

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records



**THIRD COMMITTEE, 1448th
MEETING**

Monday, 5 December 1966,
at 3.30 p.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 55:</i>	
<i>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (continued)</i>	425

Chairman: Mrs. Halima EMBAREK WARZAZI
(Morocco).

AGENDA ITEM 55

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (continued) (A/6303, chap. XIII, sect. I; A/6303/Add.1, chap. VI; A/6311/Rev.1 and Add.1; A/C.3/L.1412, A/C.3/L.1415, A/C.3/L.1416)

1. Mr. NSANZE (Burundi) said he sincerely regretted that he had been unable to be present when the High Commissioner had presented his report (A/6311/Rev.1 and Add.1), at the morning meeting. He had read that document, which gave evidence of the outstanding work done by Prince Sadruddin Khan and of the results achieved thanks to his efforts, with very great interest. Moreover, the people of Burundi had special reasons for taking an interest in the matter. The refugee problem was part of Burundi's day-to-day life; despite the extreme smallness of its territory, the country had had to take in tens of thousands of refugees, mainly from Rwanda. He proposed to make a further statement at a later meeting in order to give a fuller description of the situation in his country, and he would then suggest a number of practical measures which might alleviate the High Commissioner's task, particularly in so far as concerned the complex situation created in Burundi by the flood of refugees from neighbouring territories. For the time being, he wished to give the Committee the assurance that his country's new Government would attach greater importance to the refugee problem and would endeavour to co-operate more closely with the High Commissioner. The delegation of Burundi had had many opportunities to observe the devotion and impartiality with which the High Commissioner and his aides were carrying out their work, and it wished to assure them of its deep gratitude for the results already achieved. Without underestimating the work done, however, the Government of Burundi would like the problem of the refugees on its territory to be given closer study. For its own part, it was prepared to do its utmost to promote the success of the Office's work.

2. He would give his views on the documents submitted to the Committee later; but he could already state that he unreservedly supported the High Commissioner's report. The High Commissioner had demonstrated his complete understanding of the

problems involved, and his proposals merited unanimous support. His delegation wished to congratulate the High Commissioner on the success with which he had discharged his great and difficult responsibilities.

3. Mrs. HARRIS (United States of America) said that the post of High Commissioner, as much as any single office in the United Nations family reflected the talents of the man holding that office. Her delegation paid tribute to the work done by Prince Sadruddin Khan, who had demonstrated the imagination, patience and untiring devotion which the magnitude of his task—there were nearly three million refugees—rendered essential.

4. The High Commissioner's report (A/6311/Rev.1) described the problems to be dealt with and showed the understanding and ingenuity with which many of them had been or were being solved. It showed that the High Commissioner was continuing his efforts in what her delegation considered to be his primary function, ensuring the legal and political protection of refugees, and encouraging liberal national policies on the right of asylum.

5. More and more of the Office's work was concerned with Africa; half of the amount of \$3.5 million authorized for the 1965 programme by the Executive Committee and a large proportion of the funds received from other sources had gone to African programmes. Despite the difficulties of political disturbance and economic under-development which had hampered his work in Africa, the High Commissioner had been able, by providing legal and material assistance, to relieve the distress of the refugees and to mitigate the tensions generally caused by a sudden influx of refugees in countries which were struggling with the difficulties inherent in the process of economic and social development. He had thus made his contribution to the political, social and economic stability of the receiving countries.

6. The Major Aid Programmes, the purpose of which was to assist the "old" European refugees to find a permanent solution for their problems, should, in the United States delegation's view, be successfully completed as soon as possible, so the High Commissioner could turn his attention to other refugee matters, including, in Europe, the newly arriving refugees. The United States delegation would look forward to receiving the final report on the Major Aid Programmes discussed at the May 1966 session of the Executive Committee.

7. The United States had given the High Commissioner every possible assistance in dealing with the problems of the refugees, which, besides being a matter of concern from the humanitarian standpoint, were also a source of international controversy and often of

instability, particularly in the under-developed countries.

8. In the period since the Second World War, the United States role in assisting refugees had been exerted in legislation and the provisions of material assistance. A series of special immigration laws and administrative measures had enabled 1.2 million refugees to find homes in the United States, most of them as United States citizens; by its latest decision on the subject, the United States Congress had authorized the entry of 10,200 refugees per year under the revised Immigration and Nationality Law. In material aid, the United States had undertaken direct refugee relief programmes amounting to \$1,200 million, and also contributed \$850 million to United Nations and other inter-governmental programmes.

9. In 1966, \$115 million had been allocated to assistance programmes financed by the United States Government either directly or under multilateral aid arrangements. Since the Second World War, the American people had given more than \$1,000 million for refugee relief through private non-governmental institutions. In Africa, in addition to the \$600,000 contributed to the High Commissioner's Office for 1965, the United States had supplied more than \$2 million worth of goods for African refugees under Public Law No. 480. Since 1958, when assistance to Africa had begun to assume large proportions, the United States had supplied goods to a value of more than \$50 million to assist the High Commissioner in his work.

10. The United States realized that the High Commissioner was the main hope of the refugees, and it pledged itself once again to give him all its support in carrying out his mission, which was to protect the refugees' welfare, their persons, and their political and legal rights.

11. Mrs. POCEK-MATIC (Yugoslavia) said that her delegation had listened with great interest to the High Commissioner's description of the problems confronting him in his work for the refugees. She wished to congratulate him on his efforts up to the present, which had given the Office of the High Commissioner high prestige in many countries.

12. The High Commissioner's report (A/6311/Rev.1) clearly showed that the focus of the Office's work had moved from Europe to the African continent, where there had been a considerable rise in the number of refugees—which was now nearly 700,000, representing an increase of 300,000 over the figure for the preceding year. Unfortunately, there was reason to fear that the number would continue to increase, in view of the unrest provoked by Portugal's colonial war, the repressive apartheid policy of the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the domination of the racist white minority in Southern Rhodesia. The increase in the number of refugees in the countries which had only recently acceded to independence was not only most disturbing but represented an additional burden on the already very limited resources of the country of asylum. Those countries had undoubtedly done much to help the refugees to establish themselves in their territory, but they were not in a position to offer them living conditions which would promote their integration in the national community together with the establishment of the infra-structure needed for

over-all development. What was necessary therefore, as had been observed in the Economic and Social Council at its forty-first session, was that assistance to refugees should be carried out in conjunction with programmes to promote the development of the countries of asylum; only then would it be possible to integrate the refugees in their economies. The Office of the High Commissioner could play an important part in that process, as was witnessed by the success of the co-operation already established between the Office and many United Nations organs. The first step in that direction could be the establishment, in consultation with UNESCO, of a special education fund.

13. Her delegation hoped to see even closer co-operation between the High Commissioner's Office and other institutions, such as the United Nations Development Programmes and the International Development Association, for example, which had the necessary material resources for financing projects which might be undertaken. In that connexion, her delegation welcomed the fruitful co-operation which had been established between the High Commissioner's Office and the World Food Programme, which had made a highly significant contribution to the work of the High Commissioner by providing large supplies of food products for thousands of refugees in a number of African countries. Such co-operation was, moreover, fully in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2040 (XX) on assistance to refugees in Africa and should be encouraged. She took that opportunity to announce to the Committee that, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 2038 (XX), her Government had given the Yugoslav Red Cross the sum of 125,000 dinars for the purchase of blankets and medical supplies for refugees from Mozambique and Southern Rhodesia in Tanzania.

14. With regard to the question of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which was one of the legal instruments for ensuring international protection of refugees, she considered it desirable to extend the ratione personae scope of that instrument, which had become inapplicable because of the 1951 dateline. Her delegation therefore fully approved the adoption of the draft protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (A/6311/Rev.1/Add.1, part one), which would extend the scope of the Convention. Since, owing to lack of time, the Committee was not able to complete its consideration of the whole draft protocol at the present session, her delegation had joined with other delegations in submitting a draft resolution (A/C.3/L.1415) under which the General Assembly would approve the text of article 1 of the draft protocol providing for the elimination of the dateline 1 January 1951 mentioned in article 1, B (1) of the Convention. The other articles could be considered at the next session.

15. Her delegation also supported draft resolution A/C.3/L.1412 and approved its objectives, namely that Member States should place at the High Commissioner's disposal the financial means necessary for the completion of his assistance programme.

16. Mr. NGYESSE (Democratic Republic of the Congo) congratulated the High Commissioner on his report. The problem of refugees throughout the world, and especially in Africa, was a crucial issue. His Govern-

ment was anxious to give both moral and material assistance to those who were fleeing the evils of a retrograde colonialism or were forced by events to leave their country. The Democratic Republic of the Congo had received approximately 500,000 refugees, of whom over 400,000 were from the Portuguese colonies, in particular Angola, and the rest from Sudan and Rwanda. His Government was concerned about the situation in Angola and hoped that the Lisbon Government would harken to the voice of reason and implement the resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly. Meanwhile, it would continue to aid the Angolans, who were particularly numerous in the south-western regions of the country. The other refugees, who came from independent countries, were well-treated in the Congo, if they behaved in a manner consistent with their refugee status, and they were free to go wherever they pleased and to return to their countries if they wished. In that connexion, his Government wished to thank all who had helped it to deal with the situation. His delegation approved the principle of the draft protocol contained in the addendum to the High Commissioner's report, because the provisions of the draft protocol would ensure the refugees legal as well as material protection. Moreover, his delegation, which was a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1412, hoped that that text would be adopted unanimously by the Committee. It thanked Prince Sadruddin Khan and his dynamic team for their efforts throughout the world, and especially in Africa, in spite of many difficulties, particularly financial ones.

17. Mr. ALLAOUI (Algeria) thanked the High Commissioner for his untiring efforts on behalf of refugees and congratulated him on the progress achieved. As a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1415, his delegation wished to reaffirm Algeria's interest in the work of the High Commissioner's Office to facilitate the settlement and integration of refugees in the host countries. The grievous events which were still taking place in various parts of the world, and in Africa and Asia in particular, were the result of the continuance of the system of colonial exploitation. It was colonialism which was the main cause of the steady increase in the number of refugees in Africa, who now totalled over 700,000. The situation was further aggravated by the limited resources available to the countries of asylum, which were for the most part newly independent, developing States. Algeria, for example, faithful to its age-old tradition of hospitality and its ideal of liberty and despite its economic difficulties, was proud to give asylum to all who were fighting in defence of freedom. It was obvious, however, that, despite their efforts, the countries of asylum could not by themselves meet the needs of the refugees. Assistance from the High Commissioner's Office was thus necessary and should be directed more particularly towards the search for lasting solutions and be incorporated in a large-scale comprehensive programme set up in co-operation with the specialized agencies, the Governments concerned and the regional organizations for refugees. That assistance should be extended to the fields of education and vocational training, which would facilitate the settlement and integration of refugees in the host countries and prepare them for taking an active part in the social life of their country upon repatriation.

18. His delegation considered it the duty of the international community to come to the aid of refugees and appealed to all States, in particular the developed States, to increase their contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner to enable it to carry out the task entrusted to it by the Organization. That was the object of the draft resolution (A/3/L.1415) before the Committee, which would enable the High Commissioner for Refugees to extend his humanitarian action to the new category of refugees which had come into being since 1 January 1951, as a result of the survival of colonialism in certain parts of Africa and Asia. His delegation had sponsored the draft resolution and hoped that it would receive the Committee's unanimous support.

19. Mr. FERNANDEZ DE COSSIO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that he had listened with great interest to the report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and had noted the considerable increase in the activities of the High Commissioner's Office, in Africa especially. The report also indicated the increasing tendency of States to adopt their legislation so as to provide for refugees, as the High Commissioner had requested, and that Governments were taking an increasing part in the activities of the High Commissioner's Office, with which they had established useful contacts. Closer collaboration also appeared to have been established between municipal and local authorities and the High Commissioner's Office. His delegation considered it desirable also to extend and consolidate the work undertaken by the High Commissioner's Office in the legal field. The results of the Colloquium on Legal Aspects of Refugee Problems, held at Bellagio (Italy) in April 1965, were very encouraging in that connexion, and the Committee now had before it a draft protocol on the necessary measures for extending the scope of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

20. In the opinion of the Cuban Government, the work of the High Commissioner's Office should be essentially legal, and the action of that United Nations organ, which must show absolute neutrality and impartiality, must not be diverted from its purpose for the benefit of certain Powers which would like to make it serve the ends of their foreign policies. His delegation considered it desirable, therefore, to review the scope of the protection afforded by the 1951 Convention. At the same time, however, the notion of refugee status should be reviewed, with a view to ensuring that that status was not granted to persons not entitled to it. In paragraph 46 of the report (A/6311/Rev.1) it was stated that the right of asylum continued to be the cornerstone of the whole work of protection of refugees, because that right was essential to the enjoyment by refugees of any rights or advantages. His delegation wished to state that it refused to accord the status of refugees to persons wishing to leave their country of their own accord, without having been subject to political or religious persecution and without any legal obstacle hindering their departure. It could not accept the classification as refugees of persons who left their country when in possession of all necessary identification papers.

21. He thought it would be useful to remind the Committee, as the representative of Cuba had already

done in the Third Committee and in the meetings of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme which they had attended as observers, of a number of basic principles which the General Assembly had endorsed when it had adopted resolution 62 (I), during the second part of its first session in 1946. Annex I to the annex to that resolution defined the general principles by which the Organization should regulate its refugee activities. Paragraph 1, sub-paragraphs (d), (e) and (g), noted that it should be the concern of the Organization to ensure that its assistance was not exploited in order to encourage subversive or hostile activities directed against the Government of any of the United Nations, nor exploited by persons in the case of whom it was clear that they were unwilling to return to their countries of origin, for example, for purely economic reasons; it was also stated that the Organization should endeavour to carry out its functions in such a way as to avoid disturbing friendly relations between nations. In part II of annex I, the categories of persons who would not be the concern of the Organization were clearly defined. They were, in particular, as indicated in paragraph 6, sub-paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), persons who had participated in any subversive or terrorist organization directed against their own country or who had become leaders of movements hostile to the Government of their country of origin or who were in the military or civil services of a foreign State.

22. His delegation wished to draw the Committee's attention to some of the activities of the so-called Cuban refugees who were violating the principles he had mentioned and who had thereby lost all right to be considered refugees. It had been from among those so-called refugees that the saboteurs who had infiltrated Cuban territory had been recruited as had been bands of mercenaries who had attacked Cuba in April 1961 and who had soon been put to flight by the Cuban people. The pilots of the pirate aircraft which were bombing towns and factories from bases in the United States, the incendiaries and the whole gamut of terrorists and traitors being used even in Viet-Nam by Yankee imperialism were also from that group. Article 2 of the 1951 Convention stated that every refugee had duties to the country in which he found himself, which required in particular that he conform to its laws and regulations for the maintenance of public order. The countless acts perpetrated, in defiance of that precept, by such so-called refugees in various regions of the world were only too well-known: they had sabotaged shipyards in Spain, attacked ships in Canada and they had attacked, from Florida, United Kingdom, USSR and Spanish merchant ships in the Caribbean. However, listing their crimes would take too long and it was sufficient merely to recall something which had been witnessed by many of the representatives now present in the Committee, namely, the bazooka fire directed at the United Nations building in 1964 by the so-called "Cuban refugees".

23. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees would lose prestige if it allowed such individuals, who were the tools of an aggressive policy directed against the Government of Cuba, to receive its protection. It should confine itself to the purely humanitarian side of its work; the

fact that its programmes were financed from voluntary contributions in no way entitled the members of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, or the Office itself, to depart from the policy officially adopted by the United Nations or to act in a way contrary to the legitimate interests of a small country.

24. His delegation also had certain comments to make on paragraph 172 of the report (A/6311/Rev.1) which was closely linked to item 7 of the agenda of the fifteenth session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. It wished to point out that the United States Government, in its criminal policy of aggression against and hostility to the Cuban Government, had shrunk from nothing to bring back under the imperialist yoke a heroic people which had finally achieved its freedom. One of its manoeuvres had been to deprive Cuba of technicians, skilled workers, etc., by launching propaganda campaigns to encourage such workers to desert which offered them higher wages and special advantages—at the very time when they were most needed by their own country. Doctors, engineers and various technicians had succumbed to temptation and had left their country in some cases with members of their family, and holding all the necessary legal documents. But time had gone by and the expected crisis had not occurred. In 1962, the United States Government had stopped airline flights to Cuba in order to immediately spread the rumour that the Revolutionary Government of Cuba was not allowing those who wished to leave the country to do so. All those who had planned to travel to the United States, for example, to join their families became targets of the Yankee propaganda machine and were enticed into leaving the country by sea, in boats of all kinds and at the risk of their lives, thus providing the United States Government with an excellent propaganda weapon against Cuba. That action had been denounced by the Cuban Government on many occasions and, in September 1965, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, reaffirming once again the unchanged policy of the Revolutionary Government to allow those who wished to leave to do so, had announced that one of the country's ports would be reserved for travellers who would thus be able to leave by safe and lawful means. That decision by the Revolutionary Government of Cuba had unmasked the hypocritical manoeuvres of the imperialists, and the United States Government had been forced immediately to participate in negotiations with the Cuban Government. Those negotiations had led to the establishment of an air link between the two countries to transport all persons wishing to leave their homeland. In return, the Cuban Government wanted the thousands of Cubans wishing to return home definitively, or wishing to visit Cuba for family or tourist purposes, to be allowed to do so.

25. In conclusion, his delegation urged the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees not to expose itself to the valid and severe criticisms of world opinion and to co-operate as it should with all States Members of the United Nations, whether large or small. It reserved the right to speak again on the item before the Committee.

26. Mr. RIOS (Panama) thanked the High Commissioner for the report which he had submitted and

for his untiring work. His efforts had not been in vain since they had improved the lot of many refugees. He endorsed the High Commissioner's report and supported draft resolution A/C.3/L.1412.

27. Mr. GUDAL (Somalia) thanked the High Commissioner for the efforts he had made to find a permanent solution to the problem of refugees and to improve their living conditions. In his view, the best solution was the repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin. The refugee problem was a matter of great concern to Somalia; not only did it represent a threat to world peace, but it was also a challenge to the conscience of mankind. He assured the High Commissioner of the full support of his country and hoped that the United Nations would do all that was necessary to solve that grave problem.

28. Mr. KOITE (Mali) congratulated the High Commissioner on the devotion and perspicacity he had shown in the performance of his task. The results spoke for themselves and it was to be hoped that, by continuing along the same path, the United Nations would succeed in overcoming one of the most painful problems of the present era. Mali, a country of asylum for many refugees, welcomed the favourable developments in connexion with the refugee problem, but was disturbed by the disquieting situation prevailing in some regions, particularly in Africa, where there were massive and increasing movements of refugees from one part of the continent to the other. The High Commissioner indicated in his report that there were

600,000 refugees in Africa. Hundreds of thousands of people were obliged to leave their country in order to escape colonialist genocide. The savage repression by the Portuguese colonialists of the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) were causing a mass exodus of women, children and the aged towards such brother States as Senegal, the Congo, the Republic of Guinea and the United Republic of Tanzania which were sheltering them and offering them decent living conditions pending the liberation of their homeland. The Government of Mali was aware of the special responsibility of those African States which bordered on territories under colonial domination, and recognized the great efforts and sacrifices being made by those States in the case of African freedom. He would also stress the seriousness of the problem of the Palestinian refugees who had been driven out from their homeland twenty years before and were now living in exile almost like beggars. He believed that it was urgently necessary to find a solution to the tragic situation of that people, not by continuing to give them alms, but by the strict application of United Nations resolution 194 (III) with a view to their repatriation. In conclusion he expressed his support for the programme proposed by the High Commissioner to help countries of asylum in solving the many problems they encountered in assisting refugees.

29. The CHAIRMAN announced that the list of speakers was closed.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.