

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION
Official Records*



FOURTH COMMITTEE
18th meeting
held on
Thursday, 17 November 1983
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TREIKI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.4/38/SR.18
21 November 1983

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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General debate (continued)

1. Miss JACOB (Guyana) said that, although the Charter already enshrined the rights of peoples to self-determination and independence and the duty of the colonial Powers to prepare dependent Territories for nationhood, General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) went further by addressing itself to the development and the various manifestations of the colonial relationship, and declaring the necessity of bringing it to a speedy and unconditional end.
2. The colonial Territories had in the past been used to build up the economic and political strength of the colonial Powers, and colonial relationships in the territories that remained to be colonized had more recently taken on new dimensions owing to the colonial Powers' determination to use them for their growing military and strategic interests. Those new developments, which were assuming increasingly disquieting proportions, posed a serious challenge to the authority of the United Nations. Member States must not, therefore, allow the achievements of decolonization to lull them into complacency: much remained to be done.
3. The painstaking and vigilant work of the Special Committee on decolonization to that end deserved commendation. Its forthright pursuit of its mandate was testimony that it regarded the well-being and interests of the peoples of the dependent Territories as paramount. Her delegation had been one of those which had consistently maintained that factors such as size, geographic location, population or limited natural resources should not delay the full and speedy application of the Declaration to any Territory under colonial domination. Economic co-operation could redound to the benefit of the peoples of those Territories. However, when such co-operation created and reinforced domination and exploitation, it violated their interests and must cease.
4. For the people of Namibia, the colonial experience was a continuing nightmare. The recent consideration of the question of Namibia in the Security Council held out little hope for a solution. Namibia still languished under the triple yoke of colonialism, occupation and apartheid. South Africa and its allies had sought to distort the issue and to draw Namibia into the sphere of Great-Power and bloc rivalry. That disregard for the just demands of the Namibian people was intolerable. Her delegation would never move from its consistent stand that Namibia must be free within the framework of the United Nations plan, without qualification or modification.
5. It was unfortunate that some of the beneficiaries of decolonization should have impeded the implementation of United Nations decisions in respect of other Territories. Guyana had consistently maintained that its own freedom was incomplete as long as other parts of the world were not free.
6. The struggle of the people of Western Sahara to exercise their inalienable rights had been protracted and painful. Her delegation therefore welcomed the resolution adopted unanimously by the OAU Assembly at its nineteenth session. That decision, reproduced in draft resolution (A/C.4/38/L.2), which Guyana was co-sponsoring, set out the modalities for bringing peace and stability to the Territory so that the Saharan people could freely exercise their right to self-determination and independence.

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7. Mr. YOSSIPHOV (Bulgaria) said that decolonization was still far from complete. The heroic people of Namibia were still fighting for independence from the racist forces of occupation. In South Africa itself, despite recent cosmetic changes, the vast majority of the population still suffered under the inhuman apartheid system. A number of so-called small Territories and their peoples were still under colonial domination. The colonial Powers continued to impede the implementation of the Charter and the Declaration on decolonization.

8. In southern Africa, the policies of the racist Pretoria régime had taken on new dimensions posing a threat to peace and security in the region and beyond. At the same time, South Africa's "strategic ally" was involved in belligerent actions throughout the world.

9. In the current era of heightened international tension, a major obstacle to the eradication of colonialism continued to be the military activities and strategic aspirations of the colonial Powers in the small Territories, in disregard of the repeated appeals of the international community, most recently expressed in General Assembly resolution 37/35. On the pretext of protecting their vital strategic interests, the colonial Powers were escalating their military presence in those Territories.

10. The military activities of the United States and its NATO allies on the island of Bermuda, for example, were revealed in document A/AC.109/738. The reference in that document to the essential role that Bermuda played in the NATO alliance because of its strategic position in the Atlantic Ocean was a conclusion drawn not by the people of Bermuda but by the Commander of the United States Naval Air Station in that British colony.

11. There seemed to be no corner of the world where the Western and colonial Powers did not claim vital strategic interests needing to be protected by military and other oppressive means, as the recent United States invasion of a tiny Caribbean island demonstrated. The document also proved once again, as the petitioners who had appeared before the Special Committee during its 1983 session had charged, that the United States was making increasing use of Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands for military purposes. They had been turned into a springboard for military exercises and forays by the United States against independent countries of Central America, the Caribbean and Latin America.

12. In the mid-Atlantic region, Ascension Island was being increasingly utilized to safeguard the strategic interests of the administering Power and its allies. In the South Atlantic, the administering Power had turned the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) into a fortress. In the Pacific Ocean, the island of Guam was an essential link in the network of military bases and installations established by the United States all over the globe, in order to secure its strategic interests and strengthen the rule of imperialism. A petitioner from Guam had told the Special Committee that, though there might be no documentary or direct proof, the very idea of military bases could impede self-determination: for example, the economy became dependent on the military presence. Moreover, United States military personnel on Guam were eligible to vote in elections there, including elections on political self-determination.

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(Mr. Yossiphov, Bulgaria)

13. In Micronesia, the United States was using neo-colonialist labels such as "free association" and "commonwealth" to screen its denial of independence to the people of that Territory. No attempt by the administering Power to legitimize its de facto annexation of a Territory to which the Declaration on decolonization applied should be allowed to succeed.

14. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Fourth Committee had once again adopted a decision on military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in the Territories under their administration. In that connection, he drew attention to paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 35/118, the Plan of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration.

15. In conclusion, he expressed the unflinching support of his delegation, as a long-standing member of the Special Committee, for the just struggle of all colonial peoples, including the people of Puerto Rico, for the immediate and unconditional implementation of the Declaration.

16. Mr. JACOB (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Jordan and Iraq had exploited the Committee as a forum for their malicious campaign against Israel.

17. The scurrilous and vicious terms in which Jordan had described zionism - the national liberation movement of the Jewish people and one of the earliest active decolonization efforts - were a contemptible falsification of history. Jordan shed crocodile tears for the Palestinian Arabs but seemed unconcerned by its own brutal killing in 1970 of thousands of Palestinians in Jordan.

18. Iraq's exaggerated reference to the supposed co-operation of Israel with South Africa had no bearing on the subject under debate. Such politically inspired references conveniently diverted attention from atrocities being committed both inside and outside Iraq, which was, according to the latest Amnesty International report, suppressing the human and political rights of its own citizens on a massive scale, and was apparently using chemical weapons against civilian targets in its war with Iran.

19. Israel would not contribute to any effort which, under the guise of so-called self-determination, sought to deny the inalienable right of the Jewish people to self-determination. However, Israel and the Zionist movement had always been staunch advocates of decolonization and self-determination, and had always been ready to assist new countries in their first steps as independent nations. Israel would continue to support decolonization.

20. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that, while Israel claimed that zionism was a liberation movement, the United Nations itself had formally equated zionism with racism. Zionism was a movement against the Palestinian people and their rights; but Israel apparently did not think that 16 years of occupation of Arab lands should try the patience of the Arab world.

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21. Mr. YONIS (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he would not answer the accusations just made against his country by the representative of the Zionist entity, since they were not issues before the Committee. That representative was himself trying to divert the Committee's attention from its main concern, the liberation of colonized peoples. A matter that was clearly relevant, however, was the mounting danger of the military and nuclear collaboration between South Africa and the Zionist entity. To deny that the collaboration existed was to deny the facts. The Committee must take all possible steps to help isolate the Pretoria régime in order to hasten the liberation of the people of Namibia, and one such step would be to end that collaboration. The Committee would be able to assess the full extent of the danger if it compiled a basic file of documents providing evidence of that collaboration. That would be a specific action well within the competence of the Committee.

22. Mr. JACOB (Israel), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, observed that Iraq had referred to his country as the Zionist entity, and that Israel did not in any way object to being called Zionist. Rather, it was proud of the title, for zionism was a positive movement for the constructive development of his people and was not directed against any other peoples. His delegation objected, however, to Israel or any other State being called an "entity". States should be referred to as such, and members of the Committee should avoid name-calling and engage only in constructive deliberations.

23. Mr. YONI (Iraq), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, asked what exactly, in the view of the Zionist entity, were its boundaries and whether they stretched from the Nile to the Euphrates.

24. Mr. ADHAMI (Syrian Arab Republic), referring to Israel's contention that zionism was a liberation movement, stated that the Zionist movement was a national movement of the Jewish people that was trying to achieve its objectives through colonization. It was attempting to exercise the Jewish right to self-determination at the expense of the right of another people to self-determination. The Arabs in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories were trying to exercise their right to self-determination by combating colonialism.

25. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he wished to point out, in connection with the General Assembly resolution equating zionism and racism, that Israel was the only representative of a racist entity or State present in the chamber.

26. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had thus concluded its general debate on items 18, 102, 104 and 12, 105 and 106.

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/C.4/38/L.3, L.4)

27. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the statements of the Secretary-General, in documents A/C.4/38/L.3 and L.4, containing information on the administrative and financial implications of proposals relating to specific Territories under item 18.

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Question of Western Sahara (A/C.4/38/L.2, L.4, L.7, L.8)

28. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu) said that his delegation's view on the question of Western Sahara had been expressed in its recognition of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. It respected the right of others to hold differing views, however, just as it expected them to respect its right to hold its own opinion. It admired and respected the Kingdom of Morocco and looked forward to the day when the Organization could put the issue behind it. On that day, a genuine partnership of equals, based upon mutual respect, would have evolved, and the international community would have taken another giant step into the future.

29. His delegation, which was co-sponsoring draft resolution A/C.4/38/L.2, commended the statesmanship and diplomacy of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). No other regional body had so significantly championed decolonization. In no other regional body had so many members selflessly shared their own meagre resources with those directly engaged in decolonization. In no other regional body had the principles of pluralism and universality been as readily put into practice, despite constant efforts to subvert the Organization. In a sense, OAU belonged to all peoples, particularly those who had once been "owned", "protected", or administered by others.

30. Morocco, to its credit, was still a leading member of OAU. His delegation believed, therefore, that in the near future the people of that great nation and the people of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic would embrace as brothers and equals, and would turn their gaze together to the south of the African continent.

31. Support for draft resolution A/C.4/38/L.2 would assist OAU efforts to ensure that the people directly involved were given an opportunity to decide their own destiny.

32. The CHAIRMAN said that he had held extensive consultations with a number of delegations concerned, as well as with the Chairman of the African Group at the United Nations for the month of November, with a view to enabling the General Assembly to arrive at a consensus on the question. On the basis of those consultations, he now proposed a consensus text of the Fourth Committee. The Chairman's draft consensus would consist of the entire text of the draft as it appeared in document A/C.4/38/L.2, and to which the following new paragraph would be added as the second preambular paragraph:

"Taking account of decision AHG/Res.103 (XVIII) on the question of Western Sahara, adopted unanimously by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its eighteenth ordinary session in Nairobi, Kenya, from 20 to 27 June 1981, as well as all the relevant resolutions of the Organization of African Unity, and reaffirming all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on the question of Western Sahara,".

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(The Chairman)

33. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to adopt the draft resolution with that addition.

34. The consensus text of the draft resolution submitted by the Chairman was adopted.

35. Mr. KOROMA (Sierra Leone), speaking as Chairman of the Group of African States, said that the consensus just achieved was further evidence of Africa's commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, especially the principles of self-determination and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

36. The question of Western Sahara had fully engaged the attention of OAU, as could be seen from its resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX). The Committee, in accordance with Article 52 of the Charter, had unanimously supported that resolution. On behalf of the African Group he thanked the Committee, and especially the Chairman for the wisdom and impartiality with which he had helped achieve the consensus, which marked a great step forward.

37. Mr. ZENTAR (Morocco) said that the consensus had been achieved in large measure because of the Chairman's discreet and tireless efforts. His own delegation had worked constantly with the Chairman and all those who had genuinely been seeking a true and durable consensus rather than an illusory passing victory.

38. Morocco had gladly endorsed the consensus text added to the draft resolution just adopted, because the paragraph rightly took account of all OAU decisions on the question. Beginning with the fundamental resolution AHG/Res.103 (XVIII), based on the offer by King Hassan II of Morocco to organize a referendum, adopted at the OAU Assembly's eighteenth session, followed by the decisions of the OAU

Implementation Committee, and culminating in resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) adopted at the OAU Assembly's nineteenth session, OAU had painstakingly constructed a unified whole that admitted of no distinction among its component parts.

39. Even as Morocco welcomed the General Assembly's recognition of that unified achievement, it wished nevertheless to reiterate the express reservations on certain provisions of resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) at the time it had been adopted. Morocco had categorical reservations about the urging of direct negotiations between it and the so-called Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) in paragraph 2 of that resolution, and it had express reservations on anything in that resolution which was not in accord with the preceding OAU resolution and decisions on the question, or which had to do with the admission of new members to OAU, a matter regulated strictly by the OAU Charter. Furthermore, Morocco's acceptance of the consensus text just adopted in no way implied its recognition that the Special Committee on decolonization had any new mandate in the Saharan conflict, since its competence in the territory had ceased with the departure of the Spanish colonial soldiers. It should be noted that OAU had itself never referred subsequently, either explicitly or implicitly, to General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) in any decisions or documents relating to Moroccan Sahara. At stake were not simply the rights of Morocco as a sovereign State, but also those of the Saharan people, which would be decided solely by the referendum.

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(Mr. Zentar, Morocco)

40. The Committee had been fortunate at the current session to hear representatives of 11 political, cultural, labour and parliamentary organizations of the Saharan people, democratically elected by various sectors of the population. Most of them had fought valiantly for their identity and dignity against Spanish colonialism, and they were now continuing their historic liberation struggle to safeguard the integrity and sovereignty of their country against foreign intervention. What greater challenge could they have cast at their adversaries than to invite them to come to observe for themselves the people's will being expressed at the polls under OAU and United Nations supervision?

41. He reminded the Committee that the King of Morocco himself had solemnly declared before the General Assembly in September 1983 that Morocco wanted the referendum to be held as soon as possible, that it would assist any observers to verify that the polling was just and honest, and that it would hold itself solemnly bound by the results of the referendum.

42. Mr. SAHNOUN (Algeria) said that his delegation wholeheartedly supported the historic decision just taken by consensus, on the basis of draft resolution A/C.4/38/L.2, as orally amended. He congratulated the Chairmen of the Fourth Committee, - the African Group and the Special Committee, and others who had striven for a successful outcome. The text outlined the modalities for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The international community, by its action, had endorsed the initiatives taken by OAU and called upon the two parties to the conflict to enter into negotiations soon. The decision also reaffirmed United Nations recognition of the Saharan people's right to self-determination, and was a tribute to that people's struggle, under the Frente POLISARIO, for freedom and independence. Unfortunately, the Moroccan delegation had expressed reservations on a considerable part of the text; however, the text was a sound basis for further progress, and the Algerian delegation sincerely hoped that Morocco could shortly see its way to joining unreservedly in the consensus.

43. Mr. SHERMAN (United States of America) said that his country had consistently supported all efforts aimed at solving the problem of Western Sahara within an African context, including the relevant OAU Assembly resolutions. In that spirit, his delegation had supported the consensus approach adopted. It felt, however, that the form of the negotiations called for should be left to the parties directly involved; the matter was of secondary importance and should not be allowed to hold up the essential step of arranging a cease-fire and a referendum.

44. Mr. KAPLLANI (Albania) said that his delegation dissociated itself from paragraph 4 of OAU resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX), relating to a peace-keeping force, in view of its well-known position on what it deemed a matter of principle.

45. Mr. MAUALA (Solomon Islands) said that his delegation welcomed the consensus achieved, for which the Chairmen of the Fourth Committee and the African Group deserved special thanks. It was hoped that the efforts initiated by OAU and its Implementation Committee could be quickly brought to fruition and that the problem of Western Sahara would have been settled by the time of the General Assembly's next session.

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46. Ms. MAUALA (Samoa) said that her delegation shared the satisfaction expressed about the consensus achieved and hoped that the Saharan people's true wishes would soon be expressed by means of a referendum.

47. Mr. BURAYZAT (Jordan) said that the text adopted marked a positive step towards a political settlement of the conflict. His delegation had joined in the consensus without prejudice to its reservations about paragraph 3 of (OAU) resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX), since efforts to end the conflict quickly should not be held up by questions such as the precise form of negotiations.

48. Mr. FAN Guoxiang (China) said that the welcome decision just taken would help to solve a problem from the colonial past. China supported the cause of self-determination everywhere, and had always believed that the third-world countries of Africa should unite their efforts in that cause. It appreciated especially the work of OAU and the African Group, and hoped that the parties to the conflict would negotiate a final and peaceful solution.

49. Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde) appealed to the parties to the conflict to negotiate on the basis of the draft resolution just adopted in order to achieve a peaceful, lasting solution.

50. Mr. HAMODY (Mauritania) endorsed the thanks expressed to all those who had made possible the consensus approach achieved. Mauritania, a sponsor of OAU resolutions AHG/Res.103 (XVIII) and AHG/Res.104 (XIX), was anxious to see the realization of a peaceful future for the Saharan people; it hoped that the two parties to the conflict could overcome the chiefly psychological barriers to a settlement, and would undertake the negotiations called for in the draft resolution.

51. Mr. CASSANDRA (Sao Tome and Principe) said that his country had been one of those involved throughout the protracted efforts to end the conflict in Western Sahara in the interests of both parties. The draft resolution adopted would hasten decolonization - which, it was hoped, would have been completed in that region by the time of the General Assembly's next session. His delegation appealed to Morocco to display flexibility and to co-operate with OAU, first and foremost in arranging a cease-fire.

52. Mr. MANALO (Philippines) said that the welcome decision just taken reaffirmed the principles of self-determination and peaceful settlement of disputes, in the spirit of the United Nations Charter. His delegation thanked the Chairman of the Fourth Committee for his efforts.

53. Mr. INFANTE (Chile) said that the decision would lead to a settlement of the conflict and enable the Saharan people to exercise its right to self-determination, in accordance with the Charter. He reiterated that any decisions, to be final, must be endorsed by the Moroccan Government.

54. Mr. ZOWAWI (Saudi Arabia) said that his delegation thanked the Chairmen of the Fourth Committee and the African Group for their efforts and greatly appreciated the wisdom, foresight and spirit of co-operation shown by its fellow Arab delegations of Algeria and Morocco.

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55. Mr. SALLAM (Yemen) said that the efforts made by the Algerian and Moroccan delegations and the Chairmen of the Fourth Committee and the African Group deserved the highest praise. The draft resolution just adopted was a great stride towards rapprochement and co-operation in the region concerned and would have a positive effect on the Arab nations' efforts and Afro-Arab co-operation. His delegation congratulated OAU and all others who had contributed towards ending the conflict.

56. Mr. MOUSSA (Egypt) endorsed the expressions of congratulations; the decision taken would help to give effect to the relevant OAU resolutions on Western Sahara.

57. Mr. TANC (Turkey) endorsed the expressions of congratulations.

58. Mr. HELLER (Mexico) said that his delegation, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.4/38/L.2, shared the satisfaction at the historic consensus achieved, based on relevant United Nations and OAU resolutions; it hoped for an early start to negotiations between the two parties to the conflict.

59. Mr. TSHAMALA (Zaire) paid tribute to the effort and good will which had made possible the consensus achieved - a good omen for a peaceful settlement of the problem in the interests of all parties involved.

60. Mr. MFULA (Zambia) said that his delegation, too, welcomed the decision taken; he hoped that Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO would accordingly begin negotiations very soon and that the Fourth Committee, at the General Assembly's next session, would merely have to note the final settlement of the matter to the satisfaction of both parties.

61. Mr. LALEYE (Benin) said he hoped that the two parties to the conflict would abide by the provisions of the text just adopted.

62. Mr. BINDANG (Equatorial Guinea) endorsed the expressions of thanks and congratulated the Moroccan delegation on the statement it had just made. Equatorial Guinea shared Morocco's reservations, but hoped that the decision taken would bring the utmost benefit to Western Sahara and the world as a whole.

63. Mr. JANI (Zimbabwe) said that the text adopted represented a milestone in decolonization and, it was hoped, would mark the beginning of the end of the problem of Western Sahara. His delegation, too, appealed to both parties to negotiate a peaceful solution as quickly as possible.

64. The CHAIRMAN thanked the members of the Committee for their co-operation and said that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of the question of Western Sahara.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.