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FOURTH COMMITTEE  
7th meeting  
held on  
Tuesday, 9 October 1979  
at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 7th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BOYA (Benin)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 92: 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 SOUTHERN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA AND IN ALL OTHER TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: 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 (A/34/23 (Part III)) (continued)

1. Mr. SEIFU (Ethiopia) deplored the fact that, although the item under consideration had been on the agenda of the General Assembly for over a decade, the situation in southern Africa had not changed in any positive way, but had, on the contrary, deteriorated. The flow of investments to southern Africa continued unabated, and the precious mineral and other natural resources of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa were being depleted for the benefit of the minority régimes and their Western collaborators. At the same time, the human resources of the subcontinent continued to be exploited in the most inhuman and degrading manner, while trade between the racist régimes and the Western and certain other countries continued.

2. The continuing flow of funds and technology had undeniably enabled the racist minority régimes to maintain a sound economy, on the basis of which they had built a powerful military machine with nuclear potential. It was also widely accepted that that in turn had not only facilitated the brutal oppression of the peoples of southern Africa in their struggle for emancipation from colonialism and apartheid, but that it also posed a serious threat to the peace and well-being of the entire continent of Africa.

3. All the measures taken by the international community in pursuance of the sanctions against Southern Rhodesia had been rendered ineffective by overt and covert violations of the United Nations resolutions on the subject by certain countries, especially South Africa. Moreover, attempts to penalize the Pretoria régime for such violations and for other violations of international law and morality, had been thwarted by certain Western and other States.

4. There was no doubt as to the identity of those countries which continued to collaborate in every possible sphere with the racist Pretoria régime and which persistently defended the status quo in southern Africa: they had been named only recently at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at Monrovia. Instead of decrying the reference to their names, the countries concerned would be better advised to put a stop to their collaboration with the racists of Pretoria and Salisbury.

5. Short of armed struggle, the only feasible method of weakening and finally eliminating the racist and colonial régimes of southern Africa was the total withdrawal of investment and the imposition of a mandatory trade embargo. Measures that only mitigated the more abhorrent aspects of foreign economic and other

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interests, such as the so-called "codes of conduct" and the formal granting of trade-union rights to black workers, could in no meaningful way ameliorate the political, social and economic status of the masses in southern Africa. On the other hand, the decision taken by the Swedish Government to prohibit new investments, though limited in its effect, was an example worth emulating.

6. The United Nations, for its part, must continue to awaken public opinion in the Western world to the detrimental role being played by the transnational corporations and certain Western Governments in southern Africa. Member States should jointly strive to impose economic sanctions on South Africa and ensure the full and effective implementation of the measures already in force against Southern Rhodesia.

7. Some delegations had termed the Committee's treatment of the subject rigid, unrealistic and condemnatory. The item, however, dealt with the immoral and abhorrent policies of racists and their collaborators and unless Members intended to encourage such policies, they could not but condemn them in the strongest possible terms. The draft resolution on the item had over the years passed through various stages of intensive consultation involving almost two thirds of the membership of the Committee and allegations that sufficient consultations had not been undertaken were therefore at variance with reality. The item on the activities of foreign economic and other interests in colonial Territories was of great importance and no one should expect the members of the Committee to abandon their objective of exposing the evils of the activities of such interests in southern Africa and elsewhere, for the dubious compliment of being called moderate, flexible or realistic.

8. Another allegation made was that previous resolutions on the subject had condemned all activities of foreign economic interests in all Non-Self-Governing Territories without distinction. Some had even expounded at length on the merits of private foreign investment. The issue of private foreign investment in independent States, let alone in dependent Territories, was extremely complex. Many developing countries were critical of such investments, hence the determined efforts to formulate proper codes of conduct for transnational corporations.

9. Driven as they were by the sole motives of gaining the best advantage and deriving the maximum profit, transnational corporations could not be expected to contribute to the real long-term development of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific, especially when they negotiated not with a government representing the interests of the indigenous population, but with a colonial Power whose interest and national identity in most cases were identical with those of the corporations. His delegation believed that the situation prevailing in southern Africa and in other dependent Territories was different only in magnitude and not in kind and it therefore considered the situation in southern Africa to be sufficiently instructive for all Member States not to allow the development of

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similar exploitative situations in the small dependent Territories. That, however, would not free the administering Powers from their obligation to use their own resources to promote the real development of the colonized peoples.

10. The CHAIRMAN stated that the conference room would have to be evacuated for security reasons and suggested that the meeting should be adjourned.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.