



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. CHAMORRO MORA (Nicaragua)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

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1. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to a number of documents relating to the question of Western Sahara: the revised draft resolution A/C.4/40/L.2/Rev.1, and the amendments to draft resolution A/C.4/40/L.4 that were contained in documents A/C.4/40/L.8-11.

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2. Mr. INFANTE (Chile) observed that the Committee's debate was the most solemn way to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on decolonization. Decolonization had unquestionably been the greatest achievement of the United Nations in its 40 years of existence, but it was also its greatest challenge, since peoples still remained under the yoke of colonialism, unable to exercise their right to determine their own future.

3. The most dramatic case in point was Namibia over which, in defiance of the will of the international community, South Africa maintained an illegal hold. Namibia must emerge from the situation of inferiority imposed on it by a reprehensible system.

4. Out of its experience as a member of the Special Committee on decolonization, Chile distinguished three guidelines for the Committee's future work. First, it should always be borne in mind that the process of self-determination meant a respect for the freely expressed will of the majority of the inhabitants of a Territory. Any other approach was a new version of colonialism. Second, it was urgent to ensure that extraneous political considerations or motivations, such as the strategic value of a Territory, did not enter into discussions of the implementation of self-determination on the basis of the free and sovereign will of the people themselves. Third, in view of the fact that each year in the Special Committee the information received from the administering Powers or Administering Authorities of the dependent Territories was challenged and the Special Committee had no other way of knowing exactly what was happening in the Territories, it was indispensable to send as many visiting missions as possible to each Territory in order to verify the actual situation on the spot.

5. Chile voiced the hope that all dependent peoples would soon be free.

6. Mr. THOMPSON (Fiji) observed that the United Nations had played a crucial role in the transition of more than 59 former colonies to independence. Some remnants of colonialism, however, still existed, the most glaring example being that of Namibia. The international community must redouble its efforts to convince South Africa to release its illegal hold over Namibia and allow the people to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination and independence in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978), without any pre-conditions or further prevarication.

7. The majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories were small islands, but the basic principles of decolonization were no less applicable to them. The inalienable right to self-determination was not contingent upon a Territory's size, population, geographical location or level of economic development. The special characteristics of the small Territories in no way absolved the administering Powers from their responsibility to promote their political, economic and social development. In particular, the administering Powers must explain the available options to the dependent peoples, and the Territories should never be forced to conform to any pre-conceived economic, social and political model which was not in accordance with the express wishes of the inhabitants.

(Mr. Thompson, Fiji)

8. It was not surprising that most of the small dependent Territories wanted to move very cautiously towards any major political transition. In the case of Tokelau, Pitcairn and American Samoa, Fiji noted with satisfaction the willingness of their respective administering Powers to co-operate closely with the Special Committee. In Tokelau, New Zealand was actively fostering awareness among the people of the possibilities open to them, while also working to ensure the preservation of their cultural identity and heritage; at the same time New Zealand co-operated closely with the Special Committee by providing up-to-date information and regularly inviting it to send visiting missions. New Zealand was to be commended for its efforts to observe the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on decolonization, and Fiji itself tried to facilitate Tokelau's development by offering students from the Territory opportunities to study in educational institutions in Fiji.
9. It hoped that the United Nations could facilitate the smooth transition of the remaining dependent Territories from colonial status to freedom.
10. Mr. DIMITRIJEVIC (Yugoslavia) said that the United Nations Charter and the subsequent Declaration on decolonization had confirmed a vision of a new world where domination and exploitation were inadmissible. In the years since, millions had travelled the path from dependence to sovereignty, strong in the belief that human dignity and the right to choose one's own road to social development had no price that they would not be ready to pay.
11. It was incumbent upon the administering Powers of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories to uphold the principle of decolonization and lead the peoples of the Territories to exercise their sovereign will. The maintenance of obsolete colonial relations in a world characterized by rivalry, mistrust and encroachment upon freedom was dangerous and completely unacceptable. Attempts at colonial control caused tensions also with neighbouring independent countries, which were for the most part non-aligned.
12. The first Summit Conference of non-aligned countries had been held shortly after the adoption of the Declaration on decolonization; and it was not mere chance that the newly-liberated countries, in the wake of their own struggle for freedom and dignity, had perceived in the policy of non-alignment new vistas of equality, international solidarity, non-bloc policy and a way to universal détente, peace and development. At the same time, the struggle against colonialism, racism and all forms of domination had become an integral part of the policy of authentic non-alignment.
13. Namibia was the most glaring example of the prolongation of colonial domination and foreign political, economic and military interference. South Africa's racist military machine had turned the whole of southern Africa into an area of dangerous crisis. The Namibian question was a question of the right to self-determination and independence, and there could be no other issues involved. Urgent steps, including sanctions under the United Nations Charter, had to be taken to terminate the colonial occupation in Namibia and to do away with the apartheid régime, whose policy of aggression and arrogance had exceeded the bounds of decency.

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(Mr. Dimitrijević, Yugoslavia)

14. Yugoslavia was deeply concerned over the persistence of the conflict in Western Sahara, which was a decolonization issue and would be solved only when, as recently urged by the Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries, the parties to the conflict held direct negotiations regarding a cease-fire and created the necessary conditions for a referendum of the people under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations.

15. For people in Namibia, Western Sahara and other Territories in the Pacific and the Atlantic, the question of their self-determination and independent development was second to none. The United Nations must fully realize its historic role by peacefully solving the remaining decolonization problems.

16. Mr. DOUMA (Congo) said that the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples provided a fitting opportunity to observe that, notwithstanding the great achievements registered in the field of decolonization, colonialism persisted in various parts of the world and peoples continued to suffer daily from exploitation and domination. He drew particular attention to the situation in Namibia, where the Pretoria régime continued its insulting defiance of the international community by continuing its illegal occupation of Namibia.

17. Although the problems in the various Territories were complex and approaches to them varied, one constant characterized them all, namely, their peoples had the inalienable right to self-determination. Geographical size or location, the level of the population and the amount of resources they possessed should in no way serve as pretexts to delay or prevent the independence of colonial Territories.

18. The administering Powers had a responsibility not only to improve the level of living of the indigenous populations, but also, in particular, to prepare them to make the choices that best served their interests. Furthermore, the political, military, economic, social or cultural activities of administering Powers must not interfere with the full exercise of the right of peoples to determine their own future. The desire of the people of Namibia, and of the Territories in the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean to take their rightful place among free nations must be honoured without reservation.

19. The Committee's very important and difficult task, namely, to accelerate the process of the exercise of self-determination by people under colonial domination, was complicated by the fact that the colonial Powers sought to preserve their economic interests and maintain strategic bases in various parts of the world. He urged them to abandon their selfishness and to translate into reality their adherence to the United Nations Charter and their proclaimed support for fundamental human rights. Peace, security and co-operation among nations were at stake, for so long as colonialism and domination persisted, tensions would persist and true understanding among countries would remain elusive.

(Mr. Douma, Congo)

20. With regard to the question of Western Sahara, his delegation considered that General Assembly resolution 39/40 offered the path towards a peaceful and lasting settlement of the conflict, particularly since it reaffirmed the determination of the United Nations to co-operate with OAU in implementing the latter's decisions, in particular, its resolution AHG/104 (XIX). His delegation would support efforts to create a climate of trust conducive to constructive negotiations between the parties, with a view to organizing the referendum which all sides apparently desired. His country hoped that the problem would find a rapid and lasting solution, for the benefit of the people of Western Sahara, Africa and the world.

21. Mr. OLEANDROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Great October Revolution, which had taken place 68 years previously, had been a supreme example of the overthrow of colonialism, exploitation and oppression, and of a people's accession to self-determination and independence. The nation's subsequent successful struggle against imperialists and counterrevolutionaries, the founding of the Soviet Union and the progress it had since made in international relations and co-operation had set an example to those nations still striving towards the goals set forth in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Although that Declaration had been made 25 years previously, there were still peoples, including those in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories, which were being denied their rights. The world community must take immediate steps to enable all such nations to achieve sovereignty and self-determination, regardless of race, creed or colour.

22. The Special Committee's reports before the Committee showed how Administering Authorities continued to oppose the granting of those rights; the attempts to cling to power included new and covert forms of colonialism, including such measures as establishing military bases and imposing some form of pseudo-independent status on the Territories they controlled.

23. Such was the case in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Despite the Declaration and the Charter, the people of Micronesia had been subjected to 40 years of rule by a foreign Power; their true aspirations, and the United Nations Trusteeship system itself, had been subordinated to United States interests. Proof of United States policy was to be seen in a memorandum issued by the then President Kennedy in 1963, which had declared the intention to retain Micronesia permanently within that country's sphere of political influence; moreover, a confidential document issued the same year had stressed that the United States could not give up the Territory of Micronesia, although it was likely to encounter growing United Nations pressure to do so, and had suggested a solution in the form of a so-called plebiscite. That step had, in fact, subsequently been taken, together with associated measures such as dismembering Micronesia and subjecting the various sectors to a form of neo-colonial status such as the Compact of Free Association for the Federated States of Micronesia.

24. The peoples of Micronesia, particularly those of Belau, were resisting the militarization of their homeland. The people of Belau were seeking constitutional prohibition of the storage, transit and deployment of nuclear weapons and other

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(Mr. Oleandrov, USSR)

means of mass destruction on their territory. Micronesians were opposed to any instrument under which the Administering Authority's will and supposed strategic interests would remain paramount; such instruments made even the current limited autonomy of the Territory meaningless, and nowhere contained any provisions for the Micronesians' ultimate accession to sovereignty and independence. Such instruments were contrary to the Charter and the norms of international law. They were, in effect, but new forms of "bantustans", in a Territory whose trusteeship was under a United Nations mandate. Moreover, the use of those territories for weapons-testing and other military purposes posed a threat to the entire region. The Administering Authority was not entitled to alter the status of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands unilaterally without consulting the Security Council.

25. Pursuant to the Programme of Action contained in resolution 2621 (XXV), the General Assembly was to assume responsibility in cases of Territories in which the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had not been implemented. That Declaration, and the principles of the Charter, had been reaffirmed in the Special Committee's recommendations, which no Member State truly desirous of an end to colonialism in Micronesia could oppose.

26. The continued colonial exploitation and militarization of islands such as Guam, Puerto Rico, Diego Garcia, the Bermudas and the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the attendant stifling of genuine national economic growth, were a continuing obstacle to progress towards freedom and independence, as well as a source of growing world tension. One example, referred to at an earlier meeting of the Committee, was the United Kingdom's military base on the Turks and Caicos Islands. Although it had been claimed that such bases were only radar installations, the intention to use them for military purposes had been illustrated by the use of similar installations in the South Atlantic during the conflict with Argentina. Such activities warranted constant vigilance.

27. The colonization of small Territories remained a pressing problem calling for an urgent solution; vestiges of colonialism anywhere posed a threat to international peace and security. The Special Committee's recommendations constituted a positive measure which deserved speedy implementation.

28. Mr. YUSUFI (Afghanistan) said that with the movement towards peace, freedom and democracy brought about by the founding of the United Nations, the colonialist system had crumbled and scores of countries had achieved their independence, many of them joining the Non-Aligned Movement as well. Unfortunately, however, even after the landmark Declaration on decolonization, the right to freedom and independence was still being denied to a number of peoples in different parts of the world, often by brute force. In Namibia, the tyranny of a ruling colonial Power had been coupled with the cruel injustice of the apartheid system. Afghanistan condemned the Pretoria régime for its illegal occupation of Namibia, as it did all those who assisted the régime in perpetuating its rule. Denouncing attempts to link the independence of Namibia to extraneous issues such as the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, his Government supported the United Nations plan for Namibia and demanded the immediate and unconditional independence of



(Mr. Yusufi, Afghanistan)

Namibian people under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), their sole legitimate representative.

29. In the Middle East, a permanent and just solution was inconceivable without the restoration of the inalienable right of the people of Palestine to set up their own State, under the leadership of their sole legitimate representatives, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Israel must also withdraw from all the Arab territories it was continuing to occupy with the assistance of the United States. To resolve the conflict, an international conference should be convened, in which all the parties concerned would participate, including the PLO.

30. Afghanistan also supported the just struggle of the people of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic for self-determination and independence.

31. In the Indian Ocean region, denying the legitimate sovereignty of Mauritius over the Chagos Archipelago, the United States was strengthening its military presence in Diego Garcia. The nuclear weapons being stockpiled on the island and the threat posed by the United States rapid deployment forces in the region threatened the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the littoral and hinterland States, including Afghanistan.

32. The illegal attempts by the United States to withdraw the Trust Territories of the Pacific islands from international jurisdiction were of special concern. Afghanistan also supported the United Nations resolutions concerning the full independence of Puerto Rico. The situation in Central America and the Caribbean remained tense: his Government condemned the invasion of Grenada and the plots against Nicaragua; and it demanded the return of Guantanamo to Cuba.

33. Afghanistan attached great importance to the right of self-determination as the basis for a number of other important principles of contemporary international law, including the sovereign equality of States, the non-use of force in relations between States and the non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

34. Mr. YOSSIPHOV (Bulgaria) said that it was a source of regret that, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the process of decolonization was far from having achieved its goal, namely, the eradication of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. Many countries and peoples were still under colonial domination, and the colonial Powers were placing new obstacles in the path of the Declaration's implementation. Western imperialist States, through their economic, financial, military, diplomatic and moral support, encouraged the aggressiveness and arrogance of the racist authorities occupying Namibia.

35. In contravention of the Declaration, colonial Powers, claiming vital or strategic interests, sought to increase their military use of colonial Territories in different parts of the world. He drew attention in particular to the situation in the Trust Territory of the Pacific and Guam. At the same time, as the Committee had learned from petitioners at the current session, no significant steps

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(Mr. Yossiphov, Bulgaria)

had been taken to educate the populations of the colonial Territories or to create the conditions necessary for their transition to independence.

36. Furthermore, the colonial Powers were endeavouring to force colonial peoples to abandon their struggle for genuine national independence, in contravention of the Declaration and the Plan of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 35/118.

37. The Committee was duty-bound to take into consideration the requests made by petitioners and to urge the Committee of 24 to continue its efforts to bring about the implementation of the Declaration in all territories still under colonial domination. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's principled position of firm support for the speedy and unconditional implementation of the Declaration and the complete eradication of the inhuman system of colonialism.

38. Mr. McDOWELL (New Zealand) said that his country's commitment to decolonization had been consistent during the previous 40 years. Of the four Non-Self-Governing Territories for which New Zealand had originally been responsible, only Tokelau remained within its mandate. The relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand was unlike that in any other Territory within the Committee's purview, because of Tokelau's remoteness and harsh environment. Tokelau did not have a resident administrator, the usual form of colonial rule. The Public Service was almost entirely Tokelauan; the sole New Zealand official was resident in Samoa, not Tokelau, and visited the latter as head of the Public Service, not as a New Zealand Government representative.

39. Internal administration was in the hands of each island's Council of Elders, and matters of national significance were dealt with by the General Fono, whose members were selected by Tokelauans themselves, with no officially appointed members. Chairmanship was shared among the three islands' elected heads, and New Zealand representatives could attend only as observers and advise only if so requested.

40. The Special Committee's draft decision had noted recent developments and recorded the New Zealand Prime Minister's assurance that his country would continue to be guided solely by the Tokelau people's wishes about the Territory's future status. As shown in that report, Tokelau wished to retain the present relationship with New Zealand; that current wish must be respected and supported. But in order to ensure that the Tokelau people's wishes continued to be heard, his Government continued to heed the Tokelau leadership, and supported the sending of visiting missions by the Special Committee to Non-Self-Governing Territories. His country had always welcomed such missions; the first one ever sent by the Organization had been to the Cook Islands in 1963 and had established the principle of a United Nations role in supervising elections as a forerunner to self-determination. A Special Committee mission in 1986, invited by Tokelau and New Zealand jointly, would be able to judge progress for itself. Tokelau's political and administrative development during the previous five years had been steady, and the General Fono had decided that its leadership should study at first hand developments elsewhere. Financial control - always a yardstick of decolonization - was in the hands of

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(Mr. McDowell, New Zealand)

Tokelau; although almost 90 per cent of the annual budget was provided by New Zealand, allocations for any purpose were decided by the General Fono with the prior approval of the Budget Committee.

41. Other specialist committees of the General Fono supervised and planned agricultural development and public health activities. For example, efforts were being directed at enhancing copra production, harnessing lagoon resources to improve food production and develop new export products. In the health field, staff were being trained at institutions in the Pacific to implement public health programmes, and new emphasis was being placed on the provision of safe and adequate water supplies.

42. His delegation was a sponsor of the draft resolution on offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/C.6/40/L.6), which dealt with a subject of the utmost importance in preparing colonial peoples for self-determination. In the case of Tokelau, his country provided assistance to ensure that training opportunities were available for the people to study overseas at the institutions most suited to their needs, which were not necessarily located in New Zealand. Tokelau had links through history, culture and development interests with other island countries of the South Pacific region. While there was much in New Zealand of relevance to the people of Tokelau, there were also training requirements which could best be met by having students study elsewhere in the South Pacific. The people of Tokelau had the responsibility of deciding how training programmes should be designed to meet the social and economic priorities they themselves had established.

43. He expressed his delegation's appreciation to those countries in the South Pacific region which had made training facilities available to Tokelauans, thereby assisting the Territory in meeting its educational and training objectives.

44. The relevant draft resolution and the replies received by the Secretary-General from member Governments assumed that scholarships should be made available for study in the donor country's institutions. His delegation appealed to Member States to continue to make such scholarships available, but in a manner which allowed the people of the Territories to decide for themselves where the scholarships could best be used.

45. His Government pledged its continued co-operation with the United Nations in sharing their responsibilities towards the people of Tokelau. His delegation looked forward to the Committee's visiting mission to the Territory in 1986, as it would provide an opportunity for members to see the changes that had taken place since the last such mission.

46. Ms. MAUALA (Samoa) said that her country had close ties with Tokelau, the two countries shared many interests in their region and her delegation welcomed the fact that Tokelau played a full role in certain key regional organizations.

(Ms. Mauala, Samoa)

47. Since Samoa had attained independence, a Treaty of Friendship between it and New Zealand, the former administering Power, had been at the foundation of a close and warm relationship between them. When the last United Nations visiting mission had come to Samoa on its way to Tokelau, it had been assured that Samoa was pleased to allow the Office for Tokelau Affairs to continue to operate in Samoa, an assurance that had been repeated to Tokelau leaders at the frequent meetings they held with her Government.

48. The path to self-determination for Non-Self-Governing Territories, and in particular, Tokelau, must proceed at the pace desired by the inhabitants of the Territory. The wishes of the inhabitants must be paramount in determining their political and social progress. In the very small Territories now being considered by the Committee, the traditional pattern of the evolution to independence would not necessarily be applicable or appropriate. There was a need for flexibility to ensure that such small Territories enjoyed their rights under General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) in a manner suited to their particular needs. Whatever path they chose to give expression to their rights under those resolutions, the people of Tokelau could look forward to a continuing close and warm relationship with her country. Her delegation welcomed the fact that a United Nations visiting mission would go to Tokelau in 1986, and her Government looked forward to holding discussions with it. She hoped that the Committee would again adopt its decision on Tokelau by consensus, thus reflecting its interest in the well-being of the inhabitants.

49. It should also be noted that the people of American Samoa had clearly expressed their desire to maintain their traditional ties with the United States. The Committee should respect that reality, adequately reflected in the relevant draft resolution, which should be adopted by consensus.

50. The CHAIRMAN said that Burkina Faso, Burundi and Zimbabwe had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/40/L.5; Burkina Faso, Samoa and Zimbabwe had become sponsors of draft resolution L.6.

Request for a hearing

51. The CHAIRMAN said that he had received a communication containing a request for a hearing under agenda item 34. In accordance with the normal practice, he suggested that the request should be circulated as a Committee document and considered at a future meeting.

52. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.