

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTEENTH SESSION
Official Records



**FOURTH COMMITTEE 751st
MEETING**

Tuesday, 7 October 1958,
at 3.25 p.m.

NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Frederick H. BOLAND (Ireland).

AGENDA ITEM 39

Question of South West Africa (*continued*):

- (a) Report of the Good Offices Committee on South West Africa (A/3900);
- (b) Report of the Committee on South West Africa (A/3906 and Add.1)

1. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) recalled that Mr. Kerina (Getzen) had informed the Committee at its previous meeting that he had received from South West Africa a tape-recorded message addressed to the Chairman of the Fourth Committee. He urged that the Committee should take cognizance of the message, which formed a part of the documentation on the question of South West Africa.

2. Mr. AKO-ADJEI (Ghana) agreed with the representative of Haiti, but thought that before a decision was reached Mr. Kerina (Getzen) should give the Committee some information about the circumstances in which the tape recording had been made.

3. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) associated her delegation with the views expressed by the representatives of Haiti and Ghana.

4. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Committee was being asked to adopt a new procedure and that before coming to a decision it should consider what precedents it would be creating. He therefore suggested that a decision should be deferred until the following meeting, when the officers of the Committee would have been able to ascertain what the practical possibilities were.

5. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) pointed out that the question of South West Africa had been debated for a number of years but no solution had been found. Much had been said recently about a new approach and new methods. The petitioners' claim to represent the views of the people of South West Africa had been challenged and he therefore considered that the Committee should use any other available means to ascertain the facts.

6. Mr. AKO-ADJEI (Ghana) and Mr. OSMAN (United Arab Republic) supported the proposal that Mr. Kerina (Getzen) should be asked to explain the circumstances surrounding the making of the tape recording.

7. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) agreed with the representative of Ghana that where information had not been made available by the Administering Authority the Committee should seek to obtain information by all reasonable means. However, he supported the Chairman's proposal that a decision should be postponed until the following meeting. He formally moved the adjournment of the debate in accordance with rule 117 of the rules of procedure.

8. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) opposed the motion for adjournment, since she considered that Mr. Kerina (Getzen) should be allowed to give an explanation immediately concerning the tape recording.

9. Mr. KANAKARATNE (Ceylon) opposed the motion since he considered that, while a decision on the proposal to hear the tape recording could be postponed until the following meeting, the Committee could proceed forthwith to begin its questioning of the two petitioners in order to save time.

10. Mr. CHAMBERS (Australia) thought that the proposal to hear an unauthenticated tape recording might raise issues of importance to the Administering Authorities of Trust Territories. He therefore supported the motion for adjournment.

The motion for adjournment was rejected by 14 votes to 6, with 40 abstentions.

11. Mr. COHEN (Chile) read out a statement issued by the American Committee on Africa on 7 October 1958, concerning a tape recording of a message from Mr. T. H. Ja-Toivo, President of the Ovamboland Peoples' Congress, which it had received for delivery to Mr. Kerina (Getzen).

12. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) thought that the Committee, rather than deciding to hear Mr. Kerina (Getzen) with reference exclusively to the tape recording, could now begin its general questioning of both petitioners, on the understanding that they could be questioned not only about the tape but also about the matters dealt with in their statements.

It was so decided.

HEARING OF PETITIONERS (*continued*)

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Reverend Michael Scott and Mr. Mburumba Kerina (Getzen) took places at the Committee table.

13. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that Mr. Kerina (Getzen) wished to be referred to from now on by the name Kerina.

14. Mr. KERINA, replying to questions by U ONSEIN (Burma) and Mr. AKO-ADJEI (Ghana), said that he had with him the tape, which he showed to the Committee. He explained that Mr. Ja-Toivo had been unable to obtain the necessary documents to leave South West Africa in order to appear before the General Assembly. He was now living in Cape Town, from where it was easier to transmit petitions on behalf

of the Ovambo people to the United Nations than from South West Africa. When questioned by the South African Special Branch in connexion with petitions to the United Nations bearing his name, Mr. Ja-Toivo had assumed full responsibility for them and had made it clear that he was not prepared to divulge the names of any of the people on whose behalf the petitions had been sent. In the case of the present petition, he had had the text recorded and had then succeeded in having the tape heard by his people in South West Africa before it had been sent on.

15. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) observed that the circumstances described by Mr. Kerina made it clearer than ever that there were people in South West Africa who were very anxious to appear before the Fourth Committee to make known the views of the indigenous inhabitants but that the Union Government

was preventing them from doing so. She therefore urged that the Committee should agree to hear the tape.

16. Mr. LONGDEN (United Kingdom) asked if the text of the recorded message was identical with the letter from Mr. Ja-Toivo which was given in full in document A/C.4/380, section 2.

17. Mr. KERINA, after checking the document mentioned by the United Kingdom representative, confirmed that the two texts were identical.

18. Mr. FERNANDEZ (Costa Rica), supported by Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) said that in that case he saw no need for further discussion and formally proposed that the Committee should be adjourned.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.