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FOURTH COMMITTEE

29th meeting

held on

Monday, 26 November 1976

at 3 p.m.

New York

## SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BOYA (Benin)

### CONTENTS

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)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.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)

1. Mr. HAYDAR (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking as 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, introduced the chapter of the report of the Special Committee relating to the question of Southern Rhodesia (A/34/23/Add.1), which was submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 33/44. In performing its tasks in relation to the question of Southern Rhodesia, the Special Committee had taken into consideration the various relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in particular resolutions 33/38 A and B, and the relevant decisions of the Security Council.

2. The Special Committee had examined in depth developments relating to Southern Rhodesia at its meetings in Belgrade in April 1979, with the active participation, once again, of the national liberation movement of Zimbabwe, the Patriotic Front. In the Final Document on the Decolonization of Zimbabwe and Namibia, adopted by the Special Committee at the conclusion of its Belgrade meetings (A/34/23/Add.1, para. 12), the Special Committee reaffirmed the principle that there should be no independence before majority rule in Zimbabwe and that any settlement relating to the future of the Territory must be worked out with the full participation of the Patriotic Front and in accordance with the true aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe; called upon the international community to reject all manoeuvres by the illegal Salisbury régime to impose the so-called internal settlement, the aim of which was to give the régime a semblance of legitimacy; called upon the United Kingdom Government, to take all effective measures to enable the people of Zimbabwe to accede to independence in accordance with their true aspirations, to refrain from assisting or encouraging any measures which could hamper that process, and not to accord to the illegal régime any of the powers or attributes of sovereignty; strongly condemned the further intensification of the illegal régime's war of repression against the people of Zimbabwe, as well as its repeated acts of aggression and threats against Angola, Botswana, Mozambique and Zambia; condemned those Governments, particularly that of South Africa, which continued to support the régime in contravention of the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations; and requested all States, directly and through their action in the specialized agencies and other organizations and bodies within the United Nations system, as well as the governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned, to extend the maximum possible assistance to Zimbabwean refugees in African countries and to the national liberation movement of Zimbabwe.

3. Moreover, the Special Committee had been deeply disturbed by reports of widespread violations of the sanctions imposed on the illegal régime by the Security Council, and it strongly condemned the policies of those Governments

(Mr. Haydar, Syrian Arab Republic)

which, contrary to their specific obligations under Article 25 of the Charter, continued to collaborate with the illegal régime, and called upon them to cease all such collaboration forthwith; and expressed deep concern at the moves to lift the sanctions in violation of the Security Council's decisions and drew the attention of the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States to their responsibility and their obligation to comply scrupulously with the Council's decisions.

4. On behalf of the Special Committee, he expressed the hope that the Committee would give its full support to the Special Committee's recommendations, as set out in chapter VIII of its report.

5. Sir Anthony PARSONS (United Kingdom)\* said that the election of a new United Kingdom Government in early May 1979 had taken place a matter of days after the internal elections in Southern Rhodesia. Although those internal elections had been condemned by the Security Council and had, indeed, been based upon a constitution which was defective in important respects, they had nevertheless clearly represented an important step forward since they had been conducted on the basis of one man one vote, there had been a substantial turn-out, the new Rhodesian Parliament had a substantial majority of black members, and the first black Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia had been about to take office. That progress could not simply be decried and dismissed and the United Kingdom Government had accordingly decided to launch a major effort, building on the changes that had taken place, to achieve a return to legality and international recognition.

6. During the following weeks, the United Kingdom Government had engaged in consultations with the parties directly involved in the conflict and with other Governments closely concerned, which had led it to form conclusions that had been summarized by the Prime Minister in an address at the beginning of the meeting of Heads of Government of Commonwealth countries in Lusaka, in which she had said that her Government was wholly committed to genuine black majority rule in Southern Rhodesia, that the United Kingdom Government accepted constitutional responsibility for granting legal independence, that the Rhodesian Constitution was defective in certain important respects, and that the United Kingdom Government's objective was to achieve independence on the basis of a constitution comparable to the independence constitutions of other former British colonies.

7. It was at the meeting at Lusaka that the foundations had been laid for the negotiations currently in progress at Lancaster House. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Zambia, the Final Communiqué issued by the Heads of Government of Commonwealth countries had been circulated as document A/34/439-S/13515. He drew particular attention to paragraph 15 of that Communiqué, which related to Southern Rhodesia, in order to underline the fact that the decisions already reached at the Lancaster House Conference on the proposals which his Government had put forward regarding cease-fire arrangements followed fully and faithfully the principles which had been agreed upon at Lusaka.

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\* The full text of this statement has been issued as document A/C.4/34/L.27.

(Sir Anthony Parsons, United Kingdom)

8. Within a week of the agreement at Lusaka, invitations had been issued to Bishop Muzorewa and to the Patriotic Front each to appoint delegations to attend the Constitutional Conference at Lancaster House. Both sides had accepted the invitation and the Conference had duly begun on 10 September.

9. The Conference had addressed its work in three stages. The first stage had been to agree on the terms of a new constitution for an independent Zimbabwe, and after detailed discussion of the preliminary proposals, the United Kingdom Government had, on 3 October, put forward a full description of an independence constitution, which necessarily represented a compromise between the positions of the Salisbury delegation and the Patriotic Front delegation. The proposed constitution indisputably provided for genuine majority rule - thus meeting a major criticism of the internal settlement constitution - yet it contained adequate safeguards for minorities - thus meeting a requirement accepted in the Lusaka agreement in a way that was fully compatible with democracy and the demands of justice. At the same time, it gave the elected legislature and the Government deriving its authority from it full power to implement policies on the basis of which they would have been elected. Those constitutional proposals had been agreed to by the Salisbury delegation and, after further discussion, by the Patriotic Front on 18 October, conditional upon satisfactory arrangements being agreed for their implementation. In accepting the constitution, Bishop Muzorewa had agreed to fresh elections to be supervised under the authority of the United Kingdom Government, thus meeting a major requirement of the Lusaka agreement.

10. The next task for the Conference had been to decide on arrangements for putting the agreed constitution into effect. On 22 October, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had put forward the United Kingdom Government's detailed proposals for the pre-independence period, proposals which were based fully on the provisions of the Lusaka agreement, namely that elections should be free and fair and properly supervised under the United Kingdom Government's authority, with Commonwealth observers present. In introducing those proposals, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had said that he saw no merit in prolonging the transitional period beyond what was strictly necessary to enable the people of Southern Rhodesia to elect their Government, since too much delay would bring risks of further conflict and further uncertainty, but that at the same time, all parties had to be assured that they would be able to explain their policies and to state their case freely to the electors. He had confirmed once again that the United Kingdom Government accepted its constitutional responsibility to see that conditions for the election campaign were genuinely fair and impartial, since all parties must be able to participate in an election with a fair chance of success as long as they were prepared to put their claims to the test by political means, and that the United Kingdom Government was prepared to supervise the electoral process to the full extent necessary to ensure that it was free and fair. The United Kingdom Government had invited Commonwealth observers to witness the elections and the full electoral process and various countries had accepted the invitation on the condition that a cease-fire was successfully negotiated. The United Kingdom proposals had also been designed to ensure that there would be full freedom for the conduct of peaceful political activity during the election campaign, including free and uncensored access to the public media to put the case to the people of Southern Rhodesia and freedom to advertise and

(Sir Anthony Parsons, United Kingdom)

to publish political views in the press. The United Kingdom Government had also given a commitment that once Southern Rhodesia had returned to lawful government as a United Kingdom colony, it would be responsible for seeing that the administration acted fairly and impartially.

11. After further negotiations, a more detailed account of the United Kingdom Government's proposals had been put forward on 2 November. The arrangements included the following provisions: the United Kingdom Government was prepared to appoint a Governor, who would be a United Kingdom national and would have full executive and legislative authority; it would also appoint an Election Commissioner, with supporting staff, to supervise all aspects of the organization and conduct of the election; an Election Council would be appointed, presided over by the Election Commissioner and comprising representatives of the parties contesting the election; the Election Council and all its members would be able to make representations to the Election Commissioner and to the Governor on any matter concerning the elections; the Governor would assume authority over the civil police who would be responsible under his supervision for the maintenance of law and order; the commanders of the security forces, and of the Patriotic Front forces, would also be responsible to the Governor and would be equally responsible for the maintenance of the cease-fire; and Zimbabwe would become independent as soon as the election results had been declared and the Government formed.

12. On 5 November, the Salisbury delegation had announced its acceptance of the proposals for the interim period. During subsequent negotiations, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had clarified various points put to him by the Patriotic Front. For example, he had confirmed that Bishop Muzorewa and his colleagues had agreed not to exercise their ministerial powers during the interim; that the Election Commissioner would have a substantial United Kingdom staff of at least 100 whose task would be to supervise impartially every aspect of the electoral process; that the role of the military forces on both sides would be to maintain the cease-fire for which they would be equally responsible to the Governor; that arrangements would be made to see that the Patriotic Front forces, which might be assembled in Southern Rhodesia during the cease-fire, were properly housed and fed; and that the Patriotic Front forces, would, like the Rhodesian security forces, be required to comply with the directions of the Governor.

13. It was after those assurances and clarifications that the Patriotic Front had agreed, on 15 November, to the proposals for the interim period, subject to a successful outcome of the negotiations on a cease-fire. President Kaunda of Zambia had played an important and helpful role in the delicate negotiations which had preceded that agreement during his visit to London.

14. On 16 November, the Conference had begun to discuss the arrangements for a cease-fire, thus entering its third and final stage. On that day, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had put forward the United Kingdom Government's preliminary proposals, an amplified version of which had been introduced on 22 November. Those proposals had envisaged that the primary responsibility for the observance of the cease-fire would rest with the forces of both sides and with their commanders, who would be represented on a Cease-fire Commission under the chairmanship of the Governor's military adviser. To give

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(Sir Anthony Parsons, United Kingdom)

reassurance to both sides that, given the will to make it work, the cease-fire would operate and would be fair to both sides, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had proposed the establishment of a cease-fire monitoring force under United Kingdom auspices with the participation of Commonwealth Governments - a proposal which would fulfil another of the important principles laid down at Lusaka. He had stressed the urgency of ending the war and the human misery and material destruction which it was bringing to the people of Southern Rhodesia and its neighbours, and had said that it was important that the momentum created by the agreements on the constitution and pre-independence arrangements should be maintained. Unfortunately, his anxieties had been realized in the following days, with the sharp increase in tension between Southern Rhodesia and Zambia. The only solution was for the Conference to reach rapid agreement on a cease-fire and for all the forces to accept the authority of the United Kingdom Governor. To that end, the United Kingdom Government had further proposed, as an immediate and interim measure to reduce the danger of further escalation of the conflict in the area, an agreement whereby the Rhodesian authorities would give an immediate undertaking that no cross-border operations would be carried out by Southern Rhodesia into Zambia, and the leaders of the Patriotic Front, in co-operation with the Zambian authorities, would give an undertaking that no further movement of their armed personnel would take place from Zambia into Southern Rhodesia.

15. The Lancaster House Conference stood on the threshold of solving a problem that had bedevilled peace and security in Africa for many years. As the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs had warned, however, agreement on a cease-fire was very urgent because delay could jeopardize the extraordinary achievements of the Conference and put at risk quite unnecessarily the lives of innocent people.

16. During the past two and a half months, the parties at Lancaster House had all given much in their efforts to reach a compromise agreement. The Salisbury delegation had agreed to a new constitution. Bishop Muzorewa had agreed that new elections should be held in which the Patriotic Front would be able to participate and that legislative and executive authority should be vested in a United Kingdom Governor to enable them to do so. The Patriotic Front had overcome its difficulties in reaching agreement on the constitution and on the interim arrangements. Agreement still had to be reached on the cease-fire; that would depend on both sides being willing to do so. The United Kingdom Government had amply proved its determination to do all that it could to solve the bitter problem by fully accepting its constitutional responsibility, as it had so often been urged to do, and by undertaking to appoint a Governor with far more extensive powers than the United Kingdom had ever before exercised in Southern Rhodesia and to supervise the electoral process to the full extent necessary to ensure that it was freely and fairly conducted. He was sure that all members of the Committee would join him in hoping that the Lancaster House Conference would reach a successful conclusion in the very near future, and that the electoral process would be smooth and peaceful. In that way, the United Nations could look forward to welcoming the delegation of a newly independent Zimbabwe, representing a government democratically elected and recognized by the world as a whole.

(Sir Anthony Parsons, United Kingdom)

17. He hoped that nothing would be said or done in the Committee that could jeopardize the chances of agreement at the Conference, which he hoped would be achieved within a very short time. The emotions that the issue aroused were well known, but he urged all delegations to show restraint and flexibility at the present crucial time. His delegation undertook to inform all members of the Committee immediately and in full about developments at the Conference. Further meetings were currently being held on the cease-fire arrangements and more were planned for the following day.
18. Mr. OUATTARA (Mali) proposed that, in view of the importance of the statement made by the United Kingdom representative, the full text should be made available as soon as possible.
19. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed that the full text of the statement should be issued as a Committee document, taking into account the financial implications set out in paragraph 15 of document A/C.4/34/L.1.
20. It was so decided.
21. Mr. SEMICHI (Algeria) said that the Committee was faced with an exceptional situation. The United Kingdom representative, had just made a very important statement, during which he had drawn attention to the precarious nature of the Lancaster House talks, and some two weeks previously a similarly important statement had been made by the Observer for the Patriotic Front (A/C.4/34/SR.26). His delegation would like to have time to consider both those statements before forming a judgement, and it would be very useful for the African members of the Committee to be able to meet in order to see how the debate on the item should be organized. He requested, therefore, that no time-limit should be set for closing the list of speakers.
22. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee must do its best to abide by the time-table set by the General Assembly; representatives could perhaps place their names on the list of speakers before deciding how the debate should be organized.
23. Mr. OUATTARA (Mali) suggested that the list of speakers should be closed on Wednesday, 28 November, at 10.30 a.m.; that would allow time for the desired consultations.
24. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.