FOREWORD

This is "The Story of UNRRA". It is not the full story—that will be told much later when the official history comes to be written—but it is UNRRA in essence and is designed to tell how relief and rehabilitation was administered in the difficult, immediate post-war years to suffering humanity in Europe and the Far East. Vast areas of the world had been devastated and millions were without food and shelter. Millions cried out for help in their pitiable condition of hunger and despair... that cry did not go unheeded. Governments of more fortunate nations, representing the deep feeling of their peoples, worked out plans to alleviate hunger and overcome despair. Thus, out of good-neighborliness and good-will, and in fulfillment of pledges given during the war, UNRRA was born.

We—the staff of UNRRA (and I speak, too, for the many hundreds who have already dispersed)—have been deeply conscious of the responsibility we bore. We knew it as a trust, not only to the peoples we had the responsibility to help, but also to the peoples who made that help possible. We counted it a privilege to carry out that trust and tried conscientiously to do so. We looked on ourselves as a "fighting unit"—for we fought against starvation; we fought against disease—and we fought against time. In our struggle for victory we had to combat shortages of all kinds—food, fuel, machinery—and when we had found these things, we had to combat lack of shipping to carry them where they were needed. And it was the determination of the contributing peoples to see these difficulties overcome, and the steady cooperation of the receiving peoples to see their lands recover, which enabled us to conquer the setbacks and to achieve our aim.

Every citizen in every contributing country is entitled to have an account of our stewardship. I know, too, that my predecessors—Governor Herbert H. Lehman who built so well a functioning agency out of an official document, and Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia who followed him (and whose untimely death occurred last year)—I know that these two men would wish this account of our work to be available to citizens the world over, so that they may derive a better understanding of what we set out to do in their name and what was finally accomplished. It is hoped that the reader will find the significant answers to his questions in this—"The Story of UNRRA."

[Signature]
Director General

Feb. 15, 1948