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Held at Headquarters, New York,  
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High Commissioner for Refugees (A/3669; A/C.3/L.638) (continued)

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mrs. LIONAES	Norway
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. COX	Peru

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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (A/3585/Rev.1 and Add.1, A/3613, chapter VI, section IV); REVIEW OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (A/3669; A/C.3/L.638) (continued)

Mr. MAKIEDO (Yugoslavia) thanked the High Commissioner for Refugees for his enlightening report with its valuable recommendations and for his devoted efforts in the refugees' behalf. The results achieved during the past year and the High Commissioner's proposals for future action gave reason to hope that a final settlement of the refugee problem was in sight.

Yugoslavia had offered asylum to some 20,000 Hungarian refugees. Guided solely by humanitarian and social principles, Yugoslavia had done everything in its power, despite the heavy financial burden involved, to discharge its international obligations towards them, setting aside all political considerations. In accordance with those principles every refugee had been allowed to decide his future, free from all influence or pressure. As a result, about 600 Hungarian refugees had settled permanently in Yugoslavia and had been readily assimilated into the life of the country; Some 2,800 had been repatriated to Hungary voluntarily in full co-operation with the representatives of the High Commissioner and the Hungarian Repatriation Mission; and over 12,600 had been resettled in other countries of their choice. Some 3,500 refugees still remained in Yugoslavia awaiting resettlement, and his Government hoped that the States which had already generously opened their frontiers to refugees would agree to receive those remaining few.

He paid a tribute to the High Commissioner and to his temporary office at Belgrade for their co-operation and understanding which had made those results possible.

Since there had been no provision in the Yugoslav budget for assistance to Hungarian refugees, his Government had been compelled to raise a short-term loan to cover the unforeseen expenditure. The contributions received through the High Commissioner and from voluntary agencies had indeed been most welcome, yet they fell far short of the total, and by the end of the year an amount of some \$7 million spent by the Yugoslav Government would still be uncovered. As the High Commissioner had stated, a country of first asylum which had opened

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(Mr. Makiedo, Yugoslavia)

its frontiers to refugees should not be left to carry the financial burden; that burden, imposed by geography and assumed for humanitarian reasons, should be shared by the international community. International solidarity, as the High Commissioner had also pointed out, seemed not to have manifested itself sufficiently in behalf of Yugoslavia, and his Government therefore hoped that those expenses would be covered in the same way as the expenses of other countries of first asylum. Action for that purpose by other Member States would be in line with the General Assembly's recommendations on the subject.

He agreed with the High Commissioner that the main efforts of the international community should continue to be directed towards the legal protection of refugees and the situation of those refugees who were still living in camps. As the High Commissioner had suggested, permanent solutions should be sought primarily through repatriation and resettlement, while integration should be resorted to only when the other two possibilities had failed.

His delegation had supported the Economic and Social Council resolution recommending the extension of the Office of the High Commissioner for another term of five years, and would support the Netherlands draft resolution (A/C.3/L.638) to that effect.

Mr. SMALL (New Zealand) commended the High Commissioner for Refugees for his work and in particular for his consistent application of the principle that each refugee must be treated as an individual who would not readily regain the fulness of human dignity unless he was removed from camp and assisted in resuming a normal life. That same humanitarian concern had been shown by the Office of the High Commissioner on the occasion of the Hungarian crisis.

In recent years the New Zealand Government had greatly increased its contributions for refugees and in 1957, in view of the special burden of the Hungarian refugee problem, it was making a special payment of £25,000 over and above its normal contribution of £10,000. Moreover, private contributions in New Zealand for Hungarian relief had amounted to over £50,000.

Owing to the speed with which arrangements to marshal all available resources had been made, the Hungarian refugee problem had been brought down to manageable size, and he hoped that by further international effort the plight of the remaining Hungarian refugees would be quickly alleviated.

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(Mr. Small, New Zealand)

The High Commissioner had suggested that, in order to settle the older refugee problem and to close the 199 refugee camps that would still be existing in Europe by the end of 1960, the permanent solutions programme of UNREF should be intensified. His delegation supported action of the kind indicated by the Executive Committee of UNREF and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council. The New Zealand Government, for its part, would give careful consideration to the consequent need for additional funds.

He was grateful to the United Kingdom and Chinese representatives for their information and comments on the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong, whose misfortunes deserved general sympathy. It seemed clear that the Hong Kong authorities were making a maximum effort to deal with them.

His Government was in favour of extending the High Commissioner's mandate for a further period of five years and he was therefore in general agreement with the Netherlands draft resolution (A/C.3/L.638).

Mrs. LEIVO-LARSSON (Finland) also congratulated the High Commissioner on his successful work.

Her Government had made some contributions to international refugee aid, in particular for the Palestinian and Hungarian refugees. It was, however, unable to increase its financial support of what it regarded as a laudable international activity. In recent years it had been compelled, almost single-handed, to resettle some 500,000 displaced Finns, a number representing nearly 12 per cent of the total population. The resettlement, which had involved the construction of houses, schools and hospitals and the finding of work and farming land for the displaced persons had been a severe financial drain on the country. The Finnish people sincerely hoped that the refugee problem would soon cease to exist and that all refugees would be given an opportunity to resume a normal existence.

Mr. ETEZADI (Iran) congratulated the High Commissioner on the excellent work done by his Office, particularly for the Hungarian refugees. It was encouraging that 165,000 of them had been resettled, thanks to the combined efforts of Governments, international and inter-governmental organizations and voluntary agencies. That situation had been handled so well

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(Mr. Etezadi, Iran)

and so speedily that hope could be entertained of a general solution for the whole refugee question. Austria and the other countries which had received the refugees and the various voluntary agencies were to be highly commended for their high-minded generosity and untiring efforts.

He was happy to note that the UNREF programme had retained its original humanitarian and social, and non-political character. The programme for emergency aid and permanent solutions had been in operation for approximately three years and was effective, in spite of some setbacks. The 1955 plan of operations had been completed, the 1956 plan was being carried out and a beginning had been made with the 1957 plan.

Of the three solutions, repatriation, resettlement overseas and integration, voluntary repatriation should be stressed. The High Commissioner had, in accordance with the requests of the General Assembly, always emphasized voluntary repatriation as a solution and its importance as a guiding policy could not be over-emphasized. The Iranian Government preferred repatriation as a permanent solution, provided that it was truly voluntary.

Repatriation was not, however, always acceptable to the individual refugee and every effort must be made to find other solutions for those who did not wish to be repatriated. He congratulated those countries which were pursuing a liberal policy of resettlement overseas, thus facilitating the task of the High Commissioner, and those which had taken special measures for the benefit of the refugees and made efforts to facilitate integration in their territory.

The refugee's resettlement was made easier if he was adequately prepared for life in his new homeland and properly informed of the difficulties of integration. The High Commissioner's programme for that purpose was to be commended for integration in the country of first asylum might encounter economic and social obstacles.

Although all refugees were entitled to sympathy, those who had been longest in camps should be given priority under the programme of permanent solutions. That policy should not be lost sight of because new groups of refugees had appeared. International co-operation and assistance were essential and a special effort should be made by Governments which were more fortunate than the Iranian Government, in that they were not faced with a refugee problem.

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(Mr. Etezadi, Iran)

His delegation fully endorsed the recommendation of the Economic and Social Council that the Office of the High Commissioner should be continued for a period of five years from 1 January 1959 (650 B (XXIV)). It was obviously desirable that the High Commissioner should have more time to complete his mandate. The Iranian delegation also supported the Netherlands draft resolution (A/C.3/L.638).

Mrs. QUART (Canada) praised the High Commissioner's Office for the excellent work it had done, in particular for the tremendous additional effort it had made to assist the Hungarian refugees. It was very encouraging that, thanks to the co-operation of some forty countries, nearly 165,000 of the 199,000 Hungarian refugees had been given at least temporary homes. About 36,000 Hungarian refugees had taken refuge in Canada. About 1,000 of those had come from Yugoslavia and the Canadian Government had recently agreed to accept 700 more Hungarians from Yugoslavia. It was hoped that the latter group would reach Canada before the end of the year. Free transport to Canada, and care and assistance had been provided by the Canadian Government at a cost of approximately \$10 million, not including assistance given by provincial and municipal authorities and voluntary agencies, or the \$1 million voted by the Canadian Parliament for emergency assistance at the time of the Hungarian crisis.

Every effort had been made to help the refugees to adapt themselves to their new life and the vast majority were settling down without difficulty. Nevertheless, a very small number, only a fraction of 1 per cent of the 36,000 Hungarian refugees who had come to Canada, had returned to Hungary or applied for assistance to return to that country. No obstacles had been placed in their way: in fact, the Canadian Government had provided free transport for their return.

As her delegation had stressed at the time of the Hungarian crisis, the influx of new refugees should not cause the international community to forget those refugees who had been waiting since the end of the war in camps and reception centres in Europe. The speedy closing of the refugee camps in Europe was of the highest importance. Both in the UNREF committee and in the Economic and Social Council, her delegation had strongly supported the

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(Mrs. Quart, Canada)

resolutions requesting the High Commissioner to intensify his efforts to that end. The success of the High Commissioner's endeavours depended on further contributions from Governments. The General Assembly had approved a four-year programme of permanent solutions, costing \$16 million; it was regrettable that even that sum had not been placed at the disposal of the High Commissioner.

As the task of the High Commissioner could not be completed by the end of 1958, her delegation endorsed the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its twenty-fourth session recommending that the Office of the High Commissioner should be continued for a period of five years from 1 January 1959. As a logical consequence, it also supported the Netherlands draft resolution (A/C.3/L.638), embodying and amplifying that recommendation.

Although her delegation desired the prolongation of the High Commissioner's mandate, it was anxious for the United Nations Refugee Fund to be closed. As several programmes would not be completed by the date envisaged for the closure of the Fund, her Government would favour a draft resolution, such as the one mentioned by the representative of the United States, recommending the discontinuance of the operations of the United Nations Refugee Fund, with the exception of the programmes started and not completed by the end of 1958. Provision would, of course, have to be made for some continuing machinery to supervise the programmes which had not been completed by that date and for acting promptly in the event of a new refugee situation. Her delegation would support the establishment of a body responsible for deciding whether it was appropriate for international assistance to be given in solving specific refugee questions as they might arise. Such a body might have an emergency fund, upon which it could draw pending the receipt of moneys from appeals to the international community, that it might authorize the High Commissioner to make.

She had listened with close attention to the statements made by the representatives of the United Kingdom and China on the Chinese refugees in Hong Kong. Her Government was aware of the generous policy of the Hong Kong authorities towards refugees seeking asylum or economic betterment in Hong Kong. The Hambro report showed the complicated nature of the situation and the Hong Kong authorities' booklet, "A Problem of People", gave an outline of their efforts to solve it.

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(Mrs. Quart, Canada)

The High Commissioner was to be commended for the success achieved by his Office in carrying out a difficult task, for which it had received the Nobel Peace Prize. Nevertheless, no final solution for the refugee question had yet been found and there was no guarantee that there would not be a recurrence of the matter in future years. The necessity for a permanent body was only too obvious.

Mr. COX (Peru) paid a tribute to the memory of the late Mr. van Heuven Goedhart, the former High Commissioner for Refugees, whose generous efforts in behalf of the refugees would not soon be forgotten. The Latin American countries had always welcomed refugees and Colombia was to be highly commended for defending the right of asylum.

Peru was anxious to do all it could to alleviate the sufferings of the refugees; it had offered homes to 1,000 Hungarians and had also contributed to UNREF. His Government gave its unqualified support to the efforts of the High Commissioner and to the proposal to continue his Office for a period of five years from 1 January 1959. He associated himself with those delegations which had congratulated the High Commissioner on the work done.

As the High Commissioner had pointed out in his statement, the international protection of refugees was a continuing necessity. There could be no difference of opinion on that point.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.