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FOURTH COMMITTEE  
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at 10.30 a.m.  
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CHAMORRO MORA (Nicaragua)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.20 a.m.

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS (continued) (A/C.4/40/2/Add.5 and 6, A/C.4/40/6/Add.2)

1. The CHAIRMAN said that if he heard no objection he would take it that the Committee decided to grant the requests for hearings in documents A/C.4/40/2/Add.5 and 6 and A/C.4/40/6/Add.2.

2. It was so decided.

3. Mr. FELDMAN (United States of America) said that he had reservations with respect to the requests relating to the so-called question of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands because that matter was not properly before the General Assembly. Article 83 C of the United Nations Charter, which was binding on all Member States, gave exclusive jurisdiction in such matters to the Security Council and the Trusteeship Council.

AGENDA ITEM 110: 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 NAMIBIA AND IN ALL OTHER TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: 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 (continued) (A/40/23 (Part IV); A/C.4/40/6/Add.1 and 2; A/AC.109/803, 805, 810-812, 815, 817, 819, 825 and 826)

4. Mr. POSTOWICZ (Poland) said that foreign economic, military and other interests seriously impeded decolonization. Transnational corporations aggravated the negative trends in the world economy, promoted a neo-colonial type of international division of labour and made the developing countries increasingly dependent on the capitalist economy as a whole. That was particularly true in the vulnerable dependent Territories, whose administering Powers helped maintain favourable conditions for exploitation by foreign economic interests which stressed the export of raw materials and the import of industrial products. That was especially true in rich and illegally occupied Namibia, where exploitation and plunder were facilitated by integration into the economy of South Africa, with the help of certain Western Governments.

5. Namibia was also a striking example of how decolonization could be directly obstructed by the military activities of the administering Power, which was using its vast military strength not only to repress Namibians but also to commit aggression against neighbouring States.

6. His Government had consistently supported all efforts to help colonial peoples obtain their freedom from imperialist oppression and therefore fully supported the recommendations and conclusions of the Special Committee on Decolonization contained in document A/40/23 (Part IV).

7. Mr. BUDAI (Hungary) said that colonialism, racism and economic exploitation still existed. Foreign economic interests continued to plunder the resources of

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(Mr. Budai, Hungary)

the Non-Self-Governing Territories in southern Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. They created the material basis for the perpetuation of apartheid in South Africa, where more than 1,000 transnational corporations were operating. Had foreign economic interests played a positive role in Namibia, that wealthy Territory would long ago have become an independent country with a balanced economy. Instead, South Africa continued to strengthen apartheid by military force and brutal terror beneath the transparent facade of so-called reforms. It was regrettable that the transnational corporations, invoking the freedom of private capital, had failed to implement the sanctions designed to combat apartheid and instead supported the racist régime. Comprehensive and mandatory sanctions were one of the most effective, and the only peaceful, means of eradicating apartheid and his Government therefore welcomed every initiative to implement them.

8. Military bases and installations in the Non-Self-Governing and other colonial Territories were the major obstacle to decolonization and impeded the economic development of those Territories. His delegation therefore urged the United Nations to carry out a sustained and vigorous campaign against all military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration.

9. Mr. AL SABAH (Kuwait) said that, as many speakers had already stressed in the General Assembly, the United Nations had many accomplishments to its credit in the area of decolonization. It had consistently worked to obtain the freedom of dependent Territories and to protect their natural and human resources. Certain forces, however, had consistently flouted the United Nations and persisted in depleting the resources of dependent Territories in violation of their obligations as administering Powers under the flimsy pretext that they were acting in the interest of those Territories.

10. The exploitation of the resources of illegally occupied Namibia was a flagrant example. His country therefore firmly supported a comprehensive arms and oil embargo on South Africa as well as disinvestment in that country. It also was faithfully implementing all United Nations resolutions to that effect and had headed a committee of experts investigating loopholes in the embargoes. Kuwait had also stopped all oil sales to countries which re-exported oil to South Africa, and regretted that certain Western countries chose to ignore the embargo.

11. Dependent territories were also being exploited through the establishment of military bases which could only involve them in conflicts which did not concern them. Such bases constituted a further impediment to decolonization.

12. Mr. JASSNOWSKI (German Democratic Republic) said that in spite of world-wide protests the transnational corporations continued to exploit the human and natural resources of Namibia with total disregard for relevant General Assembly resolutions and Decree No. 1. Their unscrupulous collaboration with the apartheid régime prolonged the illegal occupation of Namibia and enabled South Africa to acquire the means necessary to carry out acts of aggression and blackmail against independent African States, thus intensifying the threat to peace and international security. Namibia had become the most striking example of economic exploitation of an oppressed people under colonial rule.

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(Mr. Jassnowski, German  
Democratic Republic)

13. The development of a balanced economy in Namibia was not in the interest of the transnational corporations, which sought to keep the Territory in the dependent role of a supplier of raw materials. As a result, the Namibian economy had been especially hard hit by the crisis in the capitalist world. The unemployment rate, for example, was higher than 20 per cent.

14. A peaceful solution to the problems in southern Africa could be brought about only through the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa. His Government strongly condemned the collaboration of the Western States with the apartheid régime, particularly the policy of "constructive engagement" pursued by the United States. He reaffirmed his country's strong support for the oppressed people of South Africa in their just struggle under the leadership of the African National Congress and called for the immediate implementation of the rights of the Namibian people in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

15. The fate of the peoples in the other Territories still under colonial rule was similar to that of the Namibian people. With the support of the colonial Powers, the transnational corporations made huge profits and thus had a direct interest in perpetuating colonial domination and preventing the development of a viable economic structure in the Territories concerned. It was appalling that the right of entire peoples to self-determination was being subordinated to the profit interests of the imperialist monopolies and the military ambitions of the colonial Powers. His Government supported all measures by the United Nations to put an end to inhuman colonial practices and combat the neo-colonialist policy pursued by imperialist States.

16. Mr. THOMPSON-FLORES (Brazil) observed that decolonization had to be seen as freedom from economic dependency. Political independence did not always bring true independence. Administering Powers had the responsibility to prepare Territories for a viable economic existence by providing them with the necessary infrastructure and by training leaders to exercise sovereignty in international relations. It was the task of the Special Committee on Decolonization to monitor conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories closely to ensure that they were conducive to self-determination.

17. It was inadmissible that the representatives of a free Namibia were not yet sitting as full Members in the United Nations. The Public Hearings on the Activities of Transnational Corporations in South Africa and Namibia held in September had provided an excellent opportunity to analyse the role of foreign economic interests in the continuing illegal occupation of that Territory. There was a school of thought that argued that foreign companies operating in South Africa and Namibia were a positive force for peaceful change in that they helped to improve the living standards of the black population and exerted pressure upon the régime from within the apartheid system. That theory disregarded certain basic facts. Less than 2 per cent of the black labour force in South Africa benefited from the transnational corporations' codes of conduct and equal employment practices, and outside the workplace no blacks were exempt from the evils of apartheid.

(Mr. Thompson-Flores, Brazil)

18. Instead of progress towards an easing of tensions in southern Africa, 1985 had witnessed a renewed cycle of violence against the black majority, which had spilled over the borders of South Africa into neighbouring States, particularly Angola.

19. The Commission on Transnational Corporations, which had sponsored the Public Hearings had concluded that the continued presence of foreign companies in Namibia had not produced measurable positive results. The transfer of technology had been negligible because the companies were almost exclusively involved in the extraction of Namibia's natural resources, frequently in contravention of Decree No. 1 of the United Nations Council for Namibia. Worse still, the taxes collected by Pretoria on the huge profits derived from the companies' exports had in fact contributed to strengthening the racist régime. Moreover, some transnational corporations were reported to be helping South Africa evade isolation in the nuclear and military sectors by providing essential inputs.

20. The international community must act resolutely in order to restrain all economic forces that might support racist practices. Apartheid and the occupation of Namibia were crimes, and required immediate action. In addition to complying strictly with mandatory sanctions imposed by the Security Council, Brazil and other Member States had adopted a set of voluntary sanctions which had put considerable pressure on the régime. Such steps, however, could be no substitute for further concerted action by the Security Council in fulfilment of the Charter, which remained the basis for appropriate measures against flagrant breaches of international law by the South African Government.

21. In respect of military activities by colonial Powers in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, Brazil wished to record its opposition to the introduction of foreign military forces into the South Atlantic; such action was inconsistent with the peace and co-operation desired by the countries of the region.

22. Mr. LIMANDE (Zambia) said that it was fitting on the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations to take note of the achievements of the Organization in the field of decolonization. Its impressive record should inspire further efforts to free all peoples who were still under foreign domination.

23. His delegation had stated on many occasions that the activities of foreign economic and other interests per se were not prejudicial to the rights of the inhabitants of dependent Territories if the administering Powers adhered strictly to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. However, sad reality was that the administering Powers had often ignored demands for self-determination and independence and had ruthlessly exploited the natural resources of the Territories under their administration. That was certainly true in the case of Namibia, where the transnational corporations were plundering the natural resources of that Territory in violation of Decree No. 1 of the United Nations Council for Namibia. Some Western States which argued that the activities of the transnational corporations in Namibia were beneficial to the indigenous population of that Territory had in fact acted in collusion with the apartheid régime in the nuclear field and were continuing to deplete Namibia's natural and human resources. South Africa and the foreign economic interests operating in Namibia sought to delay the

(Mr. Limande, Zambia)

implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) so that they could continue to plunder the Territory's wealth and impede its accession to genuine national independence. The manoeuvres by racist South Africa aimed at installing a puppet administration in Namibia further attested to its collusion with those foreign corporations.

24. In South Africa itself, the transnational corporations thrived on the exploitation of the oppressed black workers and strengthened the economic and military base of the apartheid régime. Thus, the foreign economic interests in South Africa were accomplices in the crimes perpetrated by Pretoria against the black majority in South Africa and the independent African countries in the region.

25. Peaceful change in South Africa and Namibia could be brought about only through the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against Pretoria to force it to withdraw from Namibia and abolish apartheid. Accordingly, Zambia urged all States to support disinvestment in South Africa as a means of putting an end to the exploitation of Namibian resources. He called upon the administering Powers of dependent Territories to safeguard the interests of the peoples living under their administration. Lastly, his delegation expressed satisfaction at the report of the Special Committee on Decolonization (A/40/23 (Part IV)), which merited the complete support of the Committee.

26. Mr. MOPHETHE (Lesotho) said that South Africa had demonstrated its disregard for the will of the international community through its illegal occupation of Namibia, the introduction of the abhorrent policy of apartheid into that Territory, and by encouraging the systematic plundering of Namibia's natural wealth by the transnational corporations.

27. The avaricious transnational corporations were determined to reap huge profits by exploiting the human and natural resources of Namibia. With South African connivance, foreign economic interests controlled the mining and oil industries in Namibia. Commercial agriculture was dominated by white farmers who occupied approximately two thirds of the arable land in the Territory. Cattle raising and the fishing industry were the exclusive reserve of South Africa. His delegation called upon the States involved to prevent their transnational corporations from further plundering Namibian resources. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Member States should redouble their efforts to put an end to all remaining forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism.

28. Mr. MOUSHAITI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) observed that the forces of colonialism, in a maniacal desire for expansion at the expense of other, weaker lands, invariably sought to seize Territories and exploit their wealth. Through United Nations efforts, however, many former colonial Territories had won their freedom. But colonialism had left through the door and come back through the window in the form of transnational corporations. The corporations had carved out bastions for their economic activities in Namibia, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Mayotte, the Comoros Islands and other regions still labouring under the yoke of colonialism. The resources they

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(Mr. Moushaiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

plundered and the profits they derived therefrom were siphoned off to their home headquarters, thus erecting a major roadblock to self-determination and independence.

29. General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 35/138 represented major strides forward; but their provisions had, alas, not yet become reality. In Africa, the Namibian people were still struggling for self-determination and independence despite United Nations efforts and initiatives to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978). The Palestinian people also continued to be denied all their rights. In both cases, which involved genocide, the United States was collaborating with the two occupying racist régimes through "constructive" economic, military and other ties, and either directly or through its transnational corporations. A recent study issued by the Centre against Apartheid provided proof positive of the unlawful collusion between South Africa and the United States.

30. Yet, despite the designs of certain Western interests led by the United States, Libya was confident that the efforts of the international community would eventually succeed and that independence would come to the remaining colonial countries and peoples.

31. In the meantime, those peoples were living in dire poverty and had nothing with which to build their societies, although their lands contained the wealth that would enable them to become viable. The continued plunder of that wealth by the transnational corporations was building up a debt on the part of the colonialists vis-à-vis the colonized. Not merely Namibia's resources but the people themselves were being exploited, as evidenced by the growing gap between white and black per capita income which had reached a ratio of 24 to 1 in 1980. Moreover, the foreign interests in the Territory did not reinvest their profits to foster the well-being of the black majority or ensure the scientific and technical advancement they required to build their own prosperity once they became independent.

32. It was not enough to condemn the transnational corporations. Their home countries must also be condemned, and the Governments of these countries must be sensitized to the debt which they had accumulated vis-à-vis the colonized peoples, and which they must repay. The international community must act to adopt binding sanctions against South Africa. Libya pledged its unswerving support for such efforts.

33. Mr. MAJENGO (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the dual anniversaries of the founding of the United Nations and the proclamation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples offered an opportunity to evaluate the achievements of the world body and to re-examine critically the various foreign economic and other interests which were operating in the colonial countries and which unfortunately impeded the implementation of the Declaration.

34. It was gratifying on the one hand to note that during the past 25 years most of the colonies or dependent Territories had acceded to national independence, peacefully or otherwise. On the other hand, it was highly regrettable that colonialism still existed, in all its forms, in various parts of the world.

(Mr. Majengo, United Republic of Tanzania)

35. Namibia was a case in point and, of all the colonial Territories, a unique case because of its legal status. The South African racist régime had defiantly continued to occupy and administer the Territory after its mandate was terminated some 20 years ago, and the régime had systematically turned it into another bantustan by subjecting the Namibian people to apartheid.

36. South Africa had been able to work its will in the Territory owing to the support of certain industrialized countries with vested economic interests in Namibia. Despite the rich mineral resources of Namibia, the majority of the Namibian people lived below the poverty line, because all the profit accrued by the racist régime in collaboration with transnational corporations from Western Europe and North America was repatriated to the home countries without regard to the development of the Territory. As early as 1974, the General Assembly had adopted Decree No. 1 prohibiting such exploitation. The Decree was one of the countless United Nations resolutions which had been flouted over the years by the racist régime and its economic allies. The corporations of some Member States had reportedly implemented the Decree, but the majority had categorically ignored it.

37. The process of ending South Africa's illegal occupation had been made still more difficult by the South African military build-up in Namibia. A force of 100,000 soldiers - one to every 12 Namibians - was stationed in the Territory. That did not augur well for the maintenance of peace and security in the region, particularly in view of South Africa's nuclear capability. The racist régime had been able to acquire its military capacity through the active military collaboration of the Western countries, notably the United States and the United Kingdom, which had supplied advanced military technology and spare parts in disregard of the United Nations arms embargo on South Africa.

38. Thus armed, the desperate racist régime had been using Namibia as a springboard for wanton attacks against the neighbouring States. On numerous occasions, it had violated Angola's territory and had armed, trained and financed dissident groups for commando raids in Lesotho, Mozambique, Angola and Botswana, in a systematic campaign of destabilization. Of late, economic projects had been the targets in all those States, particularly those designed to reduce economic dependence on the Pretoria régime.

39. As long as South Africa continued to receive economic, diplomatic, political, technical and military support from its Western allies, it would continue to refuse to withdraw from Namibia. Therefore, Tanzania once again called for disinvestment and the cessation of any further investment in South Africa. It urged the application of mandatory and comprehensive economic sanctions in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Sanctions had worked elsewhere, and it was time they were invoked against the arrogant régime of South Africa.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.