



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mrs. KING-ROUSSEAU (Trinidad and Tobago)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

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1. Mr. SELVARAJAH (Singapore) said that it was tragic that the racist Pretoria régime was continuing its illegal occupation of Namibia, in violation of the Charter, the norms of international behaviour, and the principles of human rights.

(Mr. Selvarajah, Singapore)

South Africa was the last remaining relic of the doctrine of white supremacy which, as the whole world agreed, was immoral. Although the United Nations had no physical power to dismantle apartheid and restore the right of self-determination to Namibia, as the Pretoria régime was well aware, it could make Pretoria pay a heavy price through diplomatic, political and economic isolation. Pressure must be exerted through co-operative action by all members of the international community, for non-co-operation by a few would sabotage the efforts of the majority. The Pretoria régime would desperately resist those pressures, but in that war of attrition majority international opinion must ultimately triumph, since concerted action by the international community could inflict severe damage on South Africa. The plummeting value of the rand was fuelling inflation, which now stood at an annual rate of 17 per cent, and South Africa's excessive dependence on exports of gold and diamonds for foreign exchange earnings increased its vulnerability. The United Nations must demonstrate to the racist régime that it had the stamina to force change in South Africa and Namibia. It also owed a moral obligation to the majority of black South Africans and the people of Namibia to end their years of suffering, including the massacre of innocent children and the detention of thousands of people, including children, under emergency regulations.

2. United Nations actions towards Pretoria would serve as a deterrent to other potential aggressors. In Kampuchea, the occupying Power had ignored majority international opinion for the past seven years and was continuing to inflict untold suffering on the Kampuchean people and to deny their fundamental right to self-determination. The United Nations must demonstrate that it had the legal and moral authority to halt that behaviour. If new forms of colonialism were encouraged, that would undermine the work done by the Committee over the past 26 years. The devious strategy used by the new colonialists was especially disconcerting because they blatantly violated the Charter while cloaking their designs in rhetorical assurances of good intent. The United Nations must not lose sight of the dangers of recolonization. Otherwise, its collective interests would be jeopardized by the selfish interests of those new aggressors and the credibility of the Organization would be seriously undermined.

3. Singapore supported the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), endorsed strongly the report of the Special Committee on decolonization and supported General Assembly resolution 35/118, which contained a comprehensive and rational plan of action for the granting of independence to Non-Self-Governing Territories. His country shared similar characteristics, historical experiences and limitations with those Territories and understood fully their desire for self-determination. Its own experience had shown that limitations such as small geographical size and population were not insurmountable obstacles to economic and political development. Administering Powers must therefore make genuine efforts to improve the standard of living, provide better educational facilities and create greater political consciousness in the Territories, with a view to hastening the process of independence.

(Mr. Selvarajah, Singapore)

4. Independence and security for such small States could best be ensured through regional co-operation, which offered genuine peace and stability rather than the risk of becoming pawns in great-Power conflicts. Before the formation of ASEAN, relations among the non-Communist countries of South-East Asia had been characterized by mistrust, envy and even conflict. Through regional co-operation, discord had been replaced by harmony, stability and economic prosperity. Regionalism could thus help the small Territories to become viable political and economic entities.

5. Mr. RAKOTOZAFY (Madagascar), speaking on the question of Western Sahara, said that the provisions of General Assembly resolution 40/50 were consistent with the principles upheld by Madagascar for the exercise of the right of the Saharan people to self-determination. Madagascar had always called for direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict, Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, with a view to creating appropriate conditions for the implementation of the peace plan of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Those negotiations should lead to agreement on a cease-fire, a timetable for the withdrawal of Morocco's troops and administration from the Territory, and procedures for holding a referendum on self-determination.

6. Madagascar hoped that the mediation efforts undertaken by the Chairman of OAU and the Secretary-General of the United Nations would be continued. It understood the present context for negotiations, as defined in the report of the Secretary-General (A/41/673), to be simply preliminary contacts which should lead as soon as possible to direct negotiations between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO. Current indirect contacts between the parties to the conflict should be confined to finding ways of implementing General Assembly resolution 40/50. The non-aligned countries, at their recent meetings at New Delhi and Harare, had reiterated their appeal to Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO to show the necessary political will to implement OAU resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) and General Assembly resolutions 39/40 and 40/50.

7. His delegation supported the conclusion reached by the Secretary-General in his report that the ultimate aim should be to enable the people of Western Sahara to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. The legal and political framework for a peaceful settlement of the question was already provided in the OAU peace plan endorsed by the General Assembly. Strong diplomatic pressure should be exerted on Morocco to negotiate directly with the Frente POLISARIO, thereby breaking the present deadlock. The technical details of the implementation of the settlement plan, which should be based on internationally recognized norms and practices, could be worked out only after the two parties had reached a political agreement on the substance. Such agreement was essential if the referendum on self-determination, the final stage of the peace plan, was to be fair and genuine.

8. Madagascar had recognized the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic and would support any initiative aimed at satisfying the legitimate aspirations of the Saharan people.

9. Miss MILLAN (Colombia), after expressing condolences to the people and Government of Mozambique for the tragic death of President Samora Machel, said that decolonization was not only the most significant achievement of the United Nations but had also played a major role in the development of international law. A veritable body of case law on decolonization had emerged which derived essentially from the principles of the self-determination of peoples, the territorial integrity of States and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without any discrimination, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed by numerous resolutions and decisions of its principal organs.

10. Although resolution 1514 (XV) had recognized the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, the universal exercise of that right remained to be achieved. That principle applied to all the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Self-determination in the true sense offered a wide range of options enabling each people to choose its own destiny in accordance with the particular characteristics of its Territory and the wishes and nature of its population. The international community, represented by both the administering Powers and the United Nations, had a major role to play in that process and had a duty to inform colonial peoples of the various options available to them.

11. The right of self-determination was inextricably linked with the right of colonial peoples to sovereignty over their natural resources. Unfortunately, newly independent countries were still in a situation of social, economic and cultural dependence - what had come to be known as neo-colonialism. Thus, political independence could not be the final objective but simply an important stage in the achievement of a broader social and human emancipation from inappropriate economic and social structures and from repression. The battle must therefore be waged against both colonial and neo-colonial systems.

12. The significant achievements of the United Nations should not tempt it to "rest on its laurels" and she urged the Fourth Committee to break its deadlock by discarding pointless recrimination and acting individually and collectively to achieve the aims set forth in the Charter.

13. As a founding member of the United Nations Council for Namibia, Colombia would do everything in its power to secure the speedy and genuine independence of that Territory. It advocated a swift and appropriate solution to the question of Western Sahara and welcomed the progress made in that regard by the Secretary-General, working in close co-operation with the current Chairman of OAU. The international community must give strong support to those initiatives, which should lead to a negotiated, just and lasting solution enabling the people of the Territory to exercise their inalienable right of self-determination.

14. Colombia also advocated the early resumption of negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom so that all the problems outstanding between the two Governments, including all aspects relating to the future of the Malvinas, could be resolved.

15. The international community must not waste the opportunity to help colonial Territories through the difficult transition to independence, in which they needed the co-operation of all countries in a position to assist them.

16. Mrs. CARRASCO (Bolivia) said that, 25 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the process of decolonization was still not complete. In Namibia, the South African colonialist régime, defying the expressed will of the international community, continued not only to occupy the Territory but also exploit its non-renewable natural resources. The recent Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries had reaffirmed the right of all countries and peoples, in particular the Namibian people, to exercise full sovereignty over their natural resources. Her Government firmly condemned South Africa's refusal to recognize the legitimate demands of the Namibian people for a peaceful transition to independence under Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and an end to the illegal plunder of Namibia's natural resources. At the special session of the General Assembly devoted to Namibia, it had proposed specific measures to enable the United Nations to ensure the self-determination and independence of Namibia.

17. In the light of the responsibility of administering Powers, under Article 73 of the Charter to preserve the natural and human resources of Non-Self-Governing Territories, and help develop their structures, her delegation believed that those Territories should be prepared for their independence through whatever means of information were available, so that their peoples were better equipped to participate actively in decisions on their future.

18. Her delegation welcomed the willingness of the Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom to seek a negotiated solution to the question of Gibraltar. It reaffirmed its support for Argentina's claim to the Malvinas and once again called for negotiations between the parties with a view to arriving at a just and peaceful settlement. In Western Sahara, a negotiated solution should be sought which would enable the people of the Territory to exercise their right of self-determination. It was encouraging that both Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO had agreed to participate in negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations and OAU. Although both parties had recognized that the procedures for solving the problem should be established in accordance with relevant international practice and norms, they clearly still disagreed on such issues as the arrangements for the cease-fire and referendum. The parties must show the necessary flexibility in order to arrive at a just political solution of the question which would benefit the peace and stability of the Maghreb countries.

19. Her delegation commended the efforts made by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations, in particular the International Labour Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization, to help improve the economic and social situation of the colonial Territories. The United Nations Educational and Training Programme for South Africa was an important part of United Nations activities to help the peoples of colonial territories to strengthen respect for and the advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Her delegation commended the Special Committee of 24 on its tireless efforts to carry out its mandate.

20. Mrs. NAVCHAA (Mongolia) said that, although the United Nations had achieved significant progress in securing the exercise of the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination and independence in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), colonialism still persisted in various parts of the world, particularly southern Africa, the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic Oceans, and the Caribbean, and was a source of tension which threatened international security. The universal and unconditional attainment of the right of every people to self-determination was therefore an important component of the comprehensive system of international security which many countries were advocating. The denial of that fundamental right to the Namibian people and the peoples of other colonial Territories led to conflicts which had serious consequences for peace.

21. The colonial Powers were stubbornly blocking the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and, despite the repeated decisions and calls of the international community, were trying to impose neo-colonial arrangements on the colonial, dependent and Trust Territories. They and their transnational corporations were intensifying the exploitation of the natural and human resources of those Territories and were using them for military purposes, including the testing of nuclear missiles. All these activities seriously hindered the implementation of the right of the peoples of those Territories to self-determination and independence and threatened their security and the security of the region.

22. A particularly serious situation existed in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands which, in violation of the Declaration on decolonization, had been divided up into different entities and was being virtually annexed by the United States. Mongolia condemned those actions and believed that resolution 2183 (LIII) of the Trusteeship Council, recommending that the Trusteeship Agreement be terminated, was unjustified. The people of Micronesia should be given the possibility of exercising their right to genuine self-determination without outside interference.

23. Her delegation supported fully the political declaration of the Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, which called for the immediate implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant United Nations resolutions. The peoples of the colonial Territories must be guaranteed immediately their right to self-determination and independence.

24. Mr. MOUMIN (Comoros) said that the international community should intensify its efforts to enable the remaining colonial Territories and peoples to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

25. He welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the question of Western Sahara (A/41/673) and the good will demonstrated by the parties to the conflict during both rounds of talks in New York, brought about by the Secretary-General's good offices. The report reflected both the Secretary-General's firm conviction as to the credibility of the procedure followed and his optimism regarding the prospects for success. For the first time since the question of the Western Sahara had become deadlocked, the Secretary-General's initiative held out hope that the problem was finally on the way to a universally satisfactory solution, in

(Mr. Moumin, Comoros)

accordance with the relevant resolutions of OAU and the United Nations and with the principles of the Charter. That initiative enjoyed the full co-operation of the current Chairman of OAU and deserved the support of the entire international community so that concord and co-operation might be restored in the Maghreb. His delegation welcomed the flexibility and political will shown by Morocco, as reflected in paragraph 14 of the report. Such a constructive attitude could have paved the way for a consensus based on the report's conclusions.

26. The Secretary-General's flexible and pragmatic initiative was the most appropriate framework for achieving the ultimate objective shared by all the parties concerned, namely, the exercise by the people of the Western Sahara of their right of self-determination, and deserved unwavering collective support.

27. Mr. MAJENGO (United Republic of Tanzania) expressed his delegation's shock and sorrow at the tragic death of President Machel of Mozambique, which was a great loss not only to the people of Mozambique, but to southern Africa, Africa and the whole world.

28. Turning to the question of Western Sahara, the Saharan people had long been struggling to liberate their country from illegal occupation by Moroccan troops. Regrettably, the occupying Power had consistently obstructed all peace initiatives since 1975. That denial of the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence posed a threat to the security of the entire region. The question of Western Sahara could not be solved militarily.

29. The illegal occupation of Western Sahara was to be condemned precisely because it "violated the provisions of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity concerning colonial boundaries imposed on peoples without their consent. The revival of territorial claims in Africa could lead only to vicious, fratricidal wars of attrition. Resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, together with General Assembly resolution 40/50, provided an internationally acceptable peace plan. The recent Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries had also reaffirmed that the question of Western Sahara was one of decolonization and had stressed that the holding of direct talks between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO was the key to the problem. His delegation urged the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of OAU to continue their efforts to persuade the two parties to the conflict to enter into direct negotiations leading to the holding of a referendum free from external interference.

30. Mr. KOUNKOU (People's Republic of the Congo), after echoing the condolences expressed by previous speakers on the death of President Machel of Mozambique, observed that, as a result of the considerable achievements of the United Nations in the area of decolonization, thousands of people all over the world had finally become masters of their own destinies.

31. It was, however, paradoxical that, as the number of Territories to be decolonized decreased, the work of decolonization became increasingly complex. Certain administering Powers to which the United Nations had given responsibility

(Mr. Koukou, People's
Republic of the Congo)

for the political, economic and cultural emancipation of the peoples of the Territories entrusted to them as a means of enabling those peoples to achieve self-determination within a reasonable period of time, were now concerned solely with safeguarding their own economic or military interests and plundered those Territories' human and material resources. Furthermore the decolonization process was currently being viewed erroneously - in the context of the strategic rivalry between the two super-Powers.

32. The adoption of resolution 1514 (XV), however, had shown that the international community intended to eliminate colonial domination once and for all. Africa, which had welcomed that initiative with great optimism, had in 1985 taken a critical look at its past on the occasion of a seminar held at Brazzaville to consider ways and means of eradicating colonialism from the face of the earth. Africa was particularly committed to that goal because the southern part of its continent was the victim of one of the most scandalous situations of all time, namely, the existence of the inhuman and anachronistic apartheid régime and its corollary, the illegal occupation of Namibia. By emphasizing the particular case of Namibia he did not mean to diminish the importance of the situation of the small Territories of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, whose peoples deserved every assistance from the international community. The report of the Special Committee of 24 on the question of Namibia (A/41/23 (Part V)) showed that the racist Pretoria régime was still not prepared to comply with international law by withdrawing from Namibia in conformity with Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Instead, that régime, supported by its allies, had resorted to numerous delaying tactics and subterfuges such as the notorious "linkage" of decolonization to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, while pursuing its policy of massive repression and violence against the Namibian people, trying to impose an interim Government in Namibia, stepping up the plunder of Namibia's resources and using the Territory as a launching pad for aggression against neighbouring African States.

33. All the forums that had considered the question of Namibia in 1986 had called expressly for immediate global action to solve that pressing problem. He hoped that the current deadlock would not last much longer for it only exacerbated the disappointment and frustration of the peoples of Africa and of the Namibian people in particular. The time for empty rhetoric and for resolutions and declarations which had no effect was past. The time had come for action. As the current Chairman of OAU had stated at the opening of the current session of the General Assembly, the problem was one of decolonization and nothing else. The linkage artificially established with the internal situation of Angola could not alter that fact.

34. The time had thus come for the General Assembly to face up to its responsibilities. The Fourth Committee must act as its conscience dictated and as its resolutions required. Since there were no remaining advocates of racism, it was time to abolish apartheid. For those who maintained that the use of force should be prohibited even in the fight against apartheid, he recommended, at the least, the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa

(Mr. Kounkou, People's
Republic of the Congo)

which, if the entire international community complied, would contribute to the final eradication of apartheid. The oppressed people of South Africa and the front-line States themselves were prepared to accept the possible consequences of such sanctions, if that was the price of dignity.

35. He commended the efforts made to mobilize international public opinion in support of the struggle of the oppressed peoples of southern Africa, whether through the United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, members of the media, and national parliaments - especially in the West. All those elements together could serve to alter the positions taken by Governments.

36. His Government was committed to securing a negotiated solution to the problem of Western Sahara so that the people of that Territory could exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. The current Chairman of OAU, the President of the Congo, had expressed satisfaction at the preliminary talks conducted in that connection and had assured the Secretary-General of the whole-hearted co-operation of OAU. He was convinced that the parties to the conflict could still draw on Africa's centuries of wisdom to help them arrive at a negotiated, peaceful solution.

37. Mr. BOZHKOV (Bulgaria) observed with satisfaction that, out of the almost 100 colonial and Trust Territories which had gained independence after the founding of the United Nations, more than 70 had achieved that status after the adoption of the Declaration on decolonization. There still existed, however, a number of small Territories whose peoples were deprived of their legitimate right to freedom and independence. Factors such as territorial size, geographical location, size of population and limited natural resources should in no way delay the speedy implementation of the Declaration. The vigorous opposition of the imperialist Powers came as no surprise, however. By means of political manoeuvres, financial deals, threats and often direct interference, they were imposing various types of neo-colonialism on the small Territories and turning them into military and strategic strongholds and bases for aggression.

38. An obvious example of such practices was United States policy towards the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. To judge from repeated statements by the United States Assistant Secretary of Defense, the avowed goal of the United States was to transform Micronesia into what United States Senator Gary Hart had called a military colony. As part of its growing militarization of the Trust Territory, the United States had, in violation of the Declaration on decolonization and the relevant United Nations resolutions, deliberately divided the Territory into four parts and imposed on them a neo-colonial status of "commonwealth" or "free association" where freedom was present in name only. The future of Micronesia remained a question of decolonization, and the United Nations had a responsibility to ensure that its people eventually exercised their right to self-determination and independence. The United States attempt to annex Micronesia through the Compact of Free Association and the granting of commonwealth status was a violation of the Trusteeship Agreement of 1947 and also contravened provisions of the Constitution of Palau.

(Mr. Bozhkov, Bulgaria)

39. His delegation supported the conclusions and recommendations made in part VI of the Special Committee's report (A/41/23) with regard to Micronesia and the other 14 Territories. Support for freedom, independence and self-determination had always been one of the main principles of Bulgarian policy.

40. Mr. TAEB (Afghanistan) said that, despite the positive role played by the United Nations in the process of decolonization, it was unfortunate that a number of Territories still suffered under some form of colonialism. Administering Powers had an obligation to help colonial peoples in every possible way to achieve self-determination and independence. Obviously, that could not be accomplished politically when economic dependency persisted and peoples did not have control over their lands and natural resources. Furthermore, the presence of administering Powers' military bases, and especially their nuclear weapons, constituted a major obstacle to the political and economic independence of the Territories, as well as a great threat to international peace and security.

41. All the land of Non-Self-Governing Territories must be restored to their people and foreign military bases and installations removed. The imperialists tried to conceal their strategic military interests by claiming that their military presence provided security guarantees, a claim belied by the aggressive use of such military bases in Guam during the Viet Nam war and in Puerto Rico during the invasion of Grenada.

42. Regarding the social and economic development of the small dependent Territories, problems of unemployment and a shortage of medical services had reached a critical level and the foreign trade balance showed a large deficit. Tourism and related activities continued to dominate the economy of some of the Territories. Instead of building new military bases, the administering Powers should improve those sectors of the economy which would enable the people to achieve economic self-reliance. Those Powers should, moreover, provide the United Nations regularly with information on economic, social and educational conditions in the Territories. In that connection, the decision of the United Kingdom not to take part in the future work of the Special Committee would hamper its effectiveness, and Afghanistan called on that country to reconsider its decision.

43. Mr. NGUYEN SI XUNG (Viet Nam), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that a statement had been made regarding the situation in Kampuchea that was a total distortion of the facts. Without continuing an unnecessary war of words, he wished to remind the representative concerned that his country had acted as a mercenary in the war of aggression against Viet Nam, allowing its territory to be used as a logistical base and a place of amusement for the invading troops. It had thus enriched itself at the expense of the suffering of the Vietnamese people and was in no position to lecture others.

44. Mr. SELVARATHA (Singapore), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the very delegation which had accused his country of collusion with the United States in the Viet Nam war and had referred to the ASEAN countries as being on the

(Mr. Selvarajah, Singapore)

side of the imperialists during that war was now objecting to being condemned for doing in Kampuchea precisely what the United States had done to it. Surely that was a double standard. The allegations just made should not be taken seriously, because they were made routinely against all South-East Asian countries which were opposed to Viet Nam's occupation of Kampuchea. The vote in the General Assembly on the resolution on the situation in Kampuchea, which had taken place that very morning, spoke for itself.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on agenda items 19, 104, 106 and 12, 107 and 108 was concluded. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.4/41/L.2, Greece had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.4/41/L.3, and Thailand and Colombia had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/41/L.5.

The meeting rose at 5.00 p.m.