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**Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee)****Summary record of the 23rd meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 8 November 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Kemayah, Sr. (Liberia)**Contents**Agenda item 57: Comprehensive review of special political missions (*continued*)Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of
Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under
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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 57: Comprehensive review of special political missions (continued) (A/C.4/73/L.8)

1. **Mr. Mekonnen** (Ethiopia) said that, at a time when global tensions were on the rise, it was incumbent upon the United Nations to use special political missions – an important and flexible tool at the Organization’s disposal – as part of a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace. His delegation hoped that the restructuring of the peace and security pillar would enable special political missions to deliver on their mandates. Addressing institutional fragmentation and ensuring system-wide coherence were essential to ensure that conflict prevention and sustaining peace were at the heart of United Nations activities. Moreover, ensuring that the peace and security pillar worked in concert with the other pillars of the Organization’s work would equip it to better address the root causes of conflict.

2. In the interest of forging a lasting peace and addressing the root causes of conflict, cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations must be enhanced. For its part, the African Union had demonstrated the necessary political will to respond to crises situations and take greater risks to achieve peace, not only sharing the Organization’s burden in so doing but attaining tangible results at a lower cost. The three United Nations regional offices in Africa and the United Nations Office to the African Union were playing a key role in forging closer engagement with the African Union on a range of prevention and mediation efforts. Other encouraging initiatives included the joint consultative meeting between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council and the conclusion of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. **Mr. Al-Hadi** (Iraq) said that special political missions deployed in turbulent contexts around the world had proven their efficacy in reducing tensions and, as such, were among the Organization’s most important political tools for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It was widely agreed that the work of special political missions must not contravene the fundamental United Nations principle of respect for the sovereignty of Member States over their territory. On that basis, his delegation stressed the need for special political missions to respect State sovereignty, territorial integrity and the independence of States in political decision-making, and consult with States in carrying out

the mandate given them by the Security Council. Moreover, special political missions must be given clearly formulated, specific and achievable mandates based on an objective assessment of the realities on the ground. The mission’s thorough coordination and constructive dialogue with the host Government were essential in carrying out its mandate and promoting political stability in the country. It was also necessary to ensure that the mission was adequately funded, to strengthen partnerships between the mission and regional and subregional organizations and to ensure that the principles of equitable geographical distribution and gender equality informed the appointment of the heads of special political missions and special envoys.

4. His Government had hosted and cooperated fully with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) since its establishment in 2003, pursuant to Security Council resolution [1500 \(2003\)](#). The mission had played a major role in supporting the Iraqi political process and had assisted in the drafting of the 2005 Constitution and the organization of parliamentary elections. Iraq welcomed the most recent extension of the mandate of UNAMI by the Security Council and would continue to support the mission’s efforts to promote stability and national reconciliation. Ongoing coordination between UNAMI and the Iraqi Government would be paramount in working to achieve the objectives set out in the mission’s mandate. The critical situation that had engulfed the country in recent years had required UNAMI to lend its support to the Iraqi Government in a joint response to the humanitarian crisis, from providing emergency relief while Iraqi cities were still under fire from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) attacks in 2014 to the recent phase of facilitating the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes.

5. In closing, he expressed appreciation for the laudable efforts of outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNAMI Ján Kubiš and welcomed the appointment of Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert as his successor, a development that highlighted the importance of empowering women at all levels.

6. **Ms. Pereira Sotomayor** (Ecuador) said that the increase in the number of special political missions, the expanded scope of their mandates and the increasingly varied situations in which they were deployed attested to their vital role in peacebuilding, preventing conflict and ascertaining its causes. Her Government endorsed the United Nations presence in Colombia and the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the helm of the United Nations Verification Mission

in Colombia. Ecuador had also lent its support to the restructuring of the peace and security pillar.

7. Her delegation wished to know more about how the mandates and operations of special political missions would be affected by the reforms adopted by the Fifth Committee, namely, the change from a biennial to an annual budget; the newly established Department of Operational Support; the establishment of the new Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the new Department of Peace Operations; and the creation of a single regional political-operational structure. Continued dialogue between the Secretariat and Member States would be needed to promote a more thorough understanding of that new structure and its functions, which would be shared between the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations.

8. The Secretary-General's action in support of gender equality and the empowerment of women as a means of tackling global problems was commendable. In that connection, her delegation welcomed the appointment of Christine Schraner Burgener as the Special Envoy on Myanmar and awaited an update on the progress made towards implementing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender launched in 2017.

9. While the funding of special political missions was a matter of legitimate concern, the Fifth Committee was the appropriate forum in which administrative and budgetary questions should be addressed. The comprehensive approach and flexibility of special political missions should also take into account the impact of a mission deployed in a particular country on the broader region.

10. **Ms. Calderón de Flores** (El Salvador) said that, some twenty-six years after signing a peace agreement, El Salvador had embarked on a new peace dialogue that aimed to include all stakeholders in the country. Although that process was not a special political mission, it offered several constructive lessons. Peacebuilding involved fostering a culture of dialogue and conflict resolution, without which peace agreements were often short-lived. Special political missions needed sufficient political and financial support to enable them to fulfil their peacebuilding and peacekeeping mandates in a manner that ensured respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States. The budget for such missions had increased dramatically in recent years and was distorting the regular budget. A special and separate account should be established for special political missions, with annual budgeting, funding and reporting.

As a troop- and police-contributing country, El Salvador highlighted the need for greater coordination between special political missions and relevant regional and subregional organizations.

11. To improve their functioning, special political missions must have clear, achievable mandates that took account of the situation in the country concerned. The transition from special political mission to peacebuilding required a clear exit strategy that allowed local actors to assume responsibility for sustainable peace and development. Women had an important role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding and should be involved on an egalitarian and effective basis at all levels and stages of peaceful dispute settlement. Accordingly, her Government remained committed to promoting internal policies to foster the participation of women in the various missions.

12. Her delegation called on the Secretary-General to promote mechanisms that would allow countries with positive experiences in peacebuilding to share them with those currently hosting special political missions. El Salvador had progressed through several phases in its process of national reconciliation and stood ready to share its experiences with other countries while welcoming input on how to address the challenges remaining as it sought to build a peaceful, safe society. Her Government firmly supported the work of the special political mission in Colombia and would continue to work for peace and stability in that country.

13. **Ms. Thinn** (Myanmar) said that her Government welcomed the appointment of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar and had already given its consent for the opening of her office in Nay Pyi Taw. It had fully cooperated with the Special Envoy's three visits during 2018, during which it had arranged meetings with relevant authorities and stakeholders and visits to the Rakhine, Shan and Kachin states to understand the situation on the ground. The Special Envoy had held consultations with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, other domestic leaders and international stakeholders. In her end-of-mission statement in October 2018, the Special Envoy had highlighted accountability and inclusive dialogue as the two pillars for national reconciliation in Myanmar and stressed the need for patience and more trust-building. The Government of Myanmar welcomed the statement and fully agreed with it. A lasting peace would be possible only through the establishment of a democratic federal union through political means and the ending of ethnic strife and armed conflicts. Accordingly, the Government of Myanmar was holding ongoing sessions of the 21st-Century Panglong Conference to reach

agreement on the fundamental principles for a democratic federal union. So far, the sessions had adopted 51 fundamental principles that were to be part of a peace accord.

14. Her Government was establishing the necessary conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation of the people who had fled to Bangladesh and had been ready to receive the first group of verified returnees since January 2018, in accordance with bilateral agreements with Bangladesh. Her delegation welcomed the recent statement by the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh that his Government would repatriate the first batch of displaced persons in the near future. Moreover, at the recent meeting of the two countries' joint working group on the repatriation of verified displaced persons, they had exchanged views on the repatriation process, from the starting point of a conducive environment for repatriation through to the verification process and eventual repatriation, resettlement and reintegration, which was to begin in November 2018. Her Government was also reaching out to partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for their assistance regarding Rakhine State, and it appreciated the support provided by other neighbouring including China, India and Japan. At the same time, the Government continued to cooperate with the United Nations and had signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist with the speedy and efficient resettlement and rehabilitation of returnees.

15. The Special Envoy on Myanmar should increase her cooperation with and support to the Government of Myanmar in building peace and national reconciliation. It was also hoped that the ongoing reform and strengthening of the United Nations system would support the Special Envoy in better delivering on her mandates.

16. **Mr. Omer Dahab Fadl Mohamed** (Sudan) said that the mandates of special political missions should prioritize mediation, reconciliation, peacebuilding and sustaining peace and must not neglect the principles of State sovereignty, independence, consent of the parties and national responsibility and ownership of the political process.

17. The September 2018 meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York on the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and development in Darfur was a clear indication of United Nations and African Union backing for the development and recovery process under way in the region and reflected

the shared desire of stakeholders for political solutions based on the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and recognition of the role of United Nations country teams during the rebuilding stage and the voluntary return of displaced persons. The fact that funding had been secured for reconstruction was another African success story achieved by the United Nations and its various sub-entities.

18. The framework agreement between the United Nations and the African Union regarding the peace and security pillar was an inspiration for further work between the United Nations and regional organizations as per Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Implementation of the framework agreement would require follow-through and funding, in particular for special political missions.

19. While his delegation welcomed the increased gender equality of special political missions and the greater participation of women in them, that trend should be matched by a more equitable geographical distribution. Least-represented regions should be given incentives to participate more fully and, if needed, positive discrimination should be introduced to achieve a balance between different regions of the world in special political missions.

20. The Organization's support for peace in Africa had provided a powerful impetus for several positive developments. The factions in South Sudan had signed a peace agreement brokered by the Sudan on behalf of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea and between Djibouti, Somalia and Eritrea were becoming normalized. The peace process in the Central African Republic, which was being mediated by the Sudan, was making progress. As a result, the prospects for peace in the Horn of Africa were bright. His delegation reaffirmed its commitment to supporting special political missions through direct cooperation and through relevant regional and subregional organizations, and reiterated its support for the Secretary-General's initiative to reform the United Nations.

Draft resolution A/C.4/73/L.8: Comprehensive review of special political missions

21. **The Chair** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

22. **Ms. Sharma** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Romania,

Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Turkey and the United Kingdom had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

23. *Draft resolution A/C.4/73/L.8 was adopted.*

Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (continued) (A/C.4/73/L.5)

24. **The Chair** said that he had received a request from the delegation of Cuba to further postpone action on the draft resolution on the question of Guam and the draft amendment thereto, contained in document A/C.4/73/L.11, and a request from the delegation of the Russian Federation to postpone action on the draft resolution on the question of French Polynesia.

25. **Mr. Lederman** (United States of America) said that his delegation respected the request to delay action on the draft resolution on the question of Guam and sought to be as constructive as possible. Its intention was not to drastically alter the text but rather to introduce minimal edits in order to clarify certain legal issues that constituted red lines for his Government. The edits in question would enable his delegation to join consensus on the draft resolution. The United States welcomed engagement with the governing authorities of Guam and hoped that delegations would endorse the amendment it had proposed.

26. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to further postpone action on the texts to a later stage of the Committee's session.

27. *It was so decided.*

28. **Mr. Aleksaev** (Russian Federation) said that while his delegation valued the constructive approach taken by the United States delegation in respect of the draft resolution on the question of Guam, it was important to recall why action on the draft resolution had been delayed. It was no secret that draft resolutions on decolonization were first negotiated in the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee on decolonization), where administering Powers had an opportunity to participate directly in the discussions and express their views before a decision was taken. His delegation always listened to the positions of the administering Powers and endeavoured, as far as possible, to take them into account in the decision-making process. Unfortunately, that approach had not been taken in the case of Guam; instead, the Special Committee had reached a consensus on the issue and the draft text, only to learn that a single

delegation subsequently disagreed with that consensus and was proposing that questions be addressed to the drafters. The Special Committee would take issue with the proposed amendments to the draft resolution, as the amendments might upset the consensus that had been reached. Ultimately, it would be more constructive to pursue cooperation more proactively before consensus was reached – as was routinely done on most issues raised in the Committee – thereby preventing action on draft resolutions from being delayed. The draft resolution on Guam should not be an exception to the practice of adopting resolutions and decisions by consensus.

Draft decision A/C.4/73/L.5: Question of Gibraltar

29. **The Chair** said that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

30. *Draft decision A/C.4/73/L.5 was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.