UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

*Official Records*

FOURTH COMMITTEE
11th meeting
held on
Wednesday, 23 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

# SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. FLEMMING (Saint Lucia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 19: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 99: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 101: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 103: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (continued)

General debate (continued)

Question of Western Sahara

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.4/46/SR.11
8 November 1991
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

91-56738 5097S (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 19: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (continued) (A/46/23 (Parts V-VI), A/46/201, 336, 344, 359, 409; A/AC.109/1056-1059, 1060-1063, 1064 and Corr.1, 1065-1067, 1068 and Corr.1, 1069-1071, 1073, 1074 and Corr.1, 1075, 1077, 1078, 1079 and Corr.1, 1082; A/AC.109/L.1761; E/1991/116, S/21360 and S/22578)

AGENDA ITEM 99: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/46/23 (Part IV (chap. VII)) and A/46/516)

AGENDA ITEM 101: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/46/23 (Part IV (chap. VI)) and A/46/229)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/46/3 (chaps. I and VII (sect. C))

AGENDA ITEM 103: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (continued) (A/46/344 and 517)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. AL-BAKER (Qatar), welcoming the admission to the United Nations of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, said that it could mark the beginning of the process of attainment of independence by the peoples of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, regardless of their political, economic and social systems.

2. Members of the international community represented in the Committee must call on the administering Powers to assist Non-Self-Governing Territories in improving their socio-economic situation and establishing conditions for exercising their right of self-determination.

3. He expressed gratitude to the specialized agencies cooperating with the Organization of African Unity with the United Nations for their assistance in implementing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and drew attention to the need to continue to provide that assistance on a more systematic basis.

4. As to Western Sahara, particular mention should be made of the efforts of the Secretary-General to implement the resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly on the subject, as well as those of the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States to organize the holding of a referendum which would make it possible to achieve the desired results in the interests of the parties concerned.

(Mr. Al-Baker, Qatar)

5. The principles of self-determination must be observed in relation to other Territories, since that right was an inseparable part of the legitimate human rights envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenants on Human Rights and also General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), which constituted the basis of the Committee's work. Moreover, the administering Powers must provide all necessary information about Non-Self-Governing Territories in accordance with the provisions of relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

6. South Africa was now at a decisive stage of its development. The apartheid laws, which denied basic rights to the majority of the population of that country had now been repealed. Although that was a positive step, the events involving bloodshed gave cause for concern and indicated an unwillingness on the part of the South African authorities to fulfil their obligations to the population; that situation was impeding the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa and progress towards creating a society in which all citizens would have equal economic, political and social rights.

7. In conclusion, referring to the role of the United Nations in settling questions involving the Non-Self-Governing Territories, he noted the need to support the United Nations so that it would be able to attain its goals.

8. Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom) said that a year previously he had noted that the rhetoric and structures of the past were still in evidence of the work of the Committee. His delegation had hoped that the establishment of a working group to consider the work of the Committee would lead to an improvement in its efficiency and a renewed concentration on the issues which the Committee had originally been established to deal with. Although the conclusions of the informal meetings of the working group correctly identified the concerns felt by a large number of delegations about the language used in Committee resolutions, the practice of referring to extraneous issues and selective name-calling, the debate in the Committee so far suggested that those conclusions would largely be ignored. That could be seen from the draft resolutions and decisions submitted by the Special Committee, which were in essence copies of those of the previous year, and in the comments made by many delegations during the consultations among the "Friends of the Chairman".

9. There were three key issues he wished to address. First was the inability, or unwillingness, of the Committee and of the Special Committee to appreciate the difference between self-determination and independence. It was totally wrong to equate self-determination solely with independence and to forget that there were other options available. The wishes of the people who lived in dependent Territories were of primary importance. His Government took seriously its obligations under the Charter to develop self-government in its dependent Territories and, in cooperation with the locally elected governments, to ensure that their constitutional frameworks continue to meet the wishes and aspirations of their peoples.

(Mr. Richardson, United Kingdom)

10. The United Kingdom also took seriously its obligations in responding to the economic needs of the people of its dependent Territories. In that respect, he drew attention to the draft resolution on the question of foreign economic interests submitted by the Special Committee which, once again, ignored completely the benefits that foreign economic interests brought to dependent Territories. Without those foreign economic interests many of the dependent Territories would be much worse off. For example, Bermuda had a per capita income of $US 29,100 and relied heavily on foreign economic investment and international finance. It was high time to recognize the positive and beneficial role of foreign investment, especially in small islands with limited capital and few natural resources of their own.

11. The third issue which needed to be addressed was the extraneous matters which the Committee insisted on considering, even though they were of no direct concern to it. The most obvious example was the question of apartheid. His Government shared with all other members of the Committee the goal of the abolition of apartheid. However, the independence of Namibia had removed any justification for apartheid to be a matter for consideration in the Committee. There was no link between the situation in South Africa and the interests of far-away Non-Self-Governing Territories. The insistence of the Special Committee on producing a draft decision on military activities was equally incomprehensible. That subject did not even appear on the list of agenda items which had been allocated to the Committee by the General Assembly.

12. It was clear that little substantive change had occurred in the Fourth Committee's attitudes to the subjects on its shrinking agenda. That situation was all the more depressing in that great changes had taken place in the world. There was an urgent need for a reform of the Committee to make it more responsive to the reality of the outside world. That would not be achieved simply by amalgamating resolutions or decisions. The Committee must stop talking about apartheid and so-called military activities. Some agenda items could with advantage be considered biennially, and steps should be taken to merge the Committee with the Special Political Committee, given the relative light workload of both of them.

13. Miss OBI (Nigeria) said that the cluster of agenda items under consideration by the Committee represented the core of the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization. They should therefore be addressed with the seriousness they deserved. The Committee had been established to follow the issues of decolonization and bring all colonial Territories to independence. Efforts to trivialize that question were very disturbing. There seemed to be a trend to push aside the substantive agenda of the Committee and devote too much attention to the question of rationalizing its work. The issue of rationalization should not cloud the Committee's consideration of the main items before it. Procedural issues could be addressed during the intra-sessional period.

(Miss Obi, Nigeria)

14. Turning to agenda item 19, she said that further efforts were required to eradicate colonialism and that all the remaining Territories, regardless of their size or population, should be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination.

15. The United Nations had constantly assisted oppressed peoples in their struggle for freedom and dignity. In that connection, her delegation commended the Secretary-General and the Organization of African Unity on the organization of a referendum in Western Sahara, and called upon the parties concerned to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and to comply scrupulously with the provisions of the United Nations peace plan, in order to find a solution to the problem of Western Sahara.

16. She welcomed the resumption of talks between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General on the question of East Timor, the agreement reached between France and the indigenous population of New Caledonia on the holding of a referendum in 1998, and the decision by Argentina and Great Britain to restore diplomatic relations. That represented a significant step towards a peaceful resolution of the Falkland Islands problem. Other Territories should also be given the right to decide their own fate. Colonialism and the subjection of other lands to foreign domination should have no place in the new world order, whose main features should be the freedom of all colonial peoples, freedom from economic exploitation, freedom from aggression and freedom from underdevelopment.

17. Mr. ALVAREZ (Uruguay) said that the process of colonization had entered its final stage. It was therefore extremely important that the organs of the General Assembly, and in particular the Special Committee, should give closer attention to the problem of the Non-Self Governing Territories. Those Territories should be helped to achieve self-determination. The Fourth Committee should set specific goals for its work, in order to derive maximum benefit from its consideration of various issues with the political support of Member States.

18. Turning to the question of Western Sahara, he said that Uruguay fully supported the implementation of the United Nations peace plan in that Territory and was participating in the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Uruguay appealed to the parties concerned to refrain from any actions which could impede the implementation of that peace plan and its holding of the referendum.

19. With regard to the rationalization of the work of the Fourth Committee, he said that work in that area was proceeding in two directions: the use of new formulations and the strengthening of the system of obligations of the administering Powers towards the Non-Self-Governing Territories. As far as the proposed new formulations were concerned, Uruguay shared the view that they should be brought in line with the new world situation. The same approach should be applied to the obligations of the administering Powers, who should endeavour to ensure that those obligations were strictly fulfilled.

(Mr. Alvarez, Uruguay)

20. Although Uruguay believed that consensus was an important form for the adoption of resolutions, it did not support the constant use of the consensus rule as a general method for adoption of resolutions by the organs of the General Assembly, since, in the final analysis, such use could conflict with the principles of articles 2 and 18 of the Charter.

21. Mr. HADGES (Cyprus) said that efforts to ensure the independence of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in accordance with the determination and will of their peoples were of particular concern to his delegation, since Cyprus had itself emerged from colonial domination 31 years previously. Cyprus expressed its solidarity with all peoples struggling for the exercise of their inalienable right to freedom and human dignity.

22. His delegation supported the view that all Non-Self-Governing Territories, regardless of their size or population, should be allowed to fulfil the aspirations of their peoples, without any hindrance, in conditions of democracy and freedom.

23. Cyprus believed that a constant increase in cooperation would undoubtedly enhance the role of the Organization in international affairs and in the maintenance of peace throughout the world, and it welcomed the important role the United Nations was called upon to play in establishing a stabler and more just world order. In that connection, great importance attached to the role of the Special Committee. His delegation did not support the view that the Committee's work was full of anachronisms and failed to reflect the new spirit in international relations. At the same time, efforts should be made to achieve a climate of consensus and cooperation and to adopt appropriate measures based on a careful study of the Special Committee's recommendations.

24. Turning to the question of the transmission by the administering Powers of information under article 73 e of the Charter, he expressed the hope that those Powers would continue to cooperate with the Secretary-General and the Fourth Committee, in accordance with their moral and legal obligations.

25. With regard to the question of Western Sahara, he noted the recent positive changes, in particular the implementation of the cease-fire agreement and the subsequent partial deployment of MINURSO. Cyprus believed that those events constituted an important step towards a just and lasting solution to the Western Sahara conflict. While it recognized the attendant difficulties, Cyprus believed that it was vital for both sides to accept that the ultimate goal was to reach a mutually acceptable solution through the holding of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The Fourth Committee could make a significant contribution towards the attainment of that goal through the consensus adoption of a resolution encompassing all the elements of a just and lasting solution of the question of Western Sahara.

26. Ms. NIELSEN (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the five Nordic countries, said that they attached great importance to the inalienable right of all

(Ms. Nielsen, Denmark)

peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination in accordance with their freely expressed political aspirations. In the general debate at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly the Nordic countries had called on the Fourth Committee to adopt a new, constructive approach to its work and procedures when considering the question of decolonization. In particular, they had pointed out that the Fourth Committee was the only forum in which the vast majority of draft resolutions were not negotiable. A change in that practice would enhance the effectiveness of its work for the benefit of the peoples of the Territories remaining on the Committee's agenda. The Nordic countries noted with regret that, to date, no significant measures had been adopted to that end. They appealed to Member States to review their positions with a view to finding a constructive approach to the issue.

27. The Nordic countries believed that the Fourth Committee should adapt to the progress achieved in the changing world situation. The wording and content of the resolutions should be relevant to the subjects dealt with and in keeping with current developments. While efforts should be made to resolve questions concerning Territories which remained non-self-governing, issues extraneous to decolonization should be excluded from the Committee's work. In particular, the independence of Namibia had rendered superfluous the consideration of the problem of apartheid within the context of decolonization. Apartheid was not an issue in any of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

28. The Nordic countries saw great merit in proposals put forward during the current session that a general debate should be held, encompassing all the items on the Committee's agenda. In addition, they supported the views expressed on the hearing of petitioners, in particular the idea of encouraging shorter statements with the possibility of providing written information on specific points.

29. The Nordic countries welcomed the draft omnibus resolution on small Territories. In their view, it was an improvement over the texts adopted in previous years. At the same time, the drafts submitted for the Committee's consideration could be shorter and less repetitious. They should avoid contentious wording and the naming of specific countries. The draft resolution on the activities of foreign economic interests should also reflect the beneficial impact of foreign investment on local economies. That and other traditional draft resolutions could usefully be considered on a two-year basis. The draft on military activities should not be repeated in its current form, as it had originally been prepared in the light of specific circumstances in Namibia and, in the opinion of the Nordic countries, had become totally obsolete.

30. Miss MOLEFE (Botswana) said that, although the international community had been working towards the eradication of colonialism since 1945, the struggle was not yet over. The people of Western Sahara also had the right to self-determination and independence. Botswana therefore welcomed the agreement in principle between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO to the

(Miss Molefe, Botswana)

proposals made by the Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity in the framework of their joint mission of good offices. The settlement process in Western Sahara was picking up momentum, as demonstrated by the adoption of Security Council resolution 690 (1991). The referendum, which would give the people of Western Sahara an opportunity to exercise their right of self-determination, was a very important step towards a just and lasting settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara. Her delegation urged all parties involved in the process to cooperate fully in order to arrive at a peaceful settlement. Botswana reiterated its support for the Secretary-General and his Special Representative.

31. The achievements of the Special Committee were the result of the international community's collective efforts to eradicate colonialism. It was her delegation's view that the same collective effort was essential to ensure that the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories also gained the opportunity for self-determination.

32. Her delegation was aware that each of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories had its own unique conditions that must be taken into account. In that connection, it urged all those involved to cooperate fully in the process of giving those Territories an opportunity to determine their political future.

33. Her delegation fully supported the idea that the Committee should review its approach and methods of operation taking into account the changing world situation. Botswana fervently hoped that the new world order would create favourable opportunities for those still under colonialism to exercise their right to self-determination and independence.

34. Ms. DAPUL (Philippines) said that her delegation welcomed the debate over strategies to be adopted in considering the needs of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. It saw the wisdom of taking into account the views of all members of the Committee in an attempt to seek consensus on all the resolutions and decisions that were before it. In that respect, the Philippines supported the Chairman's decision to continue consultations with all delegations.

35. The Philippines continued to uphold the collective commitment to the political, economic and social advancement of the peoples of the 18 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. Those Territories, with relatively small size and populations and limited natural resources, shared similar characteristics and faced unique problems. The Philippines maintained that the underlying principles of the Declaration were valid and applicable to the remaining dependent peoples.

36. The Philippines stressed the importance of cooperation between the administering Powers and the United Nations bodies concerned with decolonization. In that regard, it endorsed the idea of regular visiting

(Ms. Dapul, Philippines)

missions to the Territories and the regular provision of timely and up-to-date information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories by the administering Powers to the Secretary-General, as prescribed by Article 73 e of the Charter. The approach to the Non-Self-Governing Territories should place emphasis on the specific conditions of individual Territories, which were at different levels of political, socio-economic and constitutional development. The Philippines acknowledged that, given the economic interdependence of countries in the modern world, small island Territories needed to rely on others to sustain viable development.

37. On the question of New Caledonia, the Philippines was encouraged by the positive developments over the past three years. It noted that a new political structure had been established in New Caledonia involving devolution of powers from the central authorities to new provincial institutions. It also noted the efforts to develop a more balanced political and economic environment from which to proceed to the exercise of self-determination in 1998. It was to be hoped that the foundations for meaningful participation by the inhabitants of New Caledonia in the economic, political and social life of the Territory would be fully laid before then.

38. On the question of Western Sahara, her delegation commended the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative to implement in full the provisions of the United Nations plan and to secure the continued cooperation of the parties involved. The Philippines fully supported that process, which would lead to a just and lasting settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara through a referendum on self-determination.

39. Mr. VINOGRADOV (Belarus), noting with satisfaction the admission to the United Nations of new members, including Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, said that since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples dozens of colonial Territories had become independent, and in that historic process the United Nations and its working bodies concerned with decolonization had played a prominent role. With Namibia's accession to independence, a new phase in the process of decolonization had begun, which should lead to the full implementation of the Declaration by the end of the century. It was very important that the valuable experience acquired by the United Nations in the process of solving the Namibian problem should be actively used in other regions.

40. Over the past year significant progress had been achieved in Western Sahara; Belarus hoped that the efforts of the United Nations and its Secretary-General in solving that problem would be equally effective and that the opposing sides would show flexibility and good will and would cooperate with the United Nations.

41. When considering the problems of decolonization, it was impossible to disregard such vital matters as economic and military activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. His delegation believed that the activities of foreign economic interests in those Territories, if carried out on a just

(Mr. Vinogradov, Belarus)

basis, were definitely useful, since they afforded the Territories additional opportunities for social, economic and cultural development, which was indisputably a vital condition for self-determination. The activities of foreign capital should not be unregulated, however, or they would inevitably conflict with the vital interests of the peoples of the Territories and obstruct the exercise of the right of self-determination.

42. With regard to military activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, Belarus believed that those Territories should not be used for the deployment and testing of weapons of mass destruction, or for the burial of nuclear, chemical and other wastes, since those practices could lead to irreversible ecological changes.

43. The constructive efforts being undertaken to improve the methods of work of the Special Committee were of great importance. In the view of his delegation, efforts in that direction must be continued.

44. Some delegations had recently drawn attention to the need to rationalize and improve the effectiveness of joint work and take fuller account of the new political realities. Those views were well founded and could be supported. That applied, in particular, to the proposal to merge the Fourth Committee with the Special Political Committee, which could be implemented with the Fourth Committee as a basis and with a full understanding of the importance of the questions under consideration in the two bodies.

45. Mr. ZEINELDDIN (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Organization's customary definition of "colonialism" did not include the whole phenomenon in its various forms and manifestations throughout the world. From the point of view of the United Nations, only 18 Territories were still under the colonial rule of administering Powers. The non-listed territories under the colonial rule of a number of powerful States served as examples of that phenomenon and highlighted the urgent need to review the definition of colonialism.

46. Since the last session of the General Assembly, the international community had achieved a number of successes in the area of decolonization. The Special Committee on decolonization had reconsidered its mandate and reorganized the structure of its work; instead of following the practice of previous years, when resolutions had been adopted separately for each Territory, an omnibus resolution had been adopted for dealing with the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories by consensus; and the Subcommittee on Small Territories and the Subcommittee on Petitions, Information and Assistance had merged. The Committee had also reviewed the language of a number of its resolutions.

47. The restoration of the practice of regular visiting missions to Territories and the receiving of timely and up-to-date information about them continued to be within the Committee's scope The question of sending visiting missions, which had been raised in the report of the Working Group

(Mr. Zeinelddin, Islamic Republic of Iran)

(A/AC.109/L.1756), had been reflected in the informal conclusions derived from the informal meetings of the Fourth Committee and the informal proposal of its current Chairman.

48. The Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, meeting in Accra, had forwarded its proposal to the Secretary-General for the action plan for the eradication of colonialism. The proposal reiterated that it would be beneficial for the Secretary-General or his Special Representative to visit each Territory as soon as possible during the current decade and raised other key points, including the important role that the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee could play in implementing the action plan, as well as the need to improve cooperation between the administering Powers and the Special Committee in that regard.

49. His delegation hoped that the goal of eradicating colonialism could be attained in the current decade. Priority measures should include an appeal by the United Nations to the current administering Powers to provide a realistic timetable for self-determination in each of their respective colonial Territories in accordance with the Organization's principles and practices.

50. Concerning the question of Western Sahara, the implementation of the plan to be followed by the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara established in Security Council resolution 690 (1991), was the best solution for the people of that Territory. The cease-fire in effect since 6 September 1991 represented significant progress that should be followed by further steps, which the parties concerned should comply with the principles of the plan.

51. In conclusion, he emphasized the need for even greater constructive cooperation within the Fourth Committee in working towards a definitive solution of the problem of decolonization. To that end, the administering Powers must continue to consult with the Fourth Committee and the relevant United Nations organs. For its part, the Organization must formulate effective and practical measures so as to step up its efforts to bring colonialism to an end during the current decade. In that connection, the basic direction of the decolonization process in the Non-Self-Governing Territories must be determined, which might include actions to bring about the political and economic conditions needed for the peoples of the Territories to speed up the process of self-determination and the creation of mechanisms to guarantee new States resources, support and genuine international solidarity, particularly during the early stages of their independence.

52. Mr. MASCARENHAS (Cape Verde) said that current international relations had undergone significant changes: norms, principles, values, interests and strategies were being reconsidered. Yet notwithstanding the extensive discussion of basic human rights and freedoms, the equality of peoples and their right to self-determination, the international community continued to

(Mr. Mascarenhas, Cape Verde)

look on passively while those rights and freedoms were violated in various regions of the world. In the view of his delegation, the situation in East Timor was a typical decolonization question.

53. Mr. SRIVIDJAJA (Indonesia), speaking on a point of order, said that the reference by the representative of Cape Verde to the question of East Timor was inconsistent with the report of the General Committee (A/46/250), in accordance with which consideration of that question would be deferred to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. He asked the Chairman to draw the previous speaker's attention to the need to abide by the agenda.

54. The CHAIRMAN asked the representative of Cape Verde to continue his statement, bearing in mind the remarks of the previous speaker.

55. Mr. MASCARENHAS (Cape Verde), continuing his statement, said that the history of the occupation of East Timor was well known. The will of the people of Timor to decide its destiny independently, free of interference or colonial domination, had been demonstrated in the armed struggle that had been going on for many years and in the refusal to cooperate with the colonial authorities. The question of East Timor had appeared on the agenda of the General Assembly for many years and was awaiting a settlement. The time had come for the United Nations to help the people of Timor realize its right to self-determination. The expression of the free will of the people of East Timor in a referendum organized by the United Nations and conducted under its control represented the sole peaceful, fair and democratic solution to the problem.

56. Mr. SRIWIDJAJA (Indonesia), speaking on a point of order, again noted that the reference to the question of East Timor during the general debate on another agenda item before the Fourth Committee was out of order.

57. Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde), speaking on a point of order, agreed with the representative of Indonesia that the question of East Timor was not under discussion in the Fourth Committee as a separate agenda item, because consideration of the question had been deferred to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in order to give the Secretary-General the opportunity to find a way to settle the question. Nevertheless, the absence of the item from the agenda of the forty-sixth session by no means meant that delegations could not refer to the question when discussing the problem of decolonization. He asked that his delegation be allowed to conclude its statement.

58. Mr. MASCARENHAS (Cape Verde), continuing his statement, said that the recent joint action by the five permanent members of the Security Council to restore Kuwait's sovereignty had demonstrated unequivocally that the United Nations was able to ensure respect for the principles and rules embodied in the Charter. Those States could play an equally significant role with respect to East Timor. But other efforts on the part of the United Nations and the Secretary-General in particular to attain that goal would also be welcome.

(Mr. Mascarenhas, Cape Verde)

His delegation hoped that, in the light of the values the idea of a new world order embodied, the question of East Timor would take the place it deserved in the agenda of the United Nations.

59. His delegation hoped that the peace process going forward in Western Sahara would be successful and fully supported the Secretary-General's efforts in that respect. The settlement of the problem would require close cooperation by the Members of the United Nations concerned, and particularly their representatives on the spot. It was extremely important that the actions of the parties to the dispute should be open. They should fulfil their commitment to carry out the plan in the spirit intended by the Security Council.

60. Mr. IBANEZ (Bolivia) said that the fact that the number of Members of the United Nations had tripled since its founding was convincing evidence of the effectiveness of its work in the field of decolonization. The international community should not forget its responsibility to ensure that the administering Powers complied strictly with Article 76 of the Charter. It was also necessary to take into account the special circumstances of each Territory and the freely expressed will of its people, and to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. That was the foundation on which fulfilment of the rights and obligations governing the peaceful coexistence of States at the international level and the relations between groups in each of the States acceding to independence should be based. To complete that task it would be necessary to put the activities of the visiting missions, which in the past had been dispatched only at irregular intervals, on a more systematic basis. It was necessary to exercise more vigilance to ensure that the indigenous populations were informed of the possibilities their natural resources offered them and the ways in which those resources could be exploited for their collective benefit. It was likewise necessary to ensure the protection of the environment and to prevent any use of a Trust Territory for criminal purposes such as narcotics smuggling or the laundering of money obtained from the drug trade. It was also necessary to ensure that agricultural land was equitably distributed and that the local authorities had the necessary power to prohibit the use of the Trust Territory for nuclear testing or the testing of weapons with nuclear warheads.

61. His delegation hoped that the last vestiges of colonialism would be eradicated by the year 2000. The length of the decolonization process and the small number of Non-Self-Governing Territories remaining had been offered as justifications for a proposal which, although rational from a financial point of view, did not meet the requirements for an orderly transition to independence. His delegation therefore felt that no attempt should be made to hurry the work by the adoption of omnibus resolutions and that it would be preferable to retain the previous procedure of examining in detail the progress achieved in each Territory, as provided for in Articles 87 and 88 of the Charter.

(Mr. Ibanez, Bolivia)

62. His delegation could not agree with some of the critical comments made concerning the Special Committee's recommendations. Errors and delays did not detract from the significance of the work accomplished. At the same time, no significant advance had been achieved with respect to some questions which had seemed on the verge of solution. For example, in the case of Western Sahara, the delay in the holding of the referendum seemed to be due to the delay in revising the electoral lists. The revision and verification of those lists had been agreed to by the parties to the dispute. But the completion of the list of inhabitants of Western Sahara who had the right to participate in the referendum had been made difficult by the large-scale migrations resulting from the civil war as well as the migratory habits of the inhabitants of the Territory. It was to be hoped, however, that the Secretary-General's representative would be able to overcome the obstacles to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 621 (1988) and 690 (1991).

63. Draft decision I, "Question of Pitcairn" (A/46/23) (Part VI) seemed to contain contradictory elements. In the draft decision, the General Assembly reaffirmed "the responsibility of the administering Power to promote the economic and social development of the Territory" and urged the administering Power "to continue to respect the very individual lifestyle that the people of the Territory have chosen and to preserve, promote and protect it". In so doing, it failed to take into account the fact that custom often involved not deliberate choice but a continuation of inherited practices which were not always conducive to respect for human rights and concern for the condition of women, children and the aged. It must be remembered that the lifestyle of the population, particularly with respect to food, the integrity of the person, respect for the individual and recreation did not always meet the needs of social development. Also, in the case of American Samoa, the population figure did not include 80,000 Samoans living in the United States.

64. With respect to the Report of the President of the Economic and Social Council (E/1991/116) on measures for the coordination of the assistance of the specialized agencies and other international organizations, he pointed out that such assistance was extended not only by organizations of the United Nations system but by institutions such as CARICOM and by countries having traditional ties with the regions in which the Territories were located.

65. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that a delegation wished to exercise its right of reply and drew attention to the rules of procedure governing such statements.

66. Mr. SRIWIDJAJA (Indonesia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he did not dispute the view expressed by the representative of Cape Verde that in discussing decolonization questions delegations had the right to deal with any subject. But that did not extend to the problem of East Timor. With respect to that Territory, the decolonization process had been carried out in accordance with the United Nations Charter and General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). Consequently, on 17 July 1976 East Timor

(Mr. Sriwidjaja, Indonesia)

had officially joined the Republic of Indonesia as its twenty-seventh province. As he had stated earlier, consideration of the question in the Fourth Committee was improper and constituted interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State. Obviously, allusions to a so-called question of East Timor would not help to create an auspicious atmosphere for the visit by a Portuguese delegation to East Timor.

67. Mr. MASCARENHAS (Cape Verde), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that members of the Committee had no doubt that the problem of East Timor was directly related to the subject of decolonization. It was therefore within the competence of the United Nations and if the Indonesian delegation considered that it fell within the exclusive competence of Indonesia, it would be appropriate for the representatives present at the meeting to decide on the validity of that statement.

68. Mr. SRIWIDJAJA (Indonesia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he wished only to reiterate the very clear position of his delegation.

Question of Western Sahara

69. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that Cyprus had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.4/46/L.2.

70. Mr. BENJELOUN (Morocco) asked whether any delegations had dropped out of the list of sponsors of the draft resolution.

71. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that in accordance with the usual procedure a corrigendum to draft resolution A/C.4/46/L.2 would be issued containing a revised list of all sponsors of the draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.