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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Dr. Graciela QUAN (Guatemala)

1. At its 578th plenary meeting on 15 November 1956, the General Assembly allocated to the Third Committee the item entitled "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" for consideration and report.
2. The Committee considered this item at its 689th to 697th meetings, held between 23 and 30 November. The Committee had before it the report of the High Commissioner (A/3123/Rev.1 and Add.1 and 2)^{1/} and chapter VI, section IV, of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/3154).^{2/}
3. On the invitation of the Committee, the Deputy High Commissioner made a statement on the activities of the Office. He first paid tribute to the memory of the late High Commissioner, Dr. van Heuven Goedhart, and stated that it was he who had initiated the programme of permanent solutions. In connexion with the United Nations Refugee Fund programme, he stated that some encouraging results had been achieved and between 15,000 and 20,000 refugees from camps had been resettled in Austria, Germany, Italy and Greece. The total camp population had fallen from 84,000 at the beginning of 1955 to 57,000 at the beginning of 1956. He also paid tribute to the work of various governmental and non-governmental organizations with whom the Office was in close touch. The office in Shanghai, which had been responsible for some 14,000 European refugees in China, had been closed. The

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Session, Supplement No. 11.

2/ Ibid., Supplement No. 3.

director and the staff of that office had now been transferred to the China People's Relief Association which was continuing to extend relief to about 300 refugees formerly registered with the International Refugee Organization.

4. The governmental contributions to UNREF had fallen short of the targets set for 1955 and 1956. In that connexion, the situation was such that the UNREF Executive Committee had requested the High Commissioner to submit a report on the matter to the General Assembly. The Deputy High Commissioner appealed to all Governments to contribute generously to UNREF in order that the targets for 1956 and 1957 might be reached and the projects for permanent solutions implemented.
5. In regard to the influx of Hungarian refugees into Austria and Yugoslavia, the Deputy High Commissioner gave an account of the activities undertaken by the Office to alleviate their plight. The Office had first appealed to Governments, at the request and on behalf of the Austrian Government. Later, it had taken the necessary action, at the request of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, to consult with other appropriate international agencies and interested Governments with a view to making speedy and effective arrangements for emergency assistance to refugees from Hungary. The Deputy High Commissioner gave detailed information on the number of refugees, on communications addressed to Governments and replies and offers received, and on the co-ordination machinery established in Austria and Geneva. He stressed the fact that, in spite of the response by Governments to the appeal made by the Office, the problem had grown to such proportions that he could not feel anything but a sense of the greatest urgency and could only hope that Governments and agencies would continue their interest and help to solve it.
6. During the discussion, many delegations paid tribute to the memory of the late High Commissioner, and stressed the need for further contributions to UNREF in order to make possible the implementation of its programme. It was stated that the plight of the refugees who had been living for many years in camps should not be forgotten as a result of the impact of the influx of the new Hungarian refugees. Some delegations expressed the view that voluntary repatriation should be the main solution of the refugee problem.
7. In connexion with the influx of Hungarian refugees, some delegations expressed doubts whether this question should be discussed in the Third Committee in view of

the fact that the matter was being dealt with by the General Assembly in plenary meeting. One delegation doubted that the Hungarian refugees fell within the mandate of the High Commissioner. The majority of delegations, however, felt that the problem should be discussed in the Third Committee in view of the interconnexion between the High Commissioner's mandate under the General Assembly's resolutions of 9 and 21 November 1956 (A/RES/398 and 409) and the regular mandate of the Office. It was stressed that the discussion should be conducted solely for the purpose of finding constructive solutions and that it should not duplicate the discussion in plenary on the political aspects of the problem.

8. Many delegations expressed the view that refugees from Hungary were definitely within the Mandate of the High Commissioner and that his Office, because of its past experience, was well qualified to deal with this problem. They felt that concerted action and efforts for the relief of refugees should be channelled through that Office. They agreed with the Secretary-General's representative that no new machinery was needed for the implementation of the resolutions already adopted by the General Assembly on this subject.

9. Some delegations stated that, though they supported wholeheartedly the efforts of the High Commissioner's Office on behalf of refugees, they would abstain in the vote on any draft resolutions before the Committee because they could not offer financial help.

10. A draft resolution was submitted by Czechoslovakia (A/C.3/L.508) in accordance with which the General Assembly, desirous of hastening the solution of the urgent problem of displaced persons and refugees by various means, and primarily by voluntary repatriation, would (1) instruct the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to inform displaced persons and refugees of the laws and measures adopted in the various countries to facilitate their return, in particular such measures as amnesty and the provision of help and assistance by the various Governments to repatriated persons to facilitate their integration in the community; (2) request the Office and all the States concerned to facilitate the departure of refugees who have decided or may in the future decide to return to their countries of origin; (3) recommend that all the Governments concerned should further enter into bilateral negotiations and agree on appropriate steps to settle the problem of displaced persons and refugees, particularly by voluntary repatriation; (4) instruct the Office to prepare and to submit to the

General Assembly at its twelfth session more complete statistical data concerning displaced persons and refugees who have not been resettled, including those living in camps, which would indicate not only their total number, but also their classification by ethnic and national origin, age, sex and occupation.

11. Albania submitted an amendment (A/C.3/L.511) to the above draft resolution, in accordance with which the following paragraph would be inserted between operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of the draft resolution:

"3. Appeals to the Governments of countries where there are refugees or displaced persons not to permit among these persons propaganda activities hostile to the Governments of their countries of origin or any other propaganda aimed at dissuading them from their desire to be repatriated."

12. The representative of Syria orally proposed the following amendments to the draft resolution: (1) in the preamble, the replacement of the words "by various means, and primarily by voluntary repatriation" by the words "by voluntary repatriation and by other appropriate means"; (2) in operative paragraph 3, the deletion of the word "particularly" and the addition, at the end of the paragraph, of the words "and by other appropriate means".

13. The representative of Czechoslovakia accepted the Albanian amendment (A/C.3/L.511) and agreed to the oral amendments proposed by Syria.

14. A draft resolution was submitted by Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, France, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America (A/C.3/L.510 and Add.1). In accordance with this draft resolution, the General Assembly, taking note of the report of the High Commissioner and, in particular, of the addendum dealing with the effect of the short-fall in governmental contributions to the United Nations Refugee Fund, would (1) express its appreciation of the efforts of the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees to implement the programme for permanent solutions of the existing refugee problem and to deal with the emergency situation created by the problem of Hungarian refugees; (2) request the High Commissioner to continue his efforts to effect solutions in accordance with the UNREF programme under due safeguards in accordance with his responsibility under the Statute of his Office to provide international protection to refugees within his mandate; (3) request the High Commissioner, in consultation with the Governments concerned, to develop a

comprehensive assessment of the needs, both material and financial, of the Hungarian refugees, to be submitted to the UNREF Executive Committee for its approval at the earliest possible date; (4) express grave concern at the short-fall in the governmental contributions to the United Nations Refugee Fund; and (5) urge all States Members of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies to give early and serious consideration to making contributions to UNREF in order that the target for 1956 and 1957 might be reached, and the High Commissioner enabled fully to implement the programme planned under that Fund.

15. Syria proposed the following amendments (A/C.3/L.514) to the twelve-Power draft resolution: (1) to replace the fourth paragraph of the preamble by the following paragraph: "Bearing in mind the provisions of General Assembly resolution A/RES/409 of 21 November 1956, on the problem of Hungarian refugees, the appeals of the Austrian Government for assistance in dealing with this problem, and the response of Governments to these appeals,"; (2) in operative paragraph 2, to insert the words "the statute of his Office and" between the words "in accordance with" and the words "the UNREF programme", and to replace the words "the statute of his Office" by the words "the said statute"; (3) in operative paragraph 4, to delete the word "grave"; (4) in operative paragraph 5, to replace the word "Urges" by the word "Invites".

16. Chile proposed an amendment (A/C.3/L.515) to the twelve-Power draft resolution, the effect of which would be to insert the following paragraph between operative paragraphs 1 and 2:

"Expresses its appreciation to the Austrian Government for the part it has played in receiving and assisting the refugees who have entered its territory."

17. The sponsors of the draft resolution accepted (1) the second Syrian amendment as quoted above; (2) the Chilean amendment contained in document A/C.3/L.515; and (3) a suggestion by the Secretary-General and the Deputy High Commissioner to add, in operative paragraph 3, the phrase "in consultation with the Secretary-General and" after the words "Requests the High Commissioner". At the 696th meeting, a revised text of the twelve-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.510/Rev.1) was circulated.

18. The Dominican Republic submitted a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.509), in accordance with which the General Assembly would (1) urge Governments actively to support the work on behalf of refugees in the spirit in which it was carried forward by the late High Commissioner; (2) decide that a plaque to his memory should be placed in the Palais des Nations in Geneva; and (3) request the Secretary-General to make appropriate arrangements for this purpose.
19. Afghanistan submitted an amendment (A/C.3/L.516) to the draft resolution of the Dominican Republic, to replace the clause in operative paragraph 1 "in which it was carried forward by the late High Commissioner" by the words "of the United Nations Charter". This amendment was accepted by the representative of the Dominican Republic.
20. The representative of Greece proposed to renumber operative paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the draft resolution as 3, 1 and 2 respectively. This proposal was accepted by the representative of the Dominican Republic.
21. Syria submitted a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.512) in accordance with which the General Assembly would (1) request the High Commissioner to include in the official reports to the General Assembly detailed statistical data concerning migrations of refugees and displaced persons, care being taken to indicate the ethnic and national classification of emigrant refugees, their age, sex and country of emigration; (2) request the High Commissioner to furnish in the said reports detailed information concerning the assistance rendered by the Office to refugees and displaced persons who have emigrated to other countries. At the 696th meeting the representative of Syria withdrew this draft resolution.
22. The Committee voted first on the Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/C.3/L.508), as amended by Albania and Syria. The draft resolution was rejected by 43 votes to 10, with 15 abstentions.
23. The Committee then voted on the twelve-Power draft resolution (A/C.3/L.510/Rev.1) and the Syrian amendments thereto (A/C.3/L.514). The voting was as follows:
- The first paragraph of the preamble was adopted by 58 votes to none, with 5 abstentions;
- The second paragraph was adopted by 61 votes to none, with 6 abstentions;
- The third paragraph was adopted by 61 votes to none, with 7 abstentions;
- The Syrian amendment to the fourth paragraph was rejected by 35 votes to 10, with 20 abstentions;

The fourth paragraph was adopted by 46 votes to 8, with 13 abstentions.

The fifth paragraph was adopted by 51 votes to none, with 16 abstentions;

Operative paragraph 1 was adopted by 50 votes to none, with 17 abstentions;

Paragraph 2 was adopted by a roll-call vote of 55 to none, with 13 abstentions.

The vote was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Paragraph 3 was adopted by 51 votes to none, with 16 abstentions;

Paragraph 4 was adopted by 52 votes to none, with 15 abstentions;

The Syrian amendment to paragraph 5 was rejected by 35 votes to 10, with 20 abstentions;

Paragraph 5 was adopted by 45 votes to none, with 22 abstentions;

The Syrian amendment to paragraph 6 was rejected by 37 votes to 11, with 19 abstentions;

Paragraph 6 was adopted by 46 votes to none, with 22 abstentions;

Paragraph 7 was adopted by 53 votes to none, with 15 abstentions.

The draft resolution as a whole was adopted by a roll-call vote of 49 to none, with 19 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

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In favour: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Yemen.

24. The Committee finally voted on the draft resolution submitted by the Dominican Republic (A/C.3/L.509), as amended by Afghanistan and Greece. It was adopted by a roll-call vote of 57 to none, with 9 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Burma, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Albania, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

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

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

A.

The General Assembly,

Taking note of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees covering the activities of his Office between May 1955 and May 1956,^{1/}

Taking note in particular of the addendum to his report dealing with the effect of the short-fall in governmental contributions to the United Nations Refugee Fund (A/3123/Add.1),

Bearing in mind that, under the statute of his Office, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is charged with the duty of seeking solutions for the problems of refugees through voluntary repatriation, resettlement and integration,

Bearing in mind the provisions of part II of General Assembly resolution A/RES/398 of 9 November 1956 and General Assembly resolution A/RES/409 of 21 November 1956 on the problem of Hungarian refugees, the appeals of the Government of Austria for assistance in dealing with this problem, and the response of Governments to these appeals,

Taking note of the statements of the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees on the steps so far taken by the Office to deal with the problem of Hungarian refugees and on the impact of this problem on the UNREF programme,

1. Expresses its appreciation of the efforts of the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees to implement the programme for permanent solutions of the existing refugee problem and to deal with the emergency situation created by the problem of Hungarian refugees;

2. Expresses its appreciation to the Government of Austria for the part it has played in receiving and assisting the refugees who have entered its territory;

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^{1/} Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Session, Supplement No. 11 (A/3123/Rev.1). See also A/3123/Add.1 and 2.

3. Requests the High Commissioner to continue his efforts to effect solutions in accordance with the statute of his Office and the UNREF programme, under due safeguards in accordance with his responsibility under the said statute to provide international protection to refugees within his mandate;
4. Requests the High Commissioner, in consultation with the Secretary-General and with the Governments concerned, to develop a comprehensive assessment of the needs, both material and financial, of the Hungarian refugees, to be submitted to the UNREF Executive Committee for its approval at the earliest possible date;
5. Expresses grave concern at the short-fall in the governmental contributions to the United Nations Refugee Fund established at \$16 million;
6. Urges all States Members of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies to give early and serious consideration to making contributions to the United Nations Refugee Fund in order that the target for 1956 and 1957 may be reached and the High Commissioner enabled fully to implement the programme planned under that Fund;
7. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner to study with the UNREF Executive Committee the appropriate means to ensure the full implementation of the UNREF programme.

B.

The General Assembly,

Noting the terms of Economic and Social Council resolution 628 (XXII) of 13 July 1956,

Recalling with gratitude the work accomplished by Dr. G.J. van Heuven Goedhart as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and mindful of his devoted and untiring efforts,

Recording its deep regret at his untimely death,

1. Decides that a plaque to the memory of Dr. G.J. van Heuven Goedhart shall be placed in the Palais des Nations in Geneva;
2. Requests the Secretary-General to make appropriate arrangements for this purpose;
3. Urges Governments actively to support the work on behalf of refugees in the spirit of the United Nations Charter.