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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-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 29 March 1962, at 3.45 p.m.

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PRESENT:

Chairman:

Mr. COULIBALY (Mali)

Members:

Mr. PLIMSOLL Australia

Mr. KOUN WICK Cambodia

Mr. WODAJO Ethiopia

Mr. RASGOTRA India

Mr. ZITO Italy

Mr. ANDRIAMAHARO Madagascar

Mr. TRAORE Mali

Mr. SOLTYSIAK Poland

Mr. RIFAI Syria

Mr. NSILO SWAI)
Mr. NGAIZA) Tanganyika

Mr. Taieb SLIM Tunisia

Mr. OBEREMKO Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Mr. CROWE United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland

Mr. BLAKE United States of America

Mr. VELAZQUEZ Uruguay

Mr. SILVA SUCRE Venezuela

Mr. KREACIC Yugoslavia

Secretariat:

Mr. CHACKO Secretary of the Committee

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REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE (A/AC.109/L.6)

The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should consider the text of the report of the Sub-Committee on the Questionnaire (A/AC.109/L.6) paragraph by paragraph.

Mr. BLAKE (United States of America) said that, as he had only just received the report, he had not had time to transmit it to his Government and was not therefore in a position to comment on it in detail. He reserved the United States Government's position on the subject.

Mr. CROWE (United Kingdom) recalled that his Government was in process of voluntarily providing the United Nations with information on the Territories for which it was responsible. At first sight that information seemed to cover much of the same ground as the questionnaire. Nevertheless, if the questionnaire was adopted, he would transmit it to his Government for its consideration. In the meantime he would reserve comment.

The preamble of the report was adopted.

Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the introduction to the draft questionnaire were adopted.

Mr. PLIMSOLL (Australia), referring to paragraph 4, said that he doubted whether statistical data relating to the specific date of 14 December 1960 were available in most of the countries concerned. It was therefore to be expected that the latter would either furnish the statistics available for the nearest date or abide by the date of 14 December 1960 and give estimated figures.

It should also be remembered that certain Administering Powers had long been pursuing a decolonization programme in relation to which the date chosen by the Committee was purely incidental.

The foregoing were simply observations and were not objections to the text of the report.

Paragraphs 4 and 5 were adopted.

Mr. OBEREMKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he would have preferred the wording of paragraph 6 to be more specific.

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(Mr. Cberemko, USSR)

In the case of Territories, for the study of which a programme of work had already been laid down, it would be advisable to ask that the replies to the questionnaire should be furnished by a specific date; that would enable the Committee to obtain the information within a reasonable period before embarking upon the study of a particular Territory.

For the Territories which did not appear in the preliminary programme of work, the date of 1 June 1962 might be set as the time-limit for the transmission of the information.

Mr. PLIMSOLL (Australia) wondered whether it would be wise at that stage to set specific dates for the transmission of information. For one thing, the Committee's programme of work was still subject to change. Moreover, in the case of a Territory such as New Guinea under Australian administration, which a United Nations Visiting Mission was at present touring and which would subsequently be discussed in the Trusteeship Council, the information to be transmitted would certainly be of greater value if it included the results of the work of those two organs.

Mr. CROWE (United Kingdom) associated himself with that remark.

Mr. VELASQUEZ (Uruguay) thought that 1 June 1962 would be a somewhat arbitrary date since certain Territories would be considered before and others after that date. Moreover, the Committee's programme of work depended on the date on which the Good Offices Sub-Committee returned from London. It would therefore be better to retain the wording of paragraph 6 as it stood.

Mr. OBEREMKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that it would be wise to set the authorities concerned specific dates for the transmission of information, as was done by the Trusteeship Council. Any vague wording in that respect would provide the authorities concerned with a pretext for not transmitting the information in time and the Committee's work would thus be delayed.

He therefore maintained his earlier proposal. The date of 1 June 1962 would apply only to the countries in respect of which the Committee had not yet determined its programme of work.

Mr. RASGOTRA (India) agreed with the USSR representative that it was essential that the information should reach the Committee in good time, say two or three weeks before the consideration of a particular Territory, in order to enable the Committee to adhere to the programme of work it had set itself. To set a specific time-limit, however, would present more disadvantages than advantages; for Territories which were to be considered in August or September, information transmitted by 1 June 1962 might be out of date in many respects.

He therefore proposed that the text should remain as it stood and that it should be left to the Secretary-General in each case to specify to the Administering Power the date at which a particular Territory would be considered and to request that the information should be transmitted in good time.

Mr. OBEREMKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he still thought that by requesting Governments to furnish information by 1 June 1962 the Committee would avoid any possibility of finding itself without information during the consideration of a particular Territory. With regard to the Territories to be examined after that date, it was open to the Committee, as to other organs, to ask the Administering Power for supplementary information.

If, however, the Chairman of the Committee accepted the heavy responsibility of ensuring that the information reached the Committee in time, he would not press his proposal.

The CHAIRMAN observed that in the letter of transmittal accompanying the questionnaire the Secretary-General would in each case specify the date by which the information should reach the Committee, that date having been given to him by the Chairman of the Committee on the basis of the programme of work laid down.

Paragraph 6 of the introduction was adopted.

Section I of the questionnaire was adopted.

Mr. OBEREMKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stated that his delegation would like a number of supplementary questions which it regarded as essential to be added either to Section II or Section V. They would be as follows:

(Mr. Oberenko, USSR)

"1. What military, naval or air bases of the Administering Member or other foreign bases are there in the Territory and what foreign military or para-military personnel is there in the Territory?

"2. What military agreements concluded by the Administering Power include the Territory?

"3. Does there exist obligatory military conscription of the indigenous inhabitants of the Territory in the forces of the Administering Member?"

The information transmitted must be sufficiently complete to enable the Committee to judge of the real status of each Territory and its relations with the metropolitan Power.

Mr. Taieb SLIM (Tunisia) said that he had no objection to the amendments proposed by the USSR representative. He pointed out, however, that reservations had already been made by the United Kingdom and United States delegations. That being so, it might be advisable to suspend the meeting for a short time to give members an opportunity to study the amendments and to confer together.

The CHAIRMAN asked whether any other delegations had amendments to propose relating to other sections of the draft questionnaire.

Mr. OBEREMKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that he was not against the Tunisian proposal. His delegation would have an additional amendment to propose, to the effect that at the end of the second sentence of Section X of the draft questionnaire the following words should be added: "and for the proclamation of the independence of the Territory".

The meeting was suspended at 4.20 p.m. and resumed at 5.15 p.m.

Mr. WODAJO (Ethiopia) said that he had been authorized to state, on behalf of several delegations belonging chiefly to African countries and following an exchange of views between them, that in principle they accepted all the amendments proposed by the USSR representative. Those amendments had been considered by the Sub-Committee on the Questionnaire, but it had decided not to incorporate them in the text since they might introduce unforeseen elements into the debate and have unforeseen results. Following the exchange of views which had just taken place, the delegations on whose behalf he was speaking had

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(Mr. Woda.jo, Ethiopia)

concluded that the last two amendments proposed were most appropriate and had decided to support them. The amendments to which he was referring were the third, relating to the question of military service, and the fourth, adding to Section X a reference to the proclamation of the independence of the Territory concerned.

Mr. OBEREMKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) thanked the Ethiopian representative and the representatives of the African and Asian countries on whose behalf he had spoken for supporting the two amendments proposed by the USSR delegation. He noted that the delegations in question were also in agreement with regard to the principle of the first two amendments, but that certain considerations had prevented their supporting them. Nevertheless the Committee would be obliged to discuss those problems, which would inevitably arise when the situation in the different Territories was examined; the question of foreign bases and military agreements would of necessity be brought up at that time. It would be better if the Administering Powers voluntarily transmitted official information on the subject, without, of course, revealing any military secrets. If they did not do so, the Committee would naturally have to resort to other sources of information such as newspapers, periodicals and other publications.

The CHAIRMAN said that unless any other representatives asked to speak on the subject he would consider that the USSR delegation had accepted the Ethiopian proposal and withdrawn its first and second amendments. The third amendment would be included in Section V and the fourth in Section X.

Sections II, III and IV were adopted.

Section V, with the USSR amendment, was adopted.

Sections VI, VII, VIII and IX were adopted.

Section X, with the USSR amendment, was adopted.

The PRESIDENT paid a tribute to the patience, objectivity and courtesy shown by the members of the Committee during the first stage of their work. He was confident that the Good Offices Sub-Committee would do its utmost to report on its activities within the shortest possible time and that in the near future the Committee would be able to resume its work in the same spirit of courteous co-operation.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.