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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 12th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. ADOUKI

(Congo)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

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/45/23 (Parts V and VI); A/45/644 and Corr.1; A/C.4/45/L.2, L.3, L.7; A/AC.109/1015 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1016 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1017-1021, A/AC.109/1023 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/AC.109/1024-1036, A/AC.109/1038, A/AC.109/1041 and Corr.1, A/AC.109/1044, A/AC.109/1048 and Corr.1/Rev.1)

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General debate

1. Mr. KAPAMBWE (Zambia) said that the Committee, at the initial stage of its work, had heard various petitioners from Non-Self-Governing Territories who had expressed a determination to pursue the struggle against colonial oppression. Their courage deserved the Committee's unequivocal support precisely because its support was a source of inspiration to all peoples under such oppression.
2. Zambia, which had itself been a colony, understood very well what colonialism meant. Like any system based on injustice, colonialism could not survive for ever, and no amount of prevarication or paternalism by the colonial Powers towards Non-Self-Governing Territories could prevent its eventual eradication.
3. Development in the world in the past year had created conditions that must be exploited to eliminate colonialism everywhere. Namibia had recently been admitted into the United Nations as an independent nation. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the lessons of Namibia were being taken into account in settling the problem of the last Non-Self-Governing Territory in Africa, Western Sahara.

(Mr. Kapambwe, Zambia)

4. In that connection, his country fully supported the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Western Sahara, approved by the Security Council in June 1990. It was encouraged by the adoption in principle by Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO of the proposals contained in the report, and urged the two parties to continue to co-operate with the Secretary-General. Zambia also welcomed the readiness of Algeria and Mauritania to co-operate with the Special Representative in implementing the joint proposals of the Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).
5. As one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on Western Sahara, Zambia commended it for unanimous adoption. It commended for consensus adoption the draft resolution on New Caledonia contained in the report of the Special Committee.
6. In connection with the report of the Special Committee, his delegation noted that the administering Powers still had much to do in various Non-Self-Governing Territories. It hoped that the administering Powers that had suspended their participation in the Special Committee would reconsider and return to that important body.
7. Turning lastly to the question of apartheid in South Africa, he urged the international community to focus attention on the fact that apartheid was still the official policy of the Government of South Africa. Until discriminatory legislation was repealed, all political prisoners released and genuine elections held on the principle of "one man, one vote", the international community should continue to isolate South Africa through sanctions. Otherwise the inalienable rights embodied in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) would remain for the oppressed people of South Africa a mirage in the desert of apartheid.
8. Mr. IBRAHIM (Egypt) said that in the current year the meetings of the Fourth Committee were extremely significant because they coincided with the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In recent years, many Territories had achieved independence and joined the family of nations. One of the significant landmarks on that road was the achievement of independence by Namibia. Still, the task of the Fourth Committee was still not fulfilled. In order for colonialism to be eliminated by the end of the current century, the Committee must not relent in its efforts. In order to ensure the right of self-determination, it was essential to be guided by the noble purposes and principles that constituted the very foundation of the work of the United Nations, and to act in accordance with its Charter, with respect for human rights without distinction as to colour, religion or geographic location. The international community, taking into account the special characteristics of Territories still deprived of the right of self-determination, must study and eliminate the negative consequences of activities carried out in such Territories.
9. In an increasingly interdependent world, the developing countries were seeking access to various parts of the planet and trying to attract foreign investments and

(Mr. Ibrahim, Egypt)

co-operate with all countries. His delegation could not agree with the traditional accusations against the administering Powers. Egypt felt that some of their measures were in the right direction. What was now required was to make sure that by the end of the decade, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and peoples could realize their right to political, economic and social self-determination, protect their cultural heritage and economic structure and participate fully in international affairs for the common good.

10. No country should become the victim of aggression just because it was smaller or weaker than others or had suffered under the colonial yoke in specific circumstances that no longer existed.

11. Egypt had always taken an active part in initiatives concerning Western Sahara. In 1989, when the President of Egypt had been Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, extensive contacts had taken place between the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the secretariat of OAU and the parties concerned.

12. His delegation had read the Secretary-General's report on that matter, and agreed with its conclusions concerning the progress towards a peaceful settlement of the question of Western Sahara. Egypt hoped that the parties concerned would reach a mutually acceptable agreement on the outstanding issues within a reasonable time, so that the Secretary-General could present his report to the Security Council with the outline of a specific plan for conducting a referendum.

13. Mr. de ALMEIDA (Angola) congratulated Namibia on its accession to independence and admission to membership in the United Nations, and said that his country and people were closely monitoring the implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The resolution reflected the international community's conviction that all peoples had an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory.

14. Referring to the statement made by the Angolan Minister for Foreign Affairs at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly during the current session, he said that the Government of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO must continue their talks. His Government also welcomed Security Council resolution 658 (1990) and commended the efforts made by the Secretary-General and the Organization of African Unity to organize a referendum to determine the future of the Territory, taking into account the aspiration of the Saharan people for self-determination and independence. Noting the changes taking place in the world and the ending of the "cold war", he said that the Government and people of Angola hoped to see a peaceful settlement of the question of Western Sahara and of all the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

15. Mr. SITHOLE (Zimbabwe) said that fundamental changes were taking place in the international arena. The end of the "cold war" had ushered in a new era of hope for countries whose peoples were still under the yoke of colonialism. The year 1990 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), an anniversary which should inspire the international community to redouble its efforts to eradicate colonialism throughout the world.

(Mr. Sithole, Zimbabwe)

16. His delegation welcomed the initiative of the Special Committee in holding seminars in two regions where colonialism was still entrenched, thus enabling the United Nations to be fully apprised of the situation in those areas.
17. Although it welcomed developments in South Africa, his delegation was not convinced that apartheid was either dead or dying. The very foundation on which apartheid was built had scarcely changed. He wondered whether South Africa could be trusted when it continued to finance the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) when, since 1980, RENAMO had caused physical destruction estimated at more than \$US 60 billion and the deaths of more than one million Angolans and Mozambicans. He expressed the hope that the international community would not relax its sanctions against South Africa until that country had abolished its inhuman system of institutionalized racism.
18. Turning to the question of Western Sahara, he said that he fully supported the the joint good offices process initiated by the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General. His country's position remained unchanged in that it regarded the question of Western Sahara as a problem of decolonization and believed that the Saharan people should be given the right to choose their own destiny. It was now necessary to establish a code of conduct for the holding of a referendum. The referendum should be held without any administrative or military constraints. It was important that Morocco should withdraw from the Territory all its civilian, military and police personnel. His delegation looked forward to a successful resolution of the problem and to the day when Western Sahara would join the community of nations as a full and sovereign member.
19. Mr. VESELOVSKY (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that, in his delegation's view, the observance in 1990 of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples would undoubtedly be an important landmark in the activities of the United Nations in the field of decolonization. The declaration by the General Assembly of the period 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism should, his delegation considered, help to mobilize the efforts of the international community, including those of the international organizations of the United Nations system in that field. His delegation took a positive view of the work of a number of specialized agencies of the United Nations in the implementation of the noble aims of the Declaration on decolonization, and in particular the activities of UNESCO, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, WIPO, UNIDO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and a number of other agencies.
20. At the same time, his delegation could not but agree with the criticisms which had been levelled against those specialized agencies which were failing to implement the relevant United Nations decisions in that field. In specific terms, only nine agencies had responded to the Secretary-General's letter of 16 March 1990, which had been addressed to 25 specialized agencies and international organizations. The United Nations was not receiving sufficient

(Mr. Veselovsky, Ukrainian SSR)

information from such institutions and organizations as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which might in fact be in a position to foster the world community's endeavour to promote a more rapid completion of the processes of transition from dependence to sovereignty.

21. His country was in favour of intensifying the activities of all agencies in promoting the transition to nationhood of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, by such means as the preparation of appropriate programmes of assistance in the political, economic, cultural, information and environmental fields.

22. He recalled that the beginning of the year had been noteworthy for an event whose significance it would be difficult to overestimate. The victory of Namibia in its struggle over many years against colonial and racist domination was of both political and historic significance. No small contribution to securing the accession of Namibia to independence had been made by the international organizations of the United Nations system. It was now necessary for the Organization to continue its assistance to the Namibian State in order to consolidate its social and economic position.

23. With reference to the question of the collaboration of certain countries, in particular Israel, with the racist minority régime of South Africa in the nuclear field (A/AC.109/1053), he said that recently, in connection with the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Government of South Africa had stated its intention to review its position in that regard. His delegation welcomed that information and considered that the international organizations associated with the United Nations, and in particular IAEA, should base their relations with South Africa on the practical implementation of that verbal declaration.

24. He noted the progress which had been achieved recently in South Africa. A start had been made on the implementation of measures to establish the necessary climate for talks. The de Klerk Government had demonstrated some measure of willingness to engage in dialogue and had lifted the ban on the activities of political parties and movements. It had released Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, established contacts with representatives of the African National Congress, and lifted the state of emergency. However, the fundamental structures of the policy and practice of apartheid had not yet been dismantled.

25. He recalled that, at its summer session, the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolution 1990/54, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries". The Council's deliberations on that draft resolution, in which his delegation had played an active part, had shown the willingness of all delegations to co-operate actively in that important field and to seek decisions based on compromise. In his delegation's view it would be appropriate if such a spirit of co-operation and business-like compromise were also to prevail in the Fourth Committee.

26. Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom) said that his delegation, fully endorsing the statement made by the representative of Italy on behalf of the Twelve Member States of the European Community, wished to explore two particular points: the question of decolonization and the rationalization of the work of the Fourth Committee.

27. Regardless of the size of a territory and the numbers of people involved, United Kingdom policy was always guided by the wishes of the inhabitants. The aim of his Government was to ensure that in exercising their rights, the people of its 10 remaining dependent territories should decide for themselves what kind of political future they wanted. It was up to them to determine whether they wanted independence or wished instead to opt for some other status. In that connection he remarked that it was wrong to equate self-determination solely with independence, since other options were also available.

28. His Government was faithfully fulfilling its obligation under the Charter of the United Nations to develop self-government in its dependent territories. For example, a constitutional review would take place in the Cayman Islands early the following year. His Government was assisting its Caribbean dependent territories to diversify their economies.

29. Turning to the question of the Committee's work, he expressed the view that the Fourth Committee had become trapped by the rhetoric and structures of the past. Referring in particular to the Committee's prevailing preoccupation with apartheid, he said that it was hard to see the link between apartheid and the day-to-day interests of small island territories thousands of miles away from southern Africa. The abolition of apartheid would be best achieved by concentrating efforts under the relevant agenda items in the appropriate United Nations bodies.

30. Increasing demands upon the resources not only of the United Nations but of national Governments gave added urgency to the consideration of the question of reorganizing the Committee's work. His delegation would welcome any proposals put forward in that connection.

31. Mr. GAKWANDI (Uganda) said that colonialism was rooted in the assumption by the leading countries of the previous century that the prosperity of nations depended on how successfully they could compete for the world's natural and human resources. Now that the era of brutal competition was ending, the theoretical underpinnings of colonialism had become obsolete.

32. His delegation had hoped that in the new atmosphere conducive to co-operation, the Committee's task would be made much easier and solutions to the surviving problems of colonialism would be worked out by consensus. Although, regrettably, some countries had not shifted from previously held positions on the issue, his delegation derived some satisfaction from the fact that the reservations they expressed related largely to the language rather than the substance of resolutions before the Committee.

(Mr. Gakwandi, Uganda)

33. In view of the fact that most of the territories remaining under colonial rule were small in size and were located a long way from the world's most populated regions, his delegation stressed the need for the United Nations to adopt new strategies of disseminating information in order to prevent the spread of distorted ideas about the situation in those territories.

34. Referring to the question of Western Sahara, he said that the most reliable mechanism for ascertaining the wishes of the people of Western Sahara was through a free and democratic referendum. Uganda approved the implementation plan drawn up by the technical mission under the supervision of the Secretary-General and urged all countries to support it. The ending of the conflict in Western Sahara would not only restore the rights of the people of that territory but would also contribute towards peace and stability in the region. Uganda would therefore vote in favour of the resolutions on Western Sahara tabled in the Committee, of which it was a co-sponsor, as well as of any other resolutions in support of the efforts of any colonized people to exercise its right to self-determination.

35. Mr. AWOONOR (Ghana) said that colonialism, which in the language of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was nothing but the subjection of peoples to alien rule, domination and exploitation, constituted a denial of fundamental human rights. It fundamentally contradicted the Charter of the United Nations and impeded the promotion of world peace and co-operation. Although the economic circumstances of Non-Self-Governing Territories might be better than those of some independent States, colonialism ignored the basic issues of freedom and justice for all peoples and denied peoples the right to self-determination, thus flouting their human dignity. The example of Namibia was a testimony to man's yearning for freedom and dignity.

36. Turning to the question of Western Sahara, he said that the proposals of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at last pointed the way towards an answer acceptable to all parties to the dispute. The transitional period which would begin with the cease-fire and end either with the withdrawal of Moroccan troops or, depending on the outcome of the referendum, with the demobilization of Frente POLISARIO troops, would test the political will of both parties to the dispute as well as of the two neighbouring States, Algeria and Mauritania. Ghana called upon the parties to refrain from any act that might endanger the cease-fire, which was an essential pre-condition for the other elements of the implementation plan. One of the plan's most crucial elements was the removal of administrative and military constraints. There should be no constraints on the exercise by the United Nations of its responsibility for the organization and conduct of the referendum.

37. Ms. BIRD (Australia) said that the United Nations and the Fourth Committee could look back with pride on the achievements of the 30 years since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Namibia's recent transition to independence was the latest of those achievements, and Australia also hoped that the Secretary-General would soon be able to implement plans for a referendum in Western Sahara.

(Ms. Bird, Australia)

38. The thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration provided an excellent opportunity for assessing the work done and the tasks still outstanding. In 1962, the year of its establishment, the Non-Self-Governing Territories on the list of the Special Committee on Decolonization had numbered 64. Now there remained only 18, mostly small island States in the southern Pacific and the Caribbean. That did not mean, of course, that the Committee's work was any the less necessary. Each of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories presented unique circumstances requiring individual attention. The failure of some of the Committee's decisions and resolutions to take account of changing circumstances gave grounds for concern.

39. As a nation of the South Pacific, Australia attached particular importance to the situation in New Caledonia. It considered that the interests of New Caledonia and regional stability required a peaceful and orderly transition to genuine self-determination leaving all options open and safeguarding the rights of the Kanaks as well as of all other New Caledonians. The signing of the Matignon accords in 1988 had represented an important step forward in that process. In the past two years the situation in New Caledonia had been characterized by dialogue and co-operation, and progress had been made in the economic and political spheres. Her Government hoped that all parties would continue to abide by the principles of co-operation and conciliation.

40. The Committee would soon be considering a draft resolution on New Caledonia which had been adopted unanimously by the Special Committee on Decolonization. Her delegation expressed the hope that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

41. Mr. HERNANDEZ MACHADO (Cuba) said that since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) significant changes had taken place in the field of decolonization and over 50 countries had been freed from the colonial yoke. Nevertheless it remained essential to step up efforts and to support the legitimate aspirations of peoples still living under colonial rule. Despite changing circumstances in the world at large, changes in the situation of the colonial territories were only slight; their economies still depended entirely on the governing Powers and other foreign sources, and the continuing existence of military bases and objects in many of them impeded the Declaration's implementation.

42. It was more than ever incumbent upon the governing Powers to show their goodwill by complying with the provisions of the relevant resolutions in respect of each of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Some delegations had said that the resolutions submitted by the Special Committee were obsolete and out of touch with reality. His delegation did not share that view. In that connection, it should be noted that the reason for the repetitive nature of many aspects of draft resolutions tabled in the Fourth Committee was the failure of the governing Powers and of international organizations to fulfil their obligations properly. Many examples could be cited in that connection: the United Kingdom had refused since 1986 to co-operate with the Special Committee; there were still difficulties in co-operation between the Trusteeship Council and the Special Committee on the issue of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; the participation of

(Mr. Hernandez Machado, Cuba)

representatives of the Territories' populations in the work of the Special Committee was not ensured in all cases, and governing Powers refused year after year to receive missions sent to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

43. In that connection, it was disquieting that the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization (A/45/1), in setting out the basic directions for the Organization's activities, made no reference to colonialism and the work of decolonization. On the other hand, the Secretary-General would be required to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session a plan of action for the Decade for the eradication of colonialism, which would serve the Special Committee as a guide for its analysis of the problems in that field and in defining specific measures to be taken in order to eliminate colonialism.

44. Until such time as the administering Powers had carried out the provisions of the Declaration the work of decolonization would remain unfinished. Until such time as the apartheid régime was completely eradicated, it was necessary to maintain international pressure on the Pretoria Government and to support the liberation movement of the majority of the South African population and the Front-line States. The occasion offered by the current session should be taken to unite all forces on behalf of the complete eradication of colonialism, racial discrimination and apartheid.

45. Ms. RASOANAIVO (Madagascar) said that the great changes taking place in the world had given a new impetus to the movement of the peoples towards democracy and liberation and demonstrated conclusively that self-determination was not an empty abstraction. United in their desire to determine their own fate freely, the peoples of the world were determined to base the relations between them on the principles of the rejection of confrontation and unhealthy competition. However, it seemed that that process had not yet been extended to the countries of the South. An understandable overall optimism should not serve as an excuse for ignoring the problems connected with the attainment of independence by the colonial countries.

46. The international community had set itself the goal of eradicating colonialism before the end of the millennium. The process by which Namibia had attained independence might serve as a model, and it showed that only a multilateral entity like the United Nations was capable of carrying out so complex a task, involving so many interests. Moreover, complete freedom could only be guaranteed if the fundamental freedom of political decision of the peoples was ensured in the period after the attainment of independence, and that required the construction of the corresponding structures.

47. The political autonomy conquered at the cost of so much effort would be almost meaningless if it were not based on a satisfactory level of socio-economic development. The sad characterization of the 1980s as a time lost for development would have an even bitterer ring if it were applied to the process of decolonization. In that connection, the administering Powers, in co-operation with the development institutions, including those of the United Nations, must make a more sustained effort to promote the economic development of the colonial countries.

(Ms. Rasoanaivo, Madagascar)

48. The future of the Non-Self-Governing Territories also depended in equal measure on the preservation of their environment. To preserve their ecosystems, those regions should not be used as sites for nuclear testing or the storage of nuclear and toxic wastes. Such exploitation of their natural and human resources by the administering and other Powers was impermissible. The security and development of the indigenous populations must take precedence over the strategic interests of the administering Powers and global security itself required all States, both nuclear and non-nuclear, to give up policies of deterrence. All those problems could only be solved by the unity of the international community and the fulfilment of their responsibilities under the Charter by the administering Powers.

49. Her delegation welcomed the progress made in preparing the referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, which testified to the real desire of the parties to find a just solution to that question in the very near future. In that connection the settlement plan set out in Security Council resolution 658 (1990) was of historic significance. However, the implementation of that plan would require resolute action and the acceptance of heavy responsibilities by all the parties concerned.

50. Her delegation fully supported the good offices mission of the Secretary-General and the Chairman of the OAU, and was confident that the Polisario Front and Morocco would fulfil their responsibility to enable the people of Western Sahara freely to express their will.

51. Mrs. TAHIR-KHELI (United States of America): said that the draft resolutions on the small territories all contained the same language reiterated from year to year and in the opinion of her Government were a waste of time and effort. For that reason, her delegation heartily endorsed the proposal by Norway in the Special Committee to consolidate 10 resolutions on small island territories into a single omnibus resolution. If the Committee decided that an omnibus resolution was unacceptable, her delegation would expect the Special Committee to produce alternative proposals for rationalizing its work in the interests of avoiding duplication.

52. The idea of adopting an omnibus resolution was in no way intended to diminish the attention paid by the Special Committee or the Fourth Committee to individual Territories. Material would continue to be collected, developments reviewed, petitioners heard and reports written on each of the individual Territories. The only change would be that the basic principles for the development of the Territories would be laid down in the omnibus resolution but specific issues which were inappropriate for a General Assembly resolution would be eliminated.

53. Her delegation would also urge the Special Committee to consider the language used in several of its resolutions on the presence of military bases. That language implied that those bases constituted a major obstacle to self-determination and played other than a defensive role. Her Government protested vigorously against that anachronistic language, which reflected the inability of the Special Committee to come to grips with contemporary reality. For

(Mrs. Tahir-Kheli, United States)

that reason, her delegation was unable to join the consensus on the resolution and, in calling for a vote on it, wished to express its disagreement with the existing text.

54. Mr. STRUGAR (Yugoslavia) said that Yugoslavia and other non-aligned countries had always attached priority importance to the process of decolonization. The Movement, at whose initiative the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had been proclaimed, had established a working group which would work for the implementation of the corresponding plan of action.

55. There had been important achievements during the past year in the field of decolonization, including the attainment of independence by Namibia, the entrance into a decisive stage of the process of settlement of the question of Western Sahara, and the encouraging developments with respect to the Malvinas Islands. The fact that the list of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories contained mainly small Territories in the Pacific and the Caribbean in no way diminished the obligation of the United Nations to them. On the contrary, the international community should concentrate on ensuring that the aims of the Declaration were realized.

56. Time had proved that with political will and mutual co-operation by all concerned, colonial problems could be settled peacefully. In order to increase the effectiveness of the Organization's work, an effort should be made to reach consensus on the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly. By doing so, they would be made binding on all and their full implementation ensured.

57. Noting the comments made on the need to improve the work of the Special Committee, he said his delegation considered that the Committee should deal with the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in a more innovative manner, taking into account the specific nature of each and adjusting its methods of work to the new international atmosphere. As a member of the Committee, Yugoslavia was ready to work actively on promoting co-operation with the administering Powers in order to achieve the results desired.

58. Mr. SILVA (Sri Lanka) said that the attainment of independence by the Non-Self-Governing Territories would be a significant contribution to the goal of equality laid down in the Charter. The work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization had been remarkably successful; regrettably, however, the process had not yet been completed. Now that international relations were being freed from the ideological animosities of former days, there should be no difficulty in opening the way for the peoples of the dependent Territories to express their will freely.

59. His delegation took note with satisfaction of the progress made by the Special Committee in the decolonization process and attached great value to the constructive role played by the missions sent to the Territories in collecting information on conditions in them and determining the wishes and aspirations of their peoples concerning their future.

(Mr. Silva, Sri Lanka)

60. The United Nations and the administering Powers had a responsibility to make the inhabitants of the Non-Self-Governing Territories aware of the options available to them in the exercise of their right to self-determination and to create the conditions in which they could freely indicate their political will. In that connection the co-operation with the Special Committee by the Governments of New Zealand, Portugal and the United States was enhancing its capacity to expedite the decolonization process.

61. His delegation called upon the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations to expand their existing assistance programmes in keeping with the needs of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to exercise the greatest possible flexibility with regard to the procedures for granting such assistance. The exploitation of the natural resources of the Territories was a major obstacle to their political independence and must therefore be terminated forthwith.

62. In conclusion, the delegation of Sri Lanka welcomed the recent developments with regard to the settlement of the question of Western Sahara and supported Security Council resolution 658 (1990).

63. Mr. CISTERNAS (Chile) said that since the foundation of the United Nations its greatest achievements had been in decolonization. During that period its membership had increased considerably.

64. For no people was anything more important than the exercise of its right to self-determination. Nothing was as important for the inhabitants of a Territory as the opportunity to determine their own form of government in conditions of freedom and democracy. By the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century the United Nations had succeeded in removing from the agenda many of the questions of decolonization. Only a small number of Non-Self-Governing Territories remained. Neither the size of a Territory, nor its geographical location, nor the number of its inhabitants or scarcity of its natural resources must impede the aspiration of its people to self-determination and independence.

65. The decolonization work of the United Nations was still not complete. In order to carry out its decolonization mission the Organization had established the Special Committee on decolonization. The view had been expressed that the Special Committee's work was an anachronism and ineffective and did not take into account the new circumstances of a contemporary world in which mutual understanding and détente had taken the place of ideology and rivalry. However, as had been repeatedly pointed out, any assertions of anachronism in the Special Committee's work must confront the fact that the world still had Territories under colonial rule, and any talk of ineffectiveness must be viewed in the light of the difficulties which, despite the new climate in the world, still impeded the efforts to ensure that all peoples had the opportunity of freedom and democracy. The work of the Special Committee could not be completed but it must be continued. His delegation stated its readiness to study carefully the Special Committee's working methods in order to try to remove any outdated practices.

(Mr. Cisternas, Chile)

66. However, if the Special Committee was to achieve its ultimate goal, it must be able to count on the co-operation of the administering Powers, which must transmit information about the political, economic and social situation in the Territories under their administration. That obligation of the administering Powers stemmed from the Charter of the United Nations itself. Furthermore, the Special Committee must be given sufficient resources to send missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories with the necessary co-operation by the administering Powers.

67. The growth of mutual understanding in contemporary international relations would have a positive effect on the Special Committee's performance of its decolonization work. The attainment of concrete results in that work required concerted efforts to bring actions and attitudes into line with the new realities and dispel the age-old mistrust.

68. Attention was currently centred on the question of the full and prompt implementation of the Secretary-General's proposals to enable the inhabitants of Western Sahara freely to state their wishes about their future. It should be noted that the proposed referendum, which was to allow the Saharan people to make a choice between definitive unification with Morocco and independence, would represent the first measure of its kind carried through under the auspices and full control of the United Nations.

69. According to the available information, the conditions were basically in place for the referendum to be carried out without hindrance and within a relatively short time-frame. In order for the Secretary-General to be able to complete his report and submit it to the Security Council, it was necessary to clarify a number of important points relating in particular to the strength of the Moroccan forces which were to remain in the Territory during the referendum period and to the status of the police and the settlers in the Territory. Chile had no doubt that the Moroccan Government would resolve those issues in a suitable manner, so that the referendum could be carried out in 1991.

70. Chile believed that the Secretary-General's work on the issue must be supported. Accordingly, it intended to join the sponsors of the draft resolution on the question of Western Sahara (A/C.4/45/L.2). The Chilean delegation considered that the draft resolution should be adopted by consensus.

71. Mr. DIARRA (Mali) recalled that the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 1514 (XV) had been commemorated only a few days earlier. Decolonization was the sphere of activity in which the United Nations had secured its most impressive achievements. However, the decisive factor had been the valiant struggle of the peoples themselves.

72. The adoption of resolution 43/47, in which the General Assembly had proclaimed the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, had reaffirmed the general commitment of States to securing the gradual transition of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination and independence by the end of the century.

(Mr. Diarra, Mali)

73. It was already the established approach that such criteria as size of population or territory and geographical location or level of economic development should be disregarded when evaluating the possibility of a people exercising its right to self-determination and independence. The Charter of the United Nations and several resolutions of the General Assembly directed the administering Powers to fulfil their obligation to prepare the peoples of the Territories to exercise that inalienable right. That obligation also included such requirements as the gradual political transition of the Territories to self-determination, the gradual creation of economic infrastructure to facilitate the transition, and strict observance of the principle of a people's inalienable right to sovereignty over the natural resources of its land. In addition, the administering Powers had to refrain from establishing military bases in the Territories and from using the Territories for military activities directed against other countries. Another important element was the development of the human resources of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The administering Powers were also required to transmit to the United Nations information about developments in the Territories under their administration. They were, moreover, obliged to make it possible for missions to visit the Territories.

74. The apartheid régime was an anachronism which must be eradicated. Although his delegation noted the positive recent developments in South Africa, it still insisted on the maintenance of the sanctions against the apartheid régime until its cornerstones had been dismantled.

75. With regard to the question of Western Sahara, the Mali delegation welcomed the progress in the peace process begun in 1986 in accordance with resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and General Assembly resolution 40/50.

76. The meetings in Geneva in June 1990 and the various technical missions had made it possible to begin the implementation of the peace plan. With the establishment of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) an important step had been taken towards the holding of a referendum on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara without military or administrative constraints and under the control of the United Nations working in conjunction with the Organization of African Unity. His delegation fully supported the joint efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the current Chairman of OAU, and it called upon the parties directly involved to endeavour to achieve a just and definitive settlement of what was a fratricidal conflict.

77. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that Bolivia, Ghana, Mauritania and Chile had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/45/L.6 concerning agenda item 115. He also reported that Egypt, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mali and Peru had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/45/L.5 concerning agenda item 114.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.