



## General Assembly

Distr.  
GENERAL

A/AC.109/2000/SR.5  
5 February 2001  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

---

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF  
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 5 July 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. TANOH-BOUTCHOUÉ (Côte d'Ivoire)  
(Vice-Chairman)

CONTENTS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

QUESTION OF GIBRALTAR

QUESTION OF THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON DECOLONIZATION

QUESTION OF INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER  
ARTICLE 73 (e) OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

QUESTION OF SENDING VISITING MISSIONS TO TERRITORIES

OTHER MATTERS

---

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

In the absence of Mr. Donigi (Papua New Guinea), Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué (Côte d'Ivoire), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

2. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, at its organizational meeting on 18 February, the Special Committee had decided to take up, among others, the questions of Gibraltar, Western Sahara and East Timor at its meetings from 5 to 10 July 2000. In that connection he drew the attention of the Committee to the requests for hearings relating to the questions of Gibraltar, East Timor, New Caledonia, the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), St. Helena and Western Sahara, which were contained in the relevant aide-mémoire. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant those requests.

3. It was so decided.

QUESTION OF GIBRALTAR (A/AC.109/2000/10)

4. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the delegation of Spain had expressed the wish to participate in the Committee's consideration of that question. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant that request.

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Cortés (Spain) took a place at the table.

6. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Committee to the working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2000/10). He further informed the Committee that he had received a communication from the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Mr. Caruana, asking to be allowed to address the Committee on the question of Gibraltar. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant that request, in accordance with the established procedure.

7. It was so decided.

8. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Caruana (Chief Minister of Gibraltar) took a place at the table.

9. Mr. CARUANA (Chief Minister of Gibraltar) said that the inhabitants of Gibraltar, as the people of a colonial Territory, had an inalienable right to self-determination. Spain however considered that Gibraltarians were not a colonial people but rather, as the representative of Spain had stated in the Fourth Committee at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the descendants of colonizers. In fact, Gibraltarians were the descendants of people from various parts of Europe who, since 1704, had come to live in the colony, just as the settlers in the United States of America, Canada, Australia,

/...

New Zealand, South America and the Caribbean countries had done. All of those settlers had, nevertheless, exercised their right to self-determination. There was no alternative to the principle of self-determination. That had been recognized by the participants in the Special Committee's regional seminars, by the Special Committee itself and by the Fourth Committee. Spain however asserted that Gibraltar must be decolonized on the basis of the so-called principle of "territorial integrity". No such principle was recognized as a norm of international law in the context of decolonization. That view had been confirmed by the decision of the International Court of Justice in the Western Sahara case that the main basis for decolonization was the freely expressed will of the people.

10. Spain asserted that there was a special doctrine in the United Nations pertaining to colonies that it defined as "territorial enclaves". Gibraltarians considered that there was no such doctrine, either in the United Nations or in international law. The only principle of decolonization applicable to all colonial Territories was the principle of self-determination. Spain believed that the application of the principle of self-determination to the decolonization of Gibraltar and its people would violate its territorial integrity. However, the violation of territorial integrity was not the result of the exercise of the right to self-determination. The principle of territorial integrity applied only to the secession of territories from a Member State, which could not be justified by the principle of self-determination. That was not the case of Gibraltar or any other colony.

11. Spain asserted that Gibraltarians did not have the right to self-determination by virtue of a provision of the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713. In addition, the administering Power itself, the United Kingdom, which had previously stated that that Treaty did not affect that right, now maintained that Gibraltarians did in fact have the right to self-determination, but that it was curtailed by the Treaty of Utrecht. The people of Gibraltar believed that, however the aforementioned Treaty was interpreted, nothing could deprive it of the right to self-determination, which was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and consistent with modern international legal principles.

12. In the light of those contradictions, the Fourth Committee should request the International Court of Justice to clarify whether the principle of self-determination by the people of Gibraltar applied to the decolonization of that Territory and, if so, whether that right was in any way curtailed or affected by the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 and, if it was affected, in what way. He noted that the Parliament of Gibraltar had unanimously adopted a resolution to that effect.

13. The contention surrounding Gibraltar was not limited to the legal and political aspects. It extended to the facts of the problem too. As the Special Committee had already been informed, Gibraltar had a vibrant, self-sufficient economy based on tourism. The Territory was also one of the most strictly regulated offshore financial centres in the world, which operated in full compliance with European Union (EU) standards and international standards and requirements. Gibraltar had its own Parliament, which passed laws, and a ministerial system that exercised self-government in all spheres of political life and functioned as the executive power in all areas, with the exception of foreign relations, defence and internal security, which remained within the

/...

jurisdiction of the administering Power. It also had its own police force and judicial system and its own civil service. That demonstrated that the Territory was substantially self-governing. Yet Spain systematically painted a very different and entirely false picture of life in Gibraltar, pointing to the Territory's lack of natural resources and agricultural land, its economy's inability to function without the benefits and privileges that it enjoyed within the EU and its dependency on Spain. Gibraltarians were able to refute such propagandistic statements, which bore no resemblance to reality, but they found themselves at a disadvantage because of the limited nature of their resources and of their diplomatic and political influence.

14. Gibraltar was implementing and complied with every international convention and standard relating to the international fight against trafficking in narcotic drugs and the laundering of the proceeds of all kinds of crime. It should be noted in that connection that Gibraltar had been among the initiators of and advisers on the United Nations Offshore Forum, which had been launched to prevent drug trafficking and money-laundering, and adhered to all the criteria established by the Forum. In addition, unlike Spain, it complied with all the applicable EU requirements on the regulation of the financial system. As was widely known, the Financial Action Task Force established by the Group of Seven under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had conducted an investigation in 47 financial centres in order to ascertain which centres were cooperating in international efforts to combat the laundering of the proceeds of drug sales and organized and serious crimes. According to the Task Force's report, Gibraltar was among the centres that were cooperating in those efforts. Nevertheless, Spanish State-owned television had reported that Gibraltar had been among the 15 non-cooperative countries identified by the Task Force. That information had been posted on an Internet Web site for the sole purpose of blackening Gibraltar's reputation.

15. No visitor to Gibraltar could conclude that its inhabitants were not a distinct people. The people of Gibraltar had originally come from various Mediterranean countries and from the United Kingdom, and its ethnic mix resembled the historical and contemporary make-up of many States Members of the United Nations, while the influence of the most diverse cultures was in evidence. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of the Territory were a distinct and unique people most accurately described as "Gibraltarians".

16. Spain, for its part, maintained that, even though Gibraltar was a colony of the United Kingdom, its inhabitants were not a colonial people because they were the descendants of colonizers and of people brought to the colony by them. Consequently, Gibraltarians did not have the right to self-determination. The members of the Special Committee should not take the assertions of Spain or Gibraltar on trust. They should simply visit Gibraltar in order to acquaint themselves on the spot with its economic, political, social and cultural realities and to assess whether the inhabitants of the Territory were a distinct people enjoying the right to decolonization through self-determination.

17. As stated in paragraph 64 of the working paper on the question of Gibraltar (A/AC.109/2000/10), the Territory was not afraid of a dialogue with Spain and was seeking to develop fruitful relations with it. However, any dialogue must be founded on the principle of granting the people of Gibraltar the opportunity to express their views through their elected leaders and Government. Therefore,

/...

the resolution recommended year after year for adoption by the Fourth Committee, which called for a bilateral dialogue between the administering Power, the United Kingdom, and the third party laying claim to Gibraltar, Spain, was completely pointless. Spain was proceeding from the premise that it was not a question of decolonization, but rather a bilateral sovereignty dispute between the United Kingdom and Spain, in which the people of Gibraltar had no say. In that connection he reiterated his request to the Special Committee to include in its annual recommendation a call for the development of a constructive dialogue with the participation of representatives of the people of Gibraltar.

18. On 7 October 1999, the representative of Spain had again stated that the so-called "Matutes proposals", which provided for the exercise of joint sovereignty over the Territory with its subsequent integration into Spain, were not a final offer, but rather a starting point for negotiations. Spain had said that the people, Parliament and Government of Gibraltar had hastily rejected those proposals, without affording them due consideration. That statement did not reflect reality. The people of Gibraltar had almost unanimously rejected the idea of transferring sovereignty over Gibraltar to Spain after a period of joint sovereignty. The Parliament of Gibraltar had unanimously adopted a resolution to that effect, and Gibraltarians were now awaiting the formal rejection of those proposals by the United Kingdom, in keeping with its commitment to take into account the will of the people of Gibraltar. The rejection of the Matutes proposals in no way meant that the Government of Gibraltar did not wish to participate in a constructive dialogue on the future of the Territory.

19. Turning to the issue of the removal of the Territory from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, he said that the Government of Gibraltar supported the development of modern and realistic criteria in that area. Those criteria must, however, provide for practical measures for the attainment of self-determination, namely, the holding of referendums in which the people of the Territories concerned could choose the option of decolonization. It appeared that Spain was lobbying the Special Committee for the delisting of Gibraltar without the granting of its people's right to self-determination, since it believed that it was not a question of decolonization, which fell within the Committee's competence, but rather a territorial sovereignty dispute. It was difficult to believe that the Committee could even contemplate such a possibility, since its actions would be seen by the people of Gibraltar as a betrayal of its interests by the very Organization to which it had entrusted its fate. If the Special Committee had the least doubt about the political and legal rights of Gibraltarians, it should recommend that the Fourth Committee refer the issue to the International Court of Justice.

20. Regarding Gibraltar's difficulties in asserting its rights in the context of the EU because of Spain's refusal to recognize the competence of the Territory's authorities in respect of relations with that organization, he noted with satisfaction that the Government of Gibraltar had succeeded in reaching agreements enabling those difficulties to be overcome. In accordance with those agreements, Gibraltar's own constitutional competent authorities would be designated in EU legal instruments as competent to implement those instruments in Gibraltar, and their actions and decisions would be recognized by all members of the EU, which would further the development of constitutional and jurisdictional autonomy and independence, both in decision-making on domestic

/...

issues and in the conduct of EU business. However, since Gibraltar was not a separate and full member of the Union, it had been agreed that the Government of the United Kingdom would act as an intermediary in contacts between Gibraltar's competent authorities and the competent authorities of other States members of the EU. Agreements had also been reached on recognition by all EU member States of identity cards issued by Gibraltar's administrative authorities and on cooperation between Gibraltar's police force and the Spanish police force. The aforementioned agreements did not deal with financial issues.

21. In February 1999, the European Court of Human Rights had ruled that the United Kingdom had violated the European Convention on Human Rights because of its failure to make arrangements for Gibraltar's participation in elections of members of the European Parliament. The United Kingdom had undertaken to rectify the situation, but Spain had objected. Given that ruling by the European Court, there was nothing to prevent Gibraltar from participating in the next elections to the European Parliament, which were scheduled for 2004.

22. He expressed support for the Special Committee's intention to formulate an updated plan of action for the eradication of colonialism and to develop by the end of the year a programme of work for each Non-Self-Governing Territory. In that connection he urged the Special Committee, when it developed the programme of work for Gibraltar, to include the following four elements: (a) dispatch of a visiting mission to Gibraltar; (b) formal recognition by the Special Committee of the inalienable right of the people of Gibraltar to self-determination; (c) a recommendation, should the members of the Special Committee have the least doubt on that point, for the referral of the issue of the right of Gibraltarians to self-determination to the International Court of Justice; and (d) a call by the United Nations for the development of a dialogue with the full and equal participation of the people of Gibraltar.

23. Mr. Caruana withdrew.

24. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Bossano (Office of the Leader of the Opposition) took a place at the petitioners' table.

25. Mr. BOSSANO (Office of the Leader of the Opposition) said that a Select Committee of the House of Assembly of Gibraltar had been established to develop a consensus constitutional proposal providing for a form of decolonization that would be fully acceptable, both to the people of Gibraltar and to the Special Committee, as a legitimate act of decolonization through self-determination, and that would be much closer to the concept of free association. He was participating in the work of the Select Committee, along with the leader of the Liberal Party, Dr. García, and they would not support any constitutional reform that did not produce a change in the international status of Gibraltar as a Non-Self-Governing Territory and its removal from the list of such Territories. They had already expressed their comments on the constitution and proposed that the United Nations should be sent a formal invitation to participate in the negotiating process between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom on the issue of decolonization so that the Special Committee could be satisfied with the eventual constitutional proposals and Gibraltar could be removed from the aforementioned list.

26. Mr. Caruana had stated the previous year that the decolonization of Gibraltar was possible only through the recognition and exercise of the right of the Territory's people to self-determination, which was a bilateral matter between the colonized people and the colonial Power. The Socialist and Liberal Parties subscribed to that view, but considered that it required them to reject the Brussels negotiating process. While not rejecting the Brussels process, Mr. Caruana had told the Special Committee that the consensus resolution was ambiguous in principle and pointless in practice, and that the people of Gibraltar did not want the issue of decolonization to be negotiated between the United Kingdom and Spain. However, at the previous year's seminar in Saint Lucia, the Special Committee had been recommended to encourage negotiations between the United Kingdom and Spain, in the context of the Brussels process, aimed at achieving the settlement of the problem of Gibraltar in accordance with the relevant decisions of the United Nations. He rejected that recommendation, observing that that viewpoint did not enjoy support in Gibraltar. In that connection he called on the Special Committee to reject that recommendation and to do the opposite, namely, to recommend that the Fourth Committee should not adopt that year the usual consensus decision. The termination of the practice of adopting such decisions and the termination of the Brussels negotiating process amounted to one and the same thing.

27. Another obstacle to the decolonization of Gibraltar was the Treaty of Utrecht. The United Kingdom contended that the Treaty limited the right of Gibraltarians to self-determination, but Gibraltarians themselves had always unanimously rejected that view. He had repeatedly requested that that issue should be referred to the International Court of Justice for an opinion, and that request had been endorsed by the House of Assembly of Gibraltar. While focusing on that issue might serve only to undermine relations with Spain, he believed that it raised an important question of principle and he called on the Special Committee to support the request of the House of Assembly for the referral of that issue to the International Court of Justice.

28. At the most recent meeting in the context of the Brussels process, in December 1997, the United Kingdom had not replied to Spain's proposal for the decolonization of Gibraltar. Mr. Caruana had informed the Fourth Committee the previous year that the Matutes proposals were wholly unacceptable to the people of Gibraltar, yet that very week the new Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain had been discussing those proposals with Mr. Cook in London. He called on the Special Committee to request the United Kingdom to reply to those proposals, and it was to be hoped that they would be rejected.

29. In 1995, he had drawn the attention of the Special Committee to the Spanish Government's strategy of refusing to recognize valid documents issued by the Government of Gibraltar so as to deny Gibraltar's separate identity from the United Kingdom. One example of that strategy was the reformulation of the identity cards issued to Gibraltarians.

30. Another issue that the Committee should address was the dispatch to Gibraltar of a visiting mission. He had already received assurances from the United Kingdom authorities that they had no objection to such a visit, and he considered that the Special Committee should take advantage of that opportunity and request the United Kingdom to authorize the sending of such a visiting mission.

31. Clearly, there were some differences on specific issues between the Government and the opposition, as illustrated by the text of the leaflet attached to his statement, which had been issued during the 1996 election campaign. It suggested that he drew inspiration from the life and work of the great Mahatma Gandhi. He did so because few of the British colonies had achieved self-determination by considering the colonial Power as their best friend who was not to be antagonized under any circumstances.

32. Lastly, he noted that he had criticized the colonial Power for its failure to heed the interests of colonies and their populations, but, for the sake of even-handedness, it had to be said that the Committee itself had been equally indifferent to the aspirations of Gibraltarians. The Special Committee had been discussing the question of Gibraltar for more than 30 years without success. He believed that the time had come to listen to the aspirations of the people of Gibraltar and to follow up at least some of the proposals contained in the annex to his statement.

33. Mr. Bossano withdrew.

34. Ms. CORTÉS (Spain) said that Spain believed that the work of the Special Committee had been and continued to be crucial for the eradication of colonialism, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). However, her Government was deeply frustrated that today, at the end of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, colonial Territories including Gibraltar, continued to exist in the world.

35. Her delegation was appearing once again before the Special Committee to reaffirm its position in the dispute over Gibraltar, to recall the United Nations doctrine on the issue and to call again on the Special Committee to provide assistance in reestablishing Spain's territorial integrity.

36. As the members of the Special Committee were aware, the root of the problem of Gibraltar lay in the dispute between the United Kingdom and Spain concerning sovereignty over that Territory, which was for them alone to resolve. Thus, the General Assembly year after year had invited the Governments of the two countries to resume bilateral negotiations with a view to ending that colonial situation. Since the very beginning of the Brussels negotiating process in 1984, Spain had been generously and constructively disposed. The same could not be said of the United Kingdom, which continued to refuse to begin a dialogue on the future of the Territory and sought to perpetuate its status as a colony.

37. The position of the Spanish Government on the question of Gibraltar remained unchanged. First, Gibraltar was a colonial Territory, which was to be decolonized. Second, that process must take place with respect for the national unity and territorial integrity of Spain, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV), 2353 (XXII) and 2625 (XXV). Third, Spanish sovereignty over Gibraltar must be restored: that meant both the Rock, which had been ceded to the United Kingdom under the Treaty of Utrecht, and the isthmus, which was being illegally occupied.

38. The Government of Spain was ready to pursue its cooperation with the Special Committee with a view to ridding the world of colonialism, and it hoped that that work would be based on compliance with the resolutions and decisions

/...



of the General Assembly. Her delegation reserved the right to revert to some of the statements made at the meeting by Mr. Caruana and Mr. Bossano. Regarding the assertions by Mr. Caruana, she referred the members of the Committee to the full text of the report of the Special Committee and to the working paper prepared that year by the Secretariat.

39. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, taking into account the developments, the Committee should continue its consideration of the question of Gibraltar at its next session, subject to any directives that the General Assembly might give at its fifty-fifth session, and that it should transmit to the Assembly all relevant documentation.

40. It was so decided.

41. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of the item.

#### QUESTION OF THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION ON DECOLONIZATION

42. Ms. MARKHAM (Department of Public Information) briefly informed the Committee of the content of the report of the Department on dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from June 1999 to May 2000 (A/AC.109/2000/19).

43. Ms. MALDONADO (Department of Political Affairs) said that the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) had continued to work in close cooperation during the reporting period with the Palestine and Decolonization Section of the Department of Public Information (DPI). The work of DPA, in the framework of that cooperation, had consisted in providing substantive information on decolonization and on the activities of the Special Committee. In addition, the Decolonization Unit routinely responded to queries from Member States, representatives of the Territories, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations and individuals, providing them with information ranging from the history of decolonization in the United Nations to specific decisions on the Territories taken by the General Assembly.

44. Earlier that year, the Special Committee had been briefed on the creation of a Web site on decolonization. Since then, both Departments had sought to keep the site up-to-date and had decided on the material to be posted on it. There had been a special focus on information that might be of direct and immediate interest to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Representatives of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories had indicated in the past that information on the activities of the United Nations in the field of decolonization was not widely publicized; the Internet Web site on decolonization could make a significant contribution to filling that information gap.

45. The regional seminar held in Majuro, Marshall Islands, in May 2000, had given DPA the opportunity to strengthen and expand its contacts with individuals and non-governmental organizations concerned with decolonization in the Pacific region. The Department's officials had also been able to provide them with new information on the work of the Special Committee and to disseminate the Special Committee's documentation on the programme of work for the Non-Self-Governing

/...

Territories. The participants in the seminar had particularly appreciated the paper presented by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the role of the Committee. Although DPI had not been able to send a press officer to cover the work of the seminar, press releases had been issued both before and after the seminar giving background information on the organization of the seminar and its outcome. DPA would continue to cooperate closely with DPI with a view to ensuring appropriate coverage of such important events as the end of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which would be celebrated in 2000.

46. Mr. MEKDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed gratitude to DPI and DPA for drawing attention to the work of the Special Committee and for their unfailing support of that work. He hoped that both Departments would continue their efforts to that end. Noting that no representative of DPI had been present at the seminars in the Marshall Islands and Saint Lucia, he expressed the wish that, in future, the Department would send its representatives to cover such events.

47. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Special Committee to draft resolution A/AC.109/2000/L.4, submitted by the Chairman, and suggested that it should be adopted without a vote.

48. It was so decided.

49. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of the item.

#### QUESTION OF INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 (e) OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

50. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Special Committee to document A/55/77, which contained information submitted by administering Powers under Article 73 (e) of the Charter of the United Nations. The Special Committee appreciated receiving such information, which would enable it to consider the situation in the Territories in more depth.

51. He drew the attention of the Special Committee to draft resolution A/AC.109/2000/L.5, submitted by the Chairman, and suggested that it should be adopted without a vote.

52. It was so decided.

53. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of the item.

#### QUESTION OF SENDING VISITING MISSIONS TO TERRITORIES

54. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the Special Committee to draft resolution A/AC.109/2000/L.6, submitted by the Chairman, and suggested that it should be adopted without a vote.

55. It was so decided.

56. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of that item.

#### OTHER MATTERS

57. Mr. OVIA (Papua New Guinea) said that the Special Committee was entrusted with the arduous task of eradicating colonialism. Over the past 50 years, the situation had changed significantly, as demonstrated by the increase in the membership of the United Nations from between 30 and 40 to 188 Member States. However, progress had slowed somewhat over the past decade, when the Committee had taken up the issue of small Non-Self-Governing Territories, which many, if not everybody, in the United Nations had thought would be easier to settle.

58. Papua New Guinea would continue to make its contribution to the implementation of the mandate of the Special Committee for as long as was necessary. His delegation was disappointed that little progress had been made over the past decade in implementing the current mandate in respect of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories and that 1999 had been marked by bloodshed and violence in one Non-Self-Governing Territory.

59. He noted that the Administration of East Timor had concluded agreements with Australian companies on the exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of the maritime areas of East Timor, and requested the Administration to submit appropriate reports on the benefits of those arrangements, in the interests of transparency, accountability and good governance.

60. Noting the progress made towards resolving the differences between the administering Powers and the Special Committee, he expressed the hope that such constructive cooperation would continue and that the Special Committee, with the consent of the administering Powers, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, could move swiftly towards the adoption of a programme of work for the eventual decolonization of each of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories on a case-by-case basis. Work had already begun in American Samoa and Pitcairn and, before that, in New Caledonia, Tokelau, East Timor and Western Sahara.

61. The official position of the Government of Papua New Guinea was that, while no distinction should be made between the remaining Territories, the programmes of work, which were being developed on a universal basis, should be refined and implemented on a case by-case basis, taking into account the specific circumstances of the Territory concerned. His Government considered that it was necessary, in developing the programmes of work for each Non-Self-Governing Territory, to apply the principle of complementarity, and it supported the adoption at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly of a decision on the declaration of a second decade for the eradication of colonialism, with a view to decolonizing the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. Papua New Guinea supported the decision of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement calling for the declaration of a new decade for the eradication of colonialism.

62. Mr. DAUSA CESPEDES (Cuba) said that, despite the undeniable successes achieved, the results of the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted in General Assembly resolution 46/181, in the context of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, were not satisfactory.

/...

63. Sometimes, attempts were made to justify the limited successes achieved in recent years by referring to the dimensions of the majority of the Territories under colonial rule, the size of their populations and their vulnerability to the impact of geographical and environmental factors. Cuba could not concur with those unacceptable and discriminatory arguments. All sides must respect the inalienable right to self-determination and independence of the peoples under colonial rule, irrespective of the dimensions of the Territory, its geographical location, the size of its population and its reserves of natural resources.

64. With regard to the Special Committee's efforts to enlist the cooperation of the administering Powers, he noted a number of negative factors. Some administering Powers continued to refuse outright to maintain formal and serious relations with the Special Committee and did their utmost to obstruct its work. It was difficult to recall the last time a visiting mission had been dispatched to a Non-Self-Governing Territory, despite the fact that such missions were an ideal way of obtaining first-hand information on the economic, political and social situation in the Territories. Some administering Powers still did not submit in a timely fashion proper information on the Territories under their control, as was unequivocally required in Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations. Some administering Powers continued to carry out military activities in the Territories under their rule to the detriment of the rights and interests of the affected peoples. Some administering Powers persisted in exploiting irrationally the natural resources of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, which was a blatant violation of the letter and spirit of General Assembly resolution 2621 (XXV).

65. Cuba strongly supported the declaration, at the end of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, of a second decade in order to demonstrate to the international community the prime importance that the United Nations attached to activities in the field of decolonization.

66. For many years, Cuba had been raising the issue of Puerto Rico in the Special Committee with the support of other delegations. As a result, a series of resolutions had been adopted recognizing the inalienable right of that country to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

67. Cuba wished to reiterate its commitment to achieving the independence and self-determination of the brotherly people of Puerto Rico, which, despite more than 100 years under the yoke of colonialism, had not lost its distinctive identity as a country of Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2000, his delegation would again submit a draft resolution on that brotherly country; additional consultations on that subject were taking place with the members of the Special Committee, and Cuba hoped to receive the traditional cooperation and support when that question was considered.

68. His delegation wished to express satisfaction at the success achieved in the process of decolonizing New Caledonia and Tokelau, and hoped that that process would continue and that the interests and opinions of all the concerned parties would be taken into account; also, Cuba took note of the cooperation of France and New Zealand, the administering Powers.

69. He noted with satisfaction that the people of East Timor had exercised their right to self-determination through the holding of a popular referendum.

70. Cuba was following the developments in Western Sahara with great interest, and it was to be hoped that the agreements reached by the interested parties could be put into practice.

71. Cuba wished to reiterate its full support for the lawful right of Argentina in the dispute concerning sovereignty over the Malvinas. Cuba considered that only dialogue and cooperation between the sides would secure a durable, peaceful and just settlement.

72. It was necessary to respect the genuine rights and interests of the people of Guam. Cuba urged the administering Power to cooperate and to comply with the relevant resolutions adopted by the Special Committee and the General Assembly.

73. Decolonization was and would remain one of the main elements of Cuba's foreign policy. It would continue to cooperate with the Special Committee in all areas until such time as the mandate entrusted to the Committee by the General Assembly 39 years earlier with the adoption of resolution 1654 (XVI) was implemented in full and without exceptions.

74. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in accordance with established practice, the Committee should authorize the Rapporteur to make the necessary editorial changes to the draft resolutions and decisions of the Committee, following their adoption, with a view to the submission of reports to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

75. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.