service of peace. Mr. Jamieson who is well-known to you and whom I am very happy to see back with us, will of course be reporting to you in detail on what we have succeeded in doing in south Sudan.

Then there is another special operation which clearly falls outside our traditional role. I refer to what has now become possibly the largest airlift of human beings, in the South-Asian subcontinent. What is happening there now is the happy end of a sad story, the breaking of a vicious circle. The situation arose two years ago, with the agony of untold millions in which UNHCR was already directly involved when we were helping Bengali refugees in India. The results have been encouraging and statesmanship has solved the deadlock: the agreement which was signed in New Delhi on 28 August will, I hope, establish a structure of durable and lasting peace in that part of the world. This Delhi Agreement followed the Simla Agreement of a year earlier, and deals as you know mainly with the solution of humanitarian problems which are left from the conflict of 1971. It is aimed essentially at allowing multitudes of human beings to return to their homelands.

Following the Agreement between the parties in New Delhi on 28 August, Bangladesh and Pakistan requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish a larger programme of assistance, including this airlift. Even before the Delhi Agreement was signed, however, the Secretary-General had been asked by the parties concerned to carry out a limited repatriation operation. It is because the Secretary-General asked me at that time to act as executing agent, that we started even before the Delhi Agreement to facilitate the return of limited groups of people, particularly a group of Bengali students and seamen, who were able to return to their homeland from Pakistan in June 1973. My Office has never ceased to follow closely the developments in that part of the world. We have spared no effort towards creating an atmosphere of conciliation and understanding, towards putting an end to suffering by allowing people to return home. Following the limited movement in June 1973, the airlift was expanded to include 10,000 persons, half of whom were Bengalis wishing to return to Bangladesh from Pakistan, the other half being Pakistanis stranded in Nepal. This operation was in progress when the Delhi Agreement was signed. The Secretary-General then asked me to continue as his executing agent, to move a much more substantial number of persons, some 200,000 persons, who are to be sent home. These comprise non-Bengalis leaving Bangladesh to go to Pakistan, and Bengalis in Pakistan wishing to proceed to their homeland. This has become a very large operation, as the smaller operations which we carried out before have dovetailed into it. We have as a result had to appeal to the international community for funds to implement this airlift. The amount required is \$14,300,000. I have already had meetings with a number of Governments to

explain the background to this request, and I am happy to say that, as a result of the contributions already received, we have been able to ensure the continuing smooth movement of this larger number of persons. To date, 20,000 persons in all have been moved. I am also happy to report that we have received indications from the United Kingdom that some RAF planes might be made available to assist us in the airlift. Finally, the Government of the USSR has bilaterally made available a plane, an Ilyushin 18, which at the request of the parties concerned is to be fully integrated into the UNHCR airlift. It is beginning its flights today. The USSR has also offered a ship which may very well be used later when a substantial number of persons have already been moved by air. So far we have received from Australia, Denmark and Norway an amount of \$1,400,000 and we hope that the generosity and the speed with which these Governments responded to my appeal will be an incentive for others to do likewise.

It is important, I think, when one refers to the airlift in the subcontinent, to stress the principle of simultaneity which is contained in the Delhi Agreement. Simultaneity means that the return of Bengalis from Pakistan to Bangladesh, the movement of non-Bengalis from Bangladesh to Pakistan, and the important repatriation of the prisoners of war from India are interlinked. It is therefore essential that the response of the international community should be speedy and generous, since, by allowing people to return to their homelands, one would also ensure the smooth implementation of the Delhi Agreement as a whole, and the establishment of peace and stability in the area.

I have deliberately chosen this morning to focus on a few selected significant topics. I wished to spare you the traditional meticulous and lengthy review of all the developments that have occurred since our meeting of 1972. I trust that I have given you a fair sample, an outline of the scope and the size of our activities. We have had to face major problems, new and old, in the traditional refugee field. On the strength of the experience which the Office has acquired recently, we have been entrusted with fresh, important humanitarian tasks, and we are trying to discharge our duties as best we can, despite the fact that these assignments are heavily taxing both the human and the material resources of what remains one of the smallest offices in the United Nations system. We have also tried to adjust and to adapt ourselves to new methods in the field of administration, and here I would like to refer to the improved management and working methods which were introduced during the meeting to which you yourself referred, which took place in May when the Executive Committee had a special session. Regretfully, I could not myself attend the Special Session, precisely because the Secretary-General had sent me to the subcontinent to deal with the problem on which I have just reported. However, Mr. Mace, the Deputy High Commissioner, represented me, and I am very happy that you chose to endorse the procedures which were placed before you for your consideration. I think you will find that some of the dispositions and procedures which you endorsed during this special meeting are already reflected in some of the documents before you, and we look forward to your views, your criticism, and your advice on the presentation.

Whatever the method, what counts is that UNHCR should be able to carry out its heavy, varied and often unforeseeable tasks as efficiently as possible. To this end, we must be confident that the regular programme for 1974, once it is approved by you, will be fully financed, and that, in view of the burden which our new and extraordinary assignments place upon this Office, UNHCR will be granted the widest flexibility in the administration of its human and financial resources. In this the support of your Committee is vital, and experience has indeed taught us that we can rely on it.

ANNEX II

Summary of approved allocations under the
UNHCR Assistance Programme for 1974

<u>Country, area or activity</u>	<u>Allocations proposed at the twenty-fourth session</u>
	\$
Austria	40,000
Botswana	17,000
Burundi	160,000
Egypt	113,000
Ethiopia	93,000
France	31,000
Germany, Federal Republic of	60,000
Greece	147,000
Italy	38,000
Kenya	32,000
Latin America	210,000
Middle East	322,000
Rwanda <u>a/</u>
Senegal	109,000
Spain	111,000
Sudan	282,000
Turkey	17,000
Uganda	446,000
United Arab Emirates	222,000
United Republic of Tanzania	1,634,000
West and Central Africa	60,000
Zaire	140,000 <u>a/</u>
Zambia	373,000
Burundi refugees	1,100,000
 <u>Over-all allocations</u>	
Local settlement	210,000
Resettlement	480,000
Repatriation	60,000
Legal assistance	36,000
Counselling	215,000
Treatment and rehabilitation of the handicapped	20,000
Supplementary aid	110,000
Administrative and programme support costs	971,000
Reserve	880,000
	<hr/> <u>8,739,000</u> <hr/>

a/ An amount will be made available from the combined allocation of \$1,100,000 for Burundi refugees.

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