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**Chairman: Mr. Rafik ASHA (Syria).**

**AGENDA ITEM 31**

**Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter: reports of the Secretary-General and of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/2651, A/2652, A/2653, A/2654 and Add.1 to 3, A/2655, A/2656, A/2657 and Add.1 to 4, A/2658, A/2729) (*continued*):**

- (a) Information on economic conditions;
- (b) Information on other conditions;
- (c) Transmission of information;
- (d) Participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories

1. Mr. ARENALES (Guatemala) said that, having served on the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories, his delegation wished to reply to certain of the criticisms that had been made. He pointed out that it was the first time that a representative of the present Government of Guatemala had served on the Fourth Committee.

2. His delegation greatly regretted two factors which had prevented the Committee on Information from fulfilling its terms of reference, namely, the absence of any representative of Belgium and the United Kingdom's failure to transmit information on the Bahamas, the Territory of Belize (British Honduras), Sarawak and Sierra Leone in time for discussion in the Committee. The Committee on Information would have profited greatly from the presence of a Belgian representative during the discussion on the Belgian Congo. In connexion with the information subsequently transmitted by the United Kingdom on the Territory of Belize, he noted that the Guatemalan delegation

had analysed the economic situation in that Territory on the basis of information received by the Guatemalan Government directly. That analysis was to be found in the record of the 97th meeting of the Committee on Information (A/AC.35/SR.97). The Guatemalan delegation reserved the right to comment in due course on the information on Belize contained in document A/2657/Add.4, which had appeared after the close of the session of the Committee on Information.

3. The Guatemalan delegation had agreed with other members of the Committee on Information that the Standard Form used by the Administering Members in submitting information under Article 73 e of the Charter should be revised and expanded. It also hoped that the agenda of the Committee's next session would include an item relating to the revision of the Standard Form. The Guatemalan delegation considered that the Secretariat's analysis of the information submitted by the Administering Members should be studied in detail by appropriate government departments of all Member States. Apart from the fact that it was difficult, if not impossible, for a small group of delegations to review adequately colonial policies which had been many years in the making and needed many very complex organs to carry them out, a study of the details by the administrative services of Member States would give those States a valuable opportunity of comparing the problems which arose in the Non-Self-Governing Territories with those which had to be dealt with at home. The method would have the added advantage of answering one of the objections in the letter of 14 August 1953 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the Chairman of the Committee on Information setting forth the reasons for the Belgian withdrawal from the Committee (A/AC.35/L.142); in other words, it would enable States to contribute their experience to the solution of the problems of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

4. Many of the criticisms made of the report of the Committee on Information (A/2729) would have been echoed by the Guatemalan delegation if it had not had an opportunity, through its work in the Committee on Information, of understanding the reasons which had determined the report's final form. The United Kingdom and other delegations had criticized the many generalizations in the report. However, the Committee's terms of reference did not allow it to refer to individual Territories. The most that it could do was to make general recommendations to guide the Administering Members in their administration of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To formulate practical recommendations, it had to make a critical analysis of the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, of the policy of the Administering Members and of the progress or lack of progress to be noted. That side of the Committee's work was much more effective when it could count

on the actual presence of representatives of the Administering Members, who could, for example, explain why a particular policy had not been put into effect. That was one more reason for regretting the absence of Belgium from the Committee on Information.

5. The report had also been criticized for the emphasis it placed on the indigenous populations. The non-administering Powers, of course, were always sympathetic to any reference to the paramount interests of the indigenous inhabitants, while the Administering Members preferred to omit any specific reference to the indigenous populations. Chapter XI of the Charter did in fact refer to the "inhabitants" of the Territories, and the Administering Members argued, therefore, that the Committee on Information and its report should refer to all the inhabitants of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. While agreeing in principle, the Guatemalan delegation felt that if a study of all the inhabitants showed one sector of the population to be less privileged, the Committee and the Administering Members themselves should obviously concentrate on that sector, which happened to be the indigenous inhabitants.

6. The Polish representative had suggested that in future the report should devote greater attention to the unfavourable comments made by the members of the Committee on Information during their examination of the information submitted. Those comments, however, had been studied during the Committee's discussions and special attention had been devoted to those which had given rise to general recommendations. The Polish representative had also said that the report gave the impression that the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories was good whereas in fact it was not. However, it had not been intended that the present report should relate so much to the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories as to the advances which had been made and which ought to be made in future, thereby reflecting the progress achieved.

7. The representative of Thailand had suggested that the Committee should formulate general recommendations for application in groups of Territories rather than in all the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and that its terms of reference should be revised to enable it to do so. The Guatemalan delegation agreed in principle, but noted that although the recommendations in the report did not relate to groups of Territories, in its work the Committee had been able to take the Territories in groups.

8. The Haitian and other delegations had made special reference to draft resolution A in annex II of part one of the report. The draft resolution had been objected to chiefly because of the system which it envisaged for the granting of scholarships and fellowships. The United Kingdom had submitted amendments (A/2729, part one, paras. 41-42) to the original joint draft resolution (para. 33) because it considered that the system ought to operate through the Technical Assistance Administration. In view of the arguments which had arisen over that point, the Guatemalan delegation had put forward a compromise formula (A/AC.35/L.180) inviting the Secretary-General to suggest a procedure. Since the United Kingdom amendments had been voted upon and adopted first, the Guatemalan delegation had withdrawn its compromise suggestion. In view of the discussions in the Fourth Committee, and the new amendments submitted, the

Guatemalan delegation reserved the right to consider draft resolution A separately and to speak again on the proposed amendments.

9. The representatives of the Philippines, Poland and Czechoslovakia had criticized the report for not going into political conditions and political advancement in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The question of political advancement was near to the heart of all the non-administering Powers and particularly to those which had only recently become self-governing themselves. The Guatemalan delegation was one of those which considered that Chapter XI of the Charter was not being applied to the fullest extent. The apparent lack of connexion between paragraph e and paragraphs a and b of Article 73 of the Charter had given rise to an interpretation of Chapter XI which had in the past been the subject of much discussion. Despite the apparent harmony in the last session of the Committee on Information, the Administering Members had not yielded an inch in their interpretation of the scope of the Committee's work, while the non-administering Powers had advised caution in a manner suggesting that they were resigned to their impotence. The Guatemalan delegation had not proposed that the Committee on Information should study the political situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, nor did it intend to do so in the Fourth Committee, despite the fact that several delegations, including the United States, had argued that the Fourth Committee was competent to consider political matters. However, it did feel that although the obligation to transmit information under Article 73 e of the Charter referred to economic, social and educational conditions only, the United Nations must study those three functional fields in the light of Chapter XI as a whole. Economic development, for example, could not be studied without bearing in mind its political objective, the achievement of self-government. The same applied to the social and educational fields. The Guatemalan delegation had tried hard to have a general statement to that effect included among the objectives of economic development which later formed paragraph 17 of part two of the report, but its efforts had not been successful.

10. The subject of political conditions was a delicate one and lengthy discussions on that subject in the Fourth Committee would not be in the interest of the Territories and their inhabitants or of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the Guatemalan delegation was loath to consider that the United Nations should cease its fight for an ideal, and concentrate its efforts on a limited, technical study of the functional fields dealt with by the Committee on Information. It inclined rather to the view of the Venezuelan representative that the Committee on Information should enter a technical and concrete phase, in order to reinforce its position. Thus, the Guatemalan delegation had yielded only temporarily to practical considerations, but without renouncing its position of principle. The fact was that the international political situation which had led to the provision in the Charter, not for the immediate independence of the Non-Self-Governing Territories but for their gradual advancement towards self-government, still existed. It must be recognized that the interests of the inhabitants of the Non-Self-Governing Territories could not be considered apart from the general interests of other peoples in other countries. Nevertheless, though caution was necessary, all Mem-

ber States, administering and non-administering Powers alike, should endeavour to accelerate the progress of the Territories towards self-government. That moral and legal obligation was reinforced by political necessity in the face of ever growing nationalism. The United Nations should help to channel the forces of nationalism towards wise and constructive ends, which would contribute greatly to the welfare of the world and of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

11. Bearing those considerations in mind, the Guatemalan delegation considered that the main fault of the Committee's report was that it was the product of a too limited conception of the Committee's functions. Both administering and non-administering Powers had been over-cautious in their interpretation of Chapter XI of the Charter and not careful enough to ensure that nationalism in the Non-Self-Governing Territories did not outstrip the United Nations and frustrate its efforts. If the Committee on Information continued on its present course, the functions of the United Nations in connexion with Non-Self-Governing Territories might well be reduced to mere routine and the United Nations would be incapable of meeting current needs. One of the causes of the United Nations' present paralysis in the face of the colonial problem lay in the psychological attitude of the various delegations. The Administering Members, which were directly responsible not only for the administration of the Non-Self-Governing Territories but also to a great extent for international policy, were very much aware of the caution required. The non-administering Powers, perhaps less conscious of those responsibilities and suspicious of the caution shown by the Administering Members, were inclined to adopt radical attitudes which deepened rather than removed differences of opinion, to the detriment of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and their inhabitants. The vicious circle could be broken only by goodwill and good faith on both sides. The harmony which had reigned at the last session of the Committee on Information was perhaps a sign that the problem was on the way to being solved. It was in that spirit of goodwill and good faith that the Guatemalan delegation had voted in favour of the adoption of the report of the Committee on Information, including paragraph 17 of part two, subject to its reservations in respect of the draft resolution on educational advancement. It felt that the exercise of the right of discussion and experience in the future work of the Committee on Information might well create precedents which would smooth the path towards a wider application of Chapter XI, so much so that a declaration of principle over the right to discuss political conditions would in the end be unnecessary.

12. He hoped that when the time came for the General Assembly to consider renewing the life of the Committee on Information, all the Administering Members would be in favour of it. The discords of past years had largely disappeared, and the Administering Members which did not regard the Committee's work as useful should recognize that they could themselves gradually correct any defects in the Committee. In that connexion, he thought the work of the Committee on Information would be much more fruitful if it could count on the experience of Belgium in matters relating to Non-Self-Governing Territories, and he appealed once more to the Belgian Government to reconsider its position.

13. Lastly, the Guatemalan delegation hoped that the Administering Members would consider the possibility, at the tenth session of the General Assembly, of broadening paragraph 3 of resolution 332 (IV) so that the Committee on Information could examine the information transmitted under Article 73 e not only in the spirit of Article 1, paragraphs 3 and 4, and of Article 55 of the Charter, but also in the spirit of Chapter XI. The Administering Members could surely not object to that suggestion on grounds of principle. However, if they had any other objections, he hoped that they would recognize that the proposal was logical and had been made in good faith. If each side recognized that the other was acting in good faith, the United Nations should be able gradually to solve the problems of colonialism.

14. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) said that his delegation was anxious to co-operate, as fully as its principles would allow, in the work of the General Assembly and of its committees. While it had not taken part in the work of the Committee on Information, it was willing to give any explanations that might be necessary in connexion with the information which it had supplied in obedience to the Charter. The fact that it was willing to give such explanations did not imply any recognition of any right of supervision by the General Assembly over the administration of the Belgian Congo.

15. The fact that his delegation regarded the establishment of the Committee on Information as illegal would not prevent it from recognizing that it had worked to the best of its ability. After only three weeks the Committee had condensed its conclusions from studies relating to over sixty territories in all parts of the world into a report—a truly surprising feat. In many respects, those conclusions coincided with the experience of the Belgian Government. However, Belgium was not among those States which, according to the Burmese representative, were to be congratulated on framing their development plans in accordance with the recommendations of the 1951 report (A/1836, part three). The Belgian ten-year plan had been well under way long before 1951 and Belgian policy in the Congo was determined by Belgium alone, though it was in conformity with the principles of the Charter.

16. Several delegations had expressed their regret that Belgium had been absent from the last two sessions of the Committee on Information. The position of Belgium in that respect was well known. Belgium exercised in the Congo all the prerogatives of a sovereign State. It had never renounced or lost its sovereignty and would not allow it to be whittled away. On the other hand, Belgium had signed the declaration in Chapter XI of the Charter in all sincerity since it expressed the policy proclaimed and practised by Belgium in the Congo since 1908, a policy it would continue to carry out faithfully. It had done so under the safeguard of the reservation made by France at the San Francisco Conference in May 1945, i.e., without prejudice to the application of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter. Belgium claimed sole responsibility for the administration of the Congo, and it was for Belgium, and not, as the representative of Israel believed, for the General Assembly, to solve the Territory's problems.

17. Under Article 73 e, the Belgian Government had accepted the obligation to submit regularly to the Sec-

retary-General—not to the General Assembly—statistical and other information of a technical nature—not a report—for purposes of information and not for examination or discussion in any organ of the General Assembly. That information related to economic, social and educational conditions, not to political matters. The Lebanese representative had rightly recalled that the omission of any reference to political information at San Francisco was not due to inadvertence, but to the refusal of the colonial Powers to sign any such undertaking. The Charter had not been amended since.

18. Belgium had voluntarily placed Ruanda-Urundi under the International Trusteeship System provided for in Chapters XII and XIII of the Charter. However, it had never agreed to submit the administration of the Belgian Congo to United Nations supervision. It could not agree that the Belgian Congo should be assimilated to the Trust Territories. Belgium had no obligation to collaborate in the work of the Committee on Information, which was not provided for in the Charter.

19. The letter dated 14 August 1953 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the Chairman of the Committee on Information set forth the reasons why Belgium considered it useless to take part in the Committee's discussions. One reason had been that a purely political question had been placed on the agenda. The Belgian delegation could not have foreseen that the Committee would not discuss that question in 1953 or in 1954, and there was no evidence that it would refrain from doing so in 1955. The other reason had been that a number of States equally responsible for the administration of Non-Self-Governing Territories, and thus obliged to supply information, had not as yet done so.

20. While he would not take up the Committee's time with legal arguments on the interpretation of the Charter, he had a great deal of documentation to prove that a number of States were administering within their own frontiers territories which were not governed by the ordinary law; territories with well-defined limits, inhabited by homogeneous peoples differing from the rest of the population in race, language and culture. Those populations were disenfranchised; they took no part in the national life; they did not enjoy self-government in any sense of the word. Some of them were still unconquered. Entry into many of those territories was prohibited by law. He could not see how anyone could claim that the States administering such territories were not what the Charter called States "which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government".

21. It was strange that the very same delegations which were trying to extend the terms of the Charter beyond all the rules of traditional interpretation in order to impose on certain States obligations which were never intended, at the same time distorted the meaning of words in order to enable other States to evade an obligation imposed by the clear language of the Charter—the moderate and reasonable obligation to supply information of a non-political nature.

22. In that connexion he quoted from *Indigenous Peoples—Living and Working Conditions of Aboriginal Populations in Independent Countries*, published by the International Labour Office in 1953, which showed that the standard of living of the indigenous popula-

tions of the independent countries was extremely low and that they had practically no system of assistance, of social security or of labour protection laws. The value of that information had been confirmed by the International Labour Organisation's Committee of Experts on Indigenous Labour, which had held its second session at Geneva from 15 to 26 March 1954. It had concluded that action taken at the national level by the Governments concerned would be considerably strengthened if it were accompanied by international action.

23. The Belgian delegation had no intention of suggesting an international intervention in the domestic affairs of sovereign States. It merely asked that the Charter should be given a wide interpretation in the matter of defining the peoples to which Chapter XI applied, and that all States should recognize their duty to protect their indigenous populations, a duty they had undertaken when they signed the Covenant of the League of Nations.

24. Before replying to the questions asked in the course of the debate on economic matters, he would refer to the background against which that information should be regarded.

25. A number of representatives of Latin-American countries had stated that they were in principle anti-colonialist. That attitude was inspired by a feeling of sympathy for the peoples who lived under a régime from which they themselves had suffered. The situations were not identical, however. It was true that the Latin-American countries had been subjected to a colonial régime, but their revolutions had been the work of the colonists from the metropolitan country who, while claiming the right to govern themselves, had claimed at the same time the right to take up the role played by the metropolitan country with regard to the indigenous peoples. The work of colonization had continued after the attainment of independence and was not completely terminated even today in some of the most remote parts of the continent.

26. He would compare the situation of the Spanish colonists of America on the eve of their liberation with that of the Belgian Congo only, since that was the only territory for which Belgium was responsible.

27. Whereas fifty years previously Central Africa had been peopled with primitive tribes—most of them as backward as the forest-dwelling populations of the Amazon Basin—who were always at war with each other, today a traveller in the Congo saw towns, churches, factories, plantations, schools and hospitals. He met indigenous inhabitants who were educated and civilized. He was unlikely to visit the bush and to realize the almost insurmountable obstacles to progress raised by the hostility of nature and by lingering custom. Progress was taking place, however; much remained to be done, but much had been done.

28. In the economic field, which had been the subject of special attention during the current session, the question which properly concerned the members of the Fourth Committee was briefly whether the rights and interests of the indigenous inhabitants were effectively protected. Did the interests of the Territory really take precedence over the metropolitan country and did not the economic relations between them give the metropolitan country undue privileges? Were development plans drawn up and carried out in the light of the

interests of the Territory? Was sufficient attention paid to the development of the domestic market? Was the standard of living of the masses, which should be the paramount concern, not being sacrificed to the interests of a minority? And was progress not being hampered by a shortage of financial resources or lack of technical assistance?

29. Some of the figures were unfavourable; no one denied that the colonies were under-developed countries. What mattered was the effort that had been made to help those peoples and the progress that had been achieved. In any appraisal of what it had done, Belgium wanted complete objectivity, and it claimed to have done sound and honest work in the Congo.

30. The Charter declared that the interests of the inhabitants of the Territories were paramount; in his view that should be interpreted to mean that the interests of the Territory were paramount where they conflicted with those of the metropolitan country, rather than that the interests of one category of inhabitants should prevail over those of other elements of the population. In the Belgian Congo the paramountcy of indigenous rights was expressly recognized. Indigenous lands were inalienable. The terms of the ten-year plan made that fact perfectly clear.

31. The representative of Iraq appeared to consider that a disproportionate amount of land in the Congo was owned by Europeans. The representatives of Syria and Mexico, without expressly mentioning the Congo, had voiced concern at the distribution of land between Europeans and indigenous inhabitants. The USSR representative had also touched on the question. The fact was, however, that the indigenous inhabitants of the Belgian Congo owned more land per head than the inhabitants of the United States of America, a country which could hardly be described as under-developed. Moreover, if at any time the inhabitants of the Congo felt that their 120 million acres of land were insufficient, there remained in the Congo, despite the fact that 15 million acres had been granted to Europeans, 500 million acres of vacant land on which they could freely settle.

32. The representative of Iraq should realize that land held on concession by Europeans meant that the Congolese economy and the indigenous community benefited from the production of European plantations and the industries which depended on them—palm oil, palm kernels, coffee and rubber. Those were the four principal products. It meant all that that production represented in wages and services, export tax, transport and tax on profits. Listing the various achievements of the largest oil company, the Huileries du Congo belge, which included the construction of modern factories, a network of roads, a flotilla of river boats, hospitals, schools and 22,000 houses for its indigenous personnel, he wondered whether the representative of Iraq would suggest that the land so developed should have been left in the state of virgin forest. All the land granted on concession, mainly to cattle farmers, was vacant land over which the indigenous inhabitants had no rights; concessions were granted only on condition that the land should be properly developed. There had been no cattle at all in the Congo, except in the mountainous lands of the north-east, but now European farmers owned a total of 350,000 head of cattle. Experience had shown that ten hectares of natural pasturage were needed for each head of cattle. The number of cattle

therefore justified the concession of three and a half million hectares of land, for the cattle-breeding industry was of the greatest value to the Territory. At the same time the Government had not failed to encourage indigenous agriculture.

33. The traditional system of farming had been to clear a small area, cultivate it until the land was completely exhausted and then to abandon it and clear another patch. A programme of development of indigenous peasant farming to replace the old system had been drawn up some twenty years previously. The object was to establish the indigenous farmer on a piece of land large enough to enable him to maintain its fertility indefinitely by means of rational farming methods. The area varied according to circumstances; each *paysannat* grouped a number of families under the supervision of a territorial officer and of an agronomist.

34. The Fonds du bien-être indigène (Indigenous Welfare Fund) provided the *paysannats* with agricultural implements, schools, dispensaries and small-scale industrial equipment. In 1952 it had spent 25 million francs (\$500,000) in such ways. He drew the attention of the representative of Syria to that programme, in view of the fact that he had stated at the 418th meeting that no plan for the rational use of land had been drawn up in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

35. A similar programme was apparently being carried out in Mexico. Comparisons of methods and results should be of value for all indigenous populations, whether living in independent countries or in Non-Self-Governing Territories. The representatives of France, the United Kingdom and Denmark had stressed the value of such comparisons in assessing the information submitted. The representatives of Venezuela, Greece and some others had taken the contrary view. That opposition appeared to him to arise from hypersensitive nationalism. Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter had been quoted to prevent any allusion from being made to situations prevailing in sovereign States. Certain countries feared comparisons which might show their countries in an unfavourable light. The colonial Powers might, they thought, excuse themselves by referring to the mistakes of others. But the faults of one country were not diminished by the fact that others also had committed faults.

36. Comparisons were called for to help all countries unite in solving urgent problems such as the education of women. His own country would be glad to learn, and also had something to teach. There was one sphere in particular in which all those who had the interests of the dependent peoples truly at heart should demand that the comparison should be made; that was the sphere of development plans. A number of delegations regarded the development plans drawn up by the colonial Powers with uneasiness, if not with suspicion. They wondered whether the plans had really been drawn up in the interests of the Territories. The work of the critics of the colonial administrations would have been greatly facilitated if the Secretariat had been able to submit to them a comparative study of the development plans in the colonies and similar plans drawn up by independent States dealing with the same problems. Since sovereign States were concerned only with the interests of their own nationals and were not suspected of favouring "foreign monopolies", their plans could serve as a yardstick in judging the merits

of those drawn by the colonial Powers for their dependent territories.

37. For lack of such comparisons, the benefit of which was refused to the populations of the dependent territories by the non-administering Powers, the administering Powers did their best to make comparisons which might be of use to them. The Belgian Ministry for the Colonies maintained a file, as far as the published reports permitted, of all the requests for assistance addressed by sovereign States to the United Nations Technical Assistance Board with a view to ascertaining whether the same kind of assistance had been granted by Belgium to the Belgian Congo and, if not, to remedying the situation. So far the comparison had not revealed any serious neglect on the part of the Belgian Administration. In reply to the representatives of Israel and Mexico, he pointed out that basic equipment such as railways, roads, bridges and electric power served the black as well as the white population. Such investments were not repatriated in the form of simple capital. They were incorporated permanently in the Congo.

38. With regard to the customs relations between Belgium and the Belgian Congo, Belgium was on exactly the same footing as any other country. Products coming from or going to Belgium enjoyed no preference of any kind. Belgium's share of imports to the Congo in 1953 had been 39 per cent of the volume and 40 per cent of the value. In the same year, Belgium had received 54 per cent of the volume and 57 per cent of the value of exports from the Congo.

39. With reference to industrialization and the standard of living, the Polish representative had complained that the indigenous inhabitants imported goods to the value of 595 francs a head, whereas average imports for Europeans amounted to over 37,000 francs. He would not dispute that the average standard of living of Europeans was much higher than that of the indigenous inhabitants; the Europeans for the most part belonged to the more prosperous class of the population. Furthermore, only indigenous inhabitants lived in the bush on a subsistence economy. Nor would he stress the fact that in that calculation all equipment goods were counted among the imports by the white population. But another factor which reduced the volume of the indigenous imports was the constant increase in local production, owing to ever more varied industrialization. Emphasis had been laid on the need for industrialization and for the development of domestic markets; the more the indigenous inhabitants could buy on the spot, the less they would have to import. Much of their food was produced locally; houses being built for the indigenous inhabitants were built with locally produced materials; many of their clothes were produced in the Territory. The representative of Pakistan had informed the Committee at the 418th meeting that the following year his country would be independent of foreign jute production: that was already the case in the Congo. Crockery, bottles, tin trunks and many other goods were manufactured in the Territory.

40. The representative of the Soviet Union had deplored the insufficiency of equipment in the colonies. At the same time he had accused the colonial Powers of exempting equipment from customs duties to which consumer goods were liable. Furthermore, the Ukrainian representative had criticized the unfavourable trade balances of certain colonies, which, he had said, received

so low a price for their goods that they were unable to pay for their imports. Incidentally, the previous year the representative of the Soviet Union had expressed the opposite view. It was true that, the previous year, the situation had been reversed: trade balances had been favourable to the colonies. At the 335th meeting of the Fourth Committee, on 16 October 1953, the Soviet representative had blamed the colonial Powers for that fact and had accused them of draining the colonies to obtain strategic stocks without putting anything in their place. He was glad to say that during the financial year under consideration the Congo's trade balance had been in equilibrium.

41. The Soviet representative was of the opinion that, generally speaking, domestic trade was neglected in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. He had said that there had been no significant progress in industrialization since 1951. There was no basis for that statement as far as the Congo was concerned. The ten-year plan emphasized the need to stabilize the economy by a maximum development of the domestic market, and that had been done. A publication of the Direction des études économiques of the Ministry for the Colonies entitled *La situation économique du Congo belge en 1953* contained abundant information on the development of the economy of the Congo. The introduction stated that the volume of industrial production had reached the index figure of 300 on the basis of the 1947-1949 average.

42. Another figure which showed the increase in the domestic market was that for traffic on the Matadi-Léopoldville railway. In 1949 there had been 421,000 tons of goods for export, 481,000 for import and 474,000 tons of local traffic; in 1953 the corresponding figures had been 582,000 tons of goods for export, 747,000 for import and over a million tons of local traffic.

43. While agreeing as to the importance of developing domestic markets, he could not agree with the representatives of Mexico and Lebanon, who had accused the Administration of favouring export goods and recommended that it should concentrate its efforts on producing foodstuffs for local consumption. It was more rational to produce palm oil and coffee in the Congo and to buy wheat from Canada than to try to reverse the process.

44. The Administration did not as yet possess exact information concerning the standard of living in the tribal groups. He could say, however, in reply to the Mexican representative, that from July 1950 to December 1953 wages had increased by 77 per cent. Taking into account the movement of prices, wage-earners' purchasing power had increased in the same period by 65 per cent to 70 per cent. The volume already referred to estimated the increase in the monetary resources of indigenous inhabitants living in tribal areas at 50 per cent at least and the increase in their purchasing power at 40 per cent or 45 per cent.

45. One index of the improvement in the standard of living was the increase in the number of bicycles, which had risen from 102,000 in 1949 to 540,000 in 1953. The number of savings-bank accounts had risen from 106,000 in December 1952 to 185,000 in December 1953, while individual deposits had risen in one year from 320 million francs to 500 million francs.

46. With regard to investments, the representative of Iraq had admitted that, in a country that was not



only under-developed but actually primitive, mining was only possible by means of capital, technical experts and even, to begin with, skilled labour brought in from outside. He had added that such exploitation was profitable for the territory only if a substantial part of the profits returned to the Treasury and were expended for the benefit of the population. The Yugoslav representative had made the same remark and the representative of Ecuador had stated categorically that the participation of the inhabitants was confined to the wages they received. The speaker pointed out that the shares held by the Ministry for the Colonies in Congo enterprises in return for its contribution had been estimated on 31 December 1953 as 19 thousand million francs, or twice the annual budget for public expenditure. The largest mining company, the Union minière du Haut-Katanga, estimated that 24 per cent of its gross receipts were paid annually into the Congo Treasury by way of taxes, duties and fees of all kinds, that 15 per cent of its gross receipts were reinvested in the Congo each year and that 15 per cent was paid out in the form of dividends. There was therefore no truth in the Egyptian representative's assertion that capital was invested chiefly with a view to obtaining rapid large profits, which were subsequently repatriated. The capital remained in the Territory in the form of installations, factories, roads, electric-power stations and houses. The company employed about 19,000 workers, 80 per cent of whom lived with their families. The birth rate among them was 70.91 per thousand, the death rate 6.94 per thousand. The company supported an educational service and a medical service, comprising doctors, nurses and hospitals.

47. With regard to the technical assistance granted by Belgium to its colony, he would confine himself to making one comparison. In 1953 the Food and Agriculture Organization had had a budget of \$6,700,000 for its 230 technical assistance projects and its 624 experts. In that same year the Institut national pour l'étude agronomique du Congo had disposed of a budget of \$7,630,000, with 328 experts in Africa, and the Government's Agricultural Service had had 633 technical experts and a budget of over \$14 million.

48. The Egyptian representative had referred to the guarantees required for capital invested in Non-Self-Governing Territories. Congolese 4 per cent loans amounting to some \$40 million had been placed on the free market in Switzerland, and were quoted at above par. Another 4 per cent loan, issued in the Congo at the beginning of 1954, had been subscribed in a few days at a figure of over \$40 million.

49. He had confined his remarks to the economic field. The Venezuelan representative had wisely said at the 411th meeting that economic, social and cultural progress necessarily led eventually to political progress. The Belgian delegation had made it a rule never to discuss in the Fourth Committee political questions relating to the Congo. He would not be breaking that rule if he said that in the opinion of the Belgian Government the first step towards political progress was to provide a sound basis for such progress by working for the economic, social and cultural advancement of the peoples.

50. He did not anticipate that his speech would influence any member of the Committee, but he had wished to explain how Belgium, in the limited field with which the debate was concerned, conceived what it would never cease to regard as a sacred trust.

51. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) paid a tribute to the Administering Members which had transmitted information under Article 73 e. Their action to a certain extent indicated their good faith and respect for the Charter and reduced the likelihood of unwarranted criticism by an administering Power which, having failed to co-operate by giving a committee the necessary information, then challenged its report as inaccurate.

52. Unfortunately, however, the information supplied by the Administering Members did not provide a sufficient basis for the Committee on Information to evaluate the true economic situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and correctly assess the economic development of the indigenous population. The recommendation that special attention should be given to the improvement of the statistical services in the Territories was therefore justified.

53. It was perhaps impractical to think that the development of a Non-Self-Governing Territory could be financed without the State directly concerned hoping to get back at least the amount invested, but the Administering Members were in duty bound under Chapter XI of the Charter to consider the interests of the indigenous inhabitants as paramount and to transmit information in a form that would enable the Committee on Information and the General Assembly to see what activities were being carried on in specific areas and the extent to which the criteria laid down in part one, section VI, of the report had been followed. The factors contributing to a healthier and happier existence and a higher standard of living on the part of the indigenous population must be given paramount importance in the administration of the Territories and in the deliberations of the United Nations. If that point were conceded by the States directly concerned, the greatest barrier to the progress and ultimate self-determination of the dependent peoples would have been removed.

54. It was gratifying to note from the Committee's report the contribution made by technical experts and the economic progress achieved in some of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. On the other hand, the summaries of information prepared by the Secretary-General<sup>1</sup> showed that the standard of living and well-being of the indigenous population as a whole was not satisfactory.

55. Denmark was to be congratulated on its fine record in transmitting all the relevant information on the progress, including the political progress, of the inhabitants of Greenland. In determining the advancement of any people, economic, social, educational and political conditions must be considered together, as they were closely interrelated. Her delegation interpreted the phrase "a full measure of self-government" to mean unqualified independence. It was inconceivable that the terms of reference of the Committee on Information should be so interpreted as to preclude it from at least taking note of the political aspirations of the indigenous inhabitants. The whole object of the "sacred trust" was the ultimate independence of the non-self-governing peoples.

56. It was regrettable to note that many of the Administering Members were continuing to alienate land in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, contrary to the

<sup>1</sup> A/2651, A/2652, A/2653, A/2654 and Add.1 to 3, A/2655, A/2656, A/2657 and Add.1 to 4, A/2658.

interests of the indigenous inhabitants. Lack of consideration for the political aspirations of the dependent peoples, exploitation of the economic resources of the dependent territories, continued slow progress in the social and educational advancement of the inhabitants as a whole and the perpetuation of discriminatory practices were to be deplored. Progress had been made, but on the whole there had not been enough progress and much more could have been done. It was to be hoped that the Committee on Information would be continued and that in the near future the Fourth Committee would learn of improvements in the conditions she had outlined.

57. She repudiated any attempt by the Administering Members to shift their responsibilities for failure to live up to their obligations under the Charter on to "the innate backwardness of the Africans". The plea of backwardness had been used before, in Asia for example, to justify failure to relinquish control over Non-Self-Governing Territories. Nevertheless, when those Territories had finally become independent, there had been no chaos but steady improvement and in some cases even better administration and more rapid progress. The average African was as alert as any average human being anywhere in the world. Given the opportunity, he was as quick to grasp it and he had all the abilities necessary for his advancement. He was an earnest seeker for truth so far as his advancement was concerned. Indeed, that might be the reason why the indigenous inhabitants had not been helped to develop rapidly and why the impression was given that the Africans as a whole were such backward people that any action for their advancement must be taken slowly.

58. Mr. RODRIGUEZ FABREGAT (Uruguay) said that he entirely agreed with the Liberian representative that the ultimate objective of the sacred trust assumed by the Administering Members was self-government and independence. That was clearly stated in Chapter XI of the Charter, Article 73 b of which was devoted to the obligation to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions. The authors of the Charter had been inspired by the desire to safeguard human rights and the self-determination of peoples; they had never intended to perpetuate the colonial system. If the Fourth Committee was to discharge its obligations to the dependent peoples, it must examine all aspects of development in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, including the political aspect. It was incomprehensible that States which had subscribed to the provisions of the Charter, including Article 73 b, should now contend that they were under no obligation to inform the United Nations about political developments in the Territories for which they were responsible. There seemed, moreover, to be some contradiction between their appeals for the co-operation and assistance of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and their consistent refusal to report in full. If the Administering Members refused to transmit information on political conditions, the Committee would be forced to make deductions from the other information available to it and it could not be blamed if its conclusions were sometimes mistaken. The valuable report before the Committee suffered from one serious defect: the Committee on Information had been forced to consider economic, social and educational conditions in isolation from the political conditions which would in

the last analysis determine the fate of the non-self-governing peoples.

59. The Belgian representative had referred to the struggle for liberation in the Americas. The Latin-American people needed no interpreter to explain the circumstances or significance of that struggle. Its leaders, whether white, black or Indian, had all been inspired by the desire to abolish slavery, be it the actual slavery introduced by the Europeans as the basis of their economic domination, or economic and political slavery in the wider sense of the word. America's greatest contribution to world progress was its affirmation of the right of peoples to self-determination.

60. The information transmitted by the Administering Members contained a number of interesting population statistics. The Committee on Information should consider the origin and the relative decline or growth of the indigenous and migrant sectors of the population. In some Non-Self-Governing Territories, such as those in the Caribbean, very curious population movements had taken place. It was difficult to see what had inspired the migration of whole Asian and African social groups to the colonial enclaves in the Western Hemisphere; it could hardly have been a voluntary migration. Now, however, the indigenous peoples of the Territories concerned were in danger of being numerically overwhelmed by the migrant groups. Too little information was available for any valid conclusions to be drawn, but the Committee on Information might well seek further data.

61. As stated in the Committee's report, the burden of poverty lay heavy on many of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and it was therefore important to plan primarily with a view to alleviating poverty by improving productivity. It was clear from the whole of the report on economic conditions (A/2729, part two), and particularly from paragraph 85, that the Administering Members tended to maintain the Non-Self-Governing Territories at the level of primary producers and to keep all aspects of the economy down to that level. The Guianas, for example, were the second highest producers of bauxite in the world, but the local workers were paid deplorably low wages and all the bauxite was exported to aluminium factories in the industrialized countries. The existing situation was highly regrettable and scarcely seemed to be in keeping with the qualities often claimed for the colonial system. In that connexion, he repudiated any suggestion that the condition of the inhabitants of the Non-Self-Governing Territories should be compared with the conditions of less privileged groups in sovereign Member States. There were undoubtedly a number of problems involved in increasing productivity and raising wages, but until the economic level of the Non-Self-Governing Territories was raised there could be no real social or cultural advancement.

62. A number of representatives on the Committee on Information had drawn attention to the importance of educational advancement and the Committee had adopted a resolution on that subject. While cultural values were of the utmost importance, reading and writing were not an end in themselves. The aim of education was to develop a sense of civic and social values, to enable the individual to manage his own affairs and participate in the life of his community. It was pointless to teach a child to read and then to give him



no opportunity of receiving secondary education or technical training and to deprive him of his fundamental rights and of any participation in the life of his society. In many of the Non-Self-Governing Territories the indigenous inhabitants were not entitled to vote

even in municipal and village elections. The Administering Members should modify their conception of the indigenous peoples as inferior beings in constant need of their administration and advice.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.