



# General Assembly

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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 Monday, 24 June 2002, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Huntley. . . . . (Saint Lucia)

## Contents

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial  
Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions  
associated with the United Nations

*Hearing of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories*

Draft report of the Pacific Regional Seminar

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

**Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations**  
(A/57/73, A/AC.109/2002/L.9, E/2002/61)

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/73), information provided by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations on their work for the implementation of the Declaration (E/2002/61), and draft resolution A/AC.109/2002/L.9.

*Hearing of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories*

2. **The Chairman** informed members of the Special Committee that a representative of the United States Virgin Islands had requested permission to speak on the item under consideration. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Special Committee wished to grant the request in accordance with the usual procedure.

3. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Corbin (Minister of State of the United States Virgin Islands) took a place at the table.*

4. **Mr. Corbin** (Minister of State of the United States Virgin Islands) said that the item was one of the most important on the agenda of the Special Committee, because it dealt with assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the United Nations system, and the resolution of that issue would contribute to the social and economic development of the Territories. He reiterated the proposal made in 1999 by the United States Virgin Islands that the debate on that agenda item should be initiated at an earlier stage of the work of the Special Committee, so that proposals on the subject could be included in resolutions on the results of its work.

5. Two areas were especially significant for the development of the Territories: the direct participation of the Territories in the activities of the United Nations system, and the assistance of the United Nations system to the Territories. For many years, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had each year adopted resolutions relating to the participation of the Territories in programmes and

measures adopted by the United Nations system, and in order to implement those resolutions several of the specialized agencies had included in their rules of procedure provisions to enable the Territories to obtain the status of full or associate members or observers, even though they were not conducting an active policy of encouraging participation by the Non-Self-Governing Territories in their work. Unfortunately, other specialized agencies had not yet followed their example.

6. In its resolutions, the General Assembly had called upon the specialized agencies to focus on three key areas: first, to examine and survey the situation in each Territory, with a view to adopting measures to accelerate its social and economic progress; second, to examine the obstacles faced by the Territories in obtaining the assistance needed for them to participate in international conferences, as well as technical assistance from United Nations organs, because many of the specialized agencies took the view that assisting the Territories was not part of their mandate; and third, to draw up specific proposals for assisting the Territories and securing their representation on governing bodies. The organizations of the United Nations system should become more active in extending assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories in order to promote their social and economic development. He noted that in the medium-term plans for 1998-2001 and 2002-2005, the secretariat of the Special Committee had provided for the specialized agencies and institutions associated with the United Nations to carry out the function of coordinating work on extending assistance to the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories. However, that function was best performed by the United Nations Development Programme and the regional commissions, because, unlike the Special Committee, they were able to deal directly with the Governments of the Territories concerned.

7. The regional commissions offered an example of positive ways for the Territories to participate in the work of the United Nations system, by providing that they could have the status of members or associate members. The United States Virgin Islands, which had been an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean since 1984, could confirm the significant contribution made by that Commission to the development of many Territories in the Caribbean basin. With regard to the

resolutions adopted by the regional commissions, since 1992 the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council had adopted a number of amendments to their rules of procedure governing the arrangements for participation in global conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations, and the Non-Self-Governing Territories which were associate members of the regional commissions had been given the right to take part in the work of those conferences as official observers. The initiative for changes in the rules of procedure had come from countries which were associate members of the regional commissions, many of them being Non-Self-Governing Territories. He was grateful to those Member States and to the administering Powers for supporting the initiatives, which were very significant in developing the potential of the Territories. He also noted that the Territories were not playing a sufficiently active part in the work of international conferences and the preparations for them, and were not yet receiving the necessary information.

8. Finally, he noted that many delegations and agencies interpreted the title of the resolution to a large extent in a political rather than an economic sense. Many United Nations organs took the view that the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization was not within their sphere of competence. The United States Virgin Islands continued to believe that the proposal it had put forward in 2000 concerning the rewording of the title of the agenda item so as to reflect more closely the social and economic aspects, as well as the political aspects, of the problem was still relevant. The consultations between the Chairman of the Special Committee and the President of the Economic and Social Council might provide a good opportunity to discuss the problem.

9. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire) emphasized the importance of the work in the social and economic fields of the specialized agencies and international organizations associated with the United Nations with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization. If cooperation with those bodies, which had representatives on the ground, was expanded and made more direct, a clearer picture could be gained of the true state of affairs in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. One of the tasks facing the Special Committee was to help the populations of those Territories to understand the consequences for them of possible proposed courses of action. In that regard, the

links maintained by the agencies with the Non-Self-Governing Territories could prove to be very useful. However, there was an impression that the agencies had not so far shown any special interest in developing cooperation in that area. Strengthening relations with the agencies on the ground would be useful for all concerned.

10. **Ms. Joseph** (Saint Lucia) asked Mr. Corbin why, in his opinion, consensus had not been reached on the text of the draft resolution as it related to the specialized agencies.

11. **Mr. Corbin** (Minister of State of the United States Virgin Islands), commenting on the statement made by the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, said that he fully agreed with him about the need for a more practical approach to working with other agencies active in the Territories. That applied particularly to the United Nations Development Programme, which gave the Special Committee the fullest and most detailed information. Approximately 36 United Nations organs and regional institutions were supposed to supply information to the Special Committee, but only eight of them actually did so. He hoped additional information would be supplied by the time of the Economic and Social Council session.

12. Replying to the question put by the representative of Saint Lucia, he said that he was somewhat concerned on that score, since for a number of years some countries had refrained from voting on the draft resolution relating to the specialized agencies, both in the General Assembly and at meetings of the Economic and Social Council. The question was seen in a political light, and many of the agencies had reservations in respect of the mandate to implement the Declaration on decolonization. He suggested that the title of the agenda item should be changed.

13. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the lack of consensus on the resolution and certain difficulties in its adoption by the Fourth Committee were attributable to the stance taken by some administering Powers, which took the view that the Special Committee should not be telling the specialized agencies what to do, because the agencies had their own mandates.

14. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the work of the Special Committee in extending assistance to the Territories could be more effective and fruitful. The basic problem in that respect was the traditional

stance of countries which expressed reservations of a political nature concerning the Special Committee's work. Even members of the Special Committee made remarks of that kind. In the past three years attempts had been made to improve cooperation between the specialized agencies and the Territories under colonial administration. However, in spite of some positive changes, the situation left something to be desired. His delegation did not object to the suggestion by Mr. Corbin that the title of the agenda item should be changed.

15. **Mr. Ortiz Gandarillas** (Bolivia) said that the question of social and economic cooperation and assistance to the colonial Territories was extremely important. The draft resolution must therefore be geared more to the achievement of practical results and to the implementation of the numerous resolutions adopted on the question. One of the tasks of the Special Committee should be to monitor the activities of United Nations organs. The Special Committee could ascertain the extent to which the provisions of the resolutions adopted each year were actually implemented. The matter could be considered and debated.

16. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) agreed with the previous speaker. The question of the mandates of the specialized agencies was crucial and must be resolved. He endorsed the suggestion by Mr. Corbin that the title of the draft resolution should be changed.

17. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that it was not a question of altering the mandates of the specialized agencies. He emphasized the importance of education in the process of decolonization. It was easier for an educated people to understand what options were open to it and to take the appropriate decisions, and that in turn would make the Special Committee's work easier. In that regard, it was very important for the Special Committee to obtain from the specialized agencies relevant information about their activities in education and environmental protection, and about the positive and negative aspects of tourism in the Territories. That was the real meaning of cooperation with the specialized agencies as far as the Special Committee was concerned.

18. *Mr. Corbin withdrew.*

19. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2002/L.9 was adopted.*

20. **The Chairman** announced that the Committee had concluded its consideration of the agenda item.

#### **Draft report of the Pacific Regional Seminar** (A/AC.109/2002/CRP.1)

21. **The Chairman** drew attention to the draft report of the Pacific Regional Seminar, contained in document A/AC.109/2002/CRP.1.

22. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur, introducing the report on the work of the Pacific Regional Seminar, expressed gratitude to the people and Government of Fiji for their competent organization of the Seminar. It had been attended by representatives of a large number of Territories, and also by representatives of non-governmental organizations, specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, and representatives of administering Powers, such as France, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, with whom the participants in the Seminar had had a thorough and interesting dialogue. It was to be hoped that other administering Powers would play an active part in the Special Committee's future seminars and activities.

23. He noted that the report, which had been distributed to members of the Special Committee, had been highly appreciated. In preparing it, the members of the drafting committee had endeavoured to reflect as far as possible the views and observations expressed at the Seminar. In addition, the format of the report had been altered on the initiative of the Chairman of the Special Committee, to enable readers to search more readily for information of interest to them in the various sections. The document was the result of intensive work, and he hoped that the members of the Special Committee would endorse it by consensus and proceed as soon as possible to work on implementing its provisions.

24. **Mr. Ortiz Gandarillas** (Bolivia), referring to the question of regional seminars, said that his delegation had four points to make. First, Bolivia attached great importance to information campaigns to make the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories aware of the possibilities open to them. In addition, vocational training and capacity-building was an important area of work, and a major role in that regard was played by international organizations, especially the United Nations Development Programme, which had considerable opportunities for contributing to the

formation of the essential organizational capacity. Second, it was necessary for the specialized agencies in the United Nations system to contribute to the work in the social and economic fields. Third, it would be useful to consider the possibility of holding seminars in the Non-Self-Governing Territories themselves, in consultation with the administering Powers. Finally, future reports on the work of the seminars should include a section evaluating the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, since it was one of the aims of the regional seminars to make such evaluations, which were provided for in their rules of procedure.

25. *It was so decided.*

26. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the seminar in Fiji had lasted only three days, and because it had not been possible to complete consideration of all the items, it had been decided that work on the remaining items would continue in New York. That had caused problems because, in the opinion of some delegations, all the questions raised at the seminar ought to have been resolved by the time it was concluded. In that regard, it was important to achieve consensus in future as to whether the seminar should be treated as closed once it was over, or whether the Chairman, by agreement with the participants, could continue discussions with delegations in New York until the report on the work of the seminar was approved. The issue must be clarified, for the sake of avoiding diverging interpretations.

27. **The Chairman** said it had been decided in Fiji that the drafting committee would complete work on the report in New York, taking into account all the proposals put forward during the seminar. At the same time, in view of the problem which had arisen, it might be necessary to consider the question of continuing the work of the seminars in the future. He suggested that the Special Committee should approve the report on the work of the Pacific Regional Seminar, and include it as an annex to its own report to the General Assembly.

28. *It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*