



Wednesday, 15 March 1961,  
 at 10.55 a.m.

New York

**C O N T E N T S**

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**Chairman: Mr. Adnan M. PACHACHI (Iraq).**

*In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Ortiz de Rozas  
 (Argentina), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

**AGENDA ITEM 46**

**Dissemination of information on the United Na-  
 tions and the International Trusteeship System  
 in Trust Territories: report of the Secretary-  
 General (A/4542)**

1. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of United Nations information centres in or near the Trust Territories (A/4542).

2. U TIN MAUNG (Burma) drew attention to the fact that under the terms of operative paragraph 1 of resolution 1410 (XIV) the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to initiate discussions with the Administering Authorities concerned with a view to establishing United Nations information centres in certain Trust Territories during 1960. It was clear from the Secretary-General's report that that mandate had not been carried out; what the Fourth Committee now had before it was a report not on the establishment of United Nations information centres but on the protracted negotiations between the Secretary-General and the Administering Authorities. Furthermore, paragraph 4 of the report indicated that three months had been allowed to elapse before the Secretary-General had taken the action required of him under operative paragraph 1 of the resolution.

3. His delegation had always attached the greatest importance to the wide-spread dissemination among dependent peoples of information on the United Nations, its purposes and principles and the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By contrast, the Secretary-General's report indicated that the Administering Authorities concerned were not very eager to establish United Nations information centres in the Trust Territories under their administration.

4. It could be seen from paragraphs 6 to 10 of the report that Australia, without actually giving an outright negative reply, had informed the Secretary-General that it doubted whether the establishment of a United Nations information centre in New Guinea could be justified at the present stage. Since the arguments adduced by the Australian Government were not given in the report, he felt justified in asking the Australian representative to indicate at what stage his

Government proposed to establish a United Nations information centre in the Trust Territory. He was not convinced by the argument that the Information Centre at Sydney could effectively disseminate information about the United Nations in New Guinea. While he appreciated that there were language difficulties, he did not think that they should be an obstacle to the establishment of an information centre in the Trust Territory, even if that meant using an unsatisfactory medium such as Melanesian Pidgin. At the present stage a solution might perhaps be sought along the lines of setting up a modest centre at Rabaul.

5. The New Zealand Government's arguments against the establishment of a United Nations information centre in Western Samoa were similar to those advanced by the Australian Government. He welcomed the information in paragraph 14 of the report to the effect that the New Zealand Government had arranged to pay half the expenses of a government information service in Western Samoa and to provide a chief publicity officer. He would be interested to know whether the appointment would go to a Western Samoan.

6. The Belgian Government's view that the establishment of an information centre at Usumbura would be advantageous and valuable was encouraging and he particularly welcomed the plan to appoint at least two locally recruited staff to that office.

7. With reference to the situation in Tanganyika, he would like to know whether the information given in paragraph 16 of the report could be brought up to date.

8. He welcomed the assurance the representative of the United States had given the Secretary-General that his Government favoured the distribution of information material about the United Nations to the inhabitants of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and that the present arrangements for doing so had proved effective. He noted the opinion of the United States Government that were those arrangements to be abandoned several information centres would have to be established. His proposal was that such centres should be set up in the districts of Palau, Yap, Truk, Ponape and the Marshall Islands; the districts of Saipan and Rota could be serviced from Guam as hitherto.

9. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) was glad to be able to inform the Committee that the visit of a United Nations information officer to Dar es Salaam, reference to which was made in paragraph 16 of the report, had taken place in November-December 1960. As a result of talks held with Ministers of the Government of Tanganyika, the latter had requested that a United Nations information office should be attached to the office of the Resident Technical Assistance Representative. He understood that the Secretary-General had approved the request and that a United Nations information office would be set up at Dar es Salaam very shortly, perhaps in April 1961. Both the Admin-

istering Authority and the Government of Tanganyika welcomed that development. Thus the United Kingdom had given effect to General Assembly resolution 1410 (XIV).

10. Mr. FORSYTHE (Australia) said that his Government, after giving very careful consideration to the question of the establishment of a United Nations information centre in New Guinea, and after discussions with the Secretariat, had reached the conclusions that, at the present juncture, the demand for information on the United Nations in the Trust Territory was fully met under existing arrangements. His Government had pointed out to the Secretary-General that the number of people who could read English was limited and that any material for the remainder of the population would have to be translated into the local dialects and drastically simplified to make it understandable. Plans for accelerating the spread of literacy had been implemented in the Territory; the Australian delegation hoped to make a full statement on the educational programme during the consideration of agenda item 13 (Report of the Trusteeship Council).

11. In the present circumstances the best means of disseminating information about the United Nations was through the schools; that was the main approach followed by his Government. A new development had been the establishment, within the Administration, of the Extension Services Division, whose function it was to disseminate information of all types to the indigenous inhabitants. Special attention within that Division was paid to United Nations documents and to information supplied by the United Nations Information Centre at Sydney. Radio and films were useful media and, as the level of literacy rose, fuller use would be made of printed material.

12. In short, he felt that in the present circumstances there would be no point in establishing a United Nations information centre in the Territory. That would duplicate the work being done by the Administration of the Territory and the United Nations Information Centre at Sydney. He could assure the representative of Burma that the story of the United Nations was being accurately and fully told in the Territory.

13. At the present juncture he was unable to inform the representative of Burma when circumstances would justify the setting up of an information centre in New Guinea. In reply to that representative's suggestion that a modest information centre should be set up at Rabaul, he would inform him that the needs of the area were adequately served by the operations of the Extension Services at Rabaul to which he had referred.

14. Mr. LAPIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the report plainly indicated that the

Secretariat had failed to carry out the instructions received from the General Assembly. The report was empty and formal and merely reflected the point of view of the Administering Authorities. It went to show that the Secretariat had lost its prestige and influence and that in all matters, great and small, it acted hand in hand with the colonialists.

15. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) pointed out that operative paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 1410 (XIV) instructed the Secretary-General to co-operate with the Administering Authorities with a view to the establishment of United Nations information centres in the Trust Territories. He was surprised that the USSR representative had criticized the Secretariat for doing precisely that.

16. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said that since the report had been issued on 19 October 1960 the Committee should by now have received more up-to-date information. In particular, he wished to know whether any progress had been made in the establishment of a United Nations information centre at Usumbura.

17. Mr. COTTRELL (Secretary of the Committee) replied that in the course of further discussions held between the Secretariat and the representative of the Administering Authority it had been pointed out that the question of the selection of the assistants to be trained for service with the United Nations information centre in the Territory should properly be raised with the new Government to be set up in Ruanda-Urundi following the legislative elections.

18. A document giving information received after the compilation of the report had been prepared by the Secretariat, but had not yet been circulated to the Committee<sup>1</sup> because it took up information contained in the interim report of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi (A/4706), which was not yet available in all the working languages. In addition to that information and to the particulars which he had just given the Committee, the new document would contain information on the developments in Tanganyika which the United Kingdom representative had already brought to the Committee's attention.

199. Mr. ACHKAR (Guinea) moved the adjournment of the meeting under rule 119 of the rules of procedure.

*The motion for adjournment was adopted by 60 votes to none, with 12 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 12 noon.

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently circulated as document A/4542/Add.1.