INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION
1945-1957

Extract: pp. 290-299

GENEVA
1959
International action in the field of migration is an outgrowth of the political refugee problem which arose immediately after the First World War. Not only have political refugees ever since been regarded as a matter of international concern but the extension of international assistance to the field of economic migration followed as a logical further step. The machinery which was set up to deal with the tremendous refugee problem which arose after the Second World War has already been described.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Since 1957 the six Members of the European Coal and Steel Community have been parties to this treaty, since converted into a regulation of the European Economic Community.

\(^2\) See above, Chapters II and IV.
In addition to the difficulties raised by the speedy resettlement of the refugees who had fled to western Europe, however, some European countries after the war were faced by large manpower surpluses resulting from the long interruption of traditional migration currents and from rapid natural population growth. These surpluses could not be readily absorbed and the need was acutely felt for international action to help solve the problem through organised migration.

The initiative was taken by the International Labour Organisation whose tripartite structure as early as 1919 had set it apart from other bodies and entrusted it with unique responsibilities, and whose enlarged objectives, as defined by the Declaration of Philadelphia appended to the Constitution in 1944, included the promotion of programmes designed to facilitate "the transfer of labour, including migration for employment and settlement". In April 1950 the Organisation accordingly convened a conference for a preliminary exchange of views on the problem. This was the starting point for many new international activities in the migration field. A group of countries belonging to both the O.E.E.C. and the I.L.O. placed nearly 1 million dollars at the disposal of the latter to enable it to develop its activities in the migration field and above all, to supply advice on migration and related problems to governments requesting it. For nearly two years such technical assistance, covering not only migration questions but also the organisation of the employment market and vocational training for prospective emigrants, was provided through missions of experts set up in Bonn, Rome and Vienna and through a group of experts attached to the I.L.O. Latin American Field Office. Pursuant to the conclusions of the 1950 conference and with a view to strengthening international action the I.L.O. called a second conference which met at Naples in October 1951. This conference had before it a programme aimed at facilitating European migration movements, both economic and political, and at solving various problems directly or indirectly related to such movements.

The programme, however, was not discussed by the conference owing to the opposition of certain governments. Another international conference, held at Brussels in November 1951 on the initiative of the United States and Belgium, decided to set up a new organisation to dispose finally of the refugee problem and to tackle that of European overpopulation. A Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (P.I.C.M.M.E.) accordingly began to operate in the early part of 1952, using the administrative machinery of the International Refugee Organisation, and in the following year became the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration (I.C.E.M.). Its establishment marked a new departure in the
field of internationally sponsored migration. Whereas formerly opera­
tional activities had been confined to political refugees and limited, in
the case of others, to protection and information (of the kind provided
under the auspices of the I.L.O.), the new organisation from the outset
assumed responsibility for migration planning and assistance on a vast
scale. The considerable part which I.C.E.M. has continued to play
over the past few years should not, however, be allowed to overshadow
the work done in related fields by other bodies; this will be discussed
at a later stage.

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPEAN MIGRATION

The Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, set up
under a resolution adopted on 5 December 1951 by the Brussels Con­
ference, initially consisted of 14 members.¹ Today it has 27 ² divided
into three groups, namely European emigration countries, non-European
immigration countries and sympathising countries. Its constitution was
adopted in October 1953 and entered into force in November 1954.

The purpose and functions of the Committee as defined in Chapter I
of its constitution are “to make arrangements for the transport of
migrants for whom existing facilities are inadequate” and “... to
promote the increase of the volume of migration from Europe by pro­
viding, at the request of and in agreement with the governments con­
cerned, services in the processing, reception, first placement and settle­
ment of migrants which other international organisations are not in a
position to supply, and such other assistance to this purpose as is in
accord with the aims of the Committee”.

The budget of the Committee consists of two parts: an administrative
part, financed by compulsory contributions from member governments
which are fixed according to an agreed scale; and an operational part,
which is by far the larger and consists of voluntary or negotiable con­
tributions paid by governments interested in specific programmes, and
contributions from voluntary organisations and the emigrants themselves
or their sponsors.

The major source of operational income consists of government
contributions which are based on the number of migrants or refugees
moved with the assistance of the Committee. The contribution of the
United States ($74.90 for each migrant transported), however, is not

¹ Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Federal Republic of Germany,
France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland and United States.
² The following countries joined subsequently: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica,
Denmark, Israel, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, the Federation of Rhodesia and
Nyasaland, Spain, Sweden, Uruguay and Venezuela.
limited to persons proceeding to that country, but extends to all migrants or refugees moved by the Committee. The other governments concerned pay contributions based on the number of persons having emigrated or immigrated. Migrants able to do so personally contribute a modest amount (50 dollars for the head of the family and less for its members) towards their travel costs; sometimes a loan is made to them prior to their departure but must be reimbursed after their arrival in the country of destination. Other facilities provided by the Committee at either end of the journey and in direct relation with it, as well as technical assistance and grants to voluntary organisations, are financed without reference to the number of persons moved.

The Committee has its headquarters in Geneva and operates missions in all countries covered by its activities in and out of Europe. It requires a large maritime and air transport fleet to move European emigrants and in so doing uses normal commercial facilities, so far as possible; in addition, however, it charters its own ships and planes, its position as a major charterer enabling it to secure particularly favourable financial terms and physical transport conditions. Like the I.R.O., it employs escort personnel who provide welfare and medical services for emigrants during the voyage.

Migrants moved by the Committee are divided into two categories: the so-called "spontaneous" migrants, whom it aids either directly or through voluntary organisations and—by far the more numerous—those who move under programmes sponsored by overseas immigration countries. With respect to the latter, the Committee acts as a third party to the arrangements between the governments concerned, on whose behalf it undertakes certain planning and assistance functions in return for contributions to its budget. Thus it has played an important part in the execution of the immigration programme established in the United States under the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, family regrouping schemes sponsored by several Latin American countries and Australian assisted immigration projects which were originally to have been carried out on a purely bilateral basis and included immigrants from Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece and Malta. More recently, the Committee has played a major part in the evacuation of Hungarian refugees.\(^1\)

The work of the Committee, however, has by no means been confined—indeed it is less and less confined—to making transport arrangements. It has had, for instance, to explore ways and means of developing and improving European migration by promoting agricultural settlement in

\(^1\) See above, Chapter II.
several Latin American countries and by helping governments to improve their administrative machinery in such fields as pre-selection, selection, reception and placement; in one country—Greece—it has even assumed direct responsibility for providing complete emigration services. Technical assistance is being provided to an increasing extent in such fields as information, guidance, selection, vocational training and placement. In order to provide adequate information for migrants on living and working conditions in countries of destination and to prepare them for their future life there, the Committee resorts to every available medium, including manuals and other printed matter, moving pictures and the wireless. It also helps with recruitment by taking part in pre-selection and selection operations. In Italy, continuing the work initiated by the I.L.O., it has trained 40 employment service officials in pre-selection methods. In addition, several experts attached to its local mission participated as required in subsequent operations, including selection. Scientific selection methods, including vocational aptitude tests, were developed for this purpose. The Committee has also made great efforts to develop vocational training for prospective emigrants, e.g. in Greece and, with I.L.O. co-operation, in Italy and has thus been largely responsible for increasing the migratory flow to Latin America and the Commonwealth countries. In order to fit the training, so far as possible, to the actual needs of immigration countries, a joint I.L.O.-I.C.E.M. inquiry mission was sent in 1956 to various Latin American countries to collect data concerning the standards which skilled workers in those countries should meet and the wage level required to enable such workers to enjoy a standard of living comparable to that which they had in Europe. In 1957 a special meeting was convened by the Committee to discuss technical problems arising out of the vocational training of migrants. This meeting, in which a number of European emigration countries, some Latin American immigration countries and various international organisations participated, reviewed existing skilled labour requirements and the possibility of meeting them. The Committee has also organised language courses and prepared language training manuals. Finally, it has helped several Latin American countries, in particular Brazil, Argentina and Colombia, to organise and develop appropriate services for the placement of migrants.

The activities of I.C.E.M. have constantly expanded. In its early days it was concerned primarily with the resettlement of refugees whose cases the I.R.O. had not been able to settle definitively, and played a correspondingly modest role in the organisation of ordinary migration. However, this latter phase of its work expanded rapidly: whereas in 1953
TABLE 91. MIGRANTS MOVED WITH I.C.E.M. ASSISTANCE, BY COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION, 1952-57
(In thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries of origin</th>
<th>1952</th>
<th>1953</th>
<th>1954</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1957</th>
<th>Total Absolute figures</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.4</td>
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<td>47.7</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>132.3</td>
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<td>Federal Republic of Germany</td>
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<td>40.3</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>188.1</td>
<td>24.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
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<td>11.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
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<td>22.3</td>
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<td>45.9</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>217.2</td>
<td>28.5</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>9.4</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>104.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>119.6</td>
<td>119.8</td>
<td>160.6</td>
<td>191.0</td>
<td>751.6</td>
<td>98.5</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>121.2</td>
<td>120.4</td>
<td>162.0</td>
<td>194.1</td>
<td>762.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Countries of destination</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Overseas</strong></td>
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<td>9.0</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>13.3</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>205.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
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<td>Brazil</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Canada</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>133.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central African Federation</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>153.7</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other countries</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>120.5</td>
<td>119.0</td>
<td>139.1</td>
<td>181.0</td>
<td>724.0</td>
<td>94.9</td>
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<td><strong>European countries</strong></td>
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<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>13.1</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>121.2</td>
<td>120.4</td>
<td>162.0</td>
<td>194.1</td>
<td>762.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1 February 1952-31 December 1957. * *Including Malta and, for 1957, Yugoslavia (Hungarian refugees).
less than one-third of all emigration from Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands was assisted by the Committee, this figure had risen to about one-half by 1957.

The statistics given in table 91 illustrate this trend, bringing out the importance of refugee movements from Germany and Austria, Italian emigration to Latin America under family regrouping schemes, Italian, Dutch and Greek movements under the Australian programme, and the impact of the recent accession of Spain to membership in the Committee. The table also shows that the largest numbers of migrants were moved to Australia (26.9 per cent. of the total), the United States (20.1 per cent., largely under the Displaced Persons Act, for the execution of which a Committee became responsible following the disappearance of the I.R.O., and other refugee relief laws) and to Canada (17.5 per cent.). Movements to Latin America were smaller, particularly those to Venezuela. Altogether, from 1952 to 1957 the Committee moved more than 760,000 emigrants; of these 250,000 were refugees, including Hungarians, presumed to come within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner. Finally, it may be noted that persons moved under family regrouping schemes numbered 164,700 (86 per cent. from Italy), most of whom went to Argentina (47 per cent.), Brazil (24 per cent.) and Venezuela (17 per cent.).

THE UNITED NATIONS AND ITS SPECIALISED AGENCIES

Within the United Nations family, several organisations have a direct or indirect interest in migration problems; one of these is the International Labour Organisation which, apart from its responsibilities in its own technical field, performs a co-ordinating function. Questions falling directly within the competence of the United Nations include the rights of aliens, the demographic, economic and financial aspects of migration, and some of its social aspects. The I.L.O. is concerned with all matters connected with the migration of workers and their families and is empowered to lay down international standards, disseminate information and provide technical assistance in these fields. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is responsible for the international protection of refugees and administers a special fund for the financing of projects aimed at solving the refugee problem permanently. The World Health Organization is entrusted with the health aspects of migration, the Food and Agricultural Organization with certain aspects of land settlement schemes and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with integration
problems. Finally, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development is concerned with the financial aspects of migration and is empowered to advance funds for the financing of certain programmes.

Apart from the activities already mentioned and in keeping with its constitutional obligations, the I.L.O. immediately after the war tackled the problem of the revision of pre-war international instruments which subsequent social developments had rendered obsolete. In 1949 the International Labour Conference adopted a new Convention and a new Recommendation on migration for employment.\(^1\) Both instruments lay down general principles concerning information, recruitment, selection, transport, reception, placement, repatriation, and migration of families. The Convention, while making separate provision for workers recruited collectively under government sponsorship and persons recruited on an individual basis, lays down the fundamental rule, applicable to all, that no migrant shall be treated less favourably than nationals of the immigration country in respect of remuneration and other conditions of employment, trade union membership, housing, social security and taxes. The Recommendation is more detailed and lays down three cardinal principles: first, that the policy of member countries should be "to develop and utilise all possibilities of employment and for this purpose to facilitate the international distribution of manpower and in particular the movement of manpower from countries which have a surplus of manpower to those countries that have a deficiency"; secondly, that the measures taken by each member country "should have due regard to the manpower situation in the country" and that "the Government should consult the appropriate organisations of employers and workers on all general questions concerning migration for employment"; and thirdly, that where restrictions are placed on the employment of migrant workers, such restrictions should so far as possible be lifted after the worker has completed a prescribed period of residence in the country, in principle not exceeding five years. Appended to the Recommendation is a model agreement on temporary and permanent migration for employment, including migration of refugees and displaced persons, for use by governments wishing to conclude bilateral migration agreements. A similar model agreement, together with a number of basic principles, was drawn up in 1950 with respect to land settlement.

Special international standards were also adopted in 1955 for the benefit of migrant workers from underdeveloped countries or terri-

\(^1\) The Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949, and the Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949. On 1 June 1959 the Convention had been ratified by the following 11 countries: Belgium, Cuba, France, Guatemala, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.
tories; they are embodied in a Recommendation\(^1\) intended to cover more particularly movements taking place within Asia, Africa and Latin America and containing provisions aimed at protecting migrants during their journey and at providing various other forms of protection, discouraging movements contrary to the interests of the workers and their countries of origin, and settling them permanently in their territories of destination.

Moreover, pending the adoption of detailed regulations concerning equal treatment for foreigners under national social security schemes, a number of general principles have been embodied in the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952.

Finally, the Preliminary Migration Conference of 1950 arrived at a number of conclusions concerning the practical organisation of migration at the national level; a further result was the production of a vast amount of technical literature for the guidance of responsible agencies, which has occasionally inspired, first, the I.R.O. and later I.C.E.M. This material includes recommendations concerning the organisation of medical pre-selection and a definition of medical selection criteria for certain occupational categories (arrived at with I.R.O., I.C.E.M. and W.H.O. co-operation); an international standard classification of occupations designed to provide a valid basis for international job comparisons; manuals on the organisation of employment services, with particular reference to immigrant selection and placement; and a guide for the vocational training of emigrants.

In addition to these technical publications, the I.L.O. has issued material of more immediate practical interest, such as an analysis of immigration laws and regulations in various countries\(^2\) and a series of guides concerning living and working conditions in a few Latin American countries.

Finally, its purely operational activities have included provision of technical assistance to help governments improve their emigration or immigration services, operate vocational training projects for prospective migrants (e.g. in Italy, Greece and Malta) and solve their manpower problems in general. Projects of the latter type, though not directly concerned with migration, have obvious migration implications. They have in the past included a number of manpower surveys and the setting up of a regular service to provide information on the labour supply and demand in certain Latin American countries.

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\(^1\) The Protection of Migrant Workers (Underdeveloped Countries) Recommendation, 1955.

\(^2\) See the list of bibliographical references for Chapter VIII.
The I.L.O.'s responsibility for co-ordinating the migration activities of the various United Nations agencies is discharged through a Technical Working Group on Migration which reports to the so-called Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, a body grouping the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the executive heads of the specialised agencies. Representatives of other international organisations, namely I.C.E.M., the O.E.E.C., the Council of Europe and the Organisation of American States, have also been associated with the work of the group. The latter co-ordinates the studies and the information work of the various bodies concerned, as well as their technical assistance activities. Its purpose is to ensure better co-ordination of the programmes of the various organisations, including where appropriate the preparation of joint projects, and thus to give governments the benefit of more effective and better-integrated international action.

Apart from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, whose work has already been described\(^1\), the remaining United Nations agencies play a somewhat more limited role. The United Nations itself has adopted a Convention concerning the enforcement abroad of personal maintenance obligations and a resolution dealing with indigent aliens. The W.H.O., in co-operation with the I.L.O., has formulated medical standards for pre-selection and selection examinations. Finally, U.N.E.S.C.O. in 1956 convened a world-wide conference on the cultural integration of immigrants, as a result of which a manual containing policy recommendations for governments in this field is now in course of preparation.

\(^1\) See above Chapter II.
\(^2\) See above, Chapter VII.