

# 2179th meeting

Tuesday, 2 December 1975, at 3.40 p.m.

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

A/C.4/SR.2179

## AGENDA ITEM 23

**Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (continued)** (A/10023 (parts I, II and IV), A/10023/Add.5, A/10023/Add.6 (parts I and II), A/10023/Add.8 (part III), A/10082, A/10095, A/10097, A/10101, A/10104, A/10300, A/10326-S/11862, A/10337-S/11872, A/10373-S/11881, A/C.4/804, A/C.4/L.1120, A/C.4/L.1121, A/C.4/L.1122/Rev.1)

### QUESTION OF FRENCH SOMALILAND: CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (continued)

1. Mrs. Cissé (Guinea), on behalf of the sponsors, introduced draft resolution A/C.4/L.1122/Rev.1, concerning the question of French Somaliland. After having followed the debate on the item and in particular after having heard the statements made by the representatives of the administering Power (2168th meeting), of the liberation movements recognized by OAU (*ibid.*), of Ethiopia (2168th and 2172nd meetings) and of Somalia (2170th and 2172nd meetings), the sponsors had held consultations with a view to seeking a compromise draft resolution which could be supported by all concerned and which would be in keeping with the need to enable the people of Djibouti to achieve independence and enjoy their inalienable rights in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

2. The sponsors of the draft resolution were open to any suggestions that would improve the text, which had been worked out in a spirit of compromise and with a view to obtaining unity within the African group of States. The sponsors therefore hoped that it would be acceptable to the representatives of Ethiopia and Somalia and, in view of the administering Power's declared readiness to grant the Territory independence in accordance with resolution 1514 (XV), would receive unanimous support.

3. Mr. CONTEH (Sierra Leone) said that his delegation supported draft resolution A/C.4/L.1122/Rev.1. Both the preamble and the operative part were in keeping with the United Nations Charter and the aspirations for which the Committee had been established. He therefore echoed the plea of the representative of Guinea that it should be adopted unanimously by the Committee.

4. Mr. IBRAHIM (Ethiopia)\* said that his delegation wished to extend its profound thanks to the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/L.1122/Rev.1 on the question of

\* The statements on the question of French Somaliland made at this meeting by the representatives of Ethiopia and Somalia are reproduced *in extenso* in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at its 2172nd meeting.

so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti). That gratitude was addressed, in particular, to the Ambassador of Guinea, Mrs. Cissé, and to the other members of the drafting committee of the African group of States, who had worked tirelessly to produce the draft resolution. Members of the Committee would recall that, prior to the formulation of the draft resolution, both Ethiopia and Somalia had prepared separate and mutually exclusive draft resolutions on the question. As a result of the time and energy devoted by the drafting committee to its delicate assignment and the co-operation of interested parties, there was now a single draft.

5. Despite the difference in content between paragraph 4 of the Ethiopian draft and paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.4/L.1122/Rev.1, the Ethiopian Government, in deference to its African brothers and sisters who had worked so tirelessly in the spirit of African solidarity, had reluctantly accepted the formulation of paragraph 6 as presented by the drafting committee. That acceptance did not, however, in any way detract from its conviction that paragraph 4 of the Ethiopian draft happened to be of crucial importance to the future of the Territory and to peace in the region. However, as he had already stated, in the spirit of African solidarity, his Government had decided to go along with the opinion of the African group of States.

6. His delegation was obliged to inform its African brothers that it had gone as far as it could. Nothing less than paragraph 6 was acceptable to it and it believed that any further mutilation of the text would neither help the people of the Territory nor satisfy the interested parties. Members might, however, feel that the language of some paragraphs needed to be further refined in order to improve the logical sequence. If necessary, his delegation was prepared to indicate where that might be done.

7. In the light of the information that he had just received from his Government, he wished to bring another matter to the attention of the Committee: the OAU Co-ordination Committee for the Liberation of Africa, meeting at Dar es Salaam from 24 to 28 November 1975, had decided that certain steps should be taken towards effecting the formulation of a common front consisting of all political groups within and outside Djibouti with a view to co-ordinating their efforts to achieve independence. His delegation considered that decision to be constructive and important enough to deserve inclusion in the draft resolution now before the Committee. To that end, it had formulated the text of an additional operative paragraph and requested the Committee to include it in the draft resolution immediately after paragraph 5 and to renumber the subsequent paragraphs accordingly. His amendment read as follows:

"6. Welcomes the initiative taken by the Organization of African Unity towards reconciling all political groups

within and outside the Territory by resolving their differences and establishing a united front in the paramount interest of the national independence of the people of so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti)".<sup>1</sup>

8. He wished to assure the Committee that his delegation was prepared to consider any constructive proposals with respect to the final text of the additional paragraph he had proposed.

9. Mr. HUSSEIN (Somalia) said that he first of all wished to associate himself with the previous speaker and express his delegation's gratitude and appreciation to the drafting committee assigned by the African group of States to harmonize and, if possible, reach a compromise on the two draft resolutions submitted by the Governments of Ethiopia and Somalia, respectively, on the question of French Somaliland (Djibouti). His delegation very much appreciated the dedication and the efforts of that committee in trying to arrive at a solution to the problem and reach a compromise on a draft resolution on the subject to be submitted to the Committee.

10. As had quite rightly been pointed out by the Ambassador of Guinea in introducing the draft resolution under discussion, the drafting committee and the two parties directly concerned—namely, Ethiopia and Somalia—had held at least two more meetings in order to reach a compromise on the two draft resolutions that had been prepared by the two Governments directly concerned. Draft resolution A/C.4/L.1122/Rev.1 was more or less the product of the common goodwill shown by both Ethiopia and Somalia, although that did not mean that the drafting committee had not contributed to its formulation.

11. Nevertheless, while his delegation had shown, and was ready to continue to show, understanding, there were a number of points in the draft resolution on which it had some observations. He hoped that the Secretariat would distribute the draft amendments it wished to suggest, which he would read out.<sup>2</sup>

12. Before doing so, however, he would like to make a few remarks of a general character on the subject. At the last meeting with the drafting committee, there had been a number of paragraphs in draft resolution A/C.4/L.1122/Rev.1, including paragraph 6, which his delegation had found a little difficult to accept as formulated by the drafting committee. For that reason, he had asked the drafting committee to give him time to ask for instructions on the subject from his Government. That had been on Friday evening and, despite the difference in time between New York and East Africa, he had succeeded in obtaining the reaction of his Government on Sunday afternoon. He had immediately communicated the essence of his Government's reaction to the paragraph to the Ambassador of Guinea, who had acted as the co-ordinator of the drafting committee.

13. For the Committee's records, he wished to read out his Government's reaction to paragraph 6 and other para-

<sup>1</sup> The amendment was subsequently circulated as document A/C.4/L.1124.

<sup>2</sup> The amendments were subsequently circulated as document A/C.4/L.1123.

graphs of the draft resolution, as general remarks. He had been asked to call the attention of the Committee to the fact that the question of French Somaliland had been debated at great length at the twenty-fifth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of OAU, held at Kampala from 18 to 25 July 1975. In the course of that debate, the Somali delegation had made known its views, as had other delegations, and that had been taken into account when the Council of Ministers had unanimously adopted resolution CM/RES.431/Rev.1 (XXV) (see A/10297, annex I). The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU had endorsed that resolution and, during the course of the debate, the Head of State of Somalia, in the clearest possible terms, had announced that Somalia harboured no ambition to annex the Territory.

14. The President of Somalia, General Mohamed Siad Barre, had informed the Heads of State that Somalia was solely concerned with the Territory attaining full and unconditional independence. It was concerned, he had said, with the liquidation of colonialism in French Somaliland (Djibouti) and with the restoration of the legitimate and inalienable rights of the people to determine their own destiny.

15. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU was, of course, the supreme organ of African nations on policies and matters affecting the African continent. That was particularly the case with colonial questions, and it had been the custom and practice of the United Nations and other international organizations to reaffirm, where possible, the resolutions of OAU whenever they were brought to the attention of the United Nations and other international bodies such as the conferences of Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries. That had ensured a spirit of close co-operation and solidarity between OAU and other international bodies.

16. The purpose of the resolution of the Council of Ministers of OAU on French Somaliland (Djibouti), which had been endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, was to attain three objectives: first, to reaffirm African solidarity and support for the people of French Somaliland (Djibouti) in their struggle for immediate self-determination and independence; secondly, to castigate France for its repressive policies and to demand that France grant the Territory immediate and unconditional independence; and, thirdly, to ensure that no political or economic obstacles were placed in the path of French Somaliland's march to independence by either Somalia or Ethiopia. In order to remove all suspicion as to the motives of the two countries towards French Somaliland (Djibouti), they were called upon to support the total independence of the Territory, to refrain from interference in its internal affairs and to renounce any claim which they might have on the Territory.

17. As he had already said, the Head of State of Somalia had made it clear that Somalia had no territorial claim on French Somaliland. On behalf of his Government, he himself had reiterated that position in his statement at the 2170th meeting. It was his delegation's view that statements made by Heads of State in an official capacity, particularly at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, must be treated with all the

importance, seriousness and credibility which they commanded. It would be a self-defeating exercise if the Committee was to allow itself to be distracted from its prime objectives by an unnecessary injection of semantics.

18. Having made those general remarks, he would like to enter into the substance of the draft resolution that had just been introduced and to point out where his delegation had some amendments to present. His delegation had read the draft resolution with interest. It was grateful to Mrs. Cissé, in her capacity as co-ordinator of the drafting committee, for having provided him with a copy of the draft resolution in advance and for having indicated that the sponsors were open to any suggestions or amendments which members of the Committee, especially the parties concerned, might wish to make in connexion with the draft resolution.

19. He had also listened to the statement by the Ambassador of Ethiopia, and wished to express appreciation of the understanding he had shown on the subject.

20. Nevertheless, his delegation would like to propose an amendment to the preambular part of the draft resolution. It felt that it would be more appropriate and more accurate if the ninth preambular paragraph were to read:

*"Taking careful note of the statements made by the representatives of Somalia and Ethiopia, the two countries contiguous to so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti), with regard to their pledge to support the independence of the Territory, their avowed non-involvement in its internal affairs, and their renunciation of any territorial claims they might have on the Territory"*

That amendment left out nothing of substance and might, rather, strengthen the substance and the semantics of the original text of the ninth preambular paragraph.

21. His delegation's amendment to paragraph 3 involved a very substantial change. It proposed that the paragraph should read:

*"Calls upon the administering Power to create without further delay the necessary conditions in order to accelerate the process of independence of the people of so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti) by:*

- "(a) Effecting the release of all political prisoners;*
- "(b) Allowing the return to the Territory of all those who have been expelled;*
- "(c) Agreeing to the presence of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations in the Territory in order to ensure that the aspirations of all the inhabitants of the Territory are given free expression and that full political power is transferred to their legitimate and authentic representatives"*

22. Explaining the reasons for the substantial amendment which his delegation proposed to paragraph 3, he said that his delegation had raised three points in the paragraph. In the first place, if the administering Power was true to the statements it had made before the Committee, namely, that it was ready to grant independence to the people of the Territory if the people of the Territory so desired—and he

was sure that the people of the Territory did desire to have full and unconditional independence—his delegation suggested that the administering Power should "create without further delay the necessary conditions in order to accelerate the process of independence of the people". In order to create the atmosphere of understanding and peace in the Territory, the following elements were absolutely necessary. First, all political prisoners must be released. It was a well-known fact that there were political prisoners in the Territory whose only offence was that they had struggled for the independence of their people and their territory. Since there was now talk about independence, it was the view of his delegation and his Government that one of the absolutely necessary conditions was the release of all political prisoners. Political prisoners were usually the leaders of political movements.

23. Explaining the second reason for the substantial amendment he had proposed to paragraph 3, he said that, in his statement at the 2170th meeting of the Committee, he had dwelt at length on the 1968 so-called referendum. He had tried to prove to the members of the Committee that that so-called referendum had been rigged and gerrymandered and that it had been denounced as such by world public opinion: he had quoted from 20 or 25 leading elements of news media all over the world denouncing its illegality. Through that referendum, the French had sought, by hook or by crook, to show the world that the people of French Somaliland wished to remain with France. They had therefore had to expel from the Territory the representatives of the true independence movements. From the statements made to the Committee by the petitioners at the 2168th meeting, it was known that over 30,000 inhabitants of the main towns of the Territory were estimated to have been expelled. They were now scattered in places outside the Territory—either in the Somali Democratic Republic or in Ethiopia—and were living in very miserable conditions. Therefore, if the Committee truly wished the people of the Territory to have real independence, it went without saying that it was absolutely necessary that those true indigenous inhabitants of the Territory who had been illegally expelled should return prior to the proposed date for independence so that they might be able to participate in shaping the destiny of their country.

24. The third reason why his delegation was submitting a substantial amendment to paragraph 3 related to the proposed new subparagraph (c), in which it asked that, during the period of preparation of the Territory for independence, representatives of OAU and of the United Nations should be present. It had not mentioned only representatives of the United Nations because it did not underestimate the importance of OAU and was aware of the significance it attached to the independence of an African Territory. Furthermore, so far as the Somali Government was concerned, he felt obliged to say, with all due respect to the Government of France—with which Somalia had diplomatic relations—that it had some doubts about the French Government's sincerity regarding the modalities by which it intended to transfer power to the authentic and legitimate representatives of the Territory. Currently, as everyone knew, there existed what were called the Government Council and the Chamber of Deputies. Those bodies were, of course, the creation of France. They were a legal artifice designed to give the impression that

they represented the people; in fact, they did not represent the majority of the people, but represented France's interests in the Territory. His Government would not, therefore, be happy to see power in the Territory transferred to the existing local institutions. If the Committee was really sincere about wanting the Territory to be truly independent, then it must be sure that power was handed over to the legitimate and authentic representatives of the majority of the people of the Territory. That was why his delegation had felt compelled to propose a substantial amendment to paragraph 3 of the draft resolution.

25. His delegation also wished to propose an amendment to paragraph 4, whereby that paragraph would read:

*"Calls once again upon the Government of France to grant immediate and unconditional independence to the people of so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti) under the conditions described in paragraph 3 above, and to withdraw all its military forces from the Territory"*.

26. As would be seen, the only change proposed was the addition of the words "under the conditions described in paragraph 3 above". His delegation felt that it would improve the text to refer to the conditions that, under its amendment, would be set forth in paragraph 3.

27. His delegation proposed that paragraph 5 should read:

*"Calls upon all States, particularly the administering Power, to refrain from any action, unilateral or otherwise, which might impede the independence or jeopardize the unity, sovereignty or territorial integrity of so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti)"*.

It felt that the additions it was suggesting to that paragraph strengthened rather than weakened it, since it would give more guarantees regarding the future independence of so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti). The paragraph would call upon the administering Power to refrain from any action, unilateral or otherwise, that might impede that independence—his delegation thought it very important to use the word "impede" because the country was not yet independent. It would also call upon the administering Power to refrain from any action that would jeopardize the unity of the Territory. His delegation felt very strongly about the unity of the people; it knew that there were some who were trying to divide that nation and it heard the term "Territory of the Afars and the Issas" used. The representatives of the liberation movements and the petitioners who had been heard in the Committee had strongly condemned that term, which they regarded as part of a policy of "divide and rule". The paragraph should therefore stress that the administering Power should refrain from any action which not only might impede independence but also might jeopardize the unity, sovereignty or territorial integrity of the country.

28. The paragraph did not apply only to the administering Power, although some emphasis was laid on the latter. It applied also to other States, and primarily to the neighbouring States: Somalia and Ethiopia. His delegation believed that Somalia and Ethiopia, too, should refrain from any action unilateral or otherwise, which might impede the independence or jeopardize the unity, sover-

eignty and territorial integrity of so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti). The purpose of its amendment to paragraph 5 was therefore to strengthen the guarantees of the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Territory.

29. His delegation proposed that paragraph 6 should read:

*"Calls upon the Governments of Ethiopia and Somalia to observe scrupulously their undertaking to refrain from any interference in the internal affairs of the Territory and to respect fully the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti)"*.

30. His delegation had used the alphabetical order of the two names, but would not have any objection to saying "Somalia and Ethiopia", if that was desired in order to give full assurances.

31. The word "undertaking" in the paragraph referred to the statements mentioned in his delegation's amendment to the ninth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, which would take careful note of the statements made by the representatives of Somalia and Ethiopia with regard to their pledge to support the independence of the Territory, their avowed non-involvement in its internal affairs and their renunciation of any territorial claims they might have on the Territory. Technically speaking, that should be in the preamble to the draft resolution and paragraph 6 should be confined to calling upon Ethiopia and Somalia, rather than upon all States. Barbados or Guyana, for example, could have no problem in respect of interference in French Somaliland, which was at the other corner of the world from them. His delegation had therefore divided the provision into two parts. One part it had transferred to the preamble—the part referring to the statements. Then, in paragraph 6, it called specifically upon the Governments of Ethiopia and Somalia—or Somalia and Ethiopia, if that order was preferred—rather than upon all States, since that would better serve the interests of the Territory, to observe scrupulously their undertakings referred to in the ninth preambular paragraph, undertakings in which they had declared their intention of refraining from any interference in the internal affairs of the Territory and respecting fully the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti).

32. Those were the amendments which his delegation had felt it should propose to the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Guinea. If members studied those amendments carefully, side by side with the draft resolution and with an open mind, they would find that they improved the draft resolution rather than weakened it, since they gave more assurances and more guarantees regarding the independence, national unity and sovereignty of the Territory and regarding non-interference in its internal affairs when it obtained independence—especially non-interference by Somalia and Ethiopia.

#### QUESTION OF SPANISH SAHARA: CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (*continued*)

33. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Central African Republic, Gabon, the Gambia and Jordan had become

sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/L.1120 and that Rwanda had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.4/L.1121.

34. Mr. KAMARA (Senegal)\* said that, on behalf of his delegation, he wished to endorse draft resolution A/C.4/L.1120, which had been introduced by the representative of Tunisia at the 2177th meeting, and of which Senegal was a sponsor.

35. In so doing, he would refer as succinctly as possible to a number of important points which he had not been able to deal with in his earlier statement on Western Sahara in the Committee (2175th meeting). The points which, in his view, supported the general idea on which the draft resolution under consideration was based were the following: the reference to the agreement contained in the declaration of principles signed at Madrid on 14 November 1975 by the Governments of Mauritania, Morocco and Spain (S/11880,<sup>3</sup> annex III); geopolitics, an argument for the legitimacy of the Moroccan and Mauritanian claims; the need for the United Nations to play a role; and, lastly, the will of the parties to respect the freely expressed aspirations of the people.

36. His delegation considered it quite natural to refer to the Madrid declaration of principles, signed at the conclusion of negotiations which the countries concerned had undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Security Council, on the one hand, and the Charter of the United Nations, on the other. That declaration was truly a significant event, which had opened the way for an original approach to the decolonization of Western Sahara. Its greatest merit was probably that it had been based on the best intentions and the objectives which corresponded most closely to those most cherished by the interested parties. In support of that, he would only refer to the official statements by the spokesmen of the Government of Spain, before and after the signature of the declaration or agreement, and the terminology used in press and agency despatches. First, before the *Cortes*, at the time of the introduction of the decolonization act, which was to make the implementation of the tripartite agreement possible, Mr. Antonio Carro, Spanish Minister of the Presidency, had stated: "In this matter the Government is guided by four main principles: the safeguarding of Spain's legitimate assets; the protection of the rights of the Saharan people; respect for the wishes of the international community as reflected in the agreements and resolutions of the United Nations; and a desire to preserve international peace and security."

37. It should be borne in mind that all the resolutions of the United Nations had always called for the decolonization of Western Sahara by Spain, in co-operation with the concerned and interested parties. It was regrettable that Algeria had not been able to associate itself with the drafting of the Madrid agreement, but the fact that its signatories comprised both the administering Power in Western Sahara and the two countries which were engaged

\* The statement made by the representative of Senegal is reproduced *in extenso* in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at its 2168th meeting.

<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirtieth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1975.*

in a dispute with it could not be overlooked. In addition, the fact that the principle of self-determination for the Saharan populations had been taken into account by the signatories of the agreement should apparently satisfy not only Algeria but also the international community as a whole, which had taken such an interest in the problem of the Sahara.

38. Then, following the signature of the agreement, the Spanish Minister of Information, Mr. León Herrera, had pointed out that his country's policy had always been consistent with the position outlined by his Government on 23 May 1975 (see A/10095), namely: to decolonize the Territory in accordance with the recommendations of the United Nations, to arrange for the transfer of powers as soon as possible, to co-operate at the international level, and to accelerate Spain's withdrawal if necessary. The circulation of the agreement, after the vote in the *Cortes* on 18 November, had, as was known, been preceded by the publication of a joint communiqué signed by the three countries (*ibid.*, annex I). The communiqué mentioned the reference to the recommendations of the Security Council, to the principles of the United Nations Charter and to the spirit of friendship and understanding which had guided the parties.

39. The communiqué also stressed the need to ensure future co-operation among the three countries in their respective interests and in the interests of the Saharan population. In analysing the agreement himself, the Ambassador of Spain had indicated, in his statement in the Committee at its 2170th meeting, that that document contained the following provisions. First, Spain would proceed forthwith to institute a temporary administration in the Territory, in which Morocco and Mauritania would participate in collaboration with the *Jema'a*. It had accordingly been agreed that two Deputy Governors, designated by Morocco and Mauritania respectively, would be appointed. Secondly, the Spanish presence in the Territory was to end by 28 February 1976. Thirdly, the views of the Saharan population, expressed through the *Jema'a*, would be respected.

40. In expressing his support for draft resolution A/C.4/L.1120, the Spanish Ambassador had again reaffirmed his country's position in such a manner that there was no longer any ambiguity in that regard for the members of the Committee.

41. Geopolitics, which had not been one of the factors considered by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 16 October 1975 (see A/10300), could be taken as the most valid basis for the legitimacy of the claims of Morocco and Mauritania. A great deal of attention had already been paid to legal and historical factors in support of the rights of those countries, but not enough to the imperatives of geopolitics. That should be done by recalling the place occupied by Western Sahara on the map of Africa and by referring once again to statements contained in the International Court's ruling in its preliminary study of the problem. He referred, in particular, to two paragraphs. In paragraph 87 of its opinion, the Court stated:

"Western Sahara . . . is a territory having very special characteristics which, at the time of colonization by

Spain, largely determined the way of life and social and political organizations of the peoples inhabiting it. In consequence, the legal régime of Western Sahara, including its legal relations with neighbouring territories, cannot properly be appreciated without reference to these special characteristics. The territory forms part of the great Sahara desert which extends from the Atlantic coast of Africa to Egypt and the Sudan. At the time of its colonization by Spain, the area of this desert with which the Court is concerned was being exploited, because of its low and spasmodic rainfall, almost exclusively by nomads . . . It may be said that the territory, at the time of its colonization, had a sparse population that, for the most part, consisted of nomadic tribes the members of which traversed the desert on more or less regular routes dictated by the seasons and the wells or water-holes available to them."

42. Further on, the Court stated, in paragraph 88:

"the sparsity of the resources and the spasmodic character of the rainfall compelled all those nomadic tribes to traverse very wide areas of the desert. In consequence, the nomadic routes of none of them were confined to Western Sahara; some passed also through areas of southern Morocco, or of present-day Mauritania or Algeria, and some even through further countries."

43. He drew the Committee's attention not to the difficulties of making an appropriate judgement of the régime in the Territory and its legal relations with neighbouring countries, not to the sparsity of the population, which was not a decisive argument, but mainly to the fact that Western Sahara was only one part of a desert extending from the Atlantic coast of Africa all the way to the lands watered by the Nile in Egypt, in the north, and in the Sudan, in the south. That whole Sahara desert had constituted and still constituted integral parts of countries which bordered it to the north and the south; and terms such as Algerian Sahara, Tunisian Sahara, etc., had been established in geographical and political terminology to designate other parts. That stretch of land which crossed Africa could in any given part only be regarded as a Saharan

province of countries bordering it on the north and the south. For that reason, the Committee would surely not create in Morocco and Mauritania legitimate feelings of frustration by not allowing the populations to be consulted on their territorial claims. His delegation, moreover, would view favourably an appeal to those two countries to assure Algeria, which had a common frontier to the east of the Territory under consideration, that all its interests which did not jeopardize their own sovereignty would be safeguarded.

44. One could only note with satisfaction the will of the parties to make the United Nations play a role. That would be done at two levels. First, the Fourth Committee was requested to propose that the General Assembly should not approve, but should take note of, the agreement concluded by Mauritania, Morocco and Spain, which was an element that could no longer be denied even if one was not satisfied with the circumstances that had surrounded its drafting. Nor could the Committee fail to take into account the professions of good faith of its signatories. Secondly, provision was made for the presence of a United Nations observer appointed by the Secretary-General during the process of consultation of the Saharan populations.

45. Finally, the draft resolution requested the parties to the Madrid agreement to ensure respect for the freely expressed aspirations of the Saharan populations.

46. He concluded his statement by calling on the members of the Committee to give overwhelming support to the draft resolution whose various elements he had just justified. The draft resolution had, above all, the merit of representing a genuine effort to break away from the past. It would enable members of the Committee to look resolutely towards the future by basing their approach on the facts and the actual reality which now prevailed in Western Sahara and on co-operation between the administering Power and the two countries which had only recently engaged in a great dispute.

*The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.*

## 2180th meeting

Wednesday, 3 December 1975, at 4.30 p.m.

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

A/C.4/SR.2180

### AGENDA ITEM 88

**Question of Territories under Portuguese administration**  
(*continued*) (A/9998-S/11598, A/10023/Add.1, A/10040, A/10054, A/10055, A/10058, A/10207-S/11811, A/10208, A/10209-S/11813, A/10212, A/10214, A/10227, A/10277, A/10353, A/10353, A/10402-S/11887, A/10403-S/11890, A/C.4/802, A/C.4/803, A/C.4/L.1125)

### GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)\*

1. Mr. WU Miao-fa (China), referring to the fact that the Frente Revolucionária Timor Leste Independente (FRETILIN) had proclaimed the independence of East Timor on 28 November 1975, said that that proclamation reflected the aspirations of the broad masses of the people

\* Resumed from the 2178th meeting.