

Mr. Blandford's report to the Assembly outlined what the Arab governments most concerned with the refugee problem had done on their own initiative in the past to cope with the problem and their contributions since the inception of international co-operation to support the refugees. It continued with an analysis of the present problem and a comprehensive statement of what has been done by the United Nations and Specialized Agencies to keep the refugees fed, clothed and sheltered, prevent the outbreak of epidemics and avoid the recurrence of large-scale disturbances in protest against the continued displacement of so large a proportion of the Palestine population. The report was couched in positive and constructive terms, emphasizing business possibilities in the areas now open to refugee resettlement. It also referred to the growing willingness of Arab governments to co-operate actively in the reintegration of refugees provided this did not prejudice in any way the right of the refugees to repatriation should a political agreement on repatriation be worked out under the auspices of the Palestine Conciliation Commission or otherwise.

Mr. Blandford presented at the sixth session of the General Assembly a \$250 million programme of assistance to Palestine refugees for the three-year period of July 1, 1951 to June 30, 1954. Of this amount \$50 million would be for relief on a diminishing scale and \$200 million for reintegration of refugees into the economy of Arab countries through their absorption in agricultural and other development programmes elaborated by the governments concerned in consultation with UNRWAPR. National governments of the countries of refuge would be asked to assume maximum administrative responsibility at the earliest possible date, particularly responsibility for the administration of relief. Mr. Blandford said that while the refugees were waiting for a decision on their right to repatriation they should be enabled by a programme of training and development to become rehabilitated as individuals, so that without further delay they might have employment which would restore their self-respect, and decent shelter in which family life might be resumed. They would retain their freedom to move elsewhere whenever political conditions permitted, taking with them their belongings and their newly acquired skills. The success of the plan would depend, however, on the willingness of states members of the United Nations to make actual contributions and on the administrative co-operation of Arab states.

The United States, the United Kingdom, France and Turkey had prepared a draft resolution supporting the Blandford plan. Immediately after Mr. Blandford spoke Arab representatives asked that the draft resolution should not be discussed until it was revised so as to eliminate references to "assistance to Near East Governments" and "the welfare . . . of the countries in the area concerned", which were regarded as infringing the sovereignty of the Arab states. They argued that independent states in the area could not permit their internal development to become the object of general, unsolicited discussion by other members of the United Nations General Assembly; what was under discussion was only assistance to refugees.