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Chairman: Mr. Humberto DIAZ CASANUEVA  
(Chile).

## AGENDA ITEM 38

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees (A/5503, chap. IX, sect VI, and chap. XIII, sect. VII; A/5511/Rev.1 and Add.1, A/C.3/L.1178 and Corr.1, A/C.3/L.1179) (continued)

### GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. KISUKURUME (Burundi) said that the solution of the serious world-wide refugee problem called for joint efforts by the United Nations and the specialized agencies and for voluntary assistance from all countries and from philanthropic organizations. His delegation had studied the High Commissioner's annual report (A/5511/Rev.1 and Add.1) with care, and it sincerely thanked him for his humanitarian work on behalf of the homeless.

2. Burundi, which was a Party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees,<sup>1/</sup> had been giving hospitality in its territory for almost three years to thousands of refugees from a neighbouring sister country. Despite its own demographic and other problems, Burundi had unhesitatingly come to their assistance, but as some parts of Burundi were already over-populated, the permanent settlement of over 15,000 persons had been out of the question. The Government of Burundi had therefore requested help from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; its appeal had been answered and, as a result of close collaboration between the Office of the High Commissioner and the Government of Burundi, a plan had been drawn up, with the idea of giving the refugees a level of living like that of the local population. The Government of Burundi had given the refugees enough land to supply their needs and had taken energetic action with regard to school attendance by their children. No effort was being spared to ensure the well-being of the refugees living in Burundi.

3. His delegation thanked the international agencies and organizations which had helped it to solve the problem, and it assured the High Commissioner of Burundi's continued support.

<sup>1/</sup> United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons, held at Geneva, Switzerland, from 2 to 25 July 1951, *Final Act and Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* (United Nations publication, Sales No.: 51.IV.4).

4. Mrs. MANTZOULINOS (Greece) said that her delegation had read with interest the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and in particular the portion dealing with the activities of his Office in 1963-64. She noted that the final solution of the "old" refugee problem was expected by the end of 1965, and she thanked the High Commissioner and his staff for their efforts in that connexion.

5. After the Second World War, there had been an influx of refugees into Greece at the very time when the country had been confronted with the task of its own reconstruction. Greece had opened its doors to them and had offered them all the assistance it could possibly provide. About 15,000 of them had been placed under the High Commissioner's mandate. In accordance with the High Commissioner's general assistance programme, priority had been given to the camp-clearance project. During the past seven years, 5,000 refugees had been covered by rehabilitation or other assistance programmes devised and carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner and the Greek Government jointly. There were still some 6,000 refugees outside camps who had been included in the major aid programme for "old" refugees.

6. She wished to thank the Netherlands Government, on behalf of the Greek Government and people, for its generous contribution to the refugee settlement programme in Greece. Her delegation was also most grateful to the United States Government, which had presented a large sum to the High Commissioner's office at Athens.

7. Greece's geographical location made it a country of asylum, and it had itself had more than 1,200,000 refugees at the time of the First World War; thus, it well knew the anguish and the desires of refugees, and shared the general concern for all refugees in the world, no matter where they came from. Her delegation approved of the chapters of the report relating to refugees in the Far East and Africa.

8. She hoped that all refugee problems would soon be solved in the best possible way; she was confident that the High Commissioner would continue, within his mandate, to lend assistance wherever it was needed. It was in that spirit that the Greek delegation had joined others in presenting a joint draft resolution on the High Commissioner's report (A/C.3/L.1179) recommending action on behalf of refugees and, in the same spirit, it would vote for the draft resolution on the membership of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's programme (A/C.3/L.1178 and Corr.1). She sincerely hoped that Mr. Schnyder would be unanimously re-elected by the General Assembly to the office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

9. Mr. MELOVSKI (Yugoslavia) congratulated the High Commissioner on his detailed and instructive statement (1270th meeting), and said that he would like

to comment on the report concerning the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner during the past year. The report gave a detailed account of the work done, a picture of the current problems, and an outline of future trends in the High Commissioner's work, in the light of new conditions and requirements. His delegation was gratified to note that the efforts made by the High Commissioner and his staff for the final solution of the problem of "old" refugees had achieved encouraging results. When that deplorable legacy of the Second World War was finally liquidated, the High Commissioner would be able to give greater attention to new refugees.

10. The liberation movements of the peoples of Africa had been, and still were, accompanied by waves of refugees, which presented serious problems for the refugees themselves and for the receiving countries. The international community and the High Commissioner had a duty to seek ways of coping with that situation. In that connexion, his delegation had noted with satisfaction the efforts made by the High Commissioner in the repatriation of Algerian refugees, an action which had now been completed. Nevertheless, the resettlement and integration of those persons into the economic life of their own country still presented serious difficulties, which the Government of Algeria would no doubt tackle successfully, but with regard to which it would be well if the High Commissioner would continue to lend his assistance.

11. As the report indicated (see A/5511/Rev.1, paras. 65-66), the problem of the Angolan refugees and of the refugees from Rwanda who were in Burundi, the Congo, Tanganyika and Uganda was far from solved. A solution of that problem would require further efforts by the High Commissioner, who should organize the assistance given to those refugees. The solution lay either in repatriation, which his delegation considered the most desirable outcome or, where the Governments concerned agreed, in the integration of the refugees in the receiving countries, pursuant to the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the use of the High Commissioner's good offices.

12. The Yugoslav delegation fully endorsed the High Commissioner's conception of his activities as being strictly humanitarian and non-political; for the United Nations could not allow its aid and protection to be used by refugees who abused the right of asylum for criminal and subversive activities calculated to poison relations among States.

13. During the seventeenth session, his delegation had voted for continuing the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for a further five years (General Assembly resolution 1783 (XVII)). It believed that the Office's efforts should be directed towards a final solution of the problem of "old" refugees and towards the new refugee problems resulting from the struggle against colonialism and from national liberation movements. He did not doubt that the General Assembly would display well-deserved confidence in Mr. Schnyder by re-electing him to the post of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Yugoslavia would continue to contribute, so far as it was able, to the success of the Office's activities.

14. In conclusion, he emphasized that the membership of the Executive Committee should be enlarged and that there should be an equitable redistribution of seats, bearing in mind, among other things, the need for the activities of the Office of the High Commis-

sioner to be concentrated increasingly upon areas where new refugee problems arose.

15. Mrs. BULENGO (Tanganyika) thanked the High Commissioner for his detailed and highly instructive report and for the inspiring statement he had made. Her delegation welcomed the progress that had been accomplished and particularly admired the practical approach the High Commissioner had taken in tackling the problems of refugees in various regions.

16. Tanganyika followed with the keenest interest the efforts made by the High Commissioner in the discharge of his truly humanitarian task. In keeping with the African traditions of hospitality and brotherhood, her country had offered asylum to many refugees from neighbouring countries. The entire world bore responsibility for the existence of refugees in Africa, since the African continent had been arbitrarily carved up at the Berlin Conference of 1885 and since today certain Member States were refusing to comply with the General Assembly's resolutions. Her delegation therefore hoped that the United Nations would endeavour to eliminate the political causes of refugee situations in Africa.

17. She was glad to note that marked progress had been achieved in other parts of the world, despite the heavy financial burden on the High Commissioner's Office. It was heartening to read in the report about the refugee camps that had been cleared and the progress that had been achieved in repatriation and resettlement. She hoped that like solutions would be found for refugees in Africa. The increase in their number posed a very serious problem for the African countries, which had to devote all their resources, both human and financial, to the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease, and which were endeavouring to establish peace and respect for human dignity throughout the continent.

18. There were at present 12,000 Rwandese refugees in Tanganyika; assistance to them had so far cost her Government more than \$250,000, not counting the salaries of the technical and administrative staff. Assistance on a similar scale had been made available to them through the good offices of the High Commissioner. If the tempo of the programme was maintained it could be predicted that the refugees would become self-supporting towards the end of 1964. The visit of the Deputy High Commissioner and of the regional representative to Tanganyika, and the establishment of a co-ordinating body of representatives of the various participating agencies, had greatly contributed to the success of the operation. The Rwandese were not, however, the only refugees to seek shelter in Tanganyika. It was to be hoped that the High Commissioner would devote his attention to the new problems arising in that regard.

19. She was happy to announce her Government's intention to accede to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the objectives of which, in her view, corresponded fully with those of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the Organization of African Unity.

20. In conclusion, she expressed gratitude to the governmental organizations and charitable agencies which had given their assistance to the Tanganyikan Government and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and stated that she would vote for the draft resolution on the High Commis-

sioner's report and for the draft resolution concerning the membership of the Executive Committee.

21. Mrs. HEROMA (Netherlands) welcomed the opportunity offered by the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to focus attention on concrete situations and purely humanitarian problems. She expressed her deep appreciation for the dedicated work of the High Commissioner and his Office.

22. The report clearly illustrated the dual purpose which was the salient feature of the work carried out in 1963. On the one hand, there were the activities connected with the problems of the "old" refugees, for whom much still remained to be done; on the other, there was a current programme of complementary assistance, the purpose of which was to deal with current problems. It was that programme which would provide the guidelines for the 1964 programme of assistance, which in its turn would foreshadow the general framework of the future activities of the High Commissioner's Office.

23. It was particularly encouraging to see that a number of countries, and many specialized agencies and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, were working steadily to improve the lot of refugees and were achieving a large measure of success. The alertness displayed by the High Commissioner and his staff was also most valuable. Her delegation hoped that the Committee could find ways of taking up again the question of the right of asylum, which, as pointed out in the report, was of the highest importance in the realm of international protection.

24. She was glad that the refugee camps would soon be cleared, and she noted the impressive resettlement figures. She commended the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) for its role in that operation.

25. Perhaps the most remarkable achievement related to the difficult problem of seriously handicapped refugees. Thanks to the efforts of Dr. F.A.S. Jensen (see A/5511/Rev.1, paras. 160-163) and the goodwill of several countries, considerable progress had been made. The methods used, among them case-work and counselling, were particularly commendable.

26. In view of the fresh influx of refugees into different European countries every year, it was impossible to foresee the solution of the problem in the near future. The existing machinery must be kept intact, and the High Commissioner's Office, together with the voluntary agencies and the Governments of the countries concerned, must continue its work. Acting upon a resolution adopted by the Council of Europe, the Netherlands Government had increased its contribution to the High Commissioner's Office and would donate approximately \$230,000 in 1964. Her delegation believed that every attempt should be made to solve the "old" refugee problem as soon as possible and that the report to the Executive Committee should present the necessary information concerning new refugees in Europe.

27. The report of the Deputy High Commissioner on his journey to Africa (see A/5511/Rev.1/Add.1, annex II) was highly valuable. It seemed obvious that conditions and possibilities in that continent were very different from those in Europe, so that the assistance to be provided in the near future might well assume a different pattern. For readily understandable reasons, the programme of work for 1964 (see A/5511/

Rev.1/Add.1, paras. 82-141) gave only a rough idea of the possible changes. Her delegation hoped that the High Commissioner would be able to give the Executive Committee at its eleventh session further details on the aid programme for 1964 with a view to solving the problems posed by refugee movements for the developing African countries, keeping in mind the conditions in those countries, the relationship between the refugee problem and the problems of community development and land reform, and the financial resources available.

28. Her delegation had every confidence in the High Commissioner, whose work was an example and a source of inspiration for the United Nations.

29. Mr. DELGADO (Senegal) joined others in warmly congratulating the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner, the staff and the Executive Committee on their important humanitarian work. Senegal had always taken a sympathetic view of the activities of the High Commissioner's Office, for the refugee problem was one of the most distressing to confront the world conscience and one which best encouraged international solidarity. It was heartening to learn from the report that the High Commissioner, having reached the final stage in his activities on behalf of the European refugees, whom the Second World War had driven from their homes, was now endeavouring, under his good offices functions, to extend much-needed assistance to new groups of refugees, particularly in Africa. The High Commissioner's Office thus seemed to have reached a turning point and to be addressing itself henceforth to the solution of new problems brought about by contemporary events. Senegal was a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; but that instrument had been evolved in a historical context which was now dated, and there should be no hesitation to go beyond its formal framework. He hoped that new accessions would further extend the Convention's scope of application.

30. The Senegalese delegation particularly appreciated the results of the effort made by the Office of the High Commissioner in Africa. He hoped that the spirit of brotherhood and African solidarity would make it possible to arrive at a quick and satisfactory solution of the situation thus brought about, but his delegation could not conceal its concern for the massive exodus of Africans driven from their homes by colonial oppression. In view of those developments, it was important to strengthen the effective resources which the Office of the High Commissioner should have, for instance on the frontiers of the Congo (Leopoldville) and of the Congo (Brazzaville). Men, women, the aged and children were entering Senegal across the frontier of so-called Portuguese Guinea in order to escape the exactions and cruelty of the Portuguese colonial military forces; they were received by the local authorities, who granted them plots of land to cultivate, and by friends or relatives who gave them assistance. The sacrifice imposed by that state of affairs on Senegal was not inconsiderable, and it had elicited reprisals such as raids by Portuguese motorized columns and bombardments of frontier villages. He drew attention to those facts, not in order to make a political issue out of the refugee situation, for he was convinced that the action of the Office of the High Commissioner should remain strictly humanitarian, but in order to show the justification for wondering whether the offer of resettlement, to

which the Portuguese representative had referred, was not a cynical joke.

31. However generous the host States might be, the African refugees remained uprooted; furthermore, the resources of the States in question were limited. Consequently, the High Commissioner should devote special attention to those matters, the extent of which he had been able to assess on his recent tour in Africa. The Senegalese delegation made a solemn appeal to the donor countries to show generosity and to support the action of the Office of the High Commissioner. In conclusion, he congratulated the many non-governmental organizations, in particular the League of Red Cross Societies, which were taking part in refugee work.

32. Mr. EL BAKI (Algeria) expressed to the High Commissioner his satisfaction at the progress achieved in carrying out profoundly humanitarian work which the tragic realities of daily life made more necessary every day. He assured him of the full sympathy of the Algerian Government in carrying out his task. The efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner to improve international protection of refugees and to assist them or to encourage their repatriation, resettlement or integration in the economic and social system of the host countries, had been particularly appreciated by Algeria during the eight years of hostilities. The 300,000 men, women and children who had fled from war and repression had received from the frontier peoples emergency relief which, owing to the poverty of those peoples, was unfortunately very modest. Subsequently they had found food, shelter and medicine in the open camps along the frontiers, thanks to the generosity of the Tunisian and Moroccan Governments, but the need greatly exceeded the very limited resources of the public authorities and national organizations. Consequently, as far back as 1957, an appeal had had to be made for international assistance which had been supplied lavishly by many voluntary organizations, and the Algerian delegation wished to thank those organizations again. It thanked the High Commissioner for the untiring devotion and energy which he had shown; since the adoption by the General Assembly of the first resolution on Algerian refugees on 5 December 1958 (resolution 1286 (XIII)), the High Commissioner had requested Governments and voluntary institutions to participate in the emergency programme which, on the eve of World Refugee Year, had raised considerable sums, as a result of which it had been possible to guarantee the refugees a minimum food ration, to distribute milk and clothing to the children and to improve the health services. As for the repatriation operation—which raised great difficulties because the refugees had to be assisted in resettling in a devastated country—the High Commissioner, in collaboration with the Algerian Government and the League of Red Cross Societies, had taken an active part in it and the Algerian Government wished to thank both him and the Deputy High Commissioner.

33. Many groups of refugees unfortunately continued to appear in Africa: refugees from Rwanda in Tanganyika, Uganda and Burundi, and from Angola in the Congo (Leopoldville). The work of the Office of the High Commissioner on behalf of those groups was governed by eminently humanitarian principles which had been stated by the High Commissioner and could not arouse the slightest suspicion. In the case of the 160,000 Angolan refugees who were the victims of war, repression and imprisonment, and were forced

to flee from their country by a regime that disregarded the aspirations of the Angolan people to independence and enclosed itself in colonial ideas which had become outmoded, and of the other groups of refugees which were appearing in Africa, where the fight for liberation was being waged and where imperialism continued to claim victims, the High Commissioner, in collaboration with the Governments of the countries of asylum, was carrying out an indispensable task for the relief of poverty and restoring to uprooted human beings their dignity and incentives to live.

34. For all those reasons, the Algerian delegation would support draft resolution A/C.3/L.1179. Further, it had co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.3/L.1178 and Corr.1, considering that, in view of the interest shown in the refugee question, it would be well to ensure the widest possible representation of the various regions in the Executive Committee of the Programme, in order to make the work of the Office of the High Commissioner more efficient and more practical. Such a measure did not involve any difficulty under the rules, and consequently should secure the support of all.

35. Mr. KORVALD (Norway) congratulated the High Commissioner on his statement and report, and expressed satisfaction at the considerable progress achieved, particularly in the programme for the evacuation of camps; unfortunately, there had still been 3,000 "old" refugees on 30 June 1963, and although the number element might appear much less serious than the situation as a whole, it was none the less tragic, for those refugees were physically or mentally handicapped and represented a burden for the host countries since they could not be integrated into the production system. The question of "old" refugees could not be considered as solved as long as the situation persisted, and it must therefore be given priority.

36. The Norwegian delegation was not unaware of the extent of the new difficulties, and requested immediate energetic action to deal with them. As the representative of a country which had always assisted refugees, he considered that, to assist hundreds of thousands of human beings who had been forced to leave their homes, was the bounden duty of the international community. The Norwegian Parliament had opened a credit of \$35,000 for South African refugees, and it intended to double that figure in the near future, as a token of the concern of the Norwegian people for the victims of the apartheid policy; furthermore, the Government would waive its right to the sales tax on the proceeds from the sale of the record "All Star Festival" in Norway, amounting to \$10,000. The Norwegian Government intended to increase its ordinary contribution to United Nations programmes for refugees, especially those for "old" refugees. The Norwegian Government also intended to make a contribution for the Palestine refugees, a third of which was to be devoted to education and vocational training. He wished to point out to the Committee that a non-governmental organization in his country, the Norwegian Council of Refugees, had in 1963 raised the sum of \$238,000, which would be divided among various groups of refugees throughout the world.

37. In view of the spirit of initiative and intelligence with which the High Commissioner had drafted and applied his programmes, the Norwegian delegation wholeheartedly supported the Secretary-General's

note (A/5608 and Corr.1), for they considered Mr. Schnyder an excellent servant of the refugee cause.

38. Mr. MONTANA (Venezuela) complimented the High Commissioner on the interesting statement he had made; his delegation regarded the humanitarian work of the High Commissioner's Office as most constructive, and would support it fully. Venezuela had not suffered directly from the tragedy of refugees, but its people were deeply aware of the sad consequence of the political and social upheavals of the contemporary epoch. His delegation was therefore ready to endorse the High Commissioner's programmes, specially in the Executive Committee, and also any other steps that would help to solve that distressing situation. It would also vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1178 and Corr.1.

39. Mr. MONOD (France) said that, having represented his country in the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme between 1955 and 1960, he had been able to realize how useful and constructive was the close and confident collaboration which had always existed between the Executive Committee and the officials of the High Commissioner's Office. The two annual sessions of the Executive Committee not only served to prepare the programmes and approve a budget, they also offered the opportunity for a general confrontation of ideas and a periodic clarification of the various aspects of a constantly changing situation.

40. The Office of the High Commissioner, which had been established in order to solve the questions raised by the mass movement of European refugees uprooted by the Second World War, had seen its task complicated by the occurrence of other human dramas in Asia and later in Africa. Thanks to its efforts, combined with those of the Governments of Member States, countries of first asylum, voluntary organizations and ICEM—which, by assimilating refugees to national emigrants in the application of its transport programme, had enabled thousands of persons to be permanently resettled—it could now be said that the problem of the "old" refugees was on its way to final settlement, and the High Commissioner had merited the gratitude of all for having carried through that delicate task. There still remained, unfortunately, many refugees who were ill, aged or handicapped, for whom international aid would be indispensable for a long time to come, both in seeking a permanent solution or providing legal protection. In addition, the flow of new European refugees—amounting to some 10,000 a year—caused urgent difficulties of assistance and protection. His delegation therefore noted with satisfaction that the new activities would not be given a new direction at the expense of certain groups of refugees but would take the form of an equitable distribution of resources among all those for whom international aid was necessary.

41. His delegation had always considered international protection the primary duty of Governments and the international community, and was therefore gratified to note that protection was still the essential factor of the High Commissioner's Office. The French Government had set up a service for the protection of refugees and stateless persons—Office français de protection des réfugiés et des apatrides—to assist refugees at every stage of their integration in the community and to defend their rights, and it had played a leading role in the drafting of that "refugee law" to which the High Commissioner had referred.

42. As to the good offices procedure, his delegation had been greatly interested in the report of the Deputy High Commissioner. It expressed the fervent hope that such action would contribute to bringing prompt relief, and if possible a permanent solution, to tragic human situations which deserved the solicitude of the community of nations. There the High Commissioner's action could render, and had already rendered, great service, as for instance in the case of the Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia. It was necessary, however, in the interest of the High Commissioner's very mandate, for such action to be defined and circumscribed as clearly as possible. It should be taken in urgent cases to meet immediate material needs, but should not tend to anticipate or crystallize given situations or convert them into more or less permanent administrative issues. Moreover, international protection in its legal form must be granted to individuals and not to groups or communities. The Executive Committee should be invited to give its opinion—whenever necessary, both with regard to the budget and the orientation of programmes—on any action under consideration or being taken with a view to imparting full authority and efficacy to the High Commissioner's activities.

43. France, a traditional land of asylum which for more than half a century had received hundreds of thousands of refugees on its soil, knew from experience the drama of uprooting and transplantation and the terrible economic, social and human consequences. His delegation could therefore well appreciate the difficulties involved in the High Commissioner's task; it assured him of its esteem and trust, which it was indeed prepared to renew, and wished to reiterate that he could always count on its support and understanding.

44. Mr. HERNDL (Austria) commended the High Commissioner and his staff on the work they had accomplished and on the progress made during the past year. Despite the encouraging results achieved in Europe, where the refugee question was beginning to be less acute, the situation had occurred in other regions and would unfortunately retain its reality for a long time to come.

45. As in previous years, his delegation wished to take the opportunity of the current discussion to outline the development of the refugee situation in Austria. In 1945, at the end of the Second World War, there had been 1,650,000 refugees in Austria, whose population at the time totalled 6 million inhabitants. The refugees had first had to be housed in camps, and the Austrian Government, with the assistance of various States and, later on, ICEM, had been able to help most of those who so desired to emigrate to other countries. His Government had concentrated on providing the refugees who had remained in Austria with homes of their own under various programmes, including a special programme of the Office of the High Commissioner which, begun in 1955, had now been completed, providing 3,600 homes for refugees; that had demanded more than \$14 million, approximately half of which had been furnished by the Austrian Government. In addition, his Government had carried out several programmes of its own, including a plan for the construction of 3,100 homes, which was expected to be completed by the end of 1964. The camp clearance programme would accordingly soon be accomplished. His Government had also made substantial aid available to the refugees for their integration into

the economic and social life of Austria, and had devoted particular care to facilitating the academic and vocational education of young refugees. The satisfactory development of the refugee situation in Austria was largely attributable to the generous help which his country had received from other States and from voluntary organizations and individuals the world over, and he wished to express once again his Government's sincere gratitude to them all.

46. The refugee question could be solved everywhere in the world, as it had been in Austria, through the devoted efforts of the countries of first asylum combined with international co-operation. His Government, which had been spending approximately \$1.5 million yearly to help the refugees on Austrian territory, had been able to make only a token contribution to the budget of the High Commissioner's Office. He was pleased to announce that its contribution would be increased for the years to come.

47. In conclusion, he stressed the fact that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, an institution serving solely humanitarian purposes, was one of the most important instruments of international solidarity.

48. Mr. YAPOU (Israel) stressed the importance of the item, which concerned a sphere in which human suffering resulted from upheavals whose causes were outside the control of the international community. Since the refugee problem could not be solved by the Governments of the host countries alone, international co-operation based on strictly humanitarian considerations was essential.

49. The High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner and all the staff were to be congratulated on the past year's successes, which were described in the excellent report before the Committee. The report dealt first with the problem of the "old" refugees, which the economic and social rehabilitation programmes planned by the High Commissioner would help to solve once and for all. Second, it dealt with those new situations which, after Europe, had affected Asia and then Africa. In extending the High Commissioner's mandate for five years, the General Assembly had not necessarily assumed that new problems would continue to arise; it had been inspired more by a desire to improve the only instrument available to the international community for helping those who might become refugees.

50. It was gratifying to see that five new States had acceded to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and that another one had announced at the present meeting its intention of doing so. The Convention was an instrument of great value to which the largest possible number of States ought to be Parties. Recommendation E of the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which had adopted the Convention <sup>2/</sup> was also of particular importance in the present circumstances, since its purpose was to ensure that the treatment prescribed in the Convention was extended to refugees not covered by its provisions.

51. The delegation of Israel had welcomed several points in the High Commissioner's statement. He had said, for instance, that the High Commissioner's Office, while continuing to protect refugees in general, was prepared to give technical assistance to governments in setting up machinery for protecting refugees.

He had also mentioned the need for a declaration establishing the right of asylum and the principle that a refugee might not be forced to return to his own country against his will, a right and principle which indeed were already being applied by many States. He had also emphasized the importance of the work done by the voluntary agencies, and the Israel delegation hoped that their activities would be expanded under the good offices of the High Commissioner. It noted with satisfaction that, according to the report, Governments were becoming increasingly aware of their responsibilities towards refugees on their territory and were co-operating more closely with the High Commissioner.

52. The Government of Israel, which had welcomed about a million refugees and immigrants during the past ten years, fully supported the High Commissioner's plans for the future and would vote at the plenary meeting for his re-election.

53. Mr. GILCHRIST (Australia) recalled that his Government, as a member of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme and of the Economic and Social Council, had already been able to make known its views on the High Commissioner's report. The very satisfactory direction of the High Commissioner's programme was in great measure due to the qualities of Mr. Schnyder, aided by the active support of the Executive Committee. The Australian delegation would therefore vote for his re-election.

54. The renewal of the High Commissioner's mandate for a further period of five years enabled him to prepare longer-term programmes than before, particularly to meet the new situations which were constantly arising in regions other than Europe, now that the problem of the refugees who were victims of the Second World War seemed to be coming to an end. The High Commissioner was to be commended for the part which he had played in Africa in helping to solve the problem of the Algerian refugees and to integrate a large number of displaced persons into the local economy in Togo. The work which he was now doing in Central and East Africa was also extremely valuable for, if the problem of the displaced persons in those regions were solved speedily, they could be resettled before their morale was affected by the depressing lot of the refugee.

55. The processes of political evolution now taking place in Africa were so vast that the problem of displaced persons could hardly be solved for some years to come. The Committee was not empowered to pass judgement on the circumstances which had led to the appearance of those new refugees, but it was obliged to study the steps to be taken to help them. He praised the Deputy High Commissioner, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, for the work he had done during his visit to Africa and for the moving report which he had prepared on the subject, and the Governments of a number of African countries, including Uganda and Tanganyika, which, despite their pressing economic and social problems, had welcomed many refugees most generously. A particularly good illustration of the humane motives behind the High Commissioner's work was the assistance which he was providing for the resettlement of old and incapacitated refugees in many countries, including Australia, particularly by advising the local institutions which took them in charge.

56. Australia had contributed to the solution of the problem of the Second World War refugees by ac-

<sup>2/</sup> *Ibid.*



cepting a large number for resettlement. Since 1945 it had accepted more than 250,000 refugees and had contributed to the transport costs of most of them. The Australian Government, which had always co-operated closely with the High Commissioner, was convinced of the vital importance of his Office. It had been particularly gratified by Mr. Schnyder's visit and had been glad to be able to show him what had been done in Australia for the refugees who had come there with his Office's help.

57. In conclusion he announced that, subject to the approval of Parliament, the contribution of the Australian Government to the High Commissioner's programme for 1963-64 would amount to \$112,000, to which would be added, in response to the High Commissioner's appeal, an additional amount of \$56,000 for 1963. Australia would thus have increased its contribution by 50 per cent, and also proposed to contribute to the assistance to be given to the Palestine refugees.

58. The Australian delegation supported the proposal to enlarge the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme so as to achieve a fairer geographical distribution, and would therefore vote for the draft resolution on that subject.

59. Mr. NEJJARI (Morocco) said that his Government took a particular interest in the refugee problem, first because Morocco's long traditions had made it a land of asylum since the Middle Ages, and second because it had witnessed the High Commissioner's efforts to assist the refugees from Algeria during its sister country's struggle for independence and later to bring about their repatriation. He joined other representatives in the tributes they paid to the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner and the staff for the successes which they had achieved during the previous year and which the report described.

60. The essential goal of the High Commissioner's mandate should be the repatriation of the refugees or, as a last resort, their resettlement in host countries in conditions enabling them to support themselves. Assistance to them could only be a temporary solution: if continued too long it might have the harmful result of demoralizing them by accustoming them to live on charity. No efforts should be spared to assist the High Commissioner in his noble task, so long as there were people in the world who had been uprooted and were impatiently awaiting an opportunity to return to their homes. Those were the reasons for which the Moroccan delegation, with others, had submitted draft resolution A/C.3/L.1179 to enable the High Commissioner's humane work to go on.

61. Mrs. DELLA GHERARDESCA (Italy) congratulated the High Commissioner on his lucid exposé, which testified to the devotion and understanding with which he and his staff discharged their heavy responsibilities.

62. After studying the various activities of the High Commissioner during the past year, as described in his report, the Italian delegation, with thirteen others, had prepared a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1179) designed to cover all the aspects of the refugee problem.

63. One of the most important functions of the High Commissioner's Office was the international protection of refugees, and the Executive Committee had suggested that that aspect of the work should be considered at least once a year. It was encouraging to note that more States had acceded to the 1951 Convention and that an increasing number of countries were adopting national administrative measures to benefit refugees. Several States accorded refugees a status similar to that of their own citizens, at the regional as well as the national level, through the agency of bodies such as the Council of Europe. Most States granted refugees the same rights as nationals to social security.

64. The draft resolution covered that aspect of the problem in its operative paragraphs 1 and 2 (a). It was noteworthy that the provisions of the 1951 Convention were receiving steadily wider international recognition, even from States which were not Parties to the Convention.

65. Operative paragraph 2 (c) would give the High Commissioner sufficient resources to keep in being his Office's machinery of international co-operation, and to encourage the efforts of voluntary organizations, which were mentioned in the fifth preambular paragraph.

66. The High Commissioner's humane task was extremely delicate, legally, politically and psychologically; the General Assembly, and the Third Committee in particular, ought to give him all possible support. She therefore hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by a large majority.

67. The CHAIRMAN hoped that the Committee could vote at the 1272nd meeting on the two draft resolutions before it, so that if the draft resolution on the High Commissioner's report were adopted, Member States could bear its provisions in mind at the forthcoming meeting for the announcement of voluntary contributions to the High Commissioner's programmes.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.