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Forty-fifth Session

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 23 May 1978, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. GARRIGUE-GUYONNAUD (France)

Examination of the annual report of the Administering Authority for the year ended 30 June 1977: Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (continued)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be distributed as soon as possible.

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AS THIS RECORD WAS DISTRIBUTED ON 24 MAY 1978, THE TIME-LIMIT FOR CORRECTIONS WILL BE 30 MAY 1978.

The co-operation of delegations in strictly observing this time-limit would be greatly appreciated.

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

EXAMINATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTERING AUTHORITY FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 30 JUNE 1977: TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS (T/1786: T/L.1208)
(continued)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The Council will now open its general debate on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Mr. BROCHENIN (France) (interpretation from French): It is the desire of the United States that the trusteeship should end in 1981.

We have no reason to believe that such will not be the case. The proximity of the termination of the trusteeship, far from reducing the significance of the work of our Council, on the contrary makes it of particular importance. To be convinced of this, one need only refer to the discussions which took place last week and which enabled us, thanks to the frankness and the high quality of the many statements, to appreciate the strong feelings and at the same time the seriousness with which each of the parties concerned is approaching this last stage of the trusteeship. In particular, all the petitioners explained their views with such conviction and so many valid arguments that each time the members of our Council were perforce persuaded of the justice of the particular stand taken.

It is now inevitable that during the coming months the problems will be looked at more and more closely and that the solutions proposed will lead to increasingly committed positions.

The territory of the Pacific Islands covers a very small area - 600 square miles - but in fact it includes 3 million square miles of the Pacific Ocean. That is its unique feature, but it is also the reason for the complexity of the problems facing it. Indeed, it can hardly be asserted that the present boundaries of this essentially oceanic Territory coincide with what are termed natural boundaries. As in many other places in the world, they result from the vicissitudes of history.

(Mr. Brochenin, France)

Apart from similar climatic and geographic characteristics, it is history which has given a common denominator to these 2,000 islands dispersed in the Pacific Ocean by subjecting them together to the successive administrations of Germany, Japan and the United States. Thus, governed by these same régimes they acquired a similar administrative tradition and underwent a similar development. Moreover, their location in the very heart of the Pacific Ocean, which gives them a special importance, is an additional cohesive factor.

In these circumstances, and in accordance with the purposes which have guided the work of decolonization in recent years, it was to be hoped that this Territory of the Pacific Islands would be able to face the future in unity. "Union is strength."

However, the ocean separates as much as it unites. The immense distances between the islands have had a strong influence over the centuries in the development of individual cultures differing from each other. Today, despite a common life and considerable progress in communications, dialogue and understanding are sometimes difficult.

Nevertheless, the time to choose has arrived. The Northern Marianas have already charted their own course and since the beginning of this year, while remaining under trusteeship, they have given themselves a special administration. On 12 July the referendum which is to be held in the other six Districts of the Carolinas and the Marshalls will decide the fate of the federation provided for in the draft constitution drawn up in 1975. The year 1978 will therefore be a critical one for the future of the Territory of the Pacific Islands.

Our Council is of course bound to respect the wishes of the inhabitants of the Territory. Nevertheless, the French delegation, without wishing to call into question the choice of the populations concerned, would like once again to express the hope that the Micronesians will maintain among themselves the ties which would enable them together to take advantage not only of their common heritage but also of their experiences in the future. France took note with keen interest of the agreement reached in Hilo on 9 March last year

(Mr. Brochenin, France)

between the United States and various representatives of the Territory. It notes with satisfaction the new position of the United States authorities that, in the final analysis, there would be no incompatibility between the constitution and the régime of free association which both parties would like to establish. At this stage, however, France could not take a stand on principles which need further elaboration in the negotiations which are to take place.

Similarly, my delegation also took note in the Hilo agreements of the desire of the administering Power to involve the United Nations in the process which is to enable the people of Micronesia to decide on its future. When régime of association has been clearly defined, and when the Micronesians have the constitution of their choice, it will then be for the Trusteeship Council and the Security Council to draw the appropriate conclusions in accordance with Article 83 of the Charter relating to strategic areas.

The fact that the political decisions must be taken soon makes it all the more imperative to prepare the inhabitants for the exercise of sovereignty. In the field of foreign relations, the Administering Authority must involve the local leaders in international negotiations of direct interest to the Territory; there should be systematic inclusion of Micronesians in United States delegations, as was the case in Suva last November during the meeting of the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation.

(Mr. Brochenin, France)

The long statement made by Mr. Winkel, the High Commissioner of the Territory, provided us with some grounds for satisfaction. First, the various appointments of Micronesians to high-level posts in the administration which he has carried out augur a harmonious transition and handing over of power. The participation in our work of Mr. Juan Sablan, Deputy High Commissioner, undoubtedly is an event of the greatest importance. The greetings that I am happy to extend to him here go not only to the man and the functions that he performs, but also to the symbol that he embodies so skilfully. But many other posts still must go to Micronesians, particularly in the judiciary field. The effort made over the last few years by the Administering Authority in the field of education, as reflected in particular in the existence of some 1,500 students at university level, leads us to believe that in the coming three years Mr. Winkel will have no difficulty in finding the necessary new cadres.

However, the administrative machinery should be adapted to the specific resources and needs of the Territory. The reduction in the number of big departments from 8 to 3, which occurred last month, is an important step forward in the cutting down of administrative structures. My delegation hopes that, without reducing the efficiency of the services provided, this measure will help to reduce their cost substantially. Nevertheless, it is regrettable in this field that the transfer to Ponape of the main administrative departments did not follow the transfer of the Congress, because the resulting separation will undoubtedly be a major handicap to the efficient functioning of the institutions. We hope that following the consultation of 12 July, the Administering Authority will take the necessary steps to make it possible for the capital to play its full role.

I should like to turn now to the prospects in the economic field. A State cannot function in full sovereignty unless it has sufficient revenue available. The present finances of the Territory still depend far too heavily on subsidies from the United States. The revenue from taxation for the last year amounted to only \$6.3 million, whereas the United States contribution was over \$100 million. Unquestionably, this is a problem that the savings achieved through the reduction of the administrative structures will not be sufficient to solve.

Although since 1974 foreign investments have been authorized with certain restrictions in the Territory, there does not seem to have been a substantial inflow of capital as a result. Perhaps we should see this as the effect of overrestrictive legislation or perhaps some reluctance on the part of potential investors to commit themselves in a Territory with an uncertain political future. However, my delegation wonders whether everything possible has been done to draw attention abroad to the opportunities offered by the islands of Micronesia.

In the development strategy, the decision by Congress to extend the fishing zone of the Territory to 200 miles from the coast is a particularly important event, since it does give Micronesians control over one of the most important resources available to them. On this basis it seems that it should now be possible to organize the exploitation of fisheries and to envisage the vigorous growth of a promising industry.

It is also a matter of some concern to see how dependent the population is on the outside world for its supply of meat, milk, fruit and even canned fish. In our opinion, local production should be encouraged and protected, in particular by taxes on imports. In this connexion, to take an example, my delegation considers as very promising the project which should enable the island of Ponape to become the rice granary of the Territory, but this should be implemented as rapidly as possible.

Generally speaking my delegation, which in previous years has followed with interest the preparation and then the presentation of the five-year plan, feels that its implementation is not going ahead at quite the rate envisaged.

The importance and the number of works which the High Commissioner hopes to carry through in the coming years clearly shows the concern of the Administering Authority to provide the Territory with the infrastructure necessary for its development. At the same time, however, it does underscore the shortcomings from which the Territory now suffers. Hence it is to be hoped that the promises made here in this Council will be rapidly translated into reality.

In the social field I shall confine myself to noting with satisfaction that the districts now have satisfactory hospital facilities, although further work needs to be done for the islands which are far from the main centres.

(Mr. Brochenin, France)

Lastly, with regard to reparations for war damage, my delegation took note of the replies given by the representative of the United States to the questions put to him on that subject. However, we do feel that new diplomatic representations to Japan would make it possible to find a satisfactory solution to this painful problem.

The Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands has reached a decisive stage in its destiny. The vote on the draft Constitution on 12 July will be a first step that will make it possible to establish the ways and means by which Micronesia would like to see itself administratively organized and politically governed. At a later date the Territory will have to decide on its future status and its relations with the United States in the new context envisaged by the Hilo agreements.

It is our responsibility, in our capacity as members of the Trusteeship Council, to ensure that the population shall be able, in accordance with Article 76 of the Charter, to express themselves freely, which implies, on the one hand, that the political education of the population and its knowledge of the options open to it should be sufficient, and, on the other hand, that the United Nations should make sure that the conditions in which the population pronounces itself are fully democratic.

But the endeavour of the Trusteeship Council is not only to guarantee full exercise of political rights by the population of Micronesia, but also to see to it that the Administering Authority gives the Territory the economic and social means necessary for its development and to make it possible in the future to put an end to excessive economic dependence. It is with this appeal that I should like to conclude my statement on the situation in the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands.

Finally I should like to express, on behalf of the French Government, our best wishes for success to the Micronesian people in its task of constructing a new Micronesia.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I should like now to inform the members of the Council that a month ago the Liaison Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) informed us of its desire to participate in the deliberations of the Council.

I am happy to announce that Mr. Ross-Smith, representative of WHO for the South Pacific, has come from Fiji to follow the debates of the Council. He has expressed his wish to make a brief statement in order to point up the activities of the World Health Organization in the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands.

Since there is no objection, I now call on Mr. Ross-Smith to make his statement.

Dr. ROSS-SMITH (World Health Organization (WHO)): It is a very great pleasure and privilege for me to attend this forty-fifth session of the Trusteeship Council and to be given the opportunity to make a brief statement elaborating on the work of the World Health Organization (WHO) in so far as the Trust Territory is concerned.

The Trust Territory is geographically located within what is termed the Western Pacific Region of WHO - which region has its headquarters at Manila in the Philippines. Under the Organization's decentralized administrative structure, individual countries or groups of countries are served by WHO representatives at the country level. My designation is WHO Representative for the South Pacific and I am based in Suva, Fiji. There are 19 countries and Territories in my area, including Australia, New Zealand, all the South Pacific island countries, as well as Guam and the Trust Territories to the north. The Trust Territory was added to my area of responsibility only in 1977; before that time it was attached directly to our Regional Office in Manila.

WHO has been associated with health programmes in the Trust Territory for many years; during this time assistance has been confined principally to the award of fellowships, given to candidates for undergraduate courses which were not available in the Trust Territory, and also to enable health workers to undergo refresher training or to obtain higher qualifications abroad. Over the years a great number of health workers from the Trust Territory have also been afforded opportunities to participate in WHO's intercountry group educational meetings, such as seminars, workshops and so on.

The attachment of the Trust Territory to the Suva Office in 1977 has led to an improved working relationship with WHO. I have in my office several intercountry teams of advisers in different fields and their visits to the Trust Territory are now being facilitated. Our areas of technical co-operation are being expanded.

For example, in 1977 a team of two WHO consultants - at the Government's request - carried out a feasibility study on the new Ponape hospital, with particular reference to the hospital's capacity and capability to function as a reference and training institution. Also during the same year, the WHO

(Dr. Ross-Smith, WHO)

Regional Adviser on Oral Health visited the Trust Territory to serve as a consultant in a national dental health training programme.

At the present time another team of WHO consultants in medical education are visiting Ponape to assist the health authorities in a refresher training course for Micronesian medical officers. This is the third such course in which WHO consultants have participated - with good effects.

In terms of WHO's budgetary provisions, in 1977 a total of approximately \$66,000 was expended - \$11,000 of that for consultantships and the remaining \$55,000 for fellowships; in 1978 approximately \$106,000 is earmarked - \$9,000 for consultants and the remaining \$97,000 for fellowships; and for 1979 approximately \$97,000 is budgeted for fellowships.

In quoting those figures I must point out that the costs incurred in sending participants from the Trust Territory to various WHO seminars and courses are not included; such costs come under our intercountry projects, as do the costs of visits of WHO regular staff. All of the aforementioned costs, however, come from the WHO regular budget.

The Council will, no doubt, be more interested in the future, than in the past, and what may be expected to come from WHO by way of its technical co-operation and collaboration in health programmes in the Trust Territory in the years ahead. On this score, let me first of all mention WHO's global priority programme areas which are built around the social target pronounced by the World Health Assembly in 1977 - "Health for all by the year 2000". The blue-print to reach that target highlights the importance of a variety of integrated programme activities, including country health programming, primary health care, control of communicable diseases, maternal and child health, nutrition, immunization programmes, laboratory services and, finally, a most important one - health manpower development.

I believe the health authorities of the Trust Territory would agree that all those programme areas are also priority ones for the Trust Territory and that they would form a baseline on which to build our programme of co-operation.

Another point worth mentioning is that developing countries such as the Trust Territory, which are fast approaching independence, face a common

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problem, that is, the lack of expertise in health management. With a view to meeting that pressing need in the Pacific, WHO is entering into an agreement with the University of the South Pacific in Suva to sponsor health management training courses of one month's duration, for senior health administrators. The first such course will be held in Tonga in August of this year, and the Trust Territory has been invited to participate.

Looking ahead, we have also commenced discussions with the health authorities on the 1980/81 biennial programme and budget for which a sum of \$207,000 has been set. Broad programme areas have been defined and details of the programmes will be worked out nearer the implementation date. Most of that amount will go to the training of health personnel, through fellowships and national training courses. Consultant services will be provided as required in such important areas as primary health care, environmental health, communicable diseases, oral health and so on.

The figure of \$207,000 refers to WHO's regular budget. The possibility also remains, of course, where WHO's funds are insufficient to cover priority activity, for the organization to seek extrabudgetary resources from bilateral donors or other international sources. In such a case, WHO would serve as executing agency for the projects concerned.

Also on the planning and programming side, WHO was involved last year with the Trust Territory in a medium-term programming exercise covering the period up to 1983. This exercise was designed to formulate a guide and framework for the possible areas of WHO co-operation in the years ahead.

We in WHO clearly recognize that at this critical stage in the Trust Territory development must be the key word for the future, and development must imply social progress no less than economic progress. On this note, let me reiterate WHO's readiness and willingness to co-operate fully and play its part in the development of the Trust Territory.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of the World Health Organization for the information he has provided us with. The Council fully appreciates the effort he made in coming from Suva to participate in our deliberations. That was one of the wishes expressed by the Council in its previous annual reports, and I should like to tell him that he has made a valuable contribution to our debate.

This morning I received a written petition and a written communication. Those documents will be distributed to all members as official documents of the Trusteeship Council. The Council will be able to consider and take note of them at a subsequent meeting.

This afternoon the Council will continue the general debate. During that meeting we shall proceed to appoint a drafting committee whose task it will be to propose conclusions and recommendations on conditions in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.