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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Fourth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE EIGHTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 1 September 1953, at 11.20 a.m.

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PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. LOOMES	Australia
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mrs. MENON	India
	Mr. PETHERBRIDGE	Australia
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. FRAZAO	Brazil
	Mr. LIU	China
	Miss GARCIA-SIERRA	Cuba
	Mr. SVEISTRUP)	Denmark
	Mr. DONS-MOELLER)	
	Mr. TRUJILLO)	Ecuador
	Mr. BENITES-VINUEZA)	
	Mr. PIGNON	France
	Miss RUSAD	Indonesia
	Mr. KADRY	Iraq
	Mr. SPITS	Netherland
	Mr. SCOTT	New Zealand
	Mr. PIRACHA	Pakistan
	Mr. MATHIESON)	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. WARD)	
	Mr. SEARS)	United States of America
	Mr. FERNOS-ISERN)	

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mr. GAVIN	International Labour Organisation (ILO)
Miss BAÑOS	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Mr. DESTOMBES	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Mrs. MEAGHER	World Health Organization (WHO)

<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. HOO	Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self- Governing Territories
	Mr. BENSON	Secretary of the Committee

CESSATION OF THE TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION: COMMUNICATION FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA CONCERNING PUERTO RICO (A/AC.35/L.121, L.147) (continued)

Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand) said, in introducing his draft resolution (A/AC.35/L.147), that it represented an attempt to reconcile the divergent views expressed at the preceding meeting. It was entirely straightforward, merely recording the facts and taking note of the communications and documentation transmitted by the United States Government, and he hoped that it would help the Committee to expedite its work.

Mr. PIRACHA (Pakistan) said that he would have preferred a resolution along the lines of the text adopted by the Committee at its 1951 session in respect of the Netherlands Antilles and Surinam, but would find no difficulty in voting for the New Zealand draft resolution. The General Assembly would in any case have full opportunity to consider and discuss the matter, which was on the agenda of the forthcoming session. It should, however, be stated in the Committee's report that the Committee was transmitting the communications and documentation in question to the General Assembly without comment, for such action as might be necessary.

Mr. SPITS (Netherlands) observed that in 1946 the United States Government had of its own free will decided to transmit information on Puerto Rico under Article 73 e, thereby classifying it as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. In its resolution 66 (I), the General Assembly had taken note of that decision, but had done nothing to see whether it was justified. In resolution 222 (III), the General Assembly had requested Members to communicate to the Secretary-General information regarding changes in the constitutional status of Non-Self-Governing Territories, owing to which the Government concerned had thought it unnecessary to transmit information regarding such Territories under Article 73 e. The request was obviously for information purposes only, and the United States Government had fully complied with it. The statement by the United States Government that it would cease to transmit information on Puerto Rico because of a change in

Puerto Rico's constitutional position should settle the matter. As the Committee was not competent to do more than recommend to the General Assembly that it should adopt a resolution taking note of the communications and documentation submitted by the United States Government, his delegation wholeheartedly supported the New Zealand draft resolution.

Mr. FRAZAO (Brazil) regretted that he would be unable to vote for the New Zealand draft resolution. His delegation had defended and would continue to defend the position that the Committee was entirely competent to examine the substance of the question before it, and to decide, after a careful weighing of the facts, whether or not cessation of the transmission of information was justified in any particular case. In the case of Puerto Rico, after studying the information submitted, the Committee would, no doubt, be able to endorse and approve such cessation. But the Committee should not without thorough study recommend to the General Assembly merely to take note of the cessation and thereby to surrender powers conferred upon it by the Charter. The decision of any Administering Power to cease transmitting information on any Non-Self-Governing Territory would become valid only if the General Assembly found that the Territory in question had indeed attained the degree of self-government envisaged in Chapter XI of the Charter.

Mrs. MENON (India) was in full agreement with the Brazilian representative. She had assumed that, since the item was on the Committee's agenda, the Committee regarded itself as fully competent to examine the documentation submitted by the United States Government and to decide whether that Government was entitled to cease transmitting information on Puerto Rico under Article 73 e. There had, however, been no such examination by the Committee as whole. Only the delegations of Brazil, Ecuador and India had commented on whether the present constitutional status of Puerto Rico was in conformity with the ideals enunciated in Article 73 of the Charter. She therefore felt that it was improper for the Committee to consider the New Zealand draft resolution until there had been a full discussion of the item under consideration.

Mr. FRAZAO (Brazil) said that after consultation with other delegations his delegation might wish to submit amendments to the New Zealand draft resolution. He therefore proposed that the debate should be adjourned until the next meeting.

It was so decided.

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: REPORTS SUBMITTED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES:

(e) The financing of education (A/AC.35/L.122 and Add.1); (f) Use of indigenous languages in education (A/AC.35/L.137); (g) Community development and the general co-ordination of educational and social policy (A/AC.35/L.131) (concluded)

The CHAIRMAN stated that representatives were free to comment on any or all of the three sub-items, the discussion of which had not yet been completed.

Mr. BENITES-VINUEZA (Ecuador) said that he was pleased with the admirable documentation prepared by the Secretariat.

His delegation approached the subject of education in the Non-Self-Governing Territories in an objective and practical spirit, and with deep sympathy for peoples which, unlike its own, had not yet attained independence. Education was, of course, the road to that goal. He therefore noted with satisfaction that on the whole the Administering Powers were carrying out the moral obligation to make general and vocational education available to the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Many of the complex problems which arose in matters relating to education were not peculiar to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and the solutions found by Administering Powers might therefore be of practical value to a number of sovereign States. His own delegation had noted with interest a number of useful suggestions concerning such matters as vocational education, the training of skilled workers and the extension of education for girls. Many of the difficulties to which attention had been drawn earlier in the debate could in practice be resolved, given good will; and there was every indication that the good will was present.

With reference to the financing of education, his Government wished to do everything in its power to encourage the development of education in the Non-Self-Governing Territories with a view to enabling their inhabitants to attain self-government. Providing the funds for that purpose was the duty of the Administering Powers, rather than a generous gesture; it was, incidentally, a good investment, since by raising the level of education they also increased the economic productivity and the social usefulness of the inhabitants and enabled them to provide the funds for their own education.

As the Indian representative had pointed out, it would be helpful if the Administering Powers supplied more detailed information on such matters as the distribution of funds among the various levels of education. The UNESCO representative had drawn attention to the great variation in the share of the budget which was allocated to education in the different territories, and had also raised the question whether the money was usefully spent. That question could best be answered by a technical study undertaken by UNESCO itself.

He was deeply appreciative of UNESCO's work with regard to the use of the vernacular in education. Since conditions varied so much from region to region, each case had to be considered on its own merits, and it was only after they had all been studied that general conclusions could be drawn. There was, however, no doubt in his mind that, since language was a sociological phenomenon, the expression of a culture, the decision what language to use as a medium of instruction must rest on broader considerations than those of expediency. As the United Kingdom representative had once remarked, only the members of a culture could decide which elements of it should be preserved and which discarded. Fortunately, languages had great vigour and vitality; in his own country, the quechua was still spoken after four centuries of Spanish culture. For all those reasons, his delegation warmly supported the conclusion that the vernacular should be the first medium of instruction, even if it were necessary to introduce a second language later.

With regard to community development, the problem in the Non-Self-Governing Territories was one of conflict between indigenous and alien cultures. The question always arose, how much of the former should be preserved, and how it should be reconciled with the latter; the answer would depend on the special

factors involved in each individual case. The main reason for the conflict was, however, clear: since the Renaissance, Western culture had been predominantly individualistic, whereas indigenous culture was based on the group, the tribe, or the clan. It was not always easy for the group culture to assimilate the individualistic concepts and attitudes of the West. To facilitate the assimilation, it was necessary, first, to bring the group, as a group, to a higher level of development, and, secondly, to provide schools adapted to the cultural characteristics of each group. The first method, or community development properly so-called, was a new technique which had been highly perfected by the United Kingdom; he was waiting with interest for the results of the experiments undertaken by that country. He also hoped that further attention would be paid to adapting the school to the cultural background of the population, and that the two methods combined would enable the indigenous groups to develop sufficiently to be able to choose both their purposes in life and the means of reaching them.

Mrs. MENON (India) said that her delegation was particularly interested in the question of the medium of instruction in a multilingual State. It was clear that in the early stages of education the best results could be achieved by instruction in the language in which the child first learned to express its reactions to its surroundings. The difficulties were great, however, where the group using a language was very small. They might be overcome by the development of regional languages. But the child would then be required to learn four languages: its mother tongue, the regional language, the national language and a foreign language. Nevertheless, that was not impossible in early childhood.

The problem of the multilingual State had been successfully solved in China, where, in spite of the existence of many different dialects, the written language was uniform throughout the country. It was, on the other hand, encouraging to see that local African languages were being reduced to writing so that the lore and wisdom hitherto transmitted orally could be preserved for the good of civilization.

The Indian Government had adopted the policy that the medium of instruction and examination at the primary stage of schooling should always be the mother tongue. Where the mother tongue was different from the regional or State language, it was arranged that there should be at least one teacher on the staff of a school who could give instruction in the local language. In secondary education, if the number of children in an area warranted it, a separate school was set up to provide instruction in a local tongue. Such schools could be organized by private bodies and were entitled to recognition and grants-in-aid. The regional language was a compulsory subject throughout secondary schools.

Her delegation's view with regard to community development was that it could not take place in isolation from economic, social and educational advancement. When imposed from outside, it remained an alien element and failed to arouse the enthusiasm of the indigenous population. There were three criteria for judging the success of community development. Foremost of these was that of a revolutionary change in the social outlook of the people. They must be inspired to consciousness of their responsibilities as members of society and so have cast aside their old ideas. Secondly, the new outlook should express itself by the canalization of human energy into activities useful to the community and likely to increase its economic wealth. Thirdly, the change should have brought about sufficient harmony between the individual and the group to produce a state of social and cultural equilibrium. Much remained to be done before those criteria could be said to be satisfied in all the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The aim should be to make the best possible use of the human resources available so that the expenditure required for educational purposes might be constantly reduced.

Mr. WARD (United Kingdom) said that he had listened with interest and sympathy to the last two speakers. His Government attached much importance to the view that problems concerned were not peculiar to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, but faced many sovereign States as well. It looked forward with keen interest to comparing the results of its own attempts to solve the educational problems of the small linguistic group with the attempts made by

the Indian Government. Similarly, it had the liveliest interest in the efforts being made by Ecuador and other Latin American countries to promote community development. Indeed, it was more than ever clear that the task of members of the Committee was to pool the experience of their Governments and to co-operate rather than criticize.

The representative of Ecuador had referred to his statement that only a people itself could decide which elements of its culture to preserve and which to discard, and had rightly applied it to the matter of languages. The history of English, Italian and other modern languages showed that it was impossible to predict which of a country's multitudinous dialects would become its main literary language, and that the accident of genius rather than deliberate forethought usually governed the choice. The possibilities should likewise be left open in Africa and the peoples should be dissuaded from an over-hasty jettisoning of elements of older cultures; their loss might be irreparable.

The representative of Ecuador had drawn a distinction between the predominantly individualistic civilization of Western Europe and the predominantly group civilization of most of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The impact of one on the other caused difficulties which must be overcome. There was an urgent need for a fresh synthesis between the needs of the individual and the needs of the group and for a new type of school to satisfy group needs. In such territories under British Administration as Uganda, Tanganyika and Northern Rhodesia experiments were being made in an attempt to find the ideal type of school for that purpose. It was too early as yet to forecast the outcome.

His Government fully accepted the three criteria for judging the success of community development put forward by the Indian representative. What it claimed for the Non-Self-Governing Territories under its Administration, for Nigeria, Fiji and the Gold Coast for instance, was precisely that a consciousness of social responsibility had been aroused, that the people had been inspired to shed their age-long passivity and to begin to do things for themselves, to build roads and bridges, clinics, hospitals and dispensaries. It was the duty of the Administering Powers to provide the source of inspiration so that the peoples at present under their authority should grow to mastery of their own destinies.

Mr. PICNON (France) expressed his delegation's satisfaction with document A/AC.35/L.131, which gave a realistic picture of the existing situation. That applied in particular to chapter II, on "Social Development and Educational Policy", which provided an excellent basis for the Committee's work. In the case of some Territories, considerable progress had been made since the report had been prepared.

It was rightly stated on page 13 of the report that fundamental education in French Territories was still in a formative stage; nevertheless, great progress had been made in all the Territories in that connexion. In Mauritania, for example, field teams of educators had succeeded in teaching the alphabet to nomadic tribesmen in as little as ten days. The French Government attached great importance to fundamental education: a departmental officer specializing in that subject had been appointed for each Territory and a special fundamental education service advised by a special branch of the Ministry of Education, had been set up in the Ministry for Overseas France.

Mr. KADRY (Iraq) agreed with the Ecuadorian representative that the question of the use of indigenous languages in education was very complex, but maintained that complexity should not serve as an obstacle to the setting of certain simple and well-defined goals or to the application of certain universally accepted principles. In that connexion, his delegation wished to state its views on the teaching of Arabic in Non-Self-Governing Territories.

The French representative had said at the preceding meeting, in reply to a comment of the Iraqi delegation on cultural exchanges between the Arab States and France, that France's rejection of help offered to the inhabitants of Morocco and Tunisia was due to restrictions in the Arab States on the acceptance of French teachers and educators. Even if such restrictions existed, which the Iraqi delegation doubted, it would be more appropriate to impose reciprocal restrictions on Arab educators wishing to teach in French educational establishments than to make young people in Morocco and Tunisia, whose need of education in their own language was so great, pay the price of an alleged misunderstanding of which they were unaware.

The French representative had then proceeded to draw a correct distinction between colloquial, or dialectal, Arabic and classical written Arabic; in doing so, he had shown his awareness that Arab children learned colloquial Arabic, spoken in different dialects, at their mothers' knee, and did not learn to speak, read and write classical Arabic until they began their formal schooling. The Iraqi delegation had therefore been somewhat surprised by the statement that dialectal Arabic was a compulsory subject in Moroccan secondary schools. It seemed to be wholly unnecessary to teach Moroccan children a language which they already knew, especially in view of the fact that dialectal Arabic was not a written language. Irreparable harm might be done by oral teaching through the medium of a dialect; the pupils would end by having no knowledge of classical Arabic.

Furthermore, the French representative had expressed some doubt about the accuracy of the Iraqi delegation's contention that, while nearly all of the 70,000 French children in Morocco attended school, only 7 per cent of the Moroccan children went to school. Those facts, however, had been taken from a French official publication on the 1947 census in Morocco, in which the number of children between the ages of 6 and 14 was given as 2,100,000. If that number was divided by the number of indigenous children attending all types of schools in Morocco in 1951, the proportion was 7 per cent; the estimate was, moreover, conservative in view of the increase of the population between 1947 and 1951.

Mr. PIGNON (France) stated, in reply to the Iraqi representative, that the teaching of dialectal Arabic in Morocco was for European children only and that its purpose was to establish a closer contact between the children of settlers and the indigenous population. Moroccan children were given instruction in classical Arabic and many courses were offered in that language.

In connexion with cultural exchanges between the Arab States and France, he assured the Iraqi representative that the French Government's sole wish was to improve such exchanges on all levels of education. The wide range of

Arabic literature available in bookshops and libraries in Morocco and Tunisia served as evidence of French policy in that respect.

The CHAIRMAN declared that the discussion of item 4, educational conditions in Non-Self-Governing Territories, was closed.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.