

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR
REFUGEESLE HAUT-COMMISSAIRE POUR
LES REFUGIESPalais des Nations
GENÈVE

Dear Mr. Hicks,

8 January 1964

With the close of 1963, I would like to convey to all of you my sincere thanks for the devotion with which you are carrying out your work.

As in previous years, I would like to give you and your staff a brief summing up of the main results achieved in the course of 1963, together with some indications concerning future prospects.

The year 1963 can be considered an important milestone in the work of international assistance for refugees. Indeed, after longlasting endeavours since the end of the second world war, the completion of the major programmes of material assistance for "old" European refugees is now in sight. At the same time means of action have been put into effect to deal with current and new problems of limited dimensions as and when they arise, i.e. through the concept of the complementary assistance programme.

It is certainly gratifying that, not least as a result of the appeal of the Council of Europe for a demonstration of European solidarity, followed by the successful sale of "All-Star Festival" and the spectacular success of the special fund raising campaign in the Netherlands, the 6.8 million dollars fund raising target of the 1963 programme has come within our reach. We have a good chance finally to attain that aim, especially if all the support we have reason still to expect from interested governments is forthcoming. While the financial problem involved in the implementation of the 1963 programme is thus on its way to a solution, the actual progress made in settling the refugees also gives cause for satisfaction and it is anticipated that, save for some particularly resistant issues, the programme may grosso modo be completed according to schedule.

As for the \$1,400,000 complementary assistance programme, this has been gradually developed in the course of the year and has met one of its primary purposes, which was to keep alive the mechanism of international solidarity for the benefit of refugees wherever they may be.

"Old" and new European refugees continue to benefit from the generous resettlement opportunities offered to them by immigration countries. The severely handicapped, as you know, are also being given a chance for resettlement through the new technique of the "Jensen-dossiers". My official visits to Australia and New Zealand in May and June gave me a welcome opportunity to see for myself how the refugees are received and how they are settling in these countries which have so considerably relaxed their admission and selection criteria. The contact with the authorities in Australia and New Zealand and a short stay in Canada in December confirmed my conviction that these countries will maintain an attitude which has proved to be very helpful to uprooted people.

Mr. V. R. Hicks
UNHCR Correspondent in South Africa
Johannesburg

It has also been possible through the complementary assistance programme for a limited number of refugees of European origin mainly in outlying areas (Latin America, Middle East and North Africa), not covered by the major aid programmes, to become firmly settled in their country of residence or through resettlement in another country.

One of the most striking features of the year is the development of our work of assistance to new groups of refugees outside Europe. For the first time provision was made in 1963 for them in the regular annual programme (i.e. an allocation of approximately \$700,000 under the complementary assistance programme). The refugee problem in Togo was practically solved during the year and that of the Angolans in the Congo (Leopoldville) brought as near as possible to a solution.

Most of the \$700,000 allocation was used to initiate programmes of local settlement for the refugees from Rwanda. In order to deal with their problems a regional office was, as you know, set up in Bujumbura, while retaining our representatives at Leopoldville and in the Kivu Province. Furthermore, the Office is now also coming to grips with other new refugee problems in Africa and Asia, such as those of the Tibetans and of the Chinese refugees in Macao.

Our work in this field must still largely be regarded as of a pioneering nature and considerable difficulties lie ahead of us. However, our prudent approach based on the good offices resolutions has already proved effective. Rapid and imaginative intervention by our field staff, in close co-operation with the government concerned and with other international organizations and voluntary agencies have in several cases played a crucial role towards solving a new refugee problem or in keeping it within manageable proportions. In some cases our capacity to act rapidly has certainly helped to save the lives of refugees.

The continued close co-operation at all levels between this Office and the voluntary agencies, which are so to speak our operational arm, is, as you are aware, a vital link in the field of international assistance to refugees. I would like to stress how important it is to encourage and support their work, whether they are engaged on UNHCR projects or on other activities of benefit to refugees. As you know, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies was awarded the Nansen Medal for 1963 in recognition of the major services rendered by the agencies to the cause of refugee problems throughout the world. The award of the Medal was announced in a statement which I delivered at the opening meeting of the Annual Conference of ICVA on 23 September 1963, and in which you may find essential information on UNHCR's approach to the work of the voluntary agencies.

More recently, we have also developed a closer working relationship with some of the offices and specialized agencies of the United Nations, whose co-operation and support are invaluable, particularly in the field of assistance to new groups of refugees outside Europe, in areas where these offices and agencies are particularly active.

The policies and principles followed by the Office were recently endorsed by the General Assembly, in its debate and in the resolution on the annual report of UNHCR, the text of which has been distributed to all UNHCR Branch Offices.

The most significant feature of the discussions which took place in the Third Committee was perhaps the widening interest expressed in the work of UNHCR and the recognition of its increasingly universal character. As stated by the rapporteur of the Third Committee, "a majority of delegations stressed the continuing character of the refugee problem and also the fact that the High Commissioner's activity had become more universal in recent years". The policies of the Office were assured of continuity by the re-election of the High Commissioner for a further two years from January 1964.

It was clear from several statements that governments are gaining deeper understanding of the humanitarian cause which we are serving and are therefore more readily prepared to support and participate in our task. There also seemed to be increasing recognition of the role of UNHCR which is to encourage governments and other organizations to undertake the necessary assistance programmes, while UNHCR itself supplies initial or additional financial resources, where this is useful and practicable, in order to get the assistance machinery in motion or to prevent it from coming to a halt.

The important function of international protection was also recognized by the Assembly in the resolution on the annual report. In this field likewise the increasing universality of our work is becoming more apparent, when it is considered that of six new states which acceded to the Convention during the last twelve months, five are countries in Africa. Protection is, indeed, the basic function of the Office. While the traditional protection activities, mainly in Europe, have continued, new tasks have arisen elsewhere. Wherever refugees are in need of protection, it has to be extended to them.

Another symbol of this trend towards universality is the widening financial support for the work of the Office, as reflected in the result of the Pledging Conference. This trend in our work, combined with the general tendency to increase the membership of United Nations Committees also resulted, as you know, in the election by the ECOSOC of five additional members to the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (Algeria, Lebanon, Madagascar, Nigeria and Tanganyika).

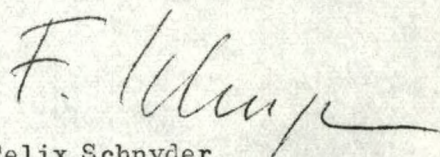
I will not dwell further on the action taken by the General Assembly since it has been described in the memorandum of 11 December addressed to all Branch Offices.

The results achieved during the past year, the decisions taken by the Assembly and the recommendations adopted by the Executive Committee at its 10th session in respect of the 1964 Programme, constitute a solid basis for our work in the coming year, when I hope that we shall get closer still to the conclusion of the major aid programmes and that we shall be able to put to good use the experience acquired in dealing with new refugee problems. The confidence expressed by the Assembly in the work of the Office will, I am sure, be an encouragement for

all of us to pursue with renewed vigour the humanitarian task to which we have dedicated ourselves.

I would like, in conclusion, to address to you and your colleagues my best wishes for a happy and fruitful new year.

Yours very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'F. Schnyder', written in dark ink.

Felix Schnyder

44-1682

HCC/1/VRH/EW.

CONFIDENTIAL.

8th January, 1964.

Dr. V.A.M. Beermann,
c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees,
Palais des Nations,
GENEVA. SWITZERLAND.

Dear Dr. Beermann,

Many thanks for your letter dated 20/12/63. The enclosures will be studied with interest.

This letter goes to you under confidential and personal cover because I am enclosing, at the request of Mr. van Wyk, a confidential report from me to him. He is anxious that you should see this and note the positive approach recommended to our problem. He desires an appointment with the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the earliest opportunity.

I am indeed sorry to hear that you will be leaving Geneva at the end of January, particularly as I was looking forward to full discussions with you on our problems. The personal contact which we were able to establish in South Africa in 1961 has always meant so much to me. Now I feel as if a fresh start must be made once more. I can only hope that whoever follows you will accept me with the same friendliness and trust that you did. You have always realised that our problems in this country have been somewhat different from the normal run of things. On your recommendation I was appointed UNHCR Correspondent in South Africa. You will never know the value of this appointment to the status of our South African Organisation. Between my Office and the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Immigration there developed a very close liaison, an understanding which did so much to bring about not only co-operation, but more important, trust. I do not think that any outsider could wish for more friendliness and co-operation than I received from Mr. Barry, Secretary for Immigration. The Senior Officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs have been no less cooperative.

You will no doubt tell me who I should call upon at Geneva in your absence. The copy of the letter enclosed will indicate matters which I would like to discuss, or perhaps the trend of discussions. In order to get as broad a view as possible of refugee relief work I would like to meet people connected with this relief work in Rome, Geneva, London and Spain (if any).

In order /

Dr. V.A.M. Beermann,

8th January, 1964.

In order to afford a picture of where we are travelling I am enclosing a revised schedule of our itinerary. We shall be in the following areas on the dates indicated:-

Rome	5/4	-	10/4
Spain	21/4	-	8/5
Geneva	13/5	-	16/5
Holland	21/5	-	26/5
London	27/5	-	11/8
Paris	12/8	-	16/8
France	16/8	-	3/9
Switzerland	5/9	-	16/9
Italy (North)	17/9	-	24/9

In a previous letter you asked me whether I had made any Hotel reservations in Geneva, and whether you could assist. The answers are 'no' and 'yes' - in other words I shall appreciate your assistance. But you must remember that we are travelling on a holiday budget and therefore do not wish to spend money on luxury hotels. Something quiet and unpretentious, but comfortable and clean, is all we need. Also we have little desire to spend our nights in hotels crowded with American and British tourists.

As I have been doing quite a bit of work for the World Council of Churches, I am also looking forward to meeting Miss Margaret Jaboor and some of the people I have corresponded with in Geneva. I shall be writing to her confirming the dates of my sojourn in Geneva.

I asked Mr. Golemo of the Gramophone Record Co., on the 13th December 1963 to provide the information you called for in para. 7 of your letter of 4th December. I was informed today that he leaves for Geneva almost immediately and would call on you to give you the latest figures and will also call on Phillips in the Netherlands. A cheque is to be handed to my office in February next.

In regard to para. 6 I can say that at least provision will be made for things to be kept going during my absence. Mrs. Wessels in my office has done all the Correspondent's clerical work and is therefore well acquainted with this side. Failing the possibility of finding someone to serve as the Official Correspondent, at least the routine work can be kept alive during my absence on leave. I shall keep contact with the office during my travels. A similar arrangement will exist for the WCC/SR and our Refugee Organisation functions. Mr. van Wyk has promised to lend a helping hand by directing and advising on matters of policy. I am certain that this arrangement will work satisfactorily. I shall appreciate your views on this.

Will you please advise me where you are moving to. I would like to keep contact with you and seek advice and guidance when this is needed.

With very best regards,
Yours sincerely,

V.R. HICKS.

UNITED NATIONS

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES



NATIONS UNIES

OFFICE DU HAUT COMMISSAIRE
POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS

Télégrammes : HICOMREF

Téléphone : 33 10 00 33 20 00 33 40 00

PERSONAL

Palais des Nations
GENÈVE

21 January 1964

1/9/1 S.AF.

Dear Mr. Hicks,

Thank you very much for your letter of 8 January. Indeed, it is sad that a relationship which developed so well and has been to the benefit of the refugees, is now coming to an end. I can really only repeat my heartfelt thanks to you for all your devotion and loyalty to a cause which you have taken so very much to heart. Our co-operation is one of my most positive souvenirs of the time I have spent with the UNHCR.

Whilst, as usual at Headquarters, the various matters in which the High Commissioner takes an interest with regard to South Africa, will continue to be dealt with by the competent officers, my function as "Country Co-ordinator" for South Africa will be taken over by a very good friend of mine, Dr. Eberhard Jahn; you may have already noted his name from correspondence. He is the Deputy Head of the Legal Division, is a citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany and is one of our most experienced officials who has served this Office since 1951.

I am briefing Dr. Jahn on the situation in your country with respect to the refugee problem. He will in due time reply to the main questions raised in your above-mentioned letter, and also give you all possible help with regard to your planned visits to refugee areas in a number of European countries and to your stay in Geneva.

As far as ALL STAR FESTIVAL is concerned, Mr. Chaput de Saintonge, who handles such matters is looking forward to meeting Mr. Golembo in order to settle outstanding points. As far as your proposal for running the office during your absence is concerned, I have passed it to our Director of Administration, Mr. F.P.E. Green and, no doubt, you will soon hear from him.

Knowing how much you and your wife have been looking forward to this long-planned extensive European trip, I do hope that you will enjoy everything immensely. It is really a pity that I will have left Geneva when you are here around the middle of May. However, one never knows in life when one will meet again, so I do not say "Goodbye", but "Au Revoir"!

With my best regards, also to your wife and family,

Mr. V.R. Hicks,
UNHCR Correspondent in
South Africa,
JOHANNESBURG, South Africa

Yours ever,

V.A.M. Beermann

P.S.

Please remember me to Mr. van Wyk and the members of ROSA.

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