



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BOYA (Benin)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items)

(a) 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

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 89: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

(b) 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

AGENDA ITEM 91: QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR: 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

AGENDA ITEM 93: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

(a) 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

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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CONTENTS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 94: UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 95: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (A/34/23/Add.3-5, 7, 8, A/34/65, A/34/66, A/34/98, A/34/103, A/34/109, A/34/276, A/34/282, A/34/308, A/34/312, A/34/342, A/34/343, A/34/420, A/34/421, A/34/427, A/34/439, A/34/483; A/C.4/34/6 and 8)

(a) 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

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 89: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/34/23/Add.9, A/34/554)

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

(b) 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

AGENDA ITEM 91: QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR: 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/Add.3, A/34/311; A/C.4/34/5 and Add.1 and 2)

AGENDA ITEM 93: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (A/34/23 (Part V), A/34/208 and Add.1-3)

(a) 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

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/34/3/Add.28, A/34/357, A/34/389)

AGENDA ITEM 94: UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

AGENDA ITEM 95: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL (A/34/572)

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1. Mr. HAYDAR (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur 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, introducing the chapters of the Special Committee's report relating to agenda items 18, 89, 91, 93 and 12, 94 and 95, said that in the course of the past year, the Special Committee had had a particularly heavy programme of work. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 33/44, in particular paragraph 12 (d), and other General Assembly resolutions referring the study of certain Territories to the Special Committee, that Committee had studied the situation in the colonial Territories and related questions in depth and had made concrete recommendations and proposals that were set forth in its report.
2. In studying the colonial Territories in question, the Special Committee had continued to enjoy the co-operation of the administering Powers concerned (Australia, France, New Zealand, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States). Thus, at the invitation of the United States Government, the Special Committee had sent a visiting mission to Guam. It would soon consider the report of that mission and would submit its conclusions and recommendations to the Fourth Committee at a later date.
3. Conscious of the constructive results achieved by earlier United Nations visiting missions sent to various Territories to study the situation at first hand, the Special Committee had reaffirmed the need for such missions in order to facilitate the full, speedy and effective implementation of the Declaration with respect to the colonial Territories. It had welcomed the invitations addressed to it by the United Kingdom and Australian Governments to send visiting missions to the Turks and Caicos Islands and to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
4. During the past year, the Special Committee had continued to follow closely the question of the assistance given to the peoples of the colonial Territories, in particular those in southern Africa, by organizations in the United Nations system. In particular, after having studied the situation in that regard, the Special Committee had expressed its concern that the assistance extended so far to the colonial peoples, particularly those of Namibia and Zimbabwe, and to their liberation movements, had been far from adequate in relation to their actual needs. It had therefore recommended that the organizations concerned should initiate or broaden contacts with those peoples, review their procedures with respect to assistance and introduce greater flexibility into those procedures so as to be able to extend the necessary assistance without delay.
5. As could be seen from the relevant chapters of the report, the Special Committee had recommended a number of measures aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in respect of the various Territories. He was confident that the Fourth Committee would take those measures into consideration in formulating its own recommendations.

6. Mr. HADDAOUI (Morocco) said that, when reading the chapter of the report of the Special Committee of 24 concerning the question of Western Sahara, he had detected certain omissions and inaccuracies; his delegation would submit the text of its comments on the matter at a later stage.

7. Sir Anthony PARSONS (United Kingdom) said that the list of Territories under United Kingdom administration was growing shorter year by year, while the list of independent members of the Commonwealth and Members of the United Nations was growing longer.

8. Since 1976, Seychelles and the Solomon Islands, previously British dependencies, had become independent and had joined the United Nations. Recently, Dominica and Saint Lucia had terminated their relationship of association with his country and had taken on full responsibility for their affairs, and had also become Members of the United Nations. In addition, Tuvalu and Kiribati, previously United Kingdom dependencies, had achieved independence but had not yet chosen to apply for United Nations membership. At the end of October 1979, St. Vincent, another Caribbean State with which his country had a relationship of association, would assume the full responsibilities of an independent State. In all those cases, and in many more which had preceded them, the transition to independence had taken place with the full support and encouragement of the United Kingdom Government.

9. He emphasized that his Government's policy continued to be one of giving encouragement to all the Territories which remained its dependencies, as it had consistently done in the past. However, as his delegation had stated many times, both in the Committee and in the Special Committee of 24, a number of those Territories had not so far indicated a wish to change their constitutional status. His Government would not force constitutional change, and certainly not independence, on those who chose not to seek it for the time being. The guiding principle would be respect for the wishes of the inhabitants of each Territory.

10. His delegation continued to participate in the work of the Special Committee, and in particular in that of its Sub-Committee on Small Territories, in order to examine in detail the situation in the remaining British dependencies in the Caribbean, the Atlantic and the Pacific. Since 1974, visiting missions had examined the situation at first hand in four Territories, at his Government's invitation. In 1980, a further mission would be sent to the Turks and Caicos Islands.

11. Those missions had enabled the United Nations to keep abreast of the current situation; they had also been able to ascertain that a number of dependencies wished to maintain their existing links with the United Kingdom. That was why it was so important to treat such Territories individually and on their own merits, rather than applying to them doctrinaire judgements about the course they should follow. The educational process must be a two-way process. The peoples and Governments of the dependent Territories must be confident that the missions sent by the Special Committee of 24 did not arrive with the sole purpose of confirming preconceived and inappropriate notions about "colonial shackles" and "struggles for liberation". Previous missions had succeeded well in that aspect

(Sir Anthony Parsons, United Kingdom)

of their work and had made clear in their reports the widely differing aspirations and economic fortunes of the Territories they had visited.

12. His Government did not, therefore, expect all the Territories it currently administered to wish to accede to independence in the near future. For a number of them, the first priority was to establish sound economic structures so that political and economic development could proceed hand in hand. For that reason, the ritualistic denunciations of the activities of foreign economic interests in the dependent Territories in which many members of the Fourth Committee indulged were all the more distressing. While the Special Committee of 24 continued to ask the United Kingdom to strengthen and diversify the economies of its Caribbean and Pacific dependencies (a task which his country was assiduously carrying out in any case), some members of the Fourth Committee took a contradictory view and indulged in blanket condemnations of the activities of "foreign economic interests". It would be interesting to see what would happen if those "foreign economic interests" did indeed cease all their activities in the dependent Territories.

13. With the accession to independence of Kiribati in July 1979, the United Kingdom was left with only one dependency in the Pacific, Pitcairn Island, which had a population of 65. The United Kingdom shared with France responsibility for the administration of the condominium of the New Hebrides. In that connexion, he was glad to report that, following the constitutional conference which had been held in the capital of the Territory, Vila, the New Hebrides would accede to independence in 1980.

14. In the Caribbean, all the Territories remaining under United Kingdom administration had received visiting missions from the Special Committee of 24 with the exception, soon to be rectified, of the Turks and Caicos Islands. In all cases, the elected Government of the Territories concerned had pointed out to the mission that it did not intend to seek independence in the near future. Naturally, should the situation change, his Government would be ready to respond to any request for constitutional change. The same was also true of Bermuda, where a healthy political dialogue continued about the merits and demerits of the various constitutional options - including independence - open to the Territory.

15. The survey was not complete, and his delegation would make a further statement on the subject of Belize at a later stage.

16. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his Government's commitment to the cause of self-determination, a principle which had always formed the basis of the policy which the United Kingdom pursued and would continue to pursue with regard to its remaining dependent Territories.

(Sir Anthony Parsons, United Kingdom)

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

17. The CHAIRMAN informed the members of the Committee that he had received two communications containing requests for hearings, one with regard to questions of Southern Rhodesia and Namibia and the other in connexion with the question of East Timor. In accordance with the usual practice, he suggested that the communications should be circulated as documents of the Committee and should be considered at a subsequent meeting.

18. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.