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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BOYA (Benin)

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REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

The meeting was called to order at 12 noon.

HEARING OF A PETITIONER

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that he had been regrettably compelled to interrupt the statement by the representative of Frente POLISARIO at the previous meeting. He requested the Department of Conference Services to take the necessary steps to ensure that that did not occur again.
2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Monsour (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro) took a place at the petitioners' table.
3. Mr. MONSOUR (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro)* said he respected, even though he failed to understand, the reasons which had caused the meeting to be interrupted the previous day. He nevertheless felt that the representatives of a people that was fighting for its freedom were entitled to greater consideration.
4. Resuming his statement, he said that, instead of emulating the courage and sense of responsibility of the Mauritanian and Saharan Governments, Morocco had chosen the path of violence in preference to that of peace, justice and wisdom. Its persistence in armed aggression and its decision to extend its military occupation were tangible proof of its intransigence and its criminal intention to continue military escalation in defiance of the rights, justice and interests of all the peoples of the region.
5. The resolution adopted by the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries at Havana was an extremely important new factor, and it should not be forgotten that despite the manoeuvres of the Moroccan delegation, which had attempted to prevent the question of Western Sahara from being placed on the agenda, the Conference had decided to shoulder its responsibilities by expressing its solidarity with the Saharan people and by adopting unanimously a resolution in which it voiced its deep concern at the serious situation prevailing in Western Sahara because the decolonization process in the Territory had not been carried to its conclusion in accordance with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The Conference had also recalled the decisions of the non-aligned countries and the resolutions of the United Nations and OAU on the subject, had taken note with satisfaction of the recommendations of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Western Sahara adopted at Monrovia, had observed that no transfer of sovereignty had yet taken place and had declared that the Saharan people must be enabled to exercise their right to self-determination and independence as soon as possible. Lastly, the Conference had welcomed the agreement concluded between the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Frente POLISARIO following which Mauritania had withdrawn its forces from the Territory of Western Sahara.

* The full text of this statement will be issued as a document.

(Mr. Monsour)

6. The Conference had deplored the fact that Morocco had extended its armed occupation to the part of Western Sahara previously administered by Mauritania and had expressed the hope that all the parties concerned would co-operate in implementing the recommendations adopted at Monrovia in order to arrive at a just solution to the problem of Western Sahara.

7. That historic document clearly demonstrated that the non-aligned countries were committed to the cause of Western Sahara and that they had chosen to take a firm stand on the blackmail and manoeuvres of Morocco and to espouse the just cause of the Saharan people. They had recognized the danger inherent in the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara and had demanded that the right of the Saharan people to self-determination and independence should be strictly observed.

8. The historic resolution adopted by OAU at Monrovia was a dynamic and positive development, which would bring peace to Western Sahara by restoring to the Saharan people their sovereignty and by ushering in a new era in a region where expansionism and contempt for the rights of peoples would give way to fraternal co-operation, good-neighbourliness, security and stability.

9. While the entire African continent, the movement of non-aligned countries and the United Nations - in short, the international community as a whole - were in agreement that the Moroccan aggression against Western Sahara was an illegitimate act and constituted a threat to peace and security in Africa, the collusion between the King of Morocco and certain parties opened the way to an internationalization of the war. Thus, the Egyptian military intervention assisting Morocco and the participation of certain non-African Powers side by side with the Moroccan army were irrefutable proof of the escalation of the war and its internationalization. They were also an insult to Africa, which was working indefatigably for a peaceful solution to the problem. The recent decision of President Carter to step up assistance to Morocco and to supply combat equipment for use against the guerrillas was a threat to peace, as it represented moral and material support to Morocco and strengthened Morocco's stubborn insistence on putting the region to fire and sword. It was also tantamount to a blow struck at the wise decisions of OAU and the United Nations supporting the right of the Saharan people to self-determination and independence. In his opinion, any true friend of Morocco should persuade that country to give up war and should give it guidance regarding peaceful alternatives. Otherwise, causing a simple problem of decolonization to degenerate into widespread conflagration was a crime for which Morocco and its accomplices would have to assume responsibility and bear the consequences.

10. For their part, the leaders of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, in their endeavour to avoid conflagrations, had refrained, at great sacrifice, from taking any stance that might lead to the internationalization of the problem. The Saharan people continued to hope for urgent action by the international community to avert that danger. It was not that the Saharan people were afraid of the danger, since they knew that they would be the winner in any confrontation; with their creative genius and their unswerving determination they would find ways of thwarting plots which had been condemned by history and mankind. If Morocco

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continued its military escalation, the Saharan people would not stand passively by, but would defend themselves courageously, as they had done up to now.

11. A number of concrete and positive developments had occurred in the past year: the adoption of the OAU resolution at Monrovia, the conclusion of the peace agreement between Mauritania and Frente POLISARIO, the adoption of the resolution by the non-aligned countries and the evolution in the position of Spain. Thus the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session had an excellent opportunity to grasp its responsibilities firmly and to take the real and effective action that was required to apply the principles of the Charter and resolution 1514 (XV).

12. It was necessary to face the facts: the only way to solve the problem of Western Sahara was to guarantee and respect the right of the Saharan people to independence. It was the duty of the international community to counter the manoeuvres of the Moroccan Government to hinder the decolonization of Western Sahara and thwart the efforts made by Africa, the non-aligned countries and the United Nations.

13. The proposals for a regional economic agreement, championed by the King of Morocco, were a delusion capable of deceiving only their author. After its failure to occupy Western Sahara militarily, Morocco had fallen back on a well-known colonialist formula and was advocating the notion of "the greater Sahara", which would be an independent sea of sand, under no country's sovereignty. Such a notion was contrary to one of the basic principles of the OAU Charter, namely, the principle that the frontiers inherited from colonial times could not be altered. Like the other States of the region, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic was fighting to preserve its principles by defending its borders.

14. Because his attempt to divide up Western Sahara between Morocco and Mauritania had failed, the King of Morocco was now looking for other partners, but the other African States to which he was proposing an outlet to the sea under a new scheme for carving up the Sahara were not fooled. They could not fail to see through that diabolical proposal to the real intentions of Morocco, which were based neither on generosity nor on a sense of responsibility; the proposal was merely a manoeuvre aimed at challenging the principle of inalterability of frontiers, destabilizing the States in question and excluding the OAU committee which had been asked by OAU to oversee the exercise of the right to self-determination and independence by the Saharan people.

15. One fact was altogether clear: the war of aggression waged by Morocco against the Saharan people was a war of colonial occupation: a foreign Power was attempting to occupy a territory militarily against the will of the people of that Territory. It was the duty of the international community to act in support of the victims of the aggression.

16. The Saharan people were convinced that peaceful means would triumph over violent ones, and the Frente POLISARIO believed firmly in the role that the United Nations must play if peace and justice were to be restored to their country. The

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(Mr. Monsour)

Frente POLISARIO was therefore prepared to confer with the Moroccan Government and to negotiate with it the restoration of peace, justice and fraternal co-operation. The signing of the peace agreement of 5 August 1979 between Mauritania and the Frente POLISARIO was an example of wisdom and realism which should guide the Moroccan Government and prevent it from choosing the path of violence, to the detriment of justice and reason.

17. He would, in any event, reaffirm one of the basic principles on which the policy of the Frente POLISARIO rested: co-operation with the United Nations so as to assist that Organization in the efforts it was called upon to make to find a solution that was just and in keeping with the rights of the Saharan people.

18. Mr. Monsour withdrew.

19. Mr. CASSANDRA (Sao Tome and Principe), supported by Mr. LIMA (Cape Verde), proposed that the statement made by the representative of Frente POLISARIO should be issued in extenso as an official document of the Committee.

20. The CHAIRMAN, after drawing attention to the financial implications of such a decision, suggested that the Committee should adopt the suggestion made by the representatives of Sao Tome and Principe and Cape Verde.

21. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (continued) (A/34/23/Add.3-5, 7 and 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/34/601; A/C.4/34/6)

(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 (continued)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (continued)

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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 (continued) (A/34/23/Add.3, A/34/311; A/C.4/34/3/Add.1-5, A/C.4/34/5 and Add.1-3, A/C.4/34/8)

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 (continued) (A/34/23 (Part V), A/34/208 and Add.1-3)

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

22. Mr. SIDDIQUI (Pakistan) noted with satisfaction that most of the administering Powers co-operated fully with the Special Committee of 24 in the exercise of its responsibilities and that they were committed to the political, social, economic, and educational advancement of the peoples of the Territories under their administration. He also noted with satisfaction that, each year, the number of colonial Territories diminished while the list of Member States grew longer.

23. However, while it was gratifying to witness the gradual emergence of independence of the small Territories in the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Atlantic, the prospects of the colonial Territories in Africa remained bleak. The racist régimes of Pretoria and Salisbury continued to deny the peoples of southern Africa their right to live freely in dignity and equality without any discrimination, and pursued their inhuman policy designed to perpetuate apartheid and racial segregation. Although the international community had condemned the policy of apartheid as a crime against the conscience and dignity of mankind, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, in gross violation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, continued to subjugate and humiliate the peoples of Namibia and Zimbabwe with impunity. Those minority racist régimes in southern Africa, through the active co-operation of certain foreign Powers, had succeeded in thwarting the crusade against colonialism.

24. In accordance with the principles of freedom and equality, it was the duty of all States to work together for the eradication of apartheid and racial

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(Mr. Siddiqui, Pakistan)

discrimination. It was the moral responsibility of all peace- and independence-loving countries to take all possible measures in support of the peoples of Namibia and Zimbabwe in their liberation struggle against the illegal racist régimes in order to put an end to the sufferings of the peoples of those Territories.

25. Through its specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with it, the United Nations could contribute very effectively to the struggle against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, apartheid and all forms of domination. The General Assembly had asked those agencies and institutions to work out appropriate measures for implementing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Although the assistance which those agencies and institutions had provided to the peoples of southern Africa was in some cases satisfactory, the action taken was generally far from adequate to meet the urgent needs of the peoples concerned. The organizations concerned should therefore broaden their contacts with those peoples and review their assistance programmes and projects to ensure wider and quicker assistance. It was also necessary for Member States to intensify their co-operation with the specialized agencies to make them better able to accomplish their task.

26. His delegation was convinced that the international community could eliminate the scourge of racial discrimination and accelerate the decolonization process by providing tangible assistance to the persecuted peoples, by strengthening their national liberation movements and by undertaking programmes aimed at ameliorating the conditions of the peoples who were victims of colonialism.

27. Pakistan, within the constraints of its limited economic resources, had associated itself with all United Nations efforts and programmes and had contributed to various United Nations funds that provided economic, technological and financial assistance to the colonial Territories; that was evidence of his country's resolve to do whatever it could to accelerate the decolonization process. It had always supported the peoples of those Territories in their just struggle against colonialism, foreign domination, racism and imperialism and would continue to support the forces of freedom against the tyranny of colonialism in all parts of the world so that one day all peoples might live a life of liberty and dignity.

28. Ms. LUCAS (New Zealand) noted with satisfaction that three non-self-governing Territories - Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and Kiribati - would have achieved independence during the current year. The independence of Kiribati, a Pacific neighbour of New Zealand, was a particularly significant occasion for her country, and she felt sure that a friendly relationship would be established between the two countries.

29. As the list of colonial Territories diminished, the Committee's attention had increasingly focused on a group of small Territories where the process of decolonization, however well-founded, could be less easily accommodated within fixed rules. The circumstances of each Territory therefore demanded a flexible approach. Tokelau, of which New Zealand was the administering Power, was an example.

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(Ms. Lucas, New Zealand)

30. That Territory had only just over 1,500 inhabitants and a very narrow economic base. In addition, there were now more Tokelauan people living in New Zealand than in the Territory itself. That was why Tokelau was now dependent on New Zealand, which would continue to give it the help it needed, while making every effort to help Tokelau towards greater self-sufficiency. Of the 14 or so areas which the 1976 United Nations Visiting Mission had identified for attention, only two remained to be dealt with -- the amalgamation and translation of Tokelauan laws and the improvement of communications among the atolls.

31. Satisfactory progress was being made on several other fronts. With regard to the public sector, New Zealand had transferred responsibility to the Office for Tokelau Affairs, and a new economic and publicity section had been set up. In the agricultural field, research had been carried out in co-operation principally with UNDP. The latter had given extensive assistance in livestock and poultry development. The sea was one of Tokelau's major resources. Surveys by UNDP and the South Pacific Commission indicated that harvesting of the sea could be a viable proposition. The South Pacific Commission was helping Tokelau to implement projects concerning water supply, technical training, scholarships and fishery development. To protect the Territory's marine resources, the New Zealand Government had established a 200-mile exclusive economic zone around the islands and had affirmed that the benefits of the zone would accrue to the Tokelauan people. New revenue sources, such as local handicrafts, had been developed. In the social development field, a housing programme based on the principle of self-help was going ahead. Schooling was free and attendance was now close to 100 per cent.

32. In the constitutional and political spheres, the Tokelauans were assuming responsibility for their own affairs, but did not wish at the current stage to review in any fundamental way their relationship with New Zealand. The New Zealand Government would always be guided by the wishes of the Tokelauan people, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). In the meantime, New Zealand encouraged exchange visits between the leaders of Tokelau and those of other newly independent Pacific States. Furthermore, publicity was given in Tokelau to United Nations consideration of its situation. Lastly, discussions were proceeding between the representatives of Tokelau and of New Zealand on the various possible political options. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand had recently visited the Territory to hold discussions with the members of the general Fono in order, on the one hand, to assure the Tokelauan people that New Zealand would assist them in attaining greater self-government but without pressing them to abandon their traditional structures, and, on the other, to pledge to set under way the next stage of political development of the Territory. That process would give the Tokelauan leaders the experience they needed in order one day to assume full responsibility for their own affairs.

33. Her delegation wished to express its gratitude to the Government of Samoa for the generous help it had provided to Tokelau in the field of health and education. It was her delegation's hope that a consensus would emerge in the Committee on the question of Tokelau.

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34. Mrs. ALI (India) said that the interests and well-being of the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories should be of paramount importance to the administering Powers, which were responsible for ensuring to the peoples of those Territories the full exercise of their sovereignty, in accordance with Chapter XI of the Charter and resolution 1514 (XV).

35. There were still at least 30 Territories under colonial rule. The political, economic and social situations prevailing in each one of them were very different, so that even if the aspirations to emancipation were the same, the attitudes of the respective administering Powers, the aspirations of the peoples concerned and the timetable for self-rule were very varied and called for solutions adapted to each case. India, which had long been a colony itself, was acutely aware of that problem. Her delegation therefore felt that looking for parallels in colonial situations could often lead to misunderstandings. The report of the Committee of 24 had taken note of that aspect of the question. In certain cases, questions of sovereignty were involved, while in others the issue was one of integration with a neighbouring State. Sometimes economic considerations might be the basic criteria.

36. With regard to East Timor, there was an increasing awareness that that country had chosen the form of independence it considered the most appropriate. The colonial Power had withdrawn, after which the people of East Timor had exercised their right to self-determination in July 1976. Her delegation was therefore surprised that the question continued to be considered by the Committee. It was also surprised that it should be considered unnatural that the people of one half of the island, belonging basically to the same race and culture as the people of the other half, should wish to join them. Notwithstanding the cultural and mythological rationalizations of the colonial experience, the differences between the eastern and western parts of the island had been the result of colonization. Surely, what was unnatural was the arbitrary and artificial partition of the island imposed in the past by the colonial Powers.

37. The unity of a nation was as important as the liberation of its people from the colonial yoke. The international community should not interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign State, but should rather seek to correct the deficiencies resulting from long years of colonial rule. The resettlement programmes undertaken by the Indonesian Government were, in that context, laudable, as were the relief operations organized under the agreement between the Indonesian Government and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Such measures responded in a substantial degree to the aspirations of the people of East Timor.

38. With regard to the situation in Western Sahara, it was necessary to proceed on the basis of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice to the effect that no claim to sovereignty over the Territory existed and that consequently the principle of self-determination continued to apply. Her delegation had consistently supported the exercise by the people of Western Sahara of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence and recognized the responsibility of the international community in that regard. Her

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(Mrs. Ali, India)

delegation welcomed the agreement between Mauritania and the Frente POLISARIO under which Mauritania had renounced its territorial claims. It considered that the decisions taken in Monrovia by the Organization of African Unity and endorsed by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of Non-Aligned Countries should be respected and that a free referendum should enable the inhabitants of the Territory to choose between independence and the status quo.

39. With regard to Belize, the people of that Territory, in several general elections, had demonstrated clearly their desire to accede to independence and to become a Member of the United Nations. Their accession to independence was currently impeded by another Member State's claim to sovereignty over the Territory. The United Nations should uphold the right of the inhabitants of Belize to independence and to the territorial integrity of their country. Her delegation actively supported the people of Belize in their struggle for independence.

40. Following a long period of colonization, many island countries were in a state of complete economic dependence on foreign interests. The activities of the administering Powers had not always helped to prepare those Territories for self-rule. In several instances the existence of military bases had seriously affected the livelihood and life-style of the indigenous population. The absence of policies designed to foster the economic growth of those Territories hampered their economic and political progress. In several cases the relevant provisions of the Charter and of General Assembly resolutions had remained unfulfilled. For that reason her delegation supported the dispatch of visiting missions to colonial Territories. It was unfortunate, in that regard, that the report of the Visiting Mission to Guam had not been submitted to the Committee earlier.

41. It seemed that the world would soon be rid of the last vestiges of colonialism, but unfortunately racial discrimination remained rampant in Southern Rhodesia and Namibia. The international community, under the active leadership of the Security Council, should therefore make a final effort to put an end to that heinous practice.

42. Mr. DESKER (Singapore) said that the confused situation in East Timor in 1975 at the time of the departure of the Portuguese colonial Power had been due largely to the fact that the latter had failed to devise appropriate measures to ensure the orderly decolonization of the Territory.

43. However, since the integration of East Timor into Indonesia, it was generally agreed that there had been significant improvements in education, social amenities and health care, and that conscious efforts had been made to develop the economy and especially the agricultural sector. Like other ASEAN countries, Singapore was satisfied that the efforts made by Indonesia had had positive effects on the welfare of the population. The people of East Timor had rapidly recognized the benefits of association with Indonesia and support for the new situation had been growing rapidly. It was therefore essential that the General Assembly should take cognizance of the real wishes of the people of East Timor and accept its integration into Indonesia.

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ORGANIZATION OF WORK

44. Mr. OUATTARA (Mali), speaking on a point of order, expressed regret that the Chairman had had to interrupt the statement by the petitioner of the Frente POLISARIO at the preceding meeting and said he hoped that steps would be taken to ensure that that did not occur again.

45. Mr. SEMICHI (Algeria), speaking on a point of order, recalled that at the preceding meeting, while Mr. Monsour, the petitioner of the Frente POLISARIO, had been making an important statement on the illegal occupation of his country by Moroccan forces, the Chairman had been obliged to interrupt and declare the meeting closed.

46. His delegation considered that that unfortunate incident was bound to be detrimental to the legitimate cause of the people who were waging an armed struggle to reconquer their national rights.

47. Having been informed of all the facts that had prompted the closure of the meeting, and while paying a tribute to the dedication of the Secretariat staff, particularly the interpreters, without whom no dialogue would be possible at the United Nations, his delegation regretted certain lapses of professional conscience. It hoped that such incidents, which disturbed the smooth progress of the work of United Nations bodies, would not recur in future.

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

48. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had received three communications containing requests for hearings, two relating to the question of East Timor and the third to the question of Belize. He suggested that in accordance with the usual practice the communications in question should be distributed as Committee documents and considered at a subsequent meeting.

49. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.