

Unlike Europe, in Africa there is no individual screening procedure for establishing refugee status. Nevertheless, adequate protection for refugees requires that governments and their administrations formally subscribe to the application both of the right of asylum and to the principles governing treatment of refugees, as set forth in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

To date 50 countries have acceded to this Convention ; of these 19 are in Africa. Other countries, without formal accession, implicitly acknowledge the principles embodied in it.

Side by side with its efforts to encourage further accessions to the Convention, HCR also advises governments in drawing up measures that help to ensure an appropriate legal status for refugees. A particularly important administrative point is the issuing of identity cards and travel documents to refugees. . . .

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) was formed in March 1962 out of a merger between three international non-governmental co-ordinating organizations working in the field of assistance to people in need. It is a practical body of co-operation for the entire non-governmental world and its present membership numbers about 100 organizations. Its rôle as a central bureau of liaison is to assist the voluntary agencies as and when possible in the improvement and growth of their programmes.

ICVA works through a General Conference and Governing Board, a series of commissions and working groups, and a Secretariat. Its General Conference is a world forum where agencies intergovernmental and governmental, as well as non-governmental exchange views and information on all topics of concern and help in programmes of assistance to people.

MISCELLANEOUS

A General Conference was held in Geneva in 1965, whose theme was : " Dynamic development and international co-operation ". The ICVA has recently published a brochure summarizing the discussions which took place on social and economic development seen from the angle of the voluntary agencies and also on the problems of refugees and migrations.¹

We would in particular mention the working groups' reports whose subjects of study were as follows : " Planning and co-ordination of voluntary agency development programmes ", " Information clearing houses ", " Manpower ", " Co-operation with governments ", " Public relations, funding and campaigns ".

As regards the place of volunteers in this work and the tasks which can be assigned to them, mention should be made of the question raised during the course of a discussion of one of these working groups : " . . . as to how much in the discussion of work of volunteers the agencies were still seeking first to find meaningful forms of service for their people. How far had we come rather to the point of asking what jobs needed to be done and only then to ask whether volunteers were the right people to do them. Should the voluntary agencies be seeking to develop counter-parts of their own organizations in the developing countries? Voluntary agencies were a phenomenon of Western society and it might well be that social structures in other parts of the world did not call for the creation of agencies along the Western pattern. There did seem to be a need, however, for encouraging the principle of self-help. "

¹ *ICVA Document*, Geneva, No. 6, " Some aspects of Dynamic Development ".