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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 9th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Tuesday, 11 July 2000, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. TANOH-BOUTCHOUÉ (Côte d'Ivoire)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

QUESTION OF GUAM (continued) (A/AC.109/2000/6 and A/AC.109/2000/L.9)

2. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had received a communication from the Office of the Governor of Guam, requesting that a representative be permitted to address the Committee. In accordance with standing procedure, he suggested that Ms. Bordallo, Lieutenant Governor of Guam, be invited to address the Committee.

3. It was so decided.

Hearing of petitioners

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Bordallo (Lieutenant Governor of Guam) took a place at the petitioners' table.

5. Ms. BORDALLO (Lieutenant Governor of Guam). speaking on behalf of H.E. Carl Gutierrez, Governor of Guam, said that, while disappointed that the Special Committee had been unable to accept the invitation to hold the regional seminar in Guam, her government and people had greatly appreciated the visits by the Chairman and the Chief of the Decolonization Unit and the focus of the latter on the role of women in the quest for self-governing status. While welcoming the Special Committee's initiative in engaging the administering Powers, she stressed that it was equally important to involve the representatives of the people in the processes leading to decolonization and delisting. Moreover, from her perspective, the goal of the Committee's work should be to bring about a self-governing status for Guam.

6. Within the framework of the Chairman's 10-step plan to end colonialism, she urged the Committee to expedite consideration of the question of Guam. In that connection, she reaffirmed the content of the petition of 2 February submitted to the Chairman by the Governor, the Speaker of the Legislature and the Congressional Delegate of Guam.

7. Progress would be much more tangible if the administering Power were actively engaged in the discussion. In that connection, she noted that, in a letter dated 6 June the Chairman of the United States Senate Committee with oversight of Guam had stressed the need for meaningful dialogue.

8. In conclusion, the people of Guam would welcome the Special Committee's consideration of amendments to the portion of the consolidated draft resolution relating to Guam in order to clarify the current status of discussions between Guam and the United States and the processes currently under way in Guam.

9. Mr. MEKDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Special Committee would have liked to hold its regional seminar in Guam, but that, due to the response of the administering Power, that had not been possible. His delegation stressed the right of the people of Guam to self-determination and the Special Committee's obligation to consider the question in an appropriate manner, consistent with its responsibilities.

10. The administering Power must act in accordance with United Nations resolutions on the question of Guam and make every effort to enable the Chamorro people of Guam to exercise their rights to freedom, property and natural resources. He supported Ms. Bordallo's remarks and stressed the need for dialogue among the Special Committee, the people of Guam and the administering Power.

11. Mr. OVIA (Papua New Guinea) inquired about the preparations for the proposed plebiscite by the Chamorro people, and about its significance.

12. Ms. BORDALLO (Lieutenant Governor of Guam) said that that question could be more appropriately answered by the next speaker.

13. The petitioner withdrew.

14. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that he had received a communication from the Guam Commission on Decolonization, requesting permission to present its views. In accordance with standing procedure, he suggested that Mr. Rivera be invited to address the Committee.

15. It was so decided.

16. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Rivera (Guam Commission on Decolonization) took a place at the petitioners' table.

17. Mr. RIVERA (Guam Commission on Decolonization) said that the situation in Guam remained very fluid and that the impact of external rule continued to affect people's daily lives. Referring to the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV), annex), he said that the administering Power could not dismiss the existence of colonialism by rationalization and denial. The democratic actions of Guam were circumscribed by the laws of the administering Power, and its peoples were dependent on an external Government which did little or nothing to address their needs. As an unincorporated territory of the United States, Guam's political interests and rights were subjugated to those of the administering Power. Under the laws of the administering Power, one third of Guam's land had been appropriated, and the Chamorros people were becoming politically and culturally marginalized in their own homeland. An administrative judge of the United States Maritime Commission had determined that the people of Guam subsidized about \$40 million of the administering Power's corporate interests on the most trade-intensive shipping routes of the globe. The United States Navy had sought to save money on its operations in Guam by dismissing local workers and inviting bids from its favourite defence contractors for that work and for land confiscated from the Chamorros.

Activists who sought the return of land through non-violent protests were given prison sentences by the courts of the administering Power.

18. The people of Guam had lost their patrimony and economic opportunities and were witnessing the degradation of their traditions and culture through forced assimilation; in addition, one third of the island's education budget and a similar proportion of its health-care budget was being used to support immigrants who typically spent no more than seven years in Guam.

19. The external decision-making process subjected the Chamorro people to considerable internal pressures as well; their situation was not unlike that of other native peoples undergoing forced assimilation and cultural genocide. There was a disproportionate incidence of imprisonment, probation, domestic violence, multifamily households, social welfare cases, school dropouts and teenage suicide among Chamorro families.

20. Although there were some beneficial aspects to Guam's relationship with the administering Power, such as regional security and relative prosperity, the Chamorros people were losing their identity; that issue must be remedied by an act of self-determination. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV), the engagement of the administering Power was vital to the process of Guam's self-determination; he supported Ms. Bordallo's appeal to the Special Committee in that connection.

21. Welcoming the Special Committee's new approach to completing its mandate, he expressed the hope that it would redouble its efforts to secure self-governing status for all Non-Self-Governing Territories. He also hoped that the question of Guam would receive similar treatment to that of American Samoa and reiterated that there was no substitute for direct participation of the people in the process of self-determination. Lastly, he informed the Special Committee that the plebiscite in Guam had been postponed till 7 November 2000, and he drew Committee members' attention to statements by the Organization of People for Indigenous Rights, a non-governmental organization, and the island's Congressional delegate, Mr. Underwood, which were available for distribution.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.