Resolution 55 (1954)[1]

Reply to the Third Report on the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Parliamentary Assembly

The Consultative Assembly has examined with great interest the report transmitted to the Council of Europe by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and thanks him for it.

The Assembly welcomes the decision taken by the United Nations General Assembly at its last Session to renew the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner for a further period of five years. It hopes this period will suffice for finding a permanent solution to the problem of international refugees, nearly 350,000 of whom have still not been completely resettled.

It is necessary, however, to point out that even a period of five years might prove inadequate, despite the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner, if the funds at the latter's disposal continue to bear no relation to the extent and diversity of the task to be accomplished.

In this connection it should be recalled that the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, in Resolution 43 of 20th September, 1953, expressed the wish that adequate funds be placed at the disposal of the High Commissioner to enable him to carry out his most important duties. In its turn, the Special Liaison Committee, on 5th February, 1954, adopted Recommendation No. 12, recommending the Committee of Ministers to invite the Governments of Meniber States to help the High Commissioner, by ail the means in their power, to solve the distressing problem of "difficult cases". The fact that the funds allocated by the United Nations for aid to refugees as at 31st March, 1954, is sufficient to allow the High Commissioner to carry out his emergency aid programme only until the end of August, 1954, shows to what extent European public opinion tends to underrate the seriousness of the refugee problem.

The Assembly, sharing the High Commissioner's belief that to continue in the same rnanner as in previous years will provide no final solution to the refugee problem, supports every effort made by the High Commissioner to raise new funds.

The Assembly therefore warmly welcomes the initiative taken by the Government of the Netherlands in recommending Member States of the Council of Europe to support the plans of the High Commissioner for granting emergency assistance and securing permanent arrangements for solving the problem of international refugees.

The Assembly would be happy to learn in due course what action has been taken by the United Nations on the various proposais of the U. N. H. C. R.

Pending further developments, the Assembly welcomes the entry into force of the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees, following the deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification on 22nd April, 1954. In this connection, the Assembly again draws the attention of Member Governments to Resolution (52) 76, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe at its Session of 18th to 22nd December, 1952, whereby Member States were invited to ratify this Convention as soon as possible.

1. (see Doc. 299, Report of the Committee on Population and Refugees). This Resolution was adopted by the Assembly at its 27th Sitting, on 23rd September, 1954