



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/C.4/316
15 November 1955
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Tenth session
FOURTH COMMITTEE
Agenda item 30

QUESTION OF SOUTH WEST AFRICA

Letter dated 8 November 1955 from the Director of the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union to the Under-Secretary for Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with the decision of the Fourth Committee taken at its 510th meeting on 15 November 1955, the following letter is circulated for the information of members of the Committee.

Berne, 8 November 1955

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of the telegram you sent me on 8 November 1955 concerning the listing of the Territory of South West Africa, and, in reply, to inform you as follows:

As you will observe from the introduction to our Bulletin 19 of 1954, to which you refer, the change made in the listing of the Territory of South West Africa was due to a communication transmitted to us by the Postal Administration of the Union of South Africa.

In this connexion, it is the rule in the Postal Union that every member country itself specifies the name under which it or its dependent territories are to appear in the various documents which we publish, provided that the name chosen is not at variance with decisions taken at a Congress of the Union.

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In the case of the Territory of South West Africa, the International Bureau complied with this practice, first, because the new listing requested by the South African Postal Administration was not at variance with a decision taken by an organ of the Universal Postal Union, and, secondly, because this new listing, which does not specify the legal bond in virtue of which South Africa administers the said Territory, is such as to cover all cases of Non-Self-Governing Territories, whether Trust, Mandated or other.

In this connexion I venture to point out to you that, in response to a proposal made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Brussels Congress in 1952, and referred to the Executive and Liaison Committee for study, that Committee decided at its session of May 1955, at which the United Nations was represented by an Observer, to submit to the Universal Postal Congress to be held at Ottawa in 1957 proposals to amend the titles of articles 4 and 5 and the text of article 5 of the Universal Postal Convention of Brussels in such a manner as to incorporate therein a terminology more in keeping than the existing titles and text with the terminology used in the Charter and the principal organs of the United Nations.

Under the terminology proposed by the Executive and Liaison Committee, the terms "colonies, protectorates, territories under suzerainty, mandate, or trusteeship" would be replaced by the general expression "Territories whose international relations are assured by a member country", this expression being based on the suggestions made to the Universal Postal Union by the United Nations.

Having regard to the foregoing considerations, I venture to believe that you will agree with me that no error has occurred in the form in which we refer to the Territory of South West Africa in this Union's publications, and that, accordingly, no correction is needed.

(Signed) (illegible)

The Director
