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at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KITTIKHOUN (Lao People's Democratic Republic)

CONTENTS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

AGENDA ITEM 19: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

COMPLETION OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

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The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 19: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued) (A/51/23 (Part VI), A/C.4/51/L.11 and A/C.4/51/8)

Report of the Chairman submitted on the basis of consultations on the draft resolution contained in document A/51/23 (Part VI) and the amendments thereto contained in document A/C.4/51/L.11 (A/C.4/51/8)

2. The CHAIRMAN said that, after two months of intensive negotiations, the parties had reached a consensus on the draft resolution on the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn Island, St. Helena, Tokelau, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands, contained in document A/51/23 (Part VI), paragraph 17. He thanked the President of the General Assembly for his assistance and expressed appreciation to the Chairman and members of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the administering Powers, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, for their cooperation, goodwill and hard work. The deliberations had shown that all parties were motivated by a desire to achieve compromise with a view to allowing the United Nations to fulfil its goal of eradicating colonialism by the year 2000. He drew attention to his report (A/C.4/51/8), which contained the amendments to the draft resolution contained in paragraph 17 of document A/51/23 (Part VI). The amendments were the result of agreement and compromise by the Special Committee and administering Powers.

3. The amendments (A/C.4/51/8) and the draft resolution contained in paragraph 17 of document A/51/23 (Part VI), as amended, were adopted without a vote.

4. Mr. SAMANA (Papua New Guinea), speaking as Chairman of the Special Committee, thanked the Chairman for presiding over the consultations. Although fundamental differences persisted, the draft resolution just adopted reflected a spirit of cooperation and goodwill that provided a framework for ongoing dialogue and cooperation between the administering Powers and the Special Committee.

5. The Special Committee’s main concern was to ensure that the situation of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories as colonial Territories was not defined in a way that undermined the rights of their peoples, including their right to determine their external political status. The Special Committee now looked forward to cooperating with the administering Powers in order to address sensitive and critical outstanding issues with a view to establishing a practical approach to implementing the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism within a given time-frame.

6. The next step would be to focus on the constitutional development of each of those Territories so as to enable the United Nations, through its instrumentalities, to implement the decolonization process in cooperation with the administering Powers. The Special Committee hoped that the administering Powers would allow United Nations visiting missions into some of the Territories in response to specific requests from the elected leaders and representatives of those Territories, and that they would allow the United Nations to monitor and assess developments there.

7. Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) thanked the Chairman, the President of the General Assembly and the other administering Power, the United Kingdom, for their efforts and assured the Committee that his delegation would continue to show goodwill during the next phase of the negotiating process.

8. Mr. ARKWRIGHT (United Kingdom) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the Chairman's report without a vote and it welcomed, in particular, the Special Committee's acceptance of the realities prevailing in the Territories concerned and its ability to put behind it the rhetoric of the cold war. He thanked the Chairman for his role in the long and complex negotiations and said that his delegation would approach the next phase of the negotiations with an open mind.

9. Mr. SAMADI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation had participated in the negotiations and that, although it was not completely satisfied with the outcome, it had joined the consensus on the understanding that the administering Powers would cooperate with the Special Committee by formally participating in its work and allowing United Nations visiting missions to review the situations in the Territories.

10. Mr. COHEN (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the agreement reached between the administering Powers and the Special Committee marked a significant step forward in addressing the realities prevailing in the Non-Self-Governing Territories in question. The European Union hoped that that new spirit would guide the work on other draft resolutions and decisions to be considered by the Special Committee in the near future. It welcomed the commitment of the administering Powers concerned and the Special Committee to continuing the informal dialogue and hoped that further positive developments would be forthcoming. He thanked the Chairman, the administering Powers and the Special Committee for their hard work and goodwill.

11. Mr. TAPIA (Chile) said that his delegation had been pleased to join in the consensus and he thanked the Chairman and the Chairman of the Special Committee for their efforts during the long and difficult negotiations.

12. Mr. RIVERO ROSARIO (Cuba) said that his delegation welcomed the adoption of the resolution by consensus and had taken note of the clarifications made during the negotiating process. It reserved the right to make a statement when the plenary session of the Assembly took a final decision on the report of the Fourth Committee.

13. Mr. POWLES (New Zealand) said that although the question of Tokelau, of which New Zealand was administering Power, had been addressed in a separate

resolution in December 1996, his delegation had taken a great interest in the draft resolution just adopted. It had worked with the Special Committee in July 1996 in an effort to find common ground acceptable to all members of the Fourth Committee. The spirit of cooperation and compromise which had prevailed boded well for the deliberations of the Special Committee in 1997. His delegation was convinced that decolonization required a positive commitment not only by the people of the Territories but also by the United Nations and the administering Powers.

14. Ms. CHEN Qinghong (China) thanked the Chairman, the Chairman of the Special Committee and the Secretariat for their assistance, and expressed the hope that the parties concerned would use the draft resolution as a starting point for a genuine process of cooperation in order to meet the target of decolonization by the year 2000. Noting that regional seminars and visiting missions were an important and effective means of ascertaining the wishes of the peoples of the small Territories, she expressed the hope that the administering Powers would show goodwill and cooperation with a view to achieving the target fixed by the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

15. Ms. KHAN-CUMMINGS (Trinidad and Tobago) thanked the Chairman and the Chairman of the Special Committee for their roles in the consultations leading to the adoption of the omnibus resolution on Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific. She expressed the hope that the adoption of the draft resolution would lead to progress in the exercise of the right of self-determination by the peoples of the Territories.

16. Mr. Al-ATTAR (Syrian Arab Republic) thanked the Chairman and the members of the Special Committee for creating a climate of confidence that would facilitate the next stage of negotiations. He expressed the hope that the Committee and the administering Powers would work together with a view to achieving the goals of the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism by the year 2000.

COMPLETION OF THE COMMITTEE’S WORK

17. The CHAIRMAN, after thanking the Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur and the members of the Committee, said that the Committee had concluded the consideration of all items allocated to it for the fifty-first session.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.