

30 November 1956

NOTE ON A MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER, 1956 TO DISCUSS
DPI COOPERATION IN PLANS FOR RELIEF TO THE
HUNGARIAN PEOPLE

Present : Professor Ahmed S. Bokhari (Chairman)

Mr. Philippe de Seynes
Mr. Peter Aylen
Mr. Myer Cohen
Mr. Thorold Dickinson
Mr. V. Duckworth-Barker
Mr. Reinholdt Eriksen
Mr. Wilder Foote
Mr. George Janacek
Mr. T.A. Raman
Mr. V.J.G. Stavridi

1. The meeting heard brief summaries of the current situation in regard both to relief in Hungary and assistance to Hungarian refugees. It was explained that an appeal to Governments was launched on 15 November asking them to make contributions to relief in Hungary, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution A/RES/393. Most replies so far specified assistance offered through other channels, such as the Red Cross. A joint appeal to governments on behalf of Hungarian refugees was about to be issued by the Secretary-General and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, but had been delayed pending agreement on an appropriate target figure. This appeal to governments would be followed immediately by an appeal on behalf of refugees addressed to NGOs.

The need was emphasized for additional funds and for coordination of effort between the various organs concerned. The chief of these are United Nations, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies.

The special responsibilities laid upon the Secretary-General in connexion with the stimulation of contributions from governmental and non-governmental sources marked, to some extent, a new departure and appeared to give DPI a greater freedom of action than in the past to play an active part in promoting fund-raising by appropriate organs. It was proposed that a letter from External Services to Information Centre Directors would suggest ways in which they could cooperate.

2. Specifically, it was agreed that the following steps be taken :

- a) a short bulletin to be issued weekly or twice-weekly for DPI use, summarizing current needs, contributions received and relevant activities;
- b) governments to be asked to support the appeal issued to NGOs and, if possible, to help in coordinating fund-raising efforts on a national basis. A recognized channel for receiving contributions in each country was felt to be essential, if confusion and waste were to be avoided.
- c) Press and Publications
Immediate efforts to be concentrated on publicizing the appeals for refugees by the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner's

Office. Later releases to be issued on contributions as received or on other steps taken. Subsequently, a pamphlet might be prepared.

d) Radio and Visual Services

- (i) Three UN radio reporters to be sent to Austria for 3-4 weeks. They would work among the refugees and would provide UN radio and national networks with colour material, interviews, feature programmes, etc. in English, French and Spanish;
- (ii) A film director, a cameraman and an assistant to be sent to Austria. Within ten days, it was expected that they would begin to send two-minute "flashes" on the refugees for placing in TV programmes and newsreels, so as to secure maximum dramatic and cumulative effect. It was hoped that, within one month, they would have material for a half hour TV programme, also usable as a documentary film. This could be commented by a famous name and it would concentrate on presenting the most moving aspects of the refugees' story.
- (iii) It was agreed that the fund-raising potentiality of this radio and film material would be very greatly enhanced if, in each country, a single nation-wide address could be given for contributions from listeners and viewers.
- (iv) A still photographer, based in Europe, to be sent to work amongst the refugees with the radio reporters and the film crew. The famous name considered as script writer for the film might also provide copy for pictorial spreads in influential magazines.

e) NGOs

Voluntary organizations, many of which were already participating in fund-raising efforts should be encouraged to continue and extend those efforts and should also be urged to support and play an active part in any national committees or similar groups which might be set up to avoid waste of effort and to secure better coordination.

It was suggested that short conferences might be held at UN Headquarters and at the Palais des Nations to explain to NGO representatives the aims and methods of UN work for relief in Hungary and for Hungarian refugees, to answer their questions and to back up the appeal.

f) Information Centres

Directors to be supplied with documentation on the questions of relief to Hungary and refugees and to receive periodical notes bringing them up to date on developments and giving them guidance as to the best ways in which they could stimulate activity in their respective regions.

3. Next meeting - 11 a.m., Wednesday, 5 December.