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Chairman: Mr. Nemi Chandra KASLIWAL  
(India).

## AGENDA ITEM 42

### Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (continued):

- (a) Report of the High Commissioner (A/5211/Rev.1 and Add.1, A/C.3/L.1031 and Add.1);
- (b) Question of the continuation of the Office of the High Commissioner (A/5186, A/C.3/L.1029 and Add.1-3)

### GENERAL DEBATE (concluded)

1. Miss RENJU (Tanganyika) said that her Government had accepted some 11,500 refugees from Rwanda and other countries and had spent over \$204,000 to meet their needs. The Government welcomed the resettlement of refugees in the border areas, but owing to their increasing numbers it was attempting to settle some of them in other, less populated parts of the country. That involved a number of social, economic and administrative difficulties which Tanganyika could not fully meet with its present limited resources.

2. She thanked the High Commissioner, the international relief agencies and other organizations for their expert advice and material aid in that matter. Thanks, moreover, to the co-operative spirit of the Tanganyikan people, the refugees were included in local self-help projects, which gave them a greater sense of belonging and would eventually make them self-supporting. Until that time, however, many of them needed outside help. The Government was encouraged in its efforts by the enthusiasm of the refugees and looked forward to a final solution of the problem before long. It would, moreover, gladly co-operate with the High Commissioner in facilitating the repatriation of any refugees who desired to return to their country of origin. Since repatriation presented its own problems—psychological, economic and perhaps political—she hoped that the High Commissioner would continue his efforts, in co-operation with the

Governments concerned, to ensure that the process of repatriation was as smooth as possible. In that connexion she warmly commended the High Commissioner for his handling of the repatriation of Algerian refugees.

3. Her delegation welcomed the further progress made in respect of European refugees and thanked those Governments which had made special efforts on behalf of the handicapped, who were so much in need of international assistance. She hoped that it would not be long before similar successes were registered in Africa and Asia.

4. She believed that almost all existing refugee problems were a product of political instability or injustices and that until the basic rights of man were universally ensured new refugee situations were bound to occur. Consequently, no deadline on international assistance should be set. The Office of the High Commissioner should be continued for another period of five years, after which the question of further continuation should be reviewed in the light of the prevailing circumstances. She therefore hoped that the Committee would give unanimous support to the draft resolution on the Office of the High Commissioner (A/C.3/L.1029 and Add.1-3).

5. Mrs. RADIC (Yugoslavia) congratulated the High Commissioner on his achievements in the past year. The successful repatriation of Algerian refugees and the prompt assistance to new refugees in Africa demonstrated the Office's increasing ability to adapt to new situations requiring speedy action. Yugoslavia particularly appreciated the Office's resolute policy with regard to permanent solution to old refugee problems, and it hoped that the joint efforts of the High Commissioner and the Governments concerned would make the final settlement of the problem possible in 1963.

6. Her Government had in the past year endeavoured to establish the closest possible co-operation with the High Commissioner's Office, not only in respect of the refugees still remaining in Yugoslavia but also in the fields of domestic legislation and international measures. With the assistance of the High Commissioner, her country had succeeded in closing down its last refugee camp; it hoped that its requests, particularly concerning assistance in the building of a transit centre, would be granted. Despite its difficulties in meeting the high expense of its own refugee programmes, the Yugoslav Government had decided that year to assist the efforts of the High Commissioner by contributing \$5,000 towards the regular programme and an additional 22 million dinars towards the Algerian programme.

7. Her delegation would support the draft resolution on the Office of the High Commissioner, believing the refugee problem still to require international assistance. She hoped that a further five-year period would be sufficient for the problem's solution so that the

function of the High Commissioner's Office might then be reduced to that of legal assistance to refugees, its basic function under its Statute (General Assembly resolution 428 (V), annex).

8. The situation created by the appearance of new refugees in Africa would call for a corresponding adaptation of the Office and its methods of work. The repatriation of those refugees to their own countries was for most of them the only means of fully solving their problems. To ensure a more comprehensive approach to the matter, the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme should be, if not enlarged, at least have a more geographically representative membership.

9. Mrs. QUAN (Guatemala) said that, while her delegation deplored the existence of the refugee problem, it could not but express satisfaction at the new non-political and constructive spirit displayed in the Committee and at the encouraging achievements of the High Commissioner's Office which had no doubt engendered that spirit. She was especially impressed by the success with which the Office had mustered the support of large numbers of Governments and organizations, enabling it to eliminate a considerable part of the refugee problem. She had also been struck by the psychological change in the refugees who were participating more actively in their own rehabilitation with a view to resuming a normal way of life.

10. She heartily endorsed the position stated by the High Commissioner in paragraph 81 of his report (A/5211/Rev.1), which would permit of the social problem at issue being transformed into a means for constructive international action ultimately benefiting both the refugees and the countries of asylum.

11. Her delegation, needless to say, whole-heartedly supported the draft resolution on the Office of the High Commissioner. In addition, and particularly because it admired the High Commissioner's competence in carrying out his humanitarian mission, it has co-sponsored the draft resolution on the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong and Macao (A/C.3/L.1031 and Add.1), which she now introduced.

12. The draft resolution, based on General Assembly resolution 1167 (XII), reaffirmed the Assembly's concern over the situation of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong and Macao and acknowledged the efforts made to meet their needs. It further authorized the High Commissioner, within his area of responsibility, to extend his humanitarian assistance to those refugees. She hoped that the international community would respond generously to the appeal made in operative paragraph 2 so that the assistance and attention which those refugees also required might be made available.

13. Mr. ISHDORJ (Mongolia) remarked that, now that the older refugee problems were reaching final solution, the attention of the High Commissioner's Office should be focused mainly on the large numbers of refugees in Africa who had fled from the racist persecution of the colonizers. Their problem must find the speediest possible solution. For that reason, his delegation supported the draft resolution on the Office of the High Commissioner, although it did not entirely agree with all of its provisions.

14. He greatly regretted that the sponsors of the draft resolution on the Chinese refugees should have been influenced by the slanderous statement made at the Committee's 1187th meeting by a member of the

Committee. The so-called Chinese refugees in Hong Kong were not refugees; indeed, that had been confirmed by the United Kingdom representative. To discuss the matter in the Committee would, moreover, be pointless in the absence of the true representatives of the Chinese people. He therefore appealed to the sponsors to withdraw their text. If it was pressed to a vote, his delegation would be compelled to vote against it.

15. Mrs. MARTIN (Guinea) expressed her delegation's appreciation of the High Commissioner's efforts, which had led to the repatriation of the Algerian refugees and had enabled thousands of Angolan, Rwandese, Mozambiquan and European refugees to resume a normal life. It was for that reason that her delegation had co-sponsored the draft resolution on the Office of the High Commissioner, despite its conviction that the problem of refugees, at least in Africa, would cease to exist once the reactionary Government of Portugal ended its policy of genocide in Angola.

16. Where the draft resolution on the Chinese refugees was concerned, she drew attention to a statement made to the legislative council of Hong Kong on 13 June 1962 by the Colonial Secretary, who had recalled his Government's decision, some seven years previously, to integrate every immigrant into the community and to strike the word "refugee" from its vocabulary (A/AC.96/INF.11). Since technical assistance could be given only at the request of the Government concerned, since it was clear that the United Kingdom preferred to deal with the problem by direct arrangement with Governments willing to help it, and since the High Commissioner could make good use of any available funds in Algeria, Angola and elsewhere, her delegation would vote against the draft resolution on that question.

17. Mrs. TREE (United States of America) commended the High Commissioner and his staff for their skill, hard work and dedication; without their efforts the plight of refugees throughout the world would be tragic indeed. She noted with particular satisfaction that the problem of the older group of European refugees was about to be finally solved, and that the High Commissioner's timely action had also resulted in the reduction of certain problems of more recent origin in other areas.

18. Resettlement by immigration must always be kept in mind as an effective means of reducing the number of persons classified as refugees, and she was glad that the High Commissioner had recognized the importance of that method and had often resorted to it. By the recent enactment of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 (Public Law 87-510), the United States Congress had extended indefinitely an earlier law which provided for the immigration to the United States of a portion of all mandate refugees resettled. Her country had been, from its first settlement, a haven for victims of natural disasters or tyranny, and it had admitted 130,000 refugees from Germany during the years of the Nazi régime. The recent legislation indicated that her Government had not lost its desire or determination to devote its resources to the cause of refugees.

19. Mr. TILINCA (Romania) felt that since the question of the "old" European refugees, for whose benefit the Office of the High Commissioner had been set up, had been virtually settled, the continuation of the Office was not necessary in order to deal with the

20,000 refugees remaining in that group. Indeed, the problem could have been solved already if the High Commissioner and the Governments of the host countries had concentrated on voluntary repatriation, which was the most efficient and humanitarian method.

20. However, large numbers of new refugees had now appeared in Africa, owing to the continuation of colonial domination in their countries, which they had fled to escape miserable living and working conditions and savage oppression. While the only solution to the African refugee problem lay in the strict implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, the international community could not, in the meantime, ignore the fate of those who needed assistance. Help could be given through the Office of the High Commissioner, and the Romanian delegation would therefore not object to the extension of his mandate and would vote for the draft resolution on that subject.

21. With respect to the draft resolution on the Chinese refugees, his delegation considered that the question of the so-called refugees in Hong Kong could not be debated so long as the representatives of the People's Republic of China, which was a party directly concerned, did not occupy their lawful seat in the United Nations.

22. Mrs. ROUSSEAU (Mali) joined previous speakers in congratulating the High Commissioner on the work of his Office. She agreed with the representative of Ghana that, so long as colonial domination continued, there would always be a refugee problem, and she had therefore become a co-sponsor of the draft resolution on the Office of the High Commissioner.

23. She would vote against the draft resolution on the Chinese refugees, for which she saw no need, since the United Kingdom representative had stated that the problem in Hong Kong was not one of refugees and that his country preferred to handle it differently. The Committee might well adopt a resolution on Angola, for instance, where thousands of Africans were being forced to leave their land because of repression of Portugal; but her delegation preferred to rely upon the High Commissioner to help such genuine refugees. The problem to which the draft resolution related was a political one, and she appealed to the sponsors to withdraw it for, if adopted, it would merely complicate the High Commissioner's already difficult task.

24. Mr. MIRANDA (Portugal) expressed his appreciation of the humanitarian work done by the High Commissioner. The very tangible results achieved were proof not only of a high standard of efficiency but also of a great clarity of purpose, the more commendable in view of the tendency on the part of some to confuse the issue and put things in a false perspective. The High Commissioner's report was an inspiring document reporting unselfish efforts to alleviate human suffering without regard to race, religion, politics or ideology. The spirit of controversy which divided human society and caused men to suffer seemed mean indeed beside the spirit of humanitarian service which rose above all controversy and united men by the bond of their common humanity. It was fortunate that most delegations in the Committee had thus approached the question under consideration, and had observed the tradition well established in the Committee of forgetting politics when dealing with refugee problems. Several delegations had seen fit,

however, to do otherwise in references to his country, and although he did not accept their allegations he would not follow their example. Simply as a point of information, he would say that the allegations regarding refugees from Mozambique, aside from being false, revealed an ignorance of the meaning of the term "refugee", if not also an attempt to screen a situation existing in a certain sector of Europe.

25. His country had very long experience with refugees' problems, for there had hardly ever been a conflict in Europe but refugees had come pouring into continental Portugal. Its record had been outstanding during the Second World War and also more recently. Portugal admitted refugees without inquiring about the causes of their flight and considering them only as human beings in need of help. It would no more subject such persons to inquiries than it would withhold food from a starving man while investigating the causes of his distress.

26. Today there were Portuguese nationals from Angola who had sought hospitality in a neighbouring country, and he thanked the High Commissioner for his successful endeavours on their behalf. His Government had taken steps to facilitate the return of those displaced Angolans to their homeland. It had set up several reception camps in Angola, each of which had the necessary accommodation and medical services for 1,000 persons. The security of those returning home was guaranteed by the local administrations and adequate measures had been taken to ensure their resettlement. His Government sincerely hoped that the persons concerned would avail themselves of those facilities. Lastly, his delegation would support the draft resolution regarding the continuation of the High Commissioner's Office.

#### CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

27. Mr. ZULOAGA (Venezuela) proposed that the draft resolution on the continuation of the Office of the High Commissioner should be put to the vote and that the debate on the draft resolution on the Chinese refugees should then continue.

*It was so decided.*

#### *The continuation of the Office of the High Commissioner*

28. Mr. LYMAR (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) requested separate votes on the fourth preambular paragraph; on the words "and those for whom he lends his good offices" in the fifth preambular paragraph; and on operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution on the continuation of the Office of the High Commissioner (A/C.3/L.1029 and Add.1-3).

*The fourth preambular paragraph was adopted by 78 votes to none, with 11 abstentions.*

*The words "and those for whom he lends his good offices" in the fifth preambular paragraph were adopted by 78 votes to none, with 11 abstentions.*

*Operative paragraph 3 was adopted by 79 votes to none, with 12 abstentions.*

*The draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1029 and Add.1-3), as a whole, was adopted by 91 votes to none, with 1 abstention.*

#### *The problem of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong*

29. Mr. CHOW (China) said that the presentation of that draft resolution was a further manifestation of

the sense of solidarity among the peoples of the world of which the Third Committee had often served as an example. The flight of Chinese refugees to Hong Kong and Macao was a fact, and it was also a fact that those refugees needed and deserved international assistance. Those facts should be discussed objectively from a humanitarian standpoint.

30. The exodus of refugees from mainland China was not, as had been asserted, a "transfer of population" that had been going on for many years; it had begun only in 1949 and had become increasingly serious by 1954, when the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with the help of the Ford Foundation, had sent to the Far East a survey mission of experts, the chief of whom had produced a report entitled "The problem of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong," known as the Hambro Report. At that time, there had been 20,000 Chinese refugees in Macao, and by May 1962 that number had increased to 30,000. The Portuguese Government had prepared a most laudable comprehensive plan to enable the refugees to become self-supporting, but its early realization would call for generous assistance from the international community, of the kind already offered by the Belgian Government, and it was hoped that that need would receive wider notice and a greater response if Macao was mentioned in the draft resolution.

31. The number of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong had risen from 700,000 in 1957—when the United Kingdom representative at the United Nations had still referred to them as "refugees"—to 1 million; consequently, their needs were much greater than those of the refugees in Macao. The Hong Kong Government had done its best to integrate them with the rest of the population, but they were so many that the best efforts of that Government alone would not be adequate. The progress it had made in recent years was outspaced by the ever growing demands, particularly for

housing; in spite of the Government's building projects, large numbers still lived in shacks which constituted a fire hazard. The scarcity of work, hospitals and schools was also keenly felt. His intention was not to criticize the Hong Kong Government, but to emphasize that the problem of the so-called "immigrant population" was basically a refugee problem which should not have been that Government's sole responsibility. From the humanitarian point of view, the problem deserved the attention and assistance of the international community, whatever might be the High Commissioner's legal relationship to it.

32. Many delegations, including that of the United Kingdom, had spoken at the twelfth session of the General Assembly of the need to show the same concern for Chinese refugees as for those of other origins, and the outcome had been the adoption of resolution 1167 (XII). The draft resolution now before the Committee was animated by the same spirit as that earlier resolution and, like it, was but a modest step. Nevertheless, the reaffirmation of the concern of the international community could at least make those unfortunate people feel that they were not ignored. He hoped that the many delegations which no doubt shared the feelings of the sponsors would vote in favour of the draft resolution.

33. Mrs. NIKOLAEVA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) remarked that some delegations were apparently not content with the results thus far achieved by the Committee which, in a spirit of co-operation, had adopted a number of resolutions of a universal nature. In presenting the draft resolution before the Committee, the sponsors had introduced political questions which went far beyond the Committee's terms of reference and which would divert its attention from its true tasks and aims. Her delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.