



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.109/SR.20
4 May 1962
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 23 March 1962, at 11.10 a.m.

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PRESENT:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. JHA	(India)
<u>Vice-Chairman:</u>	Mr. COULIBALY	(Mali)
<u>Members:</u>	Mr. PLIMSOLL	Australia
	Mr. KOUN WICK	Cambodia
	Mr. WODAJO	Ethiopia
	Mr. RASGOTRA	India
	Mr. THEODOLI	Italy
	Mr. ANDRIAMAHARO	Madagascar
	Mr. TRAORE	Mali
	Mr. SOLTYSIAK	Poland
	Mr. MANSOURI	Syria
	Mr. NGAIZA	Tanganyika
	Mr. Taleb SLIM	Tunisia
	Mr. OBEREMKO	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
	Mr. THOM	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	Mr. BINGHAM	United States of America
	Mr. VELAZQUEZ	Uruguay
	Mr. SILVA SUCRE	Venezuela
	Mr. PAVICEVIC)	Yugoslavia
	Mr. KREACIC)	
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Mr. CHACKO	Secretary of the Committee

SOUTHERN RHODESIA: GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1745 (XVI) (continued)

Mr. SILVA SUORE (Venezuela) recalled that for its consideration of the question of Southern Rhodesia the Committee had four different sources of information available to it. Working Paper No. 1 prepared by the Secretariat, reviewing various geographical, historical and political aspects of Southern Rhodesia, was less a source of information in the strict sense than a useful aide-mémoire. The text of the 1961 Constitution, which had been communicated by the United Kingdom delegation, supplied some important facts and illustrated the country's gradual development over the first half of the twentieth century and especially since 1923. The documentation which the members of the Committee had been able to assemble on their own account had also provided some useful information; he had in mind in particular the detailed analysis of the 1961 Constitution provided by the Indian representative. It was the petitioners, however, who had supplied the most practical data, both in their oral testimony and in the documents they had submitted with it.

The Special Committee had a twofold task in regard to Southern Rhodesia: first, in order to reply to the question which the General Assembly had put to it in resolution 1745 (XVI), it had to decide whether the Territory of Southern Rhodesia had attained a full measure of self-government. Even if the facts given by the petitioners did not in themselves constitute a reply to that question, the question could be settled by even a perfunctory comparison of the political situation in Southern Rhodesia with the list of "factors indicative of the attainment of other separate systems of self-government" given in the second part of the annex to General Assembly resolution 742 (VIII). The first fact to be noted was that the population of the Territory had not been able freely to express their opinion, by democratic processes, as to the political status which they desired. As far as the freedom of the population to chose between several possibilities, including independence was concerned, the association with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland seemed to be far from satisfactory to the inhabitants of Southern Rhodesia.

(Mr. Silva Sucre, Venezuela)

Without wishing to press the comparison further, he pointed out that while a certain segment of the population was already enjoying an indisputable measure of internal self-government, that segment in fact consisted only of the settlers of European origin, or 8 per cent of the population, and their relative self-government served only to accentuate still further the differences which divided them from the indigenous population, who were the historical owners of the land.

Southern Rhodesia thus gave the impression of a country torn between two factions divided not only by ethnic differences but also by the system governing the composition of Parliament, the existence of two electoral rolls, the restrictions placed on the right to vote, the absence of African officials from the higher ranks of the civil service and the inequality of opportunity for economic and cultural advancement. Admittedly, in view of the development of the Territory in the past, the present situation could be regarded as a transitional phase which should ultimately lead to complete self-government. There, too, however, while the hour of self-determination seemed to be approaching for the white European minority, the progress made by the African population was almost imperceptible. For all those reasons, his delegation would reply in the negative to the question which the General Assembly had asked in resolution 1745 (XVI).

The second part of the Committee's task was more general. As it had been requested to do in resolution 1654 (XVI), the Committee was to examine the application of the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples and to make suggestions and recommendations on the progress and extent of the implementation of the Declaration. In his delegation's view, the Committee should base itself on resolution 1654 (XVI), and in particular on operative paragraph 4 of that text, in recommending to the General Assembly the measures which it considered most likely to remedy the existing situation in Southern Rhodesia in the interests of the inhabitants of that country and of United Nations prestige.

Mr. SOLTYSIAK (Poland) recalled that one of the reasons why the Committee had decided to give highest priority to the consideration of Southern Rhodesia was that the General Assembly had requested it in resolution 1745 (XVI) to consider whether the Territory had attained a full measure of self-government.

(Mr. Soltysiak, Poland)

Referring to the list of factors indicative of the attainment of self-government given in the second part of the annex to resolution 742 (VIII), he observed, in the first place, that the population of Southern Rhodesia had not been in a position either freely to express their opinion by informed and democratic processes as to the status or change of status which they desired or to choose freely on the basis of the right of self-determination, between several possibilities, including independence.

An analysis of other factors - the nature and measure of control or interference by the Government of another State in respect of the internal government, the enactment of laws by an indigenous body, the selection of members of the executive branch of the Government by the competent authority in the Territory receiving consent of the indigenous population, the establishment of courts of law and the selection of judges, and the effective participation of the population in the Government of the Territory through an adequate and appropriate electoral and representative system - revealed that there was in fact intervention by the Government of another State in the legislative affairs of the Territory, for the exclusive benefit of the white settlers.

In the past, contrary to the provisions of the United Nations Charter and in disregard of the fundamental human rights of the majority of the population, the white settlers had arrogated all privileges to themselves, in particular occupying all the seats in the legislative body. Under the pretence of remedying that state of affairs, the new Constitution, which had been imposed on the population by the United Kingdom Government, merely perpetuated it: on the one hand it assured the European population of at least 50 of the 65 seats in the Legislative Assembly and on the other it was obviously intended to deprive the Africans of the right to vote by subordinating the exercise of that right to conditions which it was impossible for them to fulfil. For example, to qualify as a voter, an African had to prove that he had a minimum income of £120 per annum. In 1960, however, while the white settlers earned an average wage of £1,209 per annum, African wage earners, who were subject to discrimination of all kinds, earned only £87. The other qualifications were no less unjust.

(Mr. Soltysiak, Poland)

It had been claimed that relative self-government had been granted to Southern Rhodesia. However, it was enjoyed only by the white settlers, who constituted less than 10 per cent of the population and denied any rights to the indigenous population. The Special Committee should therefore not hesitate to declare, in reply to resolution 1745 (XVI), that Southern Rhodesia was a Non-Self-Governing Territory in the sense defined by the Charter and the General Assembly resolutions.

The General Assembly had also asked the Committee to recommend specific measures which could bring independence to the Trust Territories, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and other territories which had not yet attained independence.

In order to do so, the Committee should base itself not only on the facts presented by the petitioners but also on the specific proposals made by Mr. Nkomo in his capacity as representative of the population of Southern Rhodesia. He had asked:

That the United Kingdom Government should immediately abrogate the new racist Constitution of 1961;

That no federal or local election should be held in that Territory under the existing electoral system;

That new elections to the Legislative Assembly should be organized on the principle of "one adult - one vote" without distinction as to race, creed, colour, immovable property, income or education; those free elections would make it possible to form a truly representative assembly and establish a representative government;

That the Bill of Rights included in the 1961 Constitution and all racial and discriminatory laws should be repealed;

That the Central African Federation should be liquidated and the establishment of any new federation left to the decision of the population of the territories concerned;

That all African political organizations and parties should be able to enjoy democratic freedoms and that all political prisoners should be released immediately.

The Polish delegation, which was opposed to the exploitation of the majority of the population by a handful of white settlers and to every kind of discrimination and slavery, supported those requests by the people of Southern Rhodesia.

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(Mr. Soltysiak, Poland)

He recalled that the Acting Secretary-General, on the occasion of the thirteenth anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, had said that the defence of peace in the world should be based on the recognition of the inherent dignity of all human beings and on the equality of all members of the human family. In Southern Rhodesia, where human rights were openly violated, peace was also at stake. The Committee must therefore submit to the General Assembly, as soon as possible and perhaps even at its resumed session in June, recommendations which would ensure the implementation of resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1654 (XVI) for the benefit of the great majority of the population of Southern Rhodesia.

The Polish delegation reserved the right to comment at an appropriate time on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.4 submitted by Tunisia and Mali.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Mr. WODAJO (Ethiopia) associated himself with the observation made by the Chairman at the preceding meeting; he did not think that the Committee's work was advancing slowly. If the Committee had been handicapped, that was due less to a lack of information than to the fact that it was exploring a new field for which there was no precedent. Moreover, the harmonious atmosphere in which the work was proceeding was a measure of the Committee's success.

He then went on to examine the work programme submitted by the representative of India. That proposal was an excellent one, but there were some comments he would like to make on it.

According to the programme, the Committee would adjourn the following week; it would resume work on 16 April and from then until 29 April would examine the situation in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. From 30 April to 14 May it would examine the situation in Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, from 15 to 28 May the situation in Mozambique and in all the other Portuguese territories in Africa, except Angola; from 29 May to 5 June it would consider Angola and after the end of the resumed General Assembly session it would examine the situation in Kenya, Zanzibar and South West Africa.

(Mr. Wodajo, Ethiopia)

Adjournment in no way signified inaction. In fact, the adjournment would enable delegations to examine the new documents received in the meantime and to inform any petitioners from other territories how the Committee's work was progressing. However, he thought that the suggested three weeks' interruption might perhaps be reduced to two. Furthermore, he thought that the programme should be sufficiently flexible. It would be useful, for example, for the Committee to have the report of the committees studying the Portuguese territories and Angola respectively. The Committee should work in liaison with those two bodies to avoid any duplication.

In addition, the General Assembly was to meet on 5 June and it would discuss Ruanda-Urundi. In that case also, it would be advisable for the Committee to await the outcome of the General Assembly's work; like the representative of India, he thought that the Committee would be perfectly free to examine the situation in Kenya, Zanzibar and South West Africa after the resumption of the General Assembly session.

Mr. TRAORE (Mali) emphasized the urgency of the problems before the Committee and the need to fix a definite date for the suspension or resumption of its work. It was essential also that the necessary information should be available in time.

He agreed with the representative of Ethiopia that a suspension of three weeks was too long and suggested that work should be suspended for a period of eleven to fifteen days. That would give the Committee more time in which to examine the situation in the various territories, in particular Mozambique and the Portuguese territories.

Mr. Taieb SLIM (Tunisia) thanked the representative of India for submitting a very clearly drafted programme of work to the Committee. He, too, thought that an interruption of two weeks would be preferable and, in that connexion, he suggested that the work programme should be revised as follows: the Committee would consider Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland from 9 to 22 April, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland from 23 April to 7 May, Mozambique and the Portuguese territories in Africa except Angola from 8 to 21 May, and Angola and Ruanda-Urundi from 22 to 30 May.

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Mr. NGAIZA (Tanganyika) thought that the Indian representative's proposal was most useful. However, the still dependent peoples were yearning to be free as soon as possible, and he agreed with the representatives of Ethiopia, Mali and Tunisia that the Committee should not interrupt its work for three weeks but should resume work on 9 April.

Mr. THOM (United Kingdom) asked whether the representative of India would see any objection to reversing the order of items 2 and 3 of the programme of work. If Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland were relegated to third place, i.e. after the Portuguese territories (less Angola), that would reduce the risk of overlapping between the work of the Committee on Information and that of the Committee of Seventeen.

Mr. OBEREMKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said, as he had already done the previous day, that the Committee must bear the volume of work in mind. Accordingly, while accepting in principle the time-table submitted by India, he agreed with the representatives of Mali and Ethiopia that the Committee should resume work at the latest on 9 April; that would give it more time to consider the situation in the various territories. The members of the Committee could take advantage of the period of recess to study the information communicated, while the Secretariat for its part should use the time to prepare the necessary documentation.

Moreover, the Committee should disseminate information on its aims and its programme of work in the colonies and attract the attention of the peoples by publishing that information in the Press and disseminating it through the existing United Nations channels.

Mr. WODAJO (Ethiopia) did not agree with the suggestion made by the representative of Mali that the Committee should study the situation in Ruanda-Urundi before the resumed sixteenth session of the General Assembly. A special commission for Ruanda-Urundi had recently been established and had been given a particularly delicate mission of conciliation and persuasion. It would therefore be extremely useful to learn the results of its work. Moreover, various Ruanda-Urundi party leaders were to meet at Addis Ababa in an attempt to reconcile their different points of view, and for that reason also the Committee should avoid undue haste.

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Mr. RASGOTRA (India) wished to assure the representative of Tanganyika that he was equally impatient to see the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories attain independence, and equally aware of the need for the Committee to work actively to that end. It was precisely to enable the Committee to prepare itself to work with the desired effectiveness that he had asked that it should recess for a reasonable period of time. The Secretariat needed time to collect, organize and disseminate the necessary documentation on Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia, and the representatives needed time to study that documentation, to transmit it to their respective Governments and to receive instructions from them. In his view, those various operations would certainly take fifteen days. He would be willing to agree, as a compromise, that the Committee should adjourn for no longer than that, but ten days seemed to him quite inadequate, and he asked the delegations of Tanganyika and Tunisia not to press their proposals.

He saw no objection to the United Kingdom proposal that the Committee should study Mozambique and the other Portuguese possessions in Africa before Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, provided of course that the Special Committee on Territories under Portuguese Administration had completed its work before 15 April and was in a position to communicate the requisite information to the Committee of Seventeen before that date.

That solution might even be desirable in view of the disturbing reports recently received concerning Portuguese Guinea. But since the Committee was uncertain whether it could have the necessary documentation available in time, he suggested that the order of items proposed in the programme of work should be retained, items 2 and 3 being reversed if necessary. With regard to the proposal of the representative of Mali that Ruanda-Urundi should be considered before the second resumed sixteenth session of the General Assembly, he agreed with the representative of Ethiopia that it would be preferable to await the outcome of the General Assembly deliberations on the matter, and also the report of the Conciliation Commission which was to organize a conference at Addis Ababa at which the leaders of the political parties of Ruanda-Urundi would endeavour to reconcile their differences. He did not think it was necessary to take an immediate decision on that point.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should meet again on 12 April; provided that it had finished its consideration of Southern Rhodesia by Wednesday of the following week, that would enable the Committee to suspend its work for fifteen days, a length of time which appeared to have the approval of all members.

With regard to the United Kingdom representative's proposal to reverse the order of items 2 and 3 of the programme of work, the members of the Committee, appreciating the United Kingdom representative's difficult position, seemed to be willing to agree on condition that the requisite information was received by the Committee in time.

As to the consideration of the question of Ruanda-Urundi, he thought that the wisest solution would be to defer the decision on that matter until later.

Lastly, with regard to the publicity which the Soviet Union representative thought should be given the Committee's work in order to inform the dependent peoples of the opportunities offered to them, he said that of course that was in line with the Committee's wishes. He pointed out that the United Nations Office of Public Information, which had an office in Africa, published press communiqués on the work of the United Nations, although it was true that they simply stated facts. But it was not impossible that the African countries, through the press and the radio, would give useful publicity to the work of the United Nations and of the Committee in particular.

Mr. THOM (United Kingdom) said that, when fixing the date for resuming its work, the Committee should not forget that the United Kingdom delegation would be in a position to furnish information on Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland at the end of the following week, and on the other Territories by 22 April.

He hoped that the Committee would wait for the full information which the United Kingdom had voluntarily offered to submit before deciding to use the questionnaire.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the sources of information available to the Committee (information furnished by the Administering Authority, the questionnaire, and documents collected by the Secretariat) were complementary and not conflicting.

Mr. PLIMSOLL (Australia) said that, although that was true, the information provided by the Administering Authority was nevertheless generally

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(Mr. Plimsoll; Australia)

considered as basic documentation and, where the Authority showed itself willing to co-operate, the Committee should assume to begin with that it would receive the information promised, although it might supplement that information by means of the questionnaire.

Mr. OBEREMKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) observed that if the date for the resumption of work was fixed at 12 April, the Committee would only have two days remaining before the end of the week; it would be preferable for it to meet on Monday 9 April.

Mr. Taieb SLIM (Tunisia) proposed that, as a compromise, the Committee should agree upon 11 April as the date for resuming its work.

Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said that he would maintain his proposal that work should be resumed on 12 April, as it had been based on serious grounds.

Mr. PLIMSOLL (Australia) supported the Indian proposal. As the representative of Ethiopia and Mr. Rasgotra himself had pointed out, that recess could be put to good use by the Secretariat and the delegations. He thought that, in general, committees frequently did their most effective work outside the actual meetings themselves.

Mr. COULIBALY (Vice-Chairman) recalled that the Committee had decided to reach agreement without resorting to a vote whenever possible. He accordingly proposed that the members of the Committee should agree on the date of 12 April, on the understanding, however, that the Committee would submit to the seventeenth session of the General Assembly a report in conformity with the terms of reference given to it by the General Assembly.

Mr. THEODOLI (Italy) said that that date seemed acceptable to him, provided that the Committee had completed its study of Southern Rhodesia by Wednesday of the following week.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, the date for the resumption of the Committee's work would be fixed at 12 April on the understanding that the Committee would then work uninterruptedly until it had exhausted the items on its programme of work.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.