



FOURTH COMMITTEE  
37th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 11 December 1979  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 37th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BOYA (Benin)

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COMPLETION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 90: QUESTION OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

(A/34/23/Add.1, A/34/88, A/34/111, A/34/126, A/34/171, A/34/179, A/34/186, A/34/187, A/34/220, A/34/228, A/34/279, A/34/346, A/34/357, A/34/389 and Corr.1, A/34/439, A/34/499, A/34/542, A/34/599; A/C.4/34/L.26, L.27, L.28; A/C.4/34/13)

1. The CHAIRMAN said it had been suggested to him by a number of delegations that any decision to be taken by the General Assembly at its current session on the item under consideration should take due account of the possible results of the ongoing negotiations in London and that, bearing in mind the fact that the dates set by the Assembly for the completion of the work of the Main Committees had long passed, the Committee should recommend to the Assembly that a decision on the question of Southern Rhodesia should be taken directly in plenary meeting, as appropriate. During consultations, that suggestion had appeared to command a wide measure of support. He therefore suggested that the Committee should authorize the Rapporteur to report to the General Assembly as soon as possible on the suggested course of action, giving an account of the Committee's consideration of the item to date. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that suggestion.

2. It was so decided.

COMPLETION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

3. The CHAIRMAN\*, commenting on the Committee's work during the thirty-fourth session, said that, as the representative of a country whose stand on colonial issues and whose support for the peoples still living under colonial rule needed no elaboration, it had been a great privilege and an honour for him to preside over the work of a Committee which had been called upon to consider some of the most critical issues before the United Nations. The continuing denial to millions of people of their right to self-determination and independence - a right second to none, in particular to those who had fought for the privilege of exercising it - was not only a demeaning affront to the lofty principles of the United Nations but also a major cause of international tension and conflict. It was self-evident that the longer colonialism, in all its forms and manifestations, was permitted to exist in the world, the greater the risk that the situation in a particular Territory might seriously endanger the efforts of the international community to build a world of peace, a world where the humiliation of being a subject people would be a thing of the past. In that regard, the situation in southern Africa remained a case in point and one which was still fraught with danger. The developments with regard to Southern Rhodesia served to emphasize the pressing need for the international community to take all necessary steps to

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\* This statement has been given full coverage in the summary record in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee during the meeting.

(The Chairman)

ensure that the deplorable situation prevailing in the entire region was soon brought to an end. Clearly, the responsibilities of the international community in that respect, both at the national and the intergovernmental levels, were not limited to, nor should they end with, the adoption of resolutions, if those resolutions were to be translated into tangible measures for the benefit of the colonial peoples concerned.

4. As far as the specific accomplishments of the session were concerned, he said he was convinced that the work of the Committee had been constructive and that the decisions it had taken would provide a useful basis for further action by all concerned. With regard to the item on the activities of foreign economic and other interests operating in the colonial Territories, he noted with satisfaction that the majority of members acknowledged the fact that such activities seriously obstructed the progress of the Territories concerned towards freedom and independence and deplored the failure of the Governments concerned to take remedial measures to curb such damaging activities. In southern Africa, where foreign interests had been allowed for far too long to plunder at will the wealth of the colonial Territories, the situation remained far from promising, especially when seen in the light of the fact that the Committee's recommendations on the matter had again failed to achieve the support of those who were most often responsible for the deplorable anachronistic situation in the region. Needless to say, the longer such callous attitudes on the part of commercially motivated interests were allowed to continue, the longer those who benefited from them would derive comfort and support therefrom. He therefore appealed once again most sincerely to those Member States which were directly or indirectly responsible for the situation to reconsider their negative attitudes and to co-operate with the United Nations in the search for a solution to that grievous problem.

5. Another positive aspect of the session had been the recognition given by the Committee to the importance of the role of the specialized agencies and other organizations within the United Nations system in the field of decolonization. While the continuing intensification of the efforts of a number of specialized agencies and other institutions which had been in the forefront of the move to extend assistance to the peoples concerned, deserved particular commendation, he felt constrained to note that, with regard especially to those organizations that were most able to help, particularly in terms of the available resources, much remained to be done to meet the actual needs of the colonial peoples concerned. Whether their assistance was almost non-existent or merely inadequate, he believed that it should again be made clear to those organizations that the international community was morally duty-bound to render all possible assistance to the peoples of the colonial Territories in Africa. Accordingly, he was convinced that the Committee had been right in urging all concerned to carry out their obligations. In that regard, he also drew the attention of those Member States which had again expressed reservations about what they considered to be the increasing politicization of the work of the specialized agencies and had opposed the involvement of those agencies in specific actions to the provisions of the Charter, which, in relation to the development of Non-Self-Governing Territories, specifically envisaged a role for "specialized international bodies".

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(The Chairman)

Furthermore, the recognition by the General Assembly of the legitimacy of the struggle of the peoples concerned for the attainment of their inherent right to self-determination entailed, as a corollary, an obligation on the part of the organizations in the United Nations system to extend to them the maximum support possible.

6. With respect to the question of Southern Rhodesia, he was confident that he was reflecting the unanimous opinion of the members of the Committee in expressing satisfaction that the long-fought-for transfer of power to the majority appeared at last to be in the process of taking place. That achievement, the result of a process which had been the object of a truly remarkable and positive convergence of views in the Committee, could not have taken place had it not been for the sense of responsibility, tenacity and will to succeed demonstrated by all concerned at the negotiating table in London. Particularly deserving of praise in that regard were the representatives of the Patriotic Front, the representatives of the true aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe, who had clearly demonstrated by their flexibility and repeated concessions that their only concern was the restoration of peace and justice in their country and the well-being of its citizens. Also to be commended in that connexion were the Commonwealth leaders whose timely initiative in Lusaka had made the exercise possible. At the present critical stage, it was to be hoped that all the parties concerned would see to it that the terms of the agreement reached in London were scrupulously adhered to and that nothing was done that might in any way jeopardize or delay the speedy liberation of Zimbabwe and its long-awaited accession to genuine independence.

7. With regard to the other Territories which had been referred to the Committee by the General Assembly, he had been gratified to note that the Committee had also given extensive consideration to the situation in most of them. It was particularly satisfying that, through the efforts and good will of all concerned, all the recommendations formulated by the Committee with regard to Territories outside the African continent had received the assent of the administering Powers, and, in most cases, had been adopted without a vote. As to those Territories in respect of which the Committee had been unable to agree unanimously on the measures to be taken to facilitate the process of decolonization, it was his deep conviction that, notwithstanding the nature of the disputes over the Territories, only one consideration should always remain uppermost in the minds of the international community, namely the paramount importance of the wishes of the peoples concerned. In that regard, many members had drawn attention to the positive results of the work accomplished by United Nations visiting missions as a means of ascertaining the wishes and aspirations of the peoples of the colonial Territories. Visiting missions were, indeed, an indispensable means of securing adequate and first-hand information on the situation in the Territories, and the positive attitude of the administering Powers with regard to receiving such missions was a most welcome development. He hoped that the continued co-operation of the administering Powers would make possible the dispatch of further visiting missions to colonial Territories in the coming years. He also hoped that, in addition to the New Hebrides, which would soon achieve independence on the basis of the freely expressed wishes of its inhabitants, other Territories would

(The Chairman)

similarly attain self-rule in the near future and that the United Nations would be given an opportunity to play an important role in those exercises.

8. In conclusion, he expressed his sincere appreciation to the members of the Committee for the understanding, patience and co-operation they had shown. In particular, he thanked the other officers of the Committee, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Trusteeship and Decolonization and the staff of his Department, the Secretary of the Committee, and the conference-servicing staff for their assistance during the session.

9. Mr. AMPAT (Congo) proposed that, in view of the importance of the statement made by the Chairman, it should be given full coverage in the summary record.

10. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it the Committee agreed to the proposal by the representative of the Congo, taking into account the financial implications set out in paragraph 15 of document A/C.4/34/L.1.

11. It was so decided.

12. The CHAIRMAN declared the Committee had completed its work for the thirty-fourth session.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.