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held on  
Wednesday, 10 October at 3 p.m.

New York

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Chairman: Mr. SINCLAIR (Guyana):

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later: Mr. PEŇÁŽKA (Czechoslovakia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 86: ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH ARE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN NAMIBIA AND IN ALL OTHER TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (continued)

1. Mr. ABDEL-FATTAH (Egypt) welcomed the delegation of Zimbabwe following the valiant struggle by the people of that country for independence and against racism and imperialism. The role played by the United Nations in mobilizing international support for the struggle of the Zimbabwean people had been decisive in the achievement of the final victory, and Zimbabwe's independence thus was an honourable page in the history of the Organization and in that of decolonization and of the Fourth Committee in particular. The presence of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as a member of the United Nations following its recent independence further demonstrated that the decolonization process was making great strides and that it would not be long before the remaining colonial peoples were able to exercise their right to self-determination and independence.
2. However, in Namibia, despite the countless resolutions adopted by the United Nations and Decree No. 1 of the Council for Namibia, transnational corporations continued to co-operate with the illegal South African racist régime to exploit the natural wealth and cheap labour of Namibia and thus obtain huge profits that were repatriated to the countries of origin, in complete disregard of the rights of the people of the Territory and of the obligation to preserve the natural resources which were the common heritage of that people until its independence. In view of the increased resistance of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia, the international community must intensify its efforts to enable them to achieve self-determination.
3. The recent hearings organized by the United Nations Council for Namibia on the question of Namibian uranium had revealed the intentions of the racist régime to convert South Africa into a nuclear Power and had shown clearly that the entire international community opposed the illegal exploitation of uranium, one of Namibia's most important resources.
4. In flagrant violation of Security Council decisions 385 (1976) and 435 (1978), the foreign economic activities were helping to strengthen the racist apartheid system which was causing untold suffering to the peoples of southern Africa and might lead to a bloody conflagration which would endanger international peace and security. At the thirty-fifth session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, in Freetown, the Foreign Ministers had, for that reason, made a statement on foreign investment in southern Africa reaffirming that foreign investments and bank loans had helped to strengthen the apartheid régime and had encouraged it in its defiance of international public opinion. The African countries had also asked the Security Council to hold an emergency meeting in order to take, without delay, the decisive step of imposing general sanctions on

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(Mr. Abdel-Fattah, Egypt)

the racist Pretoria régime. It was to be hoped that the Security Council would take the relevant steps on that occasion, for experience in Zimbabwe had demonstrated that only general and complete sanctions could dismantle apartheid and bring about independence for Namibia, thereby also putting an end to South Africa's aggression against neighbouring countries, in particular, against Angola.

5. With regard to the other colonized regions, he pointed out that foreign investment, in the colonial territories must take into account the well-being of the population concerned and help to diversify and develop the economy and to preserve the common heritage of such territories. Accordingly, he denounced activities which were designed solely to meet the interests of the investors and of the administering Powers and which impeded implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. They deserved to be condemned by the international community and the United Nations.

6. Egypt reaffirmed its support for the countries that continued to struggle for their legitimate rights to self-determination and independence, particularly those in southern Africa, and it would continue to give them full moral and material support.

7. Mr. PEŇAŽKA (Czechoslovakia) took the Chair.

8. Mr. HADAS (Hungary) said that so far the General Assembly had in vain pointed out that the natural resources of all Territories under colonial domination were the heritage of the peoples of those Territories, and that the exploitation and depletion of those resources by foreign economic interests constituted a direct violation of the rights of the peoples and of the principles stated in the Charter and in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Foreign economic circles continued to play a prime role in colonial countries such as Namibia, in the so-called small territories and in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and to control their whole economy and their natural and human resources. The administering Powers had taken no legislative, administrative or other measure with respect to the peoples under their administration to curb the monopolies nor did they intend to do so even though the United Nations had long ago recognized and had repeatedly reaffirmed that any administering or occupying Power which deprived the colonial peoples of the exercise of their legitimate rights over their natural resources or subordinated the rights and interests of those peoples to foreign economic and financial interests violated the solemn obligations it had assumed under the Charter of the United Nations and thus created a major obstacle to the independence of such territories.

9. That was clearly illustrated by the case of Namibia whose economy continued to be dominated by foreign interests which exploited its reserves of uranium, diamonds and base minerals through 32 foreign companies, 18 of which were based in South Africa and the rest in the five leading Western countries. Apart from exploiting the natural and human resources of Namibia to their own advantage and contributing nothing to the economic development of the Territory, those monopolies

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(Mr. Hadas, Hungary)

exported the minerals in crude form, thus depriving the Territory even of the advantages of a refining industry. It should not be forgotten that colonial territories had a strategic importance for the metropolitan countries whose military bases in such Territories were meant to protect their own interests and were contrary to the United Nations Charter and to the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

10. As was clearly stated in document A/AC.109/611, the efforts of the Western countries in Namibia were directed to achieving a peaceful settlement to the situation in the Territory that would be to their advantage. It was a sad fact that, in the year of the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the Charter and the relevant provisions of the Final Declaration of the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries continued to be violated. The time had come to do everything possible, including applying sanctions against South Africa under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, to put an end to the activities of the transnational corporations in the colonial territories.

11. Ms. LUCAS (New Zealand) reaffirmed her delegation's support for the principles underlying the item under consideration, but she expressed certain reservations about the directions that the discussions and the resolutions adopted had taken. New Zealand agreed with what the representative of Sierra Leone had said on the first day of the debate, namely, that the time had come for the Committee to decide how best to achieve its objectives. Her delegation had observed with regret that previous debates on the item had been used as occasions for making accusations and counter-accusations, with the result that the Committee had tended to lose sight of the purpose of the task before it.

12. In recent years, the Committee had been concerned in particular with bringing about independence in Namibia and, until a short time ago, in Zimbabwe and with eliminating the exploitation of the people in South Africa living under apartheid. It had also been concerned with putting a stop to those foreign economic and other activities which clearly impeded the development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. No one would dispute the merits of those goals.

13. New Zealand, which had always given broad support to the basic principles defined in the debate and in the resolutions on the present item, was committed to Namibia's independence and believed that the exploitation of Namibia's natural resources by foreign economic interests must be stopped, since those activities unquestionably impeded Namibia's progress toward independence. Her delegation had also consistently maintained that it was wrong that foreign economic interests should continue to exploit the human resources of South Africa under the grossly discriminatory system of apartheid, and it had endorsed the general view that foreign economic activities that were detrimental to the future economic and general well-being of any territory should be condemned. New Zealand would therefore be willing to support any resolution which clearly and fairly defined the above

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(Ms. Lucas, New Zealand)

principles, but it believed that a distinction must be made between foreign economic activities which impeded the decolonization process and those which did not. That had not been done in the past, and the resolutions adopted tended to assume that all foreign economic interests were detrimental to the economic development of developing territories. By the same token, such resolutions had failed sufficiently to distinguish between the situation in southern Africa and the quite different circumstances existing in other Non-Self-Governing Territories.

14. The important criterion that should govern all foreign economic activities in such Territories was that they should benefit the people concerned and should be conducted in accordance with their wishes. The role that foreign economic interests should play in the development of the developing countries had been acknowledged explicitly in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, which had been approved at the recent special session of the General Assembly. The Strategy declared that direct foreign private investments should be encouraged, provided that they were compatible with national priorities and with the legislation of the developing countries. The Strategy also recognized the positive contribution made by transnational corporations to the development efforts of the developing countries. Accordingly, the objective must be to ensure that the administering Powers and other investing countries, whoever they might be, should adopt policies that encouraged their private enterprises and investors to enter into mutually acceptable forms of co-operation with their partners in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and in the developing countries in general.

15. Her delegation hoped that the resolution submitted during the current session would direct its criticism in a consistent way and only where it was justified and that its recommendations would be consistent with the discussions held in other United Nations forums.

16. Mr. ZAGAJAC (Yugoslavia) said that at the core of the problem concerning foreign economic and other interests in countries under colonial domination lay the desire of certain Western interests to earn huge profits and benefits in an easy way and to ensure the supremacy and stability of the political, military, strategic and economic privileges of Western countries in those parts of the world that were still under the domination of colonial Powers.

17. The latest review of the situation in southern Africa revealed further penetration by more than 2,000 foreign transnational corporations in the financial and industrial sectors of South Africa's economy. The activities of such corporations were still the main driving force in the growth and development of the industrial and military-industrial complexes of the South African racist régime. Without the more than 20,000 million rand invested in South Africa by Western banks and without the activities of transnational corporations, South Africa's economy would not be able to survive or to develop to the point of daring to defy the international community and flouting the decisions of the United Nations. Foreign investments in the South African economy encouraged the continuation of oppression and exploitation in South Africa and in southern Africa, as a whole. That had

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(Mr. Zagašjac, Yugoslavia)

brought about a situation in which 80 per cent of the population received less than 21 per cent of the total earnings of the country, a country where more than 2 million people were unemployed. Those factors had contributed considerably to the building of the racist State apparatus and the racist armed forces, whose acts of aggression against neighbouring sovereign States constituted violations of the Charter of the United Nations and a very direct threat to international peace and security.

18. His delegation believed that colonial exploitation and ruthless oppression by the apartheid régime in southern Africa, 20 years after the adoption of the Declaration on decolonization, showed that colonialism and its new forms were currently just as difficult and dangerous adversaries of the world community as they had been when the Declaration had been adopted. Moreover, one could safely say that that régime had become even more dangerous and more resolved to maintain its position than ever before. While the victory of the national liberation struggle and the end of colonial rule in Zimbabwe had represented, on the one hand, a triumph for the progressive aspirations of mankind, it might also mean, on the other hand, that the colonial system would defend even more desperately and persistently its position in countries that had not yet been liberated from colonial rule, especially in Namibia, where the largest interests of the capitalist countries were involved.

19. Yugoslavia's position, which had been expressed on several occasions in United Nations forums, fully coincided with that of the majority of Members of the Organization on the need to reaffirm the right of peoples under colonial rule and minority domination to enjoy and dispose of their own natural resources. Accordingly, Yugoslavia condemned any activity of foreign economic and other interests that impeded the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization in countries under colonial rule.

20. The continuation of economic, commercial, military, political and nuclear co-operation between the developed Western countries and South Africa, in defiance of unequivocal United Nations decisions, constituted a dangerous threat to the heritage of the world community. It was essential that the international community should undertake effective measures to isolate the apartheid régime and compel it to renounce its policy of oppression on the internal plane and to renounce force and aggression in its relations with its neighbours. His delegation felt that the maintenance and continuation of economic activities and economic co-operation with the apartheid régime could not be explained by the unconvincing argument that all economic activities were not detrimental to the population of the colonial regions of the African continent or that it was necessary to distinguish between the harmful activities of the apartheid régime and the useful activities pursued by Western companies in colonial countries. The information available showed that the more the South African economy was developed with the help of foreign interests, the greater the oppression and exploitation and the wider the difference between the standard of living of the white minority and that of the majority of the population.

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(Mr. Zagajac, Yugoslavia)

21. The international community should condemn once again in the most emphatic terms the exploitation and plundering of the national wealth of countries and peoples under colonial rule by the apartheid régime and the foreign economic interests wherever they operated, and especially in Namibia, where flagrant violations of the relevant decisions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, as well as of Decree No. 1 adopted by the Council of Namibia, had occurred. As had been indicated in the hearings on the exploitation of uranium in Namibia, organized by the Council for Namibia, it was very important that the General Assembly should adopt a resolute stand with regard to the nuclearization of South Africa.

22. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of one of the most important instruments in the struggle against colonialism - the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples - would make a fresh effort to eliminate the last bastions of the colonial system in the world and thus mark the eighth decade of the twentieth century with another victory for the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Yugoslavia would make its full contribution towards that end.

23. Mr. TSHAMALA (Zaire) said that it was clear from the reports prepared over the past two decades by the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples that the countries and Powers which collaborated in various fields with the racist and colonial régimes simply did not wish the situation to change or did not feel obligated in that regard; they were motivated by purely selfish reasons, since they needed the wealth which lay in the ground and subsoil of the territories in question, particularly Namibia and South Africa.

24. In no other way was it possible to explain the arrogance with which South Africa ignored the appeals of the international community. It was without doubt the support and financial aid from abroad that enabled a white minority to maintain its privileged position as a ruling class and to impose its system of domination by brute force. Once that aid and support were brought to an end, the South African white racists' dream would become no more than an inglorious chapter in the face of the emergence of a new African personality in Namibia and South Africa.

25. The problem of the activities of foreign economic and other interests called above all for a change of mentality. The problem was one of political will. It was high time that the countries possessing interests in the colonial countries decided at last to bring their actions into line with the declarations of faith they had repeatedly uttered in the United Nations. At a time when the countries of the third world and especially the African countries, beset by all manner of natural disasters and by international economic crises, were struggling to accomplish their development and were desperately seeking the necessary investments to implement the projects on which they frequently depended for their own survival, it was inconceivable that financial circles and transnational corporations continued to pump enormous sums of money into South Africa for projects that were of no urgency. His delegation refused to believe that those investments could succeed in improving in the slightest the lives and well-being of the black

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(Mr. Tshamala, Zaire)

majority in South Africa; neither did it believe that those practices could induce South Africa to abandon its ignoble policy of apartheid.

26. His delegation urged the Governments of all Member States to conform to the relevant General Assembly resolutions, particularly resolutions 2621 (XXV) and 32/35, and to have the mass media of their countries publicize United Nations efforts to inform world public opinion of the plundering of the natural resources of the colonial Territories, the exploitation of the indigenous inhabitants by foreign monopolies, especially in Namibia, and the support which those monopolies extended to the South African racist minority régime.

27. Mr. IVANICHUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that decolonization was a vital task of the United Nations and pointed out that, over the 20 years that had elapsed since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, it had been clearly demonstrated that the ideals of freedom and independence would inevitably triumph. There was no doubt that resounding victories had been won in the struggle to eradicate the colonial system, but colonialism, although dead, was not yet buried. The activities of foreign interests, especially transnational corporations, placed obstacles in the part of decolonization and gave birth to neo-colonialism, thereby impeding the implementation of the Declaration. That was vividly illustrated by the criminal activities of the transnational corporations in southern Africa, where, with the military, political and economic assistance which a number of Western Powers and monopolies extended to the Pretoria régime, the racists and colonialists had been able to remain in power and to continue their illegal occupation of Namibia and their merciless pillaging of its resources. It was well known that Namibia, as one of the 20 countries most well-endowed with mineral resources, was reaping profits that were much higher than in other regions and had therefore fallen prey to the greed of the transnational corporations. The United Nations had the duty to supervise the implementation of the 1974 Decree adopted by the United Nations Council for Namibia, which affirmed the right of the people of Namibia to dispose of their natural resources and to protect them until they attained independence.

28. The foreign corporations which, flouting United Nations resolutions, persisted in exploiting the mineral wealth of that Territory included Consolidated Diamond Mines of South West Africa, Ltd., and Tsumeb Corporation, Ltd., which had a monopoly of the mining and marketing of diamonds and non-ferrous metals, the British-owned Rio Tinto Zinc Corporation, which mined uranium, the Southern Oil Exploration Corporation, involved in the search for petroleum in Namibia, and the Metallgesellschaft, AG, of the Federal Republic of Germany, which was engaged in mining lithium. Their activities indicated that the Western monopolies had taken control of economic life in South Africa and had turned Namibia into an appendage which produced raw materials for the industrialized world. The foreign interests were therefore vitally concerned in maintaining the racist régime in power, because the stronger apartheid was the more guarantees they would have of being able to continue to reap vast profits from exploiting Namibia and South Africa itself.

29. The Western Powers hypocritically condemned the Pretoria régime but in practice supported the exploiters by defending the interests of the transnational

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(Mr. Ivanichuk, Ukrainian SSR)

corporations, which considered South Africa to be of vital strategic importance. Those Powers thereby opposed the national liberation struggle on the African continent and exerted pressure on the independent African States. The military assistance which the Pretoria régime received from the NATO countries and from Israel was a matter for serious concern. According to many sources, 40 per cent of the aircraft of the South African Air Force had been partially or entirely produced in the United States, Great Britain and other Western countries. The régime also received transport and communications equipment from a number of Western corporations. The white minority racist régime also enjoyed the support of the Space Research Corporation, which operated in the United States and Canada. As a result of all those factors, South Africa had greatly stepped up its military potential in order to stifle the national liberation movements on the African continent. Those covert violations of Security Council resolution 418 (1977) on the arms embargo against South Africa, and the co-operation which South Africa received in the nuclear field, could have very serious repercussions on international peace and security.

30. There was no doubt that political, economic and military co-operation, especially in the nuclear field, between the Western Powers and South Africa was impeding the implementation of the Declaration and hindering the elimination of racism and apartheid. With the help of that co-operation, the Pretoria régime could engage in nuclear blackmail against the independent countries of Africa. For all those reasons and despite the opposition of a number of Western countries, there was no doubt that sanctions should be applied against South Africa in conformity with Chapter VII of the Charter, as well as economic and other types of sanctions in conformity with the Declaration on decolonization and with the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations, particularly General Assembly resolution 34/41.

31. The activities of foreign interests were not limited to southern Africa but also included smaller Territories under colonial administration particularly in the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans and in the Caribbean. Despite the resolutions of the United Nations, the colonial Powers were deliberately holding up the process of decolonization, were depriving the populations of their rights and were adopting measures to fragment and assimilate Territories as, for example, in Micronesia. The metropolitan States and the transnational corporations considered that colonial domination was an important means of capital investment, a source of cheap manpower and a springboard for stifling national liberation movements.

32. His delegation declared that it was necessary to end the shameful plundering of the imperialist monopolies in southern Africa. Those activities could in no case improve the economic situation of the population of the colonial Territories but, on the contrary, were designed to perpetuate the slavery of the population and impede the attainment of independence by maintaining the last bastion of colonialism and racism in southern Africa. In the interests of peace, freedom and social justice, the criminal co-operation that was impeding the efforts of the progressive world should be brought to an end. His delegation strongly condemned the criminal activities of foreign interests in colonial Territories and fully supported the efforts made by the United Nations to unmask and condemn such exploitation in the strongest possible terms.

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33. Mrs. NOWOTNY (Austria) said it was established beyond doubt that in some Non-Self-Governing Territories -- and especially in Namibia -- foreign economic activities had side effects which were slowing down progress to independence and the full enjoyment of natural rights. However, it was a great credit to the United Nations that several transnational corporations and banks had already responded by re-evaluating their interests and obligations in the light of current political developments.

34. It could safely be assumed that big industrial enterprises and transnational corporations were solely concerned with safeguarding their own interests and were the natural supporters of the status quo. But there was another side to the problem. The same activities which were slowing down the achievement of independence and sovereignty in Namibia might prove to be very beneficial in another Territory where the political situation was not so intricate and difficult. Territories on the verge of independence or striving to consolidate it were confronted with crucial economic problems and in order to overcome them needed outside help. For those reasons, her delegation fully endorsed the views put forward recently by the representative of Sierra Leone. It was impossible to change the situation by generalizations, rejections and incriminations. The facts themselves were undisputed and countries should therefore combine their forces to arrive at a consensus language which would clearly emphasize and document the existing consensus of views.

35. Especially against the background of the eleventh special session of the General Assembly, it was impossible to ignore that all international relations had one phenomenon in common: the growth of world-wide interdependence. Nor could it be forgotten that foreign economic interests were a vital element in world industrial development although mechanisms would have to be created by governments to control the activities of such interests.

36. Consequently, his delegation considered that the Committee should strive for an impartial evaluation of each particular case regarding the effects of foreign economic activities; it should refrain from assuming that all foreign economic interests were in all cases detrimental to the political development of all Non-Self-Governing Territories.

37. Austria had a firm commitment to the progress of decolonization in general and had no national interests to defend in that field. Austria hoped that during the present year the Committee could adopt a text by a consensus in which Austria would gladly join.

38. Mr. NAVARRO (Philippines) congratulated Zimbabwe on its entry into the United Nations. His delegation shared in the exhilaration of the people of Zimbabwe at having achieved independence in much the same way as it had felt kinship with them in their years of struggle for freedom against colonialism and racism. However, the Committee's task was far from over and the crusade must be continued until the last bastion of racism was eliminated.

39. Despite zealous efforts by the Secretary-General and the international community to decolonize Namibia, the South African Government persisted in

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(Mr. Navarro, Philippines)

obstructing the implementation of the settlement proposal embodied in Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Under the guise of negotiating, South Africa had been consolidating its gains and circumventing the efforts of the United Nations Council for Namibia to grant its people true independence.

40. His delegation shared the view that the intransigence of the Pretoria régime was abetted by the continuous infusion of foreign investments and the total lack of consideration for the plight of the people of Namibia by foreign interests doing business with South Africa. The exploitation of the human and natural resources of Namibia remained unchecked, while the multinationals continued to repatriate enormous profits to their corporate headquarters. The Pretoria Government was becoming more deeply entrenched in power with the continuous flow of foreign investments and was thus emboldened to defy the resolutions and sanctions of the United Nations.

41. Today there was an even greater threat to world peace and security, namely, the technical assistance being given by certain countries in helping develop South Africa's nuclear weapons capability while they plumbed Namibia's vast uranium resources. His delegation strongly condemned that collusion, whether direct or indirect, of the foreign corporate powers with the racist régime of South Africa. It was deeply concerned with the proliferation of nuclear weapons and even more deeply concerned with the possible emergence of a nuclear Power that pursued the contemptible policy of apartheid.

42. The Philippines had always supported United Nations declarations and resolutions on the elimination of apartheid. In keeping with that staunch policy, his Government had no relations whatsoever with those States that advocated apartheid. His delegation reaffirmed its solidarity with the Namibian people in their struggle for self-determination and renewed its unwavering commitment to help stamp out the evils of racial discrimination.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.