

2156th meeting

Tuesday, 28 October 1975, at 10.55 a.m.

Chairman: Mrs. Famah JOKA-BANGURA (Sierra Leone).

A/C.4/SR.2156

AGENDA ITEM 90

Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Southern Rhodesia and Namibia and in all other Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, *apartheid* and racial discrimination in southern Africa (A/10023 (part III), A/10058, A/C.4/792)

GENERAL DEBATE

1. The CHAIRMAN suggested that consideration of agenda item 90 should be postponed until a later meeting, as the relevant chapter of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had not yet been distributed.

2. Mr. LASSE (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking as Rapporteur of the Special Committee, appealed to the Committee Secretary and, through him, to the competent departments of the Secretariat to make every effort to expedite the circulation of the relevant chapters of the report of the Special Committee. Chapter V, dealing with the question of foreign economic and other interests, which he had submitted to the Secretariat on 16 September, had not yet become available. He said that the Committee was to take up, early the following week, the final items of its agenda and that it was, therefore, essential that the chapters of the Special Committee's report dealing with the Territories to be considered should be distributed before the end of the current week.

3. He sincerely hoped that the Committee could count on the full co-operation of the Secretariat.

4. Mr. RIFAI (Secretary of the Committee) expressed his regrets for the delay in the distribution of the document in question. The Secretariat would take care that all the necessary documents would be made available to the Committee so that its programme of work could be carried out as planned.

HEARING OF PETITIONERS

5. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee that it had agreed at the previous meeting to grant the request for a hearing (A/C.4/792) received from Mr. Tim Smith, of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, who wished to address the Committee in connexion with the discussion of agenda item 90.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Tim Smith, Director of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, took a place at the Committee table.

6. Mr. SMITH (Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility) said that he represented a group of churches in the United States and other countries which was studying in depth the world role of large companies and, more especially, the role of economic interests in southern Africa, and was trying to put pressure on the United States and the countries concerned to bring them to reconsider their position in that region.

7. He wished to expose the interests of Japan and some other countries in Namibia and Southern Rhodesia; he did so with the support of the National Christian Council of Japan, the World Council of Churches and the Africa Working Group of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

8. He said that the history of the illegal minority Government of Southern Rhodesia was closely bound up with the policy of South Africa, acted as a channel for foreign interests operating in Southern Rhodesia and enabled them to evade the sanctions imposed by the international community. He emphasized not so much the extent of Japanese trade with Southern Rhodesia, which had already been competently reported, *inter alia*, by the Special Committee, but the ineffectiveness of measures taken by the Japanese Government to induce its multinational corporations to implement the sanctions.

9. Japan imported great quantities of chrome from Southern Rhodesia, although the Japanese Government had prohibited all trade with that country in 1968. It was only since 1974 that, under pressure from QAU, South African certificates of origin had been demanded for chrome. Japan therefore not only imported enormous quantities of minerals from Southern Rhodesia, thus plundering a country illegally subjected to colonial domination; it also sold to that country a large number of vehicles and items assembled in South Africa by subsidiaries of Japanese companies or sent via South Africa with the assistance of Japanese agencies such as the Japan External Trade Organization. The recent efforts of the Japanese Government to enforce sanctions and demand appropriate documentation for questionable imports should be viewed with circumspection because of the ease with which South Africa passed off Southern Rhodesian goods as its own. Japanese companies had, in fact, for many years taken advantage of the fact that several Western countries had cut back their operations in Southern Rhodesia out of respect for the sanctions. Japanese businessmen had acted in defiance of the principles of international law and the decisions of the United Nations. Now that the liberation struggle was spreading to the whole of southern Africa, however, the Southern

Rhodesian régime could not survive much longer; Japan was therefore eager to change sides and was trying to give the impression that it had always been on the side of the oppressed. Such a sudden conversion was hardly convincing.

10. With regard to Japanese interests in Namibia, he drew the Committee's attention to the fact that various Japanese electric power companies had signed contracts with Rössing Uranium, a uranium mining company controlled by South Africa and managed by the British company Rio Tinto Zinc. There was, for instance, an advance purchase contract for 8,200 short tons of uranium to be delivered between 1977 and 1986. Altogether, the contracts between Japan and South Africa for uranium amounted to 43 per cent of Japan's imports of uranium, which were of major importance in Japan's political life. The rapid expansion of nuclear power stations would permit Japan to solve its energy problems and no longer be dependent on oil imported from the Middle East. That policy was the result of pressure from the various electric power companies, including Mitsubishi and the Kansai Electric Power Company (KEPC), which had enormous political and economic influence. The Japanese Government's decision to opt for nuclear energy had certainly been precipitated in part by the oil crisis of 1974; the Government had, however, been presented with a fait accompli by the companies concerned, which had already entered into massive agreements with South Africa and other uranium-supplying countries. Japan's 10-year atomic energy development plan, announced in June 1974, provided for an increase in the number of reactors from 6 to 60 by 1985.

11. Japanese companies had been searching for uranium since 1970. The aforementioned contract, as well as a contract for the purchase of a comparable amount of uranium by the United Kingdom Government, had allowed Rio Tinto Zinc to obtain the necessary funds for the exploitation of the Rössing deposits. The exploitation of those low-yield deposits required a massive input of capital and the use of technology developed jointly by the South African Government and Rio Tinto Zinc. The necessary funds had been obtained only through the conclusion of firm long-term purchase contracts. Thus, the mining of the Rössing uranium deposits was one of the main causes for the maintenance of the illegal occupation of Namibia, because of the financial incentives for South Africa. In that connexion, he said that the Government of the United States, aware of that aspect of the matter, was making efforts to discourage foreign investment in Namibia.

12. The Japanese Government, in announcing its atomic energy development plan for 1975-1985, had only confirmed the decisions of South African and Japanese interests; the Japanese Government did, however, have an essential role to play in the matter, since it had the power to grant or not to grant import permits for Namibian uranium. If it granted such permits, it would be committing a flagrant violation of the Decree on the Natural Resources of Namibia.¹

13. The issue had been taken up in the Japanese Parliament. In reply to a statement by a representative of the

Socialist Party on the legality of the imports of Namibian uranium, the representatives of the Japanese Government had only been able to confirm the facts. The United Nations Council for Namibia had sent a delegation to Japan in May 1975 to ask that country to cancel its contracts for the purchase of Namibian uranium in view of South Africa's illegal occupation of the Territory; the delegation had, furthermore, warned Japan that it would be obliged to pay compensation when Namibia became independent if it continued to buy minerals from that country. The Japanese Government had replied that the Namibian imports were necessary because Japan had no natural resources. The imports by KEPC had evoked numerous public protests in Osaka, the headquarters of the company, as well as in Tokyo. Despite pressure by domestic and international groups, KEPC had shown no sign of being ready to reconsider its purchase contract. It had based its refusal on the fact that a large number of the uranium deposits outside Namibia and South Africa were wholly or partially controlled by Rio Tinto Zinc, which was politically allied with the South African Government, and that Rio Tinto Zinc itself was partly owned by the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa and was linked with numerous other South African interests, which meant that it was in a position to dictate to Japan who its suppliers should be. Mitsubishi was, at the same time, conducting parallel negotiations with South Africa for the provision of a reactor built with the assistance of American technology and licences.

14. If South Africa built a reactor with a 1 million kWh capacity, it would be able to manufacture each year 30 plutonium bombs of the size of the atomic bomb that had destroyed Nagasaki. It should be mentioned that Mitsubishi was also a major international arms dealer.

15. Japan was not the only country to deal with South Africa in the means of mass destruction through the exploitation of Namibia, as had recently been documented by the African National Congress of South Africa in its study of the activities of the Federal Republic of Germany in that area. The Federal Republic of Germany was obtaining some 40 per cent of its uranium from Namibia and South Africa and there was very close co-operation between those countries in the atomic field, both in the area of uranium enrichment and in the whole field of nuclear technology. The implications of that attitude for the peace of Africa and the whole world were very disturbing in the light of the role being played by the Federal Republic of Germany and NATO in South Africa.

16. He pointed out that France had always played an important role in the development of South Africa's nuclear capability and the exploitation of Namibia which that development implied. The French Government was purchasing Namibian uranium through its company Total, which also had taken a financial interest in Rössing Uranium and had a long-standing programme of collaboration with South Africa in nuclear technology and equipment.

17. The United Kingdom was more than any other country responsible for the opening of Rössing Uranium because of the crucial contracts placed in 1970 for the purchase of Namibian uranium for both military and

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 24A*, para. 84.

civilian purposes. More recently, Brazil had decided to purchase uranium in South Africa for its massive joint programme with the Federal Republic of Germany. Finally, Iran seemed likely to be putting up some of the enormous capital required for South Africa's proposed uranium-enrichment plant. There seemed to be an agreement between Iran, France and South Africa for the supply and enrichment of uranium and the construction of atomic power stations.

18. He drew the Committee's attention to the extreme seriousness of that matter and expressed the hope that firm measures would be taken to dissuade the countries concerned from further co-operation with the South African occupying régime in Namibia. He urged the Committee to adopt the same measures with respect to economic support for Rössing Uranium as it had taken against foreign economic support for the major colonial projects of the Cabora Bassa dam in Mozambique and the Cunene river basin scheme in Angola.

Mr. Smith withdrew.

19. Mr. NAGAI (Japan) observed that the statement that had just been made by the petitioner regarding Japan's economic activities in southern Africa contained important references, which were contrary to the basic position of the Japanese Government and to a certain number of measures it had taken regarding Southern Rhodesia and Namibia. His delegation would examine carefully the facts mentioned in that statement and would speak on the matter at an appropriate time. However, he wished at that stage to assure the Committee that the Japanese Government remained determined to enforce fully the economic sanctions against Southern Rhodesia and not to allow any Japanese nationals or bodies corporate under its jurisdiction to evade sanctions by employing any kind of manoeuvres. With regard to Namibia, the Japanese Government was taking fully into account the relevant United Nations resolutions and was imposing restrictions on the economic activities of Japanese nationals and bodies corporate under its jurisdiction, including the prohibition of direct investment in the Territory. The Japanese Government had never permitted the establishment in those areas of local firms or joint ventures by Japanese firms and had never permitted Japanese firms to possess mining concessions anywhere in the area. Consequently no Japanese mining firms were operating in the area.

20. He wished to stress the fact that the Government and people of Japan were fully determined to co-operate with the United Nations to bring down the illegal régime in Salisbury and to compel South Africa to withdraw from Namibia immediately. Japan would therefore do its best in the cause of social justice and human dignity, which had long been denied in southern Africa.

Requests for hearings

21. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had received a request for a hearing (A/C.4/784/Add.3) concerning Namibia from the Reverend Frederick L. Houghton of the General Theological Seminary.

22. If there was no objection, she would consider the request granted.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 87

Question of Namibia (continued) (A/9998-S/11598, A/10023/Add.3, A/10024 (vols. I and II), A/10050-S/11638, A/10229, A/C.4/784/Add.1-3)

HEARING OF PETITIONERS (continued)*

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Reverend Frederick L. Houghton, of the General Theological Seminary, took a place at the Committee table.

23. The Reverend Frederick L. HOUGHTON (General Theological Seminary) said that he had lived for two years at Odibo, near the border post of Oshikango, and wished to testify to the deterioration of the situation in the northern part of Namibia. He observed that, according to an article that had appeared in *The Windhoek Advertiser* on 17 October, Mr. Jannie de Wet, Commissioner General for the Indigenous Peoples of South West Africa, had announced that the entire frontier of 250 kilometres which separated the tribal area of the Kwanyamas from Angola would be moved a few kilometres in order to transform the frontier area into a tight security zone. If carried out, that proposal would cause dislocation and suffering, and perhaps famine, for at least 20,000 inhabitants: four major church centres, including the Anglican headquarters at Odibo, would be destroyed; at least two hospitals and several schools would be abandoned; and some 1,250 square kilometres of irrigated arable land would be denied to the Ovambo people just at the start of the summer planting season. The creation of such a zone would moreover have bitter social consequences by fanning the resentment which that arbitrary border line had always engendered.

24. After outlining the history of that border and the tragedies experienced by the Kwanyama people because of the occupation of their territory by the Portuguese and then by the South Africans, he pointed out that the tightening of border controls by the South African and Portuguese régimes in recent years had restricted the freedom of religious groups, put a stop to the free movement of livestock to pastures and to the exchange of livestock—which the Kwanyama people regarded as the most important symbol of social relations—and separated families. It appeared from his conversations with the people that the border itself was the most hated symbol of oppression, more so than the pass laws or police brutality or the suppression of civil and political liberties. It was the sign of their status as a conquered people, the symbol of their helplessness in the face of decisions made elsewhere.

25. If the South African plan were to be carried out, families would once again be driven from their homes and family links severed. According to information he had recently received from Ovamboland, the first of those

* Resumed from the 2146th meeting.

removal operations had already begun. That measure, together with recent South African military operations, had caused such disturbance in Ovamboland that Church leaders had been called from Windhoek in an effort to calm the people. That was an indication of the desperateness of the situation, since the usual South African reaction in times of trouble was rather to remove Church leaders.

26. If the South African régime persisted with its plan, mass resistance was to be feared. The bloodshed and suffering that might result would cast everlasting shame upon the civilized world.

27. The people of Ovamboland had a moving, almost religious faith in the United Nations, to which they looked to enforce justice and the rule of law. The day was not far off when, having lost that faith, in impatience and righteous anger they would take matters into their own hands. That day would be a grim one.

28. In conclusion, he expressed his gratitude to the United Nations for its efforts on behalf of the Namibian people. He truly believed that it had been the hope that justice and law would triumph which had so far forestalled a costly armed confrontation between the people of the Territory and the South African régime. At the same time, he urged the Committee to bring about the realization of that hope by taking stronger action to prevent everything which had been accomplished from being destroyed in a sudden explosion. He pledged to the United Nations the sympathy and moral support of those who wished to see the Namibians achieve their freedom.

The Reverend Frederick L. Houghton withdrew.

AGENDA ITEM 23

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (A/10023/Add.4, A/10082, A/10091, A/10095, A/10097, A/10101, A/10104, A/10175, A/10269, A/10300, A/C.4/783, A/C.4/786, A/C.4/787 and Add.1-3, A/C.4/789, A/C.4/L.1094)

QUESTION OF FRENCH SOMALILAND

29. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Executive Secretary of the OAU Co-ordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa had informed the Committee that one of the two national liberation movements of French Somaliland recognized by OAU had expressed a desire to participate in the work of the Committee concerning its country. She stated that, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 3280 (XXIX) and if there was no objection, she would inform the Executive Secretary that the Committee agreed to have both national liberation movements take part in the work of the Committee concerning their country.

It was so decided.

30. Mr. de LATAILLADE (France) said that, with reference to the decision that had just been taken by the Committee, his delegation wished to point out that, as far as it was concerned, neither of the two movements in question could be said to represent the population of the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

2157th meeting

Wednesday, 29 October 1975, at 3.55 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. Famah JOKA-BANGURA (Sierra Leone).

AGENDA ITEM 90

Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Southern Rhodesia and Namibia and in all other Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, *apartheid* and racial discrimination in southern Africa (continued) (A/10023 (part III), A/10058)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. LASSE (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking as Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting

of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, introduced chapter V of the Special Committee's report on its work during 1975 (A/10023 (part III)).

2. That chapter, which concerned agenda item 90, was submitted in accordance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 3299 (XXIX). In preparing it, the Special Committee had also been guided by the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 3328 (XXIX), in paragraph 11 of which the Assembly had requested the Special Committee to continue to seek suitable means for the immediate and full implementation of resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2621 (XXV) in all Territories which had not yet attained independence and, in particular, to formulate specific proposals for the elimination of the remaining manifestations of colonialism. The Special Com-

A/C.4/SR.2157