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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 TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 27 March 1962, at 11.55 a.m.

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PRESENT:

Chairman:

Mr. JHA (India)

Members:

Mr. PLIMSOLL Australia

Mr. KOUN WICK Cambodia

Mr. WODAJO Ethiopia

Mr. RASGOTRA India

Mr. THEODOLI Italy

Mr. ANDRIAMAHARO Madagascar

Mr. TRAORE Mali

Mr. LEWANDOWSKI Poland

Mr. RIFAI Syria

Mr. NGAIZA Tanganyika

Mr. Taieb SLIM Tunisia

Mr. MOROZOV Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Mr. CROWE United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland

Mr. BINGHAM United States of America

Mr. VELAZQUEZ Uruguay

Mr. SILVA SUCRE Venezuela

Mr. PAVICEVIC Yugoslavia

Secretariat:

Mr. CHACKO Secretary of the Committee

SOUTHERN RHODESIA: GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1745 (XVI) (A/AC.109/L.4/Rev.1 and Corr.1, L.5) (continued)

Mr. Taieb SLIM (Tunisia) said that he had been entirely satisfied by the Syrian representative's reply to the statement made at the twenty-second meeting by the United States representative regarding the Committee's right to adopt resolutions. In his delegation's view, the members of the Committee were entitled to press for a vote when they felt it was necessary, and that view had been confirmed in the summing up of the Committee's work made by the Chairman at the sixth meeting (A/AC.109/1). As the USSR representative had stated at the previous meeting, if the Committee could not solve certain problems by general agreement, there would be no alternative but to adopt a resolution. He appealed to the United States representative to accept that interpretation.

In a spirit of co-operation the sponsors of the draft resolution (A/AC.109/L.4/Rev.1) were prepared to accept the second Polish amendment (A/AC.109/L.5). The sponsors had consulted various delegations before submitting the draft resolution and had felt that it might be necessary to request the General Assembly to add the question of Southern Rhodesia to the agenda of its resumed session.

He appealed to the Polish representative not to press his first and third amendments, with a view to maintaining an atmosphere of harmony in the Committee.

At the previous meeting the representative of Italy had explained that he would have difficulty in supporting operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution because his delegation did not recognize the Committee's right to address itself to the United Kingdom Government direct. In the view of the Tunisian delegation, operative paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 represented merely a possible means of ascertaining from the Administering Power what steps it proposed to take in order to secure the immediate implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) in Southern Rhodesia. In a spirit of conciliation and in order to satisfy the representatives of Italy and Poland, he suggested that paragraph 2 of the draft resolution should be redrafted to read:

"Expresses its conviction that it is necessary for the evolution of the Territory towards independence that the United Kingdom Government should abrogate the 1961 Constitution without further delay and should convene another Constitutional Conference with the participation of the political leaders of Southern Rhodesia."

(Mr. Taieb Slim, Tunisia)

He hoped that with that amendment the draft resolution would be acceptable to all the members of the Committee.

Mr. TRAORE (Mali) proposed that the Committee should have a short recess in order to give representatives time to confer and decide on the best course of action.

The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection that would be done.

The meeting was suspended at 12.15 p.m. and resumed at 12.30 p.m.

Mr. WODAJO (Ethiopia) said that his delegation had been much impressed by the argument adduced by the Tunisian representative at the previous meeting to the effect that the Committee should take action in the immediate future with regard to Southern Rhodesia. His delegation entirely agreed and would therefore offer a few suggestions. Firstly, he would request the sponsors not to press for an immediate vote on the draft resolution. He was not suggesting that the draft resolution should be withdrawn, since his delegation entirely agreed with it in principle, but merely that final action should be deferred. The reason for that suggestion was that his delegation felt that within the next week or two the Committee could establish contact with the United Kingdom Government through a sub-committee, which could go to London, explain to the United Kingdom Government the feelings and trends of opinion in the Committee and ascertain what the future prospects were. The views of the sub-committee would be of great value when the Special Committee finally considered the draft resolution.

He would also suggest that before the sub-committee departed for London the Chairman should prepare a summary of the views expressed and the points on which agreement had been reached, for the sub-committee to present to the United Kingdom Government. With regard to the composition of the sub-committee, he thought the practice so far followed had been satisfactory and that the choice of members should be left to the Chairman, in consultation with the members of the Committee.

Mr. PAVICEVIC (Yugoslavia) thanked the Tunisian representative for the changes he had agreed to make in the draft resolution. The amended wording of operative paragraph 2 was entirely in conformity with the Committee's terms of reference. He supported the suggestions made by the representative of Ethiopia and expressed the hope that the proposed sub-committee would be able to provide the Committee with useful information which would enable it to make specific recommendations.

Mr. Taieb SLIM (Tunisia) said that on the understanding that the principles on which there was general agreement should form the basis of the sub-committee's work, and providing that the United Kingdom delegation was willing to co-operate, his delegation would have no objection to the proposed procedure. It should be clearly understood that the sponsors had not withdrawn the draft resolution but had merely agreed to a postponement of the vote until the Committee was in possession of the report of the proposed sub-committee. That meant that time would have to be found at a later stage, and before 1 June, to hold further discussions on the question of Southern Rhodesia and draft the Committee's final recommendations. His delegation was prepared to agree to those suggestions in order to meet the wishes of the other members of the Committee.

Mr. TRAORE (Mali) said that the specific and constructive suggestions made by the representative of Ethiopia were generally in line with his delegation's policy. He agreed that the Chairman should be asked to submit a summary of the points which the whole Committee endorsed. The proposed sub-committee should be appointed as soon as possible and should set to work quickly. When the sub-committee had presented its report, the Committee could decide whether or not it was necessary to vote on the draft resolution.

Mr. RASGOTRA (India) expressed satisfaction that, thanks to the understanding attitude shown by the representatives of Tunisia and Mali in response to the appeal of Ethiopia, the procedural difficulties which had arisen at the previous meeting concerning the question of voting on the resolution appeared to have been largely overcome. His delegation's silence on that point had not meant that it disagreed with the principles underlying the draft resolution submitted by Mali and Tunisia. It agreed with the conclusion that the Territory of Southern Rhodesia had not attained self-government; indeed the situation of "armed injustice" prevailing there was extremely dangerous. Hence he welcomed the suggestion of an approach to the United Kingdom Government, which in the opinion of many delegations was indeed responsible for the future development of the situation in Southern Rhodesia. It was urgently necessary for the Committee to take action to arrest the present trend in the Territory. The proposed sub-committee should leave as soon as possible for London, where it would express the grave concern felt by the Committee and endeavour to obtain assurances that every effort would be made to reverse the present trend in Southern Rhodesia ...

(Mr. Rasgotra, India)

and to promote its evolution to early independence. The period of the recess which had been agreed upon could be occupied by the negotiations in London, so that the Committee's schedule would not be adversely affected.

Mr. LEWANDOWSKI (Poland) endorsed the Syrian representative's statement at the previous meeting concerning the procedural question the United States representative had raised. It was now clear that every member had the right to propose a draft resolution and that if no agreement was reached upon it a vote would have to be taken.

He thanked the representatives of Tunisia and Mali for accepting his delegation's second amendment (A/AC.109/L.5). If, however, the Ethiopian suggestion was accepted, it would seem advisable for the report to be submitted somewhat earlier than 1 June.

His delegation's position on the Ethiopian suggestion would depend on two factors. Firstly, nothing would be gained by adopting it if the sub-committee's terms of reference were not acceptable to the United Kingdom Government and if that Government was not willing to co-operate to the full with regard to further action on Southern Rhodesia. Secondly, the terms of reference of the sub-committee should be as specific as possible and should reflect the greatest possible consensus of opinion in the Committee on the problem of Southern Rhodesia. His delegation would adopt a final position on the Ethiopian suggestion when the Committee had heard the terms of reference to be given to the Sub-Committee. He reserved the right to revert at a later stage, if necessary, to the two Polish amendments which had not been accepted.

Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) agreed that it should be made quite clear that, while the Committee would act by consensus of opinion as far as possible, it had the right to deal with problems by voting on a draft resolution where necessary.

The question at present before the Committee was whether it should vote on the draft resolution and the amendments forthwith, or whether it should leave the draft resolution in abeyance until the action suggested by the Ethiopian representative had been completed. He still felt that the best procedure would be for the Committee to vote on the draft resolution and then send a Good Offices Sub-Committee to negotiate with the United Kingdom Government. The

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

Ethiopian representative had suggested that the Chairman should prepare a summary of the views that had been expressed in the Committee; in view of the wide measure of agreement which was apparent, it could be assumed that the Chairman's summary would largely reflect the same views as were expressed in the draft resolution. In that way it would be known before the departure of the sub-committee that there was definite support for the proposed talks. Since the African delegations in particular seemed to place great hopes on that approach, he felt that the attempt should be made. If the Committee accepted the Chairman's summary as a directive to the sub-committee, his delegation could associate itself with the Ethiopian suggestion. He reserved the right to propose amendments to the draft resolution when the sub-committee had presented its report.

The CHAIRMAN said that, if the Committee decided to request the Chairman to provide a summary, he would carry out that task to the best of his ability and would take account both of the discussions in the Committee and of the points made in the draft resolution. He felt, however, that it should not be open to members of the Committee to accept, reject or amend the summary. If the Committee wished to have a draft that it could discuss and criticize, it could appoint a drafting committee or use some other method. If it left the task to the Chairman, it would have to decide to have confidence in the summary.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.