

## World Refugee Year

THE IDEA of World Refugee Year originated with four private citizens in the United Kingdom who reportedly were impressed with the progress made through concentrated and co-ordinated efforts by the International Geophysical Year. As a result of this group's suggestion, the United Kingdom delegation to the 9th (Special) Session of the United Nations Refugee Fund Executive Committee submitted a draft resolution expressing support for the proposal to proclaim a World Refugee Year. The Executive Committee adopted the resolution and requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to bring it to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly at its thirteenth session. World Refugee Year, to begin in June 1959 and end on July 1, 1960, was instituted by the General Assembly in its resolution 1285 (XIII) of December 5, 1958. The text of that resolution, which was supported by Canada, states:

The General Assembly,

*Having considered* the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, together with the resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the United Nations Refugee Fund at its ninth (special) session on 26 September 1958,

*Convinced* of the need to make a further world-wide effort to help resolve the world refugee problem,

*Having considered* the proposal for a World Refugee Year to begin in June 1959,

*Noting* that this proposal has two aims, namely:

- a) To focus interest on the refugee problem and to encourage additional financial contributions from governments, voluntary agencies and the general public for its solution,
- b) To encourage additional opportunities for permanent refugee solutions, through voluntary repatriation, resettlement or integration, on a purely humanitarian basis and in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the refugees themselves,

1. *Urges* States Members of the United Nations and members of the Specialized Agencies to co-operate, in accordance with the national wishes and needs of each country and from a humanitarian point of view, in promoting a World Refugee Year as a practical means of securing increased assistance for refugees throughout the world;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take such steps as he may think fit to assist in the promotion of a World Refugee Year in accordance with the present resolution.

### Scope of World Refugee Year

Although the resolution initiating World Refugee Year was adopted by the General Assembly during consideration of the report of the High Commissioner for Refugees, it has been generally acknowledged from the outset that the scope of World Refugee Year should not be restricted to refugee programmes within the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner. On the contrary, it is intended that all international refugee programmes, some of which have no direct connection with the High Commissioner for Refugees, should benefit from the special efforts requested of member governments and voluntary agencies during the 12-month period. The following are the fields of interest of several international agencies concerned with refugees: