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Seventh Report on the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees transmitted to the Council of Europe

Report

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1. Introduction

1. In previous annual memoranda submitted to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe for its information, an account was given of the activities of the High Commissioner for Refugees in the preceding twelve months.
2. In this memorandum, members of the Assembly are also given general information on the task of UNHCR, including a review of the methods followed in seeking solutions to the various problems concerning refugees.

2. PART I - General information on the task of UNHCR

Definition of the term of refugee

3. According to the UNHCR Statute, refugees within the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner are persons who, owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion, are outside their country of origin and are unable, or owing to such fear unwilling, to avail themselves of the protection of that country. Refugees meeting these conditions are entitled to the protection of the Office of the High Commissioner irrespective of their geographical location. Refugees who are assisted by other UN agencies or who have the same rights and obligations as nationals of their country of residence are outside the mandate of UNHCR.
4. The main distinction between refugees within the mandate of UNHCR and persons falling within the mandate of the Council of Europe's Special Representative for National Refugees and Over-population is that the Special Representative is concerned with "national" refugees who enjoy the same rights as nationals of the country in which they reside. His activity is complementary to that of UNHCR, and through the assistance given by him to national refugees the Special Representative is partly relieving the burden of countries of residence of these refugees and therefore indirectly facilitating the task of this Office.

Survey of the non-settled refugee population

5. In the past, one of the problems facing the High Commissioner has been that of determining the number of non-settled refugees within his mandate. A survey was therefore undertaken by the Office in those six countries (Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Turkey) where the vast majority of non-settled refugees live. This showed that in mid-1957 there were 58,000 such refugees living in camps and 120,000 living outside camps.
6. The total number of refugees coming within the mandate of UNHCR is estimated at about two million, including one million in European countries. The refugees who have been resettled overseas are in most cases well on the way to becoming integrated.
7. On 1st July 1957, refugees within the mandate in Europe, including Hungarian refugees, were distributed in accordance with the following estimates:
 - 7.1. Austria - 77,000
 - 7.2. Belgium - 67,000
 - 7.3. France - 280,000
 - 7.4. Germany - 220,000
 - 7.5. Greece - 16,000
 - 7.6. Italy - 20,000
 - 7.7. Netherlands - 15,000
 - 7.8. Sweden - 29,000
 - 7.9. Switzerland - 21,000
 - 7.10. United Kingdom - 182,000
 - 7.11. Other countries - 10,000

7.12. TOTAL - 937,000

Distribution of non-settled refugees by main categories

8. Of these 937,000 refugees, 178,000 were considered as non-settled. By 1st January 1958 the number of non-settled refugees had decreased to 160,000, as shown in the following table:

	Total number of non-settled refugees	Non-settled refugees outside camps	Non-settled refugees inside camps
Austria	46,500	26,000	20,500
France	36,000	36,000	
Germany	55,700	37,000	18,700
Greece	9,400	8,000	1,400
Italy	11,600	5,000	6,600
Turkey	800	500	300
	160,000	112,500	47,500

9. These figures include an estimated 21,000 difficult cases, or refugees and their dependents who are too old or sick to earn a living. Also included in the above table are the new Hungarian refugees, about whom more detailed information can be found in paragraphs 40-48.

10. In addition, there are some 10,000 refugees of European origin on the Chinese mainland who are being resettled in other countries under the Joint Operation of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration and this Office.

11. In the past year this Office has assisted two further categories of refugees: those who had to leave the Middle East as the result of events which took place in that area in 1956 and those who went from Algeria to Tunisia.

Main forms of assistance to refugees

12. In accordance with its Statute the main task of the Office of the High Commissioner is: " to assume the function of providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations, to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting Governments and, subject to the approval of the Governments concerned, private organisations to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new national communities ».

13. The Office also provides emergency aid for the neediest groups of refugees, as authorised by the General Assembly in its Resolution 538 (VI).

Main activities of the Office

14. The task of international protection is carried out by defining and seeking to improve the legal status of refugees in various countries and by the promotion of intergovernmental instruments which include clauses for the benefit of refugees. The main instrument is the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the application of which is supervised by this Office.

15. The permanent solutions fall into three categories: voluntary repatriation, resettlement in other countries, and integration.

16. If a refugee expresses the wish to return to his home country he is put in touch with the authorities of that country, and the Office assists the refugee wherever possible to overcome difficulties in the way of his repatriation. In the case of refugees being visited by repatriation missions a member of the staff of this Office is present during interviews to ensure that no pressure is exercised on the refugee from any side.

17. Under the programme of the United Nations Refugee Fund drawn up by the General Assembly in October 1954, refugees who are not firmly settled, and in particular those living in camps, are assisted in establishing themselves: either through the promotion of resettlement in another country, movements in most cases being carried out by the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), or through integration in their country of residence, in close co-operation with the authorities of that country. The programme is carried out under the supervision of the 21-member UNREF Executive Committee, comprised

of Government representatives from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Holy See, Iran, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States and Venezuela.

18. The Fund was established for the four-year period 1954-1958. The target for voluntary governmental contributions for the Fund was fixed at \$16,000,000. With these funds projects for integration and resettlement of refugees are financed by this Office, which supervises their implementation by voluntary agencies and by the authorities in the countries of residence. From within those countries supporting contributions are made to these projects. Until 30th April 1958 these supporting contributions have amounted to approximately \$16,000,000.

19. Within the UNREF programme, a specific amount is earmarked every year for the settlement of difficult cases, the transfer of refugees of European origin from the mainland of China (Far Eastern Operation), and emergency aid to the neediest groups of refugees.

20. In addition to governmental contributions, funds are also being obtained from nongovernmental sources. By 31st August 1958 a total of 82,042,732 had been obtained from such sources. The largest private contribution made to the programme is nearly 81,000,000 given by the Netherlands people as the result of a public campaign held in 1955. Further fund-raising campaigns are being organized. In this connection a proposal for a World refugee year has originated in the United Kingdom, where it has the support of the Government and voluntary agencies. The main objectives of the World Refugee Year are (a) to raise funds for assistance to refugees, through Governments, voluntary agencies and the general public and (b) to encourage further opportunities for permanent solutions as defined in the UNHCR Statute. At its ninth (special) session the Executive Committee considered this proposal and expressed support of it in the following resolution¹: - "The Executive Committee, - Having considered the proposal for a "World Refugee Year as envisaged by the Government and voluntary agencies in the United Kingdom; - Noting that this proposal has two aims, namely:

20.1. to focus interest in the world refugee problem and to encourage additional financial contributions from Governments, voluntary agencies and the general public for its solution;

20.2. to encourage additional opportunities for permanent solutions, as defined in the Statute of the High Commissioner for Refugees,

Supports the proposal, and requests the High Commissioner to bring it to the attention of the Thirteenth Session of the General Assembly as a practical means of securing increased assistance for refugees throughout the world, in accordance with the wishes and needs of each country. "

21. In the course of the discussion it was stressed that in order to be effective the arrangements for organising a World Refugee Year must be flexible. The Committee generally agreed that funds collected within the framework of the World Refugee Year should benefit all categories of refugees, and that each participating country should be able to decide on the allocation of the funds it had raised.

Basic policy of UNHCR

22. In carrying out the above-mentioned activities, the High Commissioner follows the basic principles set forth in the Statute that the work of the Office should be of a humanitarian and social character and entirely non-political.

23. In seeking solutions to the problems of refugees, UNHCR is guided by the principle of family unity and endeavours to give the refugee the fullest freedom in the choice of the solution most appropriate to his problem. Refugees wishing to return to their home country or to be resettled in another country are assisted in every way. Every effort is being made by UNHCR, through negotiations with the Governments of countries of resettlement, and in co-operation with the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration and with the Administration of the United States Escapee Program, to take advantage of any resettlement opportunity which becomes available. Particular attention is being given to the emigration of families with one difficult case or handicapped refugee who can be cared for by other self-supporting members of the family, and to the resettlement of refugees who, on account of some physical or social handicap, cannot be accepted under current emigration programmes. Certain countries have already admitted substantial numbers of such refugees; and others are ready to do so if a resettlement grant is provided. Considerable attention is also paid to the reunion of members of families, some of whom could not rejoin their relatives in immigration countries owing to the fact that they have been previously rejected on medical grounds.

1. Resolution No 10, on the proposal for a World Refugee Year, adopted at the 63rd Sitting, on 26th September 1958.

24. In a case where the non-settled refugee cannot be admitted to another country for resettlement or does not wish to emigrate or to be repatriated, he is given an opportunity, subject to certain conditions, to benefit from integration projects carried out under the United Nations Refugee Fund.

25. In accordance with the policy laid down by the UNREF Executive Committee, first priority is given to the refugee camp population. Many of these refugees have been living in camps since the end of the second world war. They include a high percentage of women and of children who have never known a normal existence. The primary object is, therefore, to clear the camps within the shortest possible time.

Further action on behalf of refugees

26. At its Twelfth Session in December 1957 the General Assembly of the United Nations in its Resolution 1165 (XII) decided to continue the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for a period of five years from 1st January 1959.

27. In Resolution 1166 (XII), also adopted at its Twelfth Session, the General Assembly requested the High Commissioner to intensify the programme of the United Nations Refugee Fund to the fullest extent possible in order to achieve permanent solutions for the maximum number of refugees remaining in camps, without losing sight of the need to continue to seek solutions for the problems of refugees outside, camps. In order to carry out this resolution a special camp clearance programme has been drawn up, for the implementation of which it is estimated that \$4,800,000 will be required, in addition to the \$16,000,000 target for governmental contributions to UNREF. The camp clearance programme is intended to make it possible for those refugees still in camps who do not benefit from other international programmes to leave the camps with the assistance of UNHCR before the end of 1960. The General Assembly authorised the High Commissioner to appeal to States Members of the United Nations or of the Specialised Agencies for the additional funds needed for clearing the refugee camps.

28. The General Assembly also provided for the establishment of an Executive Committee on 1st January 1959. Its membership is the same as that of the UNREF Executive Committee, with the addition of the Republic of China, Sweden, Tunisia and Yugoslavia. The new Committee will itself pronounce on such further programmes as might be required to help solve specific refugee problems remaining or arising after 31st December 1958.

29. Pending the entry into function of this Committee in January 1959 the UNREF Executive Committee was requested to exercise in 1958 some of the functions of that Committee.

30. The UNREF Executive Committee, at its ninth (special) Session held from 25th to 26th September 1958, considered the action necessary to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to complete by the end of 1960 the clearance of camps, and to give assistance to those non-settled refugees living outside camps. The opinion was expressed in the Committee that it would be most desirable, and in accordance with past General Assembly decisions, for international assistance to be provided on a diminishing scale in subsequent years and that international programmes should aim at assisting the host countries to provide permanent solutions for refugees only where this was not possible from national resources. In considering the programmes before it the Committee supported the principle that there still remained the need for assistance, particularly for refugees living in camps, for handicapped refugees and for European refugees who would have to be transferred from the mainland of China.

31. The Executive Committee recognised that on past years' experience contributions of \$4,700,000 might be expected, of which \$3,700,000 might come from Governments and \$1,000,000 from private sources. On the other hand, the Committee considered that, if the pressing needs of refugees were to be met, programmes to a total of \$6,000,000 would be necessary for 1959.

32. The breakdown of the amount of \$ 6,000,000 is as follows:

32.1. Camp Clearance Programme²

32.2. Far Eastern Programme :

a. UNHCR expenditure:

Care and maintenance of refugees in Hong Kong - 210,000

Administrative costs of Hong Kong Office - 25,000

2. An amount of \$ 150,000 for administrative expenses is included in the figure for camp clearance.

Assistance from voluntary agencies - 108,000

Resettlement of difficult cases - 337,000

- b. ICEM expenditure: - Transportation costs (not included in total)
- 32.3. Programme for non-settled refugees living outside camps :
 - a. Permanent solutions for refugees in handicapped categories - 1,000,000
 - b. Registration and follow-up - 70,000
 - c. Case-work and counselling - 120,000
 - d. Promotion of education - 20,000
 - e. Vocational training - 30,000
 - f. Supplementary aid - 80,000 - 1,320,000
- 32.4. Emergency account for individual cases - 50,000
- 32.5. Programme for new refugees in Greece³ - 240,000
- 32.6. Legal assistance - 80,000
- 32.7. Contribution to administrative budget of UNHGR ⁴ - 330,000 - Grand total - 6,000,000

3. PART II - Progress achieved from July 1957 to July 1958

International protection

33. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is now in force in the following 22 States: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ecuador, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia and the United Kingdom. In several other countries, ratification of or accession to the Convention is under active consideration, and its provisions are already being applied.

34. An Agreement relating to Refugee Seamen was unanimously adopted in November 1957 by the Governments of Belgium, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The Agreement was drafted at a series of intergovernmental conferences called upon the initiative of the Netherlands Government. The Agreement establishes criteria whereby refugee seamen who have no country in which they may lawfully stay shall be issued, by States parties to the Agreement, with the travel document provided for by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, or a similar document, and be accepted in the territory of the State concerned. A certain number of signatory States are already applying its principles. The Agreement has so far been ratified by France and the United Kingdom.

35. Consultations took place during the period under review between UNHCR and the Council of Europe on various questions of international protection. A provision was included in the European Extradition Convention, adopted in December 1957, with the object of safeguarding refugees against extradition to a country where they may fear persecution. The UNHCR also co-operated with the Special Committee on the Simplification of Frontier Formalities, which has adopted a multilateral agreement for the exemption of refugees from visas. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted, on the proposal of the Special Committee, Resolution (58) 5 on measures for facilitating travel by refugees.

36. A further development in the field of refugee travel is the entry into force in May 1957 of an arrangement between the Benelux countries and France, exempting refugees from the requirement of an entry visa for temporary travel between those countries; similar arrangements already exist between the Benelux countries.

3. Including permanent solutions for refugees arrived in Greece in 1957-1958.

4. A amount of \$150,000 for administrative expenses is included in the figure for camp clearance.

37. This Office has also closely collaborated with OEEC in connection with the movement of refugees for employment. A recommendation has been adopted by the OEEC Manpower Committee to the effect that refugees who travel to another member country in order to take up employment under the OEEC Council (Decision C (56) 258) shall be issued with a travel document giving them the right of return valid for a period of two years.

38. The determination of the eligibility of refugees under the 1951 Convention is of great importance as it is the prerequisite for their enjoyment of the benefits of the Convention and is also frequently taken as the criterion for the granting of asylum. This Office co-operates with governmental authorities to varying extents in the determination of eligibility under the Convention in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands. In Austria a new procedure has been instituted, by a decree of 29 th March 1958, according to which decisions on eligibility are taken by the Austrian authorities, with UNHCR representatives acting in an advisory capacity.

39. The right to work is one of the most important rights which can be granted to a refugee, and improvements in this respect have been made during the period under review, particularly in Italy. The final step in the integration of a refugee in his country of residence must always be naturalisation, and measures are being pursued by this Office to facilitate naturalisation.

40. The UNHCR has continued discussions with the German authorities on further measures for the indemnification of refugees who were victims of Nazi persecution.

Hungarian refugee problem

41. The total number of Hungarian refugees reaches about 200,000, of whom 180,000 arrived in Austria and 20,000 in Yugoslavia. A relatively small number sought asylum in other European countries after arriving as normal travellers.

42. At the end of January 1958, the High Commissioner was able to announce that solutions, through voluntary repatriation, resettlement or local integration, had been found for every refugee who had entered Yugoslavia. Of outstanding note was the fact that immigration countries accepted for resettlement many refugees suffering from serious physical ailments and other handicaps that would normally prevent their inclusion in resettlement schemes. This result is to be attributed to remarkable cooperation between the Yugoslav and other Governments, the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, the Administration of the United States Escapee Program, the League of Red Cross Societies and the other voluntary agencies. The Yugoslav Government has, however, been left with a substantial deficit on its expenditure for Hungarian refugees.

43. By the end of August 1958 a total of 166,000 Hungarian refugees had been resettled, 17,000 had been repatriated and some 17,000 were still in Austria, including 6,800 in camps.

44. In Austria, the year from July 1957 to July 1958 has been marked by a progressive slowdown in emigration. Although voluntary repatriation has continued without major difficulty, the possibilities of resettlement from Austria have become increasingly inadequate. At the end of August 1958 there were still some 17,000 Hungarian refugees in Austria, of whom an estimated 7-8,000 wish to emigrate. There were also some 500 Hungarian refugees in Italy waiting for emigration. Further opportunities for emigration have, however, recently been offered by Canada, Luxembourg, Switzerland and the United States, and a drive is being made to find resettlement openings for all refugees wishing to leave Austria and Italy.

45. To meet the needs of Hungarian refugees wishing to remain in Austria, UNHCR is implementing a \$3,500,000 permanent solutions programme. The major part is devoted to the construction of housing and the provision of small loans. In view of the high proportion of young refugees, there is also a complete range of educational projects from kindergarten to university. The need for this educational programme will remain for several years, and arrangements have been made for its continuation by the Austrian authorities, with backing from the United States Government.

Voluntary repatriation

46. As hitherto, the voluntary repatriation of refugees within the mandate of UNHCR has been facilitated in accordance with the provisions of the Statute, and refugees expressing to this Office the desire to be repatriated have been referred to the authorities of their country of origin. In the past year, under the terms of

Resolution 925 (X) of the General Assembly, representatives of this Office have accompanied repatriation missions in Austria and Yugoslavia to ensure that no pressure from any side was exercised on refugees applying for repatriation.

47. From 1st July 1957 to 1st July 1958 an estimated 4,300 Hungarian refugees returned to Hungary. According to information available to this Office, 2,000 other refugees returned to their country of origin in the course of 1957, including 1,000 from France and 500 from the Federal Republic of Germany.

Resettlement

48. Between November 1956 and August 1958, some 166,800 Hungarian refugees were transported from Austria and Yugoslavia to countries of second asylum or resettlement, the vast majority by or under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration. During 1957, some 35,000 other refugees were resettled under the auspices of ICEM.

49. European Governments have continued to make a considerable contribution towards the resettlement of refugees. Of the 166,000 Hungarian refugees resettled since November 1956, over 87,000 were offered admission to European countries, including 5,900 to Belgium, 12,700 to France, 15,500 to Germany, 7,200 to Sweden, 12,700 to Switzerland, and 21,700 to the United Kingdom. During 1957 some 2,500 other refugees, including 1,000 physically handicapped, were resettled in Europe, mainly in Belgium, France, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

50. In some instances, grants from UNREF or from USEP have been necessary to facilitate the establishment of handicapped refugees, while in others the receiving Governments have shouldered the full responsibility.

The programme of the United Nations Refugee Fund

51. In 1958 the UNREF programme entered its fourth and final year. Up to 30th September 1958, Governments had announced contributions to UNREF and to the Camp Clearance Programme totalling \$16,543,518, which includes \$8,137,783 from 16 European Governments. Under Resolution 1166 (XII) of the General Assembly the UNREF programme will come to an end on 31st December 1958. It will be replaced by a series of separate programmes, as shown in paragraph 30 above. These programmes include a programme for camp clearance which was already started in 1958 and will be spread over 1959 and 1960.

52. In the past four years the UNREF programme has been implemented in twelve countries of Europe and the Middle and Far East. UNREF projects are of four kinds: permanent solutions, settlement of difficult cases, the Far Eastern Operation and emergency aid. The major part of the permanent solutions programme is being carried out in the countries with a camp population, in Austria, Germany, Greece and Italy. The programme is comprised mainly of projects for housing, counselling and vocational training, but it also includes loans to establish independent craftsmen, loans to small enterprises employing refugees, settlement of refugees in agriculture, scholarships to refugee students, aid to difficult cases and emergency assistance.

53. By 30th April 1958, 519 projects had either been or were being completed. These represented an outlay of \$10,466,171 from UNREF and approximately \$16,000,000 by the beneficiary countries. On the same date another 122 projects, costing \$3,034,830 to UNREF, were in various stages of negotiation. By 31st March 1958 some 35,000 refugees had benefited from the programme, of whom 22,039 refugees had been firmly settled, including 7,123 living in camps.

Survey of non-settled refugees

54. The survey of the non-settled refugee population in various countries referred to in paragraph 5 of this report revealed that within the number of 58,200 refugees living in camps at mid-summer 1957, 33,700 were not eligible for assistance under the USEP programme. Of these 2,400 were considered likely to emigrate before the end of 1958. Of the remaining 31,300 refugees living in camps, 11,800 were in households affected by physical, social or economic handicaps, 2,100 were in households one or more members of which needed employment, while 17,400 needed adequate accommodation only.

55. Of the 120,000 non-settled refugees living outside camps, 97,000 were not expected to emigrate under normal schemes and were not eligible for USEP assistance. Of these 97,000 some 35,500 were in households affected by physical, social or economic handicaps, 17,500 were in households one or more members of which needed employment, while 43,500 needed adequate accommodation only.

Permanent solutions

56. The permanent solutions programme has been increasingly focussed on the refugee camp population in Austria, Germany, Greece and Italy. During 1958 it is planned to clear 21 camps in Austria, 27 in Germany, while in Greece and in Italy most of the earlier refugees will be enabled to leave the camps. Self-help was the original objective of UNREF, but this has become more and more difficult to achieve, since most of the refugees who could be helped to become self-supporting have now been settled, while those who remain are handicapped refugees who require more assistance. These persons must often be given long and extensive counselling, and, because many of them may never be able to earn a normal wage, special arrangements have to be made in order to reduce the rent on new accommodation to a level the refugees can afford.

57. In Austria by 31st March 1958, a total of 9,989 refugees had been firmly settled under projects for permanent solutions, while another 5,475 had benefited from the UNREF programme. By that date 935 dwelling units had been completed, 648 had been started and a further 1,238 were being planned. As regards the counselling programme, every effort has been made to ensure that full coverage is available for the 21 camps listed for closure in 1958, so that the refugees may be informed on the housing, credit and rehabilitation facilities available under the UNREF programme.

58. In Germany by 31st March, a total of 3,749 refugees had been firmly settled, and a further 5,106 had benefited from permanent solutions projects. Germany has the largest number of refugees in camps. In 1958 it is planned to clear 27 camps containing 5,700 refugees under both the UNREF programme and a German barracks clearance programme. Since the beginning of the UNREF programme, 348 dwelling units have been completed, 583 have been started, and a further 647 have been planned. Other components of the UNREF programme in Germany include counselling, rehabilitation of handicapped refugees, and installation loans and grants.

59. In Greece by 31st March, a total of 488 refugees had been firmly established under permanent solutions projects, while 371 more had benefited. Despite the continuing refugee influx, the Greek Government will clear as many camps as possible during 1958.

60. In Italy by 31st March, a total of 738 refugees had been firmly settled under the permanent solutions programme. Because of Italy's surplus population, the emphasis of the UNREF programme has been placed on resettlement rather than integration. So far 507 refugees have emigrated under UNREF projects, and from the beginning of 1958 a joint ICEM-UNHCR, processing centre has been operated at Latina.

61. The permanent solutions programme has been implemented on a smaller scale in five other countries. In Belgium, nearly 2,000 refugees have benefited from a counselling scheme; in France 230 handicapped refugees have been rehabilitated; while in Lebanon, Turkey and the United Arab Republic, some 250 refugees have benefited under various projects.

Settlement of difficult cases

62. According to the recent survey there were in mid-1957 some 4,700 refugees in camps who because of age or illness could not earn their own living or who had no relatives to support them. There were a further 1,000 such refugees of European origin in the Far East, and a more limited number in the Middle East.

63. By 31st March, 936 difficult cases in Europe had been settled under UNREF projects. Of these 307 had been settled in local institutions, 492 had been moved abroad, while 137 aged refugees, in Greece and Italy, had been given annuities. A notable development in the past two years has been the transfer overseas of difficult cases among European refugees from China, who have been accepted by Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

Emergency aid

64. Emergency aid projects for the most needy groups of refugees have been implemented in Greece, Italy, Turkey and three Arab countries. In 1957, 5,390 refugees were given medical and relief assistance, while in the first three months of 1958 2,969 refugees had benefited from this, programme.

Far Eastern Operation

65. At the beginning of 1958, there were still some 10,300 refugees of European origin on the mainland of China, nearly all of whom left the USSR after the Russian revolution. Resettlement opportunities exist for about half of this number, but funds were not available to ICEM for their transportation. Before being moved abroad, these refugees pass through Hong Kong where their care and maintenance is financed by the UNHCR.

66. During 1957 the number entering Hong Kong increased so rapidly that funds available to ICEM for their transport and to the High Commissioner for their maintenance were used up earlier than had been anticipated. A joint appeal for funds was made by the Director of ICEM and the High Commissioner in January 1958, to which several Governments responded. Between January and August 1958 a total of 1,500-refugees were moved overseas, and the case-load in transit through Hong Kong was at last reduced to the agreed one of 250 persons. This operation is now planned to be completed by the end of 1961, with ICEM moving 3,000 refugees a year. The total cost to UNHCR for care and maintenance during the same period would reach \$525,000 provided the average caseload in Hong Kong could be kept at 250 persons and the average transit time at three weeks.

4. CONCLUSIONS

67. The progress achieved both in the field of international protection and in finding permanent solutions for non-settled refugees is due in no small part to the understanding attitude and generosity evidenced by the Governments and peoples of European countries. The support given to this Office by the Council of Europe has been encouraging. In the field of international protection the co-operation between the Council of Europe and UNHCR has resulted in the simplification of travel formalities for refugees and the inclusion of refugees in European social security schemes. The Council of Europe has further demonstrated its practical support of the work of this Office through its recommendations to Governments to give a favourable response to the appeals addressed to them by UNHCR, through its own contribution to this Office for Hungarian refugees, and through the impulse it has given to public opinion in its member countries.

68. It will be seen from this report that, while the Hungarian refugee problem has been solved in Yugoslavia, a final solution has still to be achieved for the Hungarian refugees in Austria. Moreover, in Austria, Germany, Greece and Italy, there still remain some 40,000 refugees within the mandate of this Office in camps, where many of them have lived the greater part of their lives. To bring these men, women and children back to normal life is a primary aim of the programmes considered by the Executive Committee at its ninth (special) session and set forth in paragraph 30 above.

69. The High Commissioner would like to stress the need for countries to open their frontiers still wider than they have done hitherto, and would be grateful to members of the Council of Europe for their continued interest in the problem of refugees and for their support in helping UNHCR to obtain the funds required for its solution.