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REFUGEES REFUGIES FLÜCHTLINGE REFUGIADOS

December 14, 1979

To all interested parties

Dear Friends,

RE: Indochinese Refugees: Follow-up
to the CICARWS Consultation

In the statement from the Consultation on Indochinese Refugees convened by CICARWS in July of this year, the responsibilities of the churches were set out in the first point. Most heavily stressed was the responsibility for participation in large-scale programs of overseas resettlement in order to ease the refugee pressure on the countries of first asylum.

We have attached hereto a report on what the churches in 15 countries of resettlement have been doing to help Indochinese refugees. You will also find a shorter report which brings up to date our earlier account of how WCC member churches in various countries of first asylum have been able to respond to the crisis.

The tone of these reports tends to be optimistic. The response of the churches in helping the Indochinese refugees resettle has been energetic and imaginative, and the churches have also become political advocates for the newcomers by urging the enactment of larger quotas and insisting on expeditious, humanitarian treatment. Yet it must be remembered that although a world total of about 600,000 resettlement places have been made available to the Indochinese refugees, at least 1.5 million have been rendered homeless, a figure which does not include the current massive exodus from Kampuchea into Thailand. Moreover, it probably is safe to assume that of the Indochinese refugees having the highest capacity for successful resettlement, most have already been moved or are at least awaiting processing for movement. More and more, then, the "residue" will be left: the old, the sick, the handicapped, the uneducated and unskilled people -- in short, the ones who pose the greatest challenge of all to those willing and able to help.

One final, sobering reminder: despite the magnitude of the Indochinese refugee crisis, the numbers of people involved comprise only about eleven percent of the world's estimated refugee population.

Sincerely yours,

Ruud van Hoogevest
Coordinator of Refugee Services

Report on the Response of the Churches to the Indochinese Refugee Crisis:
Countries of Resettlement

AUSTRIA

259 Indochinese refugees had been accepted for permanent resettlement before July 1979. After the United Nations appeal in that month, a further 500 places were promised. The federal government and voluntary agencies have a joint working arrangement to meet the housing, employment, counselling and other needs of the newcomers. Against the 500 promised places, 174 refugees have already arrived in Austria, and of this number 96 are considered to have been integrated. 78 of these cases were handled by the churches (66 by the Catholic church, 12 by the Protestant churches), and the remaining 18 were integrated by the government. Problems noted are that larger families than before are appearing, as well as an increasing number of single refugees. Also, compared with before, the refugees now tend to have higher expectations. On the whole, though, the integration of Indochinese refugees in Austria is reported to be proceeding smoothly.

BELGIUM

A total of 2,000 visas for 1979 has been approved for Indochinese refugees. Of these, the WCC-related office in Belgium has accepted responsibility for 470 plus another 500 family reunion cases still in Vietnam. Plans for continuing the programme through 1980 have been made, and government approval in the form of financial assistance is under consideration. The churches -- Catholic and Protestant -- have been working hard to influence the government to accept more refugees, and the cooperation between churches of all denominations in this matter has been excellent. Financial contributions in support of the resettlement work done by the WCC-related office in Belgium come from the government, private donations and WCC Geneva.

DENMARK

Approximately 900 Indochinese refugees have been resettled in Denmark, and another 300 rescued by Danish ships are in Hong Kong and Singapore awaiting asylum grants for Denmark. The integration process in Denmark is totally financed and handled by the government, but Eanchurchaid, the WCC-related agency in Denmark, is part of the decision-making process through its membership in the Danish Refugee Council. The integration process into Denmark begins in the refugee centers of Southeast Asia, and the refugees are accompanied by Danish Refugee Council representatives from the centers to Denmark where the first stop is at a hospital for medical examinations. Local support groups have been established in areas where the refugees live in order to help ease their way into Danish society. It should be noted that Denmark is prepared to receive handicapped refugees such as cases suffering from polio, heart disease, tuberculosis and those who are deaf and dumb.

FINLAND

In addition to 100 Indochinese refugees accepted for permanent settlement, 25 close relatives of this group have been admitted. The Finnish government takes full administrative and financial responsibility for integrating these refugees, but the churches are involved at the parish level in various kinds of caring ministries. The total of 125 places seems to be the limit for now, but the churches through

representation on a government committee have been urging the admission of more refugees, and an official statement by the churches to this effect has been issued. As elsewhere in Scandinavia, the Indochinese refugees upon admission become part of the Finnish welfare system, and so far their integration into the country has been successful.

FRANCE

Cimade is the WCC-related agency in France, a country which has accepted more than 56,000 Indochinese refugees, of which about 14,500 have arrived in 1979. One-third of that number had church sponsorships, and the remainder was handled by the government. The French sponsorship system is not based on church guarantees but arranged by families or individuals willing to be sponsors, a process which then results in visa grants by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Cimade and other voluntary agencies have been pressuring the government to accept more refugees in future, and direct assistance is given in the reception of refugees and in meeting the needs required for integration into French life. With growing numbers of Indochinese refugees destined for France, the work being done by Cimade is bound to increase.

GERMANY

Germany's quota for resettling Indochinese refugees was recently doubled from 10,000 to 20,000, and there are indications that this may be an annual rather than an overall figure. The Protestant and Catholic churches cooperate closely on matters affecting the admission of Indochinese refugees to Germany, and they have consistently pressed the government to increase its quota. The Protestant churches through the Diakonisches Werk have developed a many-sided programme to help the newcomers. This includes the generation of public concern; the production of a manual in which the rights of Vietnamese refugees in Germany are set out; the planning of an Indochinese integration center in an area where the density of refugees is high; the hiring of specially-trained social workers and other helpers; caring for the needs of 70 unaccompanied Indochinese children; the printing in Vietnamese, Chinese and German of a guide to German society; the organization of an international roundtable in the spring of 1980 on the subject of the integration of Indochinese refugees worldwide; the publication of a regular newsletter for Vietnamese (circulation 3,000); the release in early 1980 of the results of a survey taken on the adaptation of Indochinese refugees to German society; and the printing in pictures and text of Bible stories in Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese, German and English.

NETHERLANDS

So far the Netherlands have accepted 2,500 Indochinese refugees, a number which is expected to rise to 3,000 by the end of 1979. The Dutch government strives to select a cross-section of the refugee population. Boat refugees picked up by Dutch ships at sea fall outside the quota. After arrival in the Netherlands, the refugees are first housed in pensions and hotels throughout the country for a period of six to twelve months during which all the necessary arrangements for housing, employment, schooling, etc., are made. Through a national refugee council the government, the churches and other

agencies cooperate in the organization and delivery of refugee services. The churches make their presence felt mainly in three areas: by their participation in the national refugee council, through their own local diocesan arms, and by organizing volunteer groups and so-called "guest families" which offer all kinds of personal help to the refugees once they have arrived at their final destinations. Although the integration of Indochinese refugees into Dutch society has been generally successful, problems do exist in two areas: the Netherlands are approaching the saturation point for absorbing new Indochinese and other refugees, so a slowing down in the flow is anticipated. Also, there have been tensions at times between the refugees and the Dutch population as well as between the refugees themselves, but these tensions, taken in context, have been manageable.

NORWAY

The Norwegian government increased to 3,000 its quota of Indochinese refugees, and by October 1979 approximately 2,000 had arrived in Norway. The Norwegian Refugee Council in cooperation with the government's Department of Social Affairs is responsible for the refugees' travel to and reception and integration into Norwegian society. Norwegian Church Aid along with 20 other official and voluntary organizations are members of the Norwegian Refugee Council. The churches have been active at the congregational level in giving assistance to the refugees. Although official responsibility for the refugees' integration is borne by the Norwegian Refugee Council, congregations have helped the refugees in numerous personal and practical ways as they enter Norwegian life. With all costs covered from official sources, the churches have been free to concentrate on individual and family care. The Church of Norway points out that its concern for the Indochinese refugees is consistent with its position with regard to all groups of immigrants to Norway, including foreign workers. These concerns are shared by the Catholic and other Protestant churches, and in addition to the publication of official statements in support of refugees and immigrants, the churches act as suppliers of information to newcomers as well as to their congregations, they organize language classes and other courses, and they act as pressure groups to influence both local and national policy as it affects refugees and immigrants.

SWEDEN

A total of 2,250 Indochinese refugees has been accepted for resettlement in Sweden, and of this number 1,600 will have arrived by the end of 1979. The WCC-related agency, Swedish Free Church Aid, is actively involved in the care and counselling of refugees alongside the government which covers all costs and admits every refugee into the Swedish welfare system. The churches are helping by providing interpreters, apprising the refugees of their legal rights, sponsoring an information center to sensitize public opinion, and in helping influence government policy. Examples of the last-named are pressures to improve selection procedures and expressions of concern about taking also a fair share of the so-called land cases, not just boat people who are mostly ethnic Chinese. Swedish policy is to settle Indochinese refugees in 20 localities throughout central and southern Sweden, with no fewer than 100 refugees in each place.

SWITZERLAND

By the end of 1979 about 3,800 Indochinese refugees will have arrived in Switzerland, and of this total nearly two-thirds will have come since the July 1979 United Nations appeal. Switzerland has established 15 reception centers throughout the country where, in a two to three-month period, the first steps toward integration are taken. This includes general orientation, language courses, provision of housing, schooling for the children and special training or retraining for parents or other adults. Plans call for the acceptance of another 2,000 refugees in 1980, a figure which in reality will probably rise to about 3,000 because many family-reunion cases are involved. The situation in Switzerland with regard to helping integrate the refugees differs from most other countries in that the financial costs as well as the work involved are shared by the federal government, the churches and other helping agencies, and many local groups which provide support of all kinds to the refugees. Indeed, Swiss Inter-church Aid (HEKS) reports that without the assistance of these support groups it would have been impossible to accept as many refugees as Switzerland has decided to take. The Protestant churches through HEKS have been outspoken advocates not only on behalf of the acceptance of Indochinese refugees in Switzerland but also in favor of reconstruction and the search for peace and justice in Southeast Asia.

UNITED KINGDOM

In a pamphlet about Southeast Asian refugees entitled "They Need Help", the British Council of Churches reports its government's agreement to make available 14,000 places, but questions whether this number will be enough. "..... the offers of help reported from all over the country suggest that Britain could eventually take more. An informed and understanding public can influence decisions by governments and local authorities." After describing the work being done by various agencies throughout Britain in receiving and resettling the refugees, the pamphlet goes on to outline the three ways in which the public can most effectively render assistance to the resettlement agencies and local authorities which carry the main burden: by organizing support groups in every local area to coordinate voluntary work and receive offers of help; by publicizing the issue; and by emphasizing the need for material help as well as other needs such as English-language instruction.

AUSTRALIA

In 1979 the Australian government increased its quota for Indochinese land and boat refugees from 10,500 to 14,000 per year, and by June 1980 it is expected that 37,000 Indochinese will have arrived in the country. Once they have been accepted, Indochinese refugees are government-assisted migrants and are transported at government expense to large hostels where they remain from six weeks to six months. There they are given orientation courses, English-language instruction, employment assistance, etc. A revolving fund provides interest-free loans of up to A\$600 per family to encourage departure from the hostels. This fund is administered by the voluntary agencies. The government provides funds for grant-in-aid welfare workers of the voluntary agencies,

and the Australian Council of Churches has one such worker on its staff in Sydney. The churches have also received grants to employ "hosting" workers who match refugees with parishes, community groups or families. The ACC has been conscious of its role as coordinator in refugee and migration matters, and in March 1979 it sponsored a consultation with New Zealand and Australian agencies to examine matters of common concern. Emerging from this consultation was a determination to increase efforts to educate the public on refugee matters and also to stress the essential links between resettlement and development. Challenging the communities in which the refugee hostels are located to become more involved was also a concern of the consultation. The Australian Council of Churches has consistently pressed the government to increase its monthly rate of refugee acceptances, and, under a special resettlement program called "Refugees Need Friends," has offered to sponsor 500 people directly from the hostels at no cost to the government except for transportation.

CANADA

Canada has offered 36,000 resettlement places to the Indochinese refugees. Under the terms of the 1976 Immigration Act, the Canadian Council of Churches has been actively involved in a program of refugee sponsorship as defined by this legislation. Accordingly, refugees and others seeking resettlement in Canada on humanitarian grounds are selected according to flexible standards designed to evaluate their ability to establish themselves. The amount of assistance from private sources like the churches in Canada can have a great bearing on the refugees' chances of acceptance. Through the sponsorship program, churches and other organizations can express their concern for the displaced and persecuted by providing settlement services beyond those normally furnished through the federal and provincial governments. The care, attention and personalized assistance provided by such groups results in the acceptance of some refugees who might not otherwise be admitted to Canada. Any legally incorporated organization may act as sponsor, and so may any group of at least five people. Three criteria must be met for a group or organization to be approved as a sponsor: 1) it must be able to make adequate arrangements in the community for reception and settlement of the refugees or other humanitarian applicants; 2) it must have sufficient financial resources and expertise to provide lodging, care, maintenance and resettlement assistance, and 3) it must not be in default with respect to any other sponsorship undertaking on behalf of a refugee or humanitarian applicant. It is expected that any Canadian group or organization approved for sponsorship will offer both short-term material assistance and longer-term counselling and guidance to help the refugees adjust to life in Canada. Thus the churches and other groups provide food and clothing, orientation to Canadian society, employment help, language and job-training, and other services.

NEW ZEALAND

The Inter-Church Commission on Immigration and Refugee Resettlement (ICCI) represents the National Council of Churches and the Catholic Church in New Zealand. The ICCI is closely involved with the New Zealand government in formulating refugee policy, and it has urged that the quota for admitting Indochinese refugees be doubled as from 1980. Before 1979 New Zealand had accepted 535 Indochinese refugees. This year it will accept a further 900, and

at the United Nations conference in July New Zealand made a further commitment to accept 1,800 refugees by June 1981. ICCI sees New Zealand's role in the Indochinese refugee situation as a dual one. Pressing for an expansion of the refugee resettlement program is part of its commitment, and the other part is encouraging steps to reconstruct Indochina in the hope that stabilization of the three countries there will reduce the refugee flow.

UNITED STATES of AMERICA

The number of Indochinese refugees accepted for resettlement in the United States now exceeds 250,000. One of the leading voluntary agencies involved in helping resettle the Indochinese is Church World Service, the relief and development arm of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Church World Service summarizes its work with these refugees in seven points: 1) in cooperation with denominational resettlement offices CWS has resettled 30,000 Indochinese refugees since 1975 and will continue as long as resettlement needs exist; 2) it staffs and manages the Joint Voluntary Agency office in Malaysia, interviewing and documenting refugees for admission to the U.S.; 3) it continues an advocacy role for changing U.S. immigration laws and policies; 4) it provides information for constituency education regarding refugee situations in every part of the world; 5) it provided two staff persons for the United Nations Orderly Departure Program based in Ho Chi Minh City to screen applicants for immigration to U.S.; 6) it sent \$15,000 worth of pharmaceutical supplies to camps in Thailand; and 7) it provides support services through the CWS West Coast Office of Immigration and Refugee Program for the entire West Coast region. Although the American government has refused to normalize diplomatic and trade relations with Vietnam, and opposes international development assistance programs for that country, Church World Service works with the people of Vietnam in making positive contributions to their development. This arises out of a basic commitment by CWS to help improve the quality of life of people under duress anywhere in the world. In addition to sizable shipments of material aid to Vietnam and the other Indochinese countries, CWS has been able to send several delegations to Vietnam to evaluate project needs and to discuss the refugee situation and other points of concern with Vietnamese officials as well as the churches there. Simultaneously, CWS maintains an ongoing dialogue with its own government regarding relationships with Indochina and, in the case of refugees, in advocating substantial changes in U.S. legislation. In a recent publication entitled "CWS and Indochina Today," the following words appear: "..... U.S. churches have a role to play in the lives of people in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. That role is being played out today in the refugee camps of Asia, among resettled families in the U.S., in the Hanoi New Economic Zone, in the Na Bong Agricultural School in Laos, in meetings with government officials, in the sending and receiving of relief supplies, in the design of a new rice huller in Vietnam in helping the people of Indochina, wherever they are and whatever their pasts, to build new lives for themselves."

Report on the Response of the Churches to the Indochinese Refugee Crisis:
Countries of First Asylum

Please see the attached report which summarizes the various requests received by CICARWS from churches in Southeast Asia for assistance to Indochinese refugees. The date of this report is October 15, 1979, and since then additional information has been received and action taken as follows:

INDONESIA

The attached report refers to a second survey which the Council of Churches in Indonesia (DCI) was carrying out in cooperation with the Indonesian government. A copy of this report has been received. Based on visits to seven refugee camps in the Riau Archipelago, the DCI's team recommended that for the time being it should not establish a refugee assistance program of its own but that it could participate in serving refugees by selecting and seconding field and social workers to UNHCR for its social and education programs. The DCI also recognized that within one or two years there will be a need to serve the refugees who by then have not been accepted for resettlement in third countries. Already the DCI, in cooperation with another agency, is laying plans for serving these forgotten people. Finally, the DCI will carefully monitor all developments and changes in the refugee situation so that the churches will be ready to serve when needed.

PHILIPPINES



The National Council of Churches in the Philippines has an Ecumenical Committee on Refugees which has initiated a two-part program for helping Indochinese refugees temporarily accommodated at the Tara and Bataan camps in the Philippines. Food assistance will comprise one part of this program, and educational, cultural and religious activities will also be carried out. The church has agreed to hire a Chinese-speaking social worker who will be based where the refugees are, and a Manila-based program coordinator will also be hired. In late November CICARWS transferred US\$25,000 as a first instalment toward support of these activities.

Follow-up to CICARWS Consultation on Indochinese Refugees
Geneva, July 1979

REQUESTS FROM CHURCHES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

1. The flood of refugees from Indochina to other South-East Asian countries of first asylum earlier this year led CICARWS and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) to send a joint team to four of these countries from July 1-15. The purposes of these team visits were: (a) to express ecumenical concern to and solidarity with the churches and related agencies in Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand; (b) to gather first-hand information on the refugee situation in each country, and (c) to learn the churches' and agencies' views concerning the refugee problem and in what ways ecumenical cooperation could best be expressed. For reference see the Report of World Council of Churches Commission on Inter-Church Aid and Christian Conference of Asia Joint Team Visit to South-East Asia Countries on Indochinese Refugees, July 1-15, 1979.
2. On July 24-25 CICARWS convened in Geneva a Consultation on Indochinese Refugees which, among other things, heard the report of the joint team visit and, while stressing the overriding need for immediate and massive programmes of resettlement to third countries, also recognized the urgent necessity of providing for the spiritual and physical needs of the refugees in camps as they await resettlement. (For reference see the Statement from this Consultation for fuller particulars on the responsibilities of the churches and other issues as they pertain to the Indochinese refugee situation). Representatives from the South-East Asian countries of first asylum who were present for the Consultation agreed to prepare and submit appropriate proposals to CICARWS for presentation to the ecumenical network.
3. Following are summary descriptions by country of the proposals so far received:

HONG KONG

In cooperation with the Hong Kong government and UNHCR, Hong Kong Christian Service, which is the service arm of the Hong Kong Christian Council, operates the Shamshuipo Transit Centre whose population of boat people now exceeds 10,000. At an annual estimated cost per person of US\$163, HKCS meets the needs of refugees by offering classes in adult handicrafts, language, domestic science, tailoring and arts. In addition, sports and recreation are offered, a trilingual newspaper is published, and two medical clinics are in operation. This asking covers the period from April 1, 1980 to March 31, 1981.

US\$320,000

A special project has just been submitted which aims at the prevention of malnutrition among Vietnamese refugee children in the Shamshuipo Transit Centre. The HKCS medical officer has determined that the large number of children suffering from persistent skin eruptions and boils show the symptoms of malnutrition. It is proposed to treat these children for six months with Vitasoy, a protein-rich soyabean product made in Hong Kong and sold to HKCS at a much-reduced price, following which the children will be thoroughly examined and compared with a second group of children not treated with Vitasoy. Approximately 3,000 children in the Shamshuipo Camp will benefit.

US\$ 10,000

INDONESIA

In September CICARWS forwarded US\$10,000 to the Council of Churches in Indonesia to enable a team to survey the refugee situation in the Anambas islands where some 35,000 Indochinese boat people had landed. Recently the Indonesian government officially responded to the Indonesian churches as partners in the refugee operation. Pending the outcome of a second survey being carried out in cooperation with the Indonesian government, the Council of Churches has been requested to consider the following assistance to refugees while they await resettlement opportunities overseas: (a) emergency shelter and other material assistance to new arrivals; (b) health care both to refugees and to the local population; (c) assistance in resettlement processing, and (d) in cooperation with the Catholic Church, the Indonesian Council of Churches will minister to the spiritual needs of the refugees.

US\$ 75,000

MALAYSIA

Although CICARWS has received no proposal from the Council of Churches of Malaysia, a number of ecumenical agencies have made small direct grants to cover the costs of immediate relief assistance.

PHILIPPINES

The National Council of Churches in the Philippines through its Committee for Refugees has, in cooperation with the Philippine government and UNHCR, submitted a proposal for assisting Indochinese refugees temporarily accommodated at the Tara Processing Centre. Assistance in the form of food and clothing, the provision of drinking water, tools and various educational, cultural and religious programmes are planned, and the NCCP expects to be able to recruit some volunteer workers and make a financial contribution exceeding US\$20,000. The amount that follows is requested through CICARWS:

US\$ 70,000

THAILAND

CICARWS has already forwarded US\$10,000 in response to an emergency request from the YMCA for a vehicle to be used by its medical team working in the refugee camps. In addition, CICARWS has seconded to the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM), Bangkok, Mr. Craig A. Grant to assist in the processing required for Indochinese refugees to be transported to their overseas destinations. Mr. Grant's appointment is for ten months as from September 1, 1979, at a cost of US\$11,500.

CICARWS is awaiting from the Church of Christ in Thailand a proposal for additional assistance to Indochinese refugees living in camps along the borders to Laos and Cambodia. The refugees to be helped under this proposal are those who have found asylum in Thailand over the past months. The CCT's programme for Indochinese refugees is expected to total:

US\$125,000

4. Summary of requests

Hong Kong	US\$330,000	Philippines	US\$ 70,000
Indonesia	75,000	Thailand	125,000
		Total	<u>US\$600,000</u>