

THE INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION

On 12 February, 1946, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution (printed as Annex III to the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization below) referring the problem of refugees and displaced persons to the Economic and Social Council for examination and report to the General Assembly.

During its First Session the Economic and Social Council established a Special Committee on Refugees and Displaced Persons to carry out promptly a thorough examination of the problem and to make a report to the Council at its Second Session.

This Special Committee met in London from 8 April to 1 June, 1946. It recommended the establishment of a new international body, to be a specialized agency of a non-permanent character, to deal with the problem of refugees and displaced persons and reported on matters incidental to the establishment of such an organization.

The Committee's report was considered at the Second Session of the Economic and Social Council, which adopted a draft Constitution for the Organization. The Council also urged upon members of the United Nations the gravity and urgency of the problem of refugees and displaced persons.

At its Third Session in 1946 the Council further considered the draft Constitution, and also the report of the Committee it had previously established on the finances of the proposed International Refugee Organization, in the light of comments received from Governments. It transmitted to the General Assembly the draft Constitution, a resolution on interim measures, and a report on finances.

The matter was the subject of lengthy discussion at the second part of the First Session of the General Assembly before the Constitution of the International Refugee Organization, and the Agreement on Interim Measures were approved and opened for signature on 15 December, 1946. In approving these Instruments the General Assembly, considering that every effort should be made to provide for the early establishment of the Organization, urged members to sign the Instruments, and, if possible, to sign the Constitution without reservation.

The functions of the Organization, which are detailed in Article 2 of the Constitution, are the repatriation; the identification, registration, and classification; the care and assistance; the legal and political protection; the transport; and the resettlement and re-establishment of persons who are the concern of the Organization.