



SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ALLAF (Syrian Arab Republic)

later: Mr. MAMPUYA-MUSUNGAYI NKUEMBE (Zaire)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

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

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1. Mr. Al-SAID (Oman) said that the Fourth Committee could take pride in its achievements: by setting the underlying principles and applying the necessary moral pressures, it had succeeded in advancing the process of decolonization. The number of issues and territories discussed by the Committee appeared to decrease each year. However, although various colonial territories had achieved their

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(Mr. Al-Said, Oman)

independence and become Members of the United Nations, the many difficulties, delays and problems which had yet to be overcome should not be forgotten. Nor should one fail to remember that oppression and suffering were increasing in severity in some territories and for some peoples, especially in southern Africa.

2. With respect to various small territories, islands and archipelagos, particularly in the Pacific and Caribbean areas, the reports of the Special Committee of 24 and the statements by the administering Powers seemed to indicate that in general progress towards independence was continuing in an orderly, peaceful and practical manner and that the will of the peoples of those territories, and political, social, economic and geographical considerations, were being taken fully into account. His delegation looked forward to welcoming a number of those territories to membership in the United Nations in the near future.

3. Regarding the territories administered by the United Kingdom in the Americas and the Atlantic Ocean, his delegation had been glad to learn that the consultations and negotiations were progressing. It wished to urge all the parties concerned to speed up the process of achieving a just solution based on respect for the right of the people to self-determination.

4. His delegation regretted, however, that the Committee had still to consider painful situations involving Arab and Moslem countries with which Oman shared the closest bonds of common language, culture, religion and destiny. It considered that an urgent solution to those problems must be sought on a bilateral and regional basis in such a manner as to ensure the reconciliation of the parties, the repatriation of all refugees and respect for the decisions taken by the legitimate constitutional bodies representing the inhabitants of the territories in question. Otherwise, there was a risk of escalation of violent incidents that could embroil other Powers in the region and elsewhere.

5. Mr. BARANCIRA (Burundi) wished, first of all, to extend congratulations to the delegations of the Soviet Union, the Byelorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Great October Revolution. As everyone was aware, that Revolution, and the socialist countries in general, had greatly influenced the solution of the decolonization problems considered by the Committee and had helped to settle them.

6. The right of peoples to self-determination was one of the basic principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, and it was binding on all Members of the Organization. That principle was applicable to all peoples, whatever the size of the territory of which they were nationals. Yet, at the present time, in the case of many small territories, the administering Powers were citing economic difficulties or questions of geographical size in order to delay the granting of independence. No State, which was concerned about the implementation of the principles of the Charter could subscribe to such allegations, which were simply pretexts put forward by the administering Powers in order to perpetuate their domination and continue to exploit the resources of those territories. The small territories, like all territories under colonial domination, had the right to

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(Mr. Barancira, Burundi)

achieve independence and freedom. In co-operation with the United Nations, the administering Powers should make every effort to implement the provisions of the Charter and of resolution 1514 (XV) as soon as possible.

7. With respect to East Timor and Belize, his Government wished to reiterate its support for the independence of those territories and their existence as free States. The right of the people of East Timor could not be contested by anyone. His delegation therefore appealed to Indonesia to comply with the resolutions of the United Nations and to withdraw its forces from the territory without delay.

8. The problem of Western Sahara continued to concern the international community. At the time when the proclamation of the independence of that territory had been expected, events had taken a dramatic turn: two neighbouring States had arrogated to themselves the right to divide the territory and to occupy it militarily and administratively, with the obvious complicity of the administering Power, which had failed to live up to its obligations and thus bore primary responsibility in the matter. The division and occupation of Saharan territory was a flagrant violation of the Charter. The struggle of the Saharan people, under the leadership of Frente POLISARIO, its only legitimate representative, was therefore as just as the struggles of all peoples fighting for their freedom and independence. His country paid tribute to States, like Algeria, which were helping the Saharan people to recover their dignity and fully exercise their sovereignty.

9. In view of the developments in the region, the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity had spared no effort to endeavour to find a solution consistent with the Charter and the sacred principles of the right of peoples to self-determination, in consultation with all the parties concerned, a right reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 3458 A and B (XXX). However, the mission of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Rydbeck, had ended in failure and, for a variety of reasons, it had not been possible to hold the summit meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, which would have been attended also by Frente POLISARIO. In his delegation's opinion, such a summit meeting was of critical importance to the search for a just and lasting solution to the problem of Western Sahara.

10. His delegation considered that it was the duty of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity to avert any source of tension and any risk of conflict in that region. Neither organization, in any event, should remain a spectator in a situation which represented an obvious violation of their Charters. That would set a dangerous precedent.

11. The only way to solve the problem peacefully was to allow the Saharan people to choose their own destiny in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. His delegation therefore requested all the States in the region to work towards that goal and to establish conditions for peace and co-operation in the region on that basis.

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12. Mr. KHARLAMOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples constituted the priority task of the Fourth Committee.

13. In recent years, the decolonization process had considerably accelerated because of the struggle of the national liberation movements and the pressures exerted by the international community, which had enabled many peoples in the small territories to attain independence. As Mr. Brezhnev had said on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the October revolution, since the Second World War more than two billion people had thrown off the colonial yoke and achieved independence and, in general, it could be considered that the colonial system had virtually been eliminated - a circumstance of considerable historical importance.

14. Nevertheless, certain colonial Powers were still obstructing the decolonization process in many small territories, under the fallacious pretext of lack of preparation in the political, economic and social spheres, or of specific conditions - the small size of the territories concerned and their geographical isolation and their small population.

15. The colonial Powers were using most of those small territories as military bases or testing grounds and were plundering their resources through the imperialist monopolies, in flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

16. Furthermore, the General Assembly had in many resolutions, including resolution 31/29, called upon the administering Powers concerned to transmit information to the Secretary-General on political and constitutional developments in the Territories in accordance with Article 73 e of the Charter, yet certain Powers still refused to provide such information, as in the case of Brunei.

17. His delegation was surprised that the United States continued to keep the Territory of the Pacific Islands as a Trust Territory. The trusteeship system had long been obsolete, and the time had come to put an end to it in the last Territory where it was still applied, namely Micronesia.

18. As a member of the Trusteeship Council, his delegation was actively striving to enable the peoples still under colonial domination to exercise their right to self-determination and attain independence, and in that connexion it drew attention to the fact that the unity and territorial integrity of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands were threatened and that the problem was far from solved. The Security Council, and only the Security Council, had the responsibility of deciding on the political future of the Territory. Furthermore, it would be useful if the Trusteeship Council systematically reported to the General Assembly on its work.

19. The question of the decolonization of the small territories was a far from insignificant problem, as international peace and security largely depended on its solution. The fact that certain decolonization problems still remained to be settled could lead to the emergence of explosive situations. In order to avoid the creation of new trouble spots, all States should strictly abide by the principles

(Mr. Kharlamov, USSR)

set forth in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and in the many United Nations resolutions on decolonization. In accordance with those documents, the peoples of Western Sahara, Guam, Belize, the Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Solomon Islands, American Samoa, the New Hebrides and Micronesia, and the peoples of all other small colonial territories, should be given the means of exercising their right to self-determination.

20. Since the adoption of the Declaration, on the initiative of the Soviet Union in 1960, considerable progress had been made in the struggle for the elimination of the system of colonial domination. A hundred or so young States had chosen the path of independent development. Nevertheless, some vestiges of colonialism remained and were a source of tension and possible conflict.

21. As his delegation had recently observed, the time had come for the United Nations to set specific time-limits for the elimination of all the enclaves of colonialism which remained in the world and require the colonial Powers to decolonize the territories still under their administration within a definite period of time. In that way the elimination of the remaining vestiges of colonialism should be accelerated, particularly in Namibia, Rhodesia and South Africa.

22. On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the October Socialist revolution, it should be recalled that the victory of the proletariat in the Soviet Union had broken the ranks of imperialism and opened the way for the national liberation movements. The October revolution had awakened the consciousness of the colonial peoples and helped them to win major victories in the struggle they were waging to free themselves from the yoke of imperialism.

23. The forces of progress, whose role was becoming increasingly important, were currently engaged in reorganizing the entire system of international relations on just and democratic foundations. The Soviet Union was glad that the newly independent States were playing an increasingly important role in that process, and it would continue to struggle beside them for the freedom and independence of peoples, until the final elimination of colonialism, racism and apartheid was achieved.

24. Mr. SZUMA Chun (China) said that the Chinese people and Government had always supported the legitimate struggle of the peoples of the world to obtain their independence and defend their national sovereignty.

25. The Chinese people and Government were opposed to the establishment of foreign military bases in any region of the world and believed that all military bases in foreign territory should be relinquished. His delegation therefore had reservations regarding paragraph 6 of the decision of the Special Committee of 24 appearing in chapter XXII, on Guam, of the Special Committee's report (A/32/23/Add.4), as the text of that paragraph constituted a recognition of foreign military bases. That reservation also applied to all texts of the same nature concerning other Territories.

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26. Mr. GAYAMA (Congo) said that it was a tragic paradox that the discussions in the Committee created a division between certain countries of the third world which had acquired their independence at a relatively recent date and other peoples who aspired to independence. That was the case regarding East Timor and Western Sahara. Yet Indonesia, on the one hand, and Morocco and Mauritania, on the other, were States that were supposed to be among the firm supporters of the principle of self-determination. There was no reason to question whether the Timor and Saharan peoples were as worthy as other peoples of self-determination: self-determination was a cardinal principle which applied to all Member States without exception. A consistent principle of his country's policy was that the problem of decolonization should be confronted wherever it arose; but its frankness and forthrightness could on no account be construed as a sign of hostility towards countries such as Mauritania and Morocco, with which the Congo had always had fraternal relations based on trust.

27. The incomplete decolonization of East Timor, the aggression to which it had been subjected and its brutal annexation by Indonesia were a striking example of the expansionist aspirations of certain countries of the third world. Indonesia, which had contributed so decisively to the emergence of the non-aligned movement and struggled heroically to free itself from the Dutch colonial yoke, had now become an oppressor, thus betraying the spirit of Bandung, which had given rise to such hopes. In view of those manoeuvres, various international bodies had tried to protect the higher interests of the people of East Timor and preserve peace and security in the region: both the General Assembly and the Security Council had called upon the Indonesian Government to stop violating the territorial integrity of East Timor and withdraw its occupying forces from the territory without delay so as to enable the people to exercise their right to self-determination and independence in complete freedom. Similarly, the administering Power, Portugal, and Portugal alone, had been asked to complete the process of decolonization interrupted by the interference of Indonesia. The non-aligned countries, at the fifth summit meeting of Heads of State and Government held at Colombo in August 1976, had also adopted a major political declaration, unequivocally reaffirming the right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence.

28. It was sad to note the record of failure shown by the Portuguese Government, which acknowledged its inability to carry out the mandate entrusted to it by the United Nations. However, that failure, in spite of appearances, did not represent a step backwards in the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV), for it was difficult to halt the dynamics of decolonization. Thanks to the obstinacy of East Timor's struggle in the field, the forces of the national liberation movement, FRETILIN, were offering heroic resistance and, in fact, controlled practically all parts of East Timor. That clearly showed that unjust causes were doomed to failure no matter what means were used to thwart them.

29. The very grave situation in Western Sahara represented a serious threat to peace in Africa and in the world. It was disheartening to find that, once again, the cause of the situation lay in failure to implement United Nations resolutions

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(Mr. Gayama, Congo)

properly. Moreover, in 1975 three Powers had seen fit to sign in Madrid an agreement deciding the fate of thousands of men, women and children, without making the slightest attempt to consult them. All colonization inevitably engendered its antidote, an armed national liberation struggle. The visiting mission sent to that Territory by the United Nations had advocated the holding of a popular consultation. Unfortunately, all the hopes which the Saharan people had placed in the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity had been dashed.

30. His Government therefore appealed to the goodwill of all African States to ensure that no effort was spared to arrange for the holding of a special session of the OAU devoted to Western Sahara, in accordance with the decision taken at the Libreville summit meeting. The need for such a meeting had become particularly pressing since recent developments showed that tension was escalating dangerously, and there was even reason to fear internationalization of the conflict.

31. In view of such a threatening situation, it was the duty of the United Nations to do its utmost to avert a crisis whose proportions and intensity might eventually escape its control.

32. A people's right to freedom was not something which could be granted or withheld depending on the goodwill of some chance guardian. It was an inalienable right which must be exercised unequivocally, without hindrance or pressure. Peace and harmony in the various regions of the African continent were of vital importance, and therefore every effort must be made to persuade Morocco and Mauritania to give the Saharan people the right to choose their own destiny. In the light of those considerations his delegation understood and supported the resistance which the Frente POLISARIO was offering to the occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco and Mauritania.

33. The efforts of the true friends of Africa must not serve to sow the seeds of discord among neighbouring African countries but must help them objectively to overcome their differences and to co-operate in the interests of their peoples and of African unity. He wished to stress the concept of African unity, which in no circumstances must be allowed to serve as a cover for the strategy of imperialist reconquest.

34. Mr. Mampuya-Musungayi Nkuembe (Zaire) took the Chair.

35. Mr. PINTO (Peru) noted with satisfaction the progress made in decolonization but deplored the existence of many vestiges of colonialism, which made a mockery of human rights and threatened international peace and security in several parts of the third world.

36. For many developing countries the end of colonialism had not meant the disappearance of all the obstacles impeding their progress. Neo-colonialism had created new obstacles and the struggle for political liberation had been succeeded by the struggle against economic domination. First of all the Governments concerned must assume their responsibilities and do all in their power to ensure that economic difficulties, exacerbated by certain private interests, did not turn

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(Mr. Pinto, Peru)

the already wide gap between the developed and developing countries into an unbridgeable chasm. His delegation had voted in favour of the resolution condemning the activities of foreign economic and other interests which were impeding decolonization and the struggle against apartheid.

37. The situation in Namibia was a typical example of that situation. The Territory should have acceded to independence years ago, yet it was still occupied and exploited by the Republic of South Africa, with the support of certain Powers with vested interests. The same was true of Southern Rhodesia, where an illegal régime was perpetuating its rule, based on the contemptible system of apartheid, with the help of South Africa and other economic Powers. Every effort must be made to ensure that the necessary conditions were created for a genuine process of self-determination in those Territories.

38. But there were other traces of colonialism remaining in Africa which seriously threatened the peace and security of the continent. The situation in Western Sahara was a case in point. His delegation considered that the United Nations should ensure respect for the right of the Saharan people to self-determination, without any outside interference.

39. Another people whose inalienable right to sovereign freedom had also been flouted was the people of East Timor. His country, which had always opposed the occupation of territories by force, hoped that it would be possible to find a satisfactory solution, in keeping with the principles of the Charter and with the wishes of the population of the Territory.

40. The situation was equally disturbing in Belize, where progress towards self-determination had been blocked. His delegation was convinced that the Latin American tradition of wisdom would prevail and that a *fait accompli*, of the kind which had already aggravated similar situations in other parts of the world, would be avoided. The administering Power must be urged to find a solution to its legal dispute with the Republic of Guatemala, so that a just and equitable solution could be found to enable Belize to attain independence in an atmosphere of peace and security.

41. He welcomed the positive turn taken by the negotiations between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Argentine Republic concerning the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and noted with satisfaction the statement by the United Kingdom representative announcing that the Solomon Islands would achieve full independence by the middle of 1978. He hoped that the administering Power would make similar efforts with regard to other colonial Territories.

42. His delegation re-emphasized the historical importance it attached to the decolonization process, which must be completed as soon as possible. To achieve that end, it was not sufficient automatically to apply the principles which had produced positive results in the past and under particular circumstances; those principles must be suitably adapted to current decolonization problems. That was a task not only for the United Nations but for all the parties concerned, for account must be taken of the geographical and political realities which would determine the future of newly independent countries, which must not be influenced

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(Mr. Pinto, Peru)

by the world power struggle and must be decided in a climate of peace which alone could guarantee independence and progress in the exercise of the inalienable right of colonial peoples to self-determination.

43. Freedom and justice were constant human values which transcended all political systems and interests. That axiom also characterized the decolonization process and made it irreversible and it was that consideration that prompted his country consistently to support the decolonization struggle, to which not only the United Nations but all truly peace-loving peoples were committed.

44. Mr. ROBINSON (Guyana) noted that the membership of the United Nations had almost tripled in 32 years, a fact which clearly demonstrated the over-all trend towards decolonization and the task accomplished by the United Nations in implementing its principles intelligibly in that area. Article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations prescribed the duties and responsibilities of the administering Powers, whose duty it was to lead the Territories under their responsibility to freedom and independence, once the foundations for independence had been firmly laid. Resolution 1514 (XV) had defined the concept of self-determination embodied in the Charter, and resolution 1541 (XV) had complemented it by describing options with regard to the exercise of self-determination. However, the choice between the various legitimate forms of decolonization must always be the result of the wishes of the peoples of the Territory, freely expressed on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

45. At a time when colonial empires had been all but dismantled, it was distressing to note that obstacles were still being placed in the way of the independence of certain Territories. Everyone was aware of the circumstances of the independence struggles of Western Sahara and East Timor, which had prompted the Security Council to meet on several occasions during 1975 to consider the situation in those Territories. At its summit meeting, held in Libreville in July 1977, the OAU had agreed to convene an extraordinary summit meeting to consider the issue more thoroughly. Meanwhile, the United Nations should continue to promote the interests of the people of Western Sahara. With regard to East Timor, his country had made its position clear in 1975; in its view, all peoples should be given the opportunity to chart their own course for development, without external interference of any kind, and it had always supported the liberation movement in East Timor.

46. Guyana would lend its support to appropriate measures designed to safeguard the principle of self-determination in the case of both those Territories. The United Nations should also be vigilant in ensuring that the principle of self-determination was not compromised in the case of Belize. However, his delegation would speak more fully on that question at a later stage.

47. Mr. WOLFF (United States of America) noted that his country regularly transmitted to the Secretary-General detailed information on the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Guam. With regard to American Samoa, in August 1976 the population had decided in a referendum that they wished to elect their own Governor and Lieutenant-Governor. The election was scheduled for 8 November 1977 and the winner of the election would be installed on 3 January 1978. The United States was deeply committed to developing self-government in Samoa in

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(Mr. Wolff, United States)

accordance with the wishes expressed by the peoples concerned and the traditional social structure, which was stronger in Samoa than in other territories administered by the United States.

48. In April 1977 Guam had elected delegates to a Constitutional Convention which would soon complete the drafting of a constitution. A preliminary draft provided for a system of self-government within political union with the United States, a republican form of government, a local court system and a bill of rights. The people would continue to elect their own Governor, Lieutenant-Governor and unicameral legislature. The status of Guam as a United States Territory with a locally drafted constitution would be in accordance with the wishes of the people, as expressed in a referendum, in which 90 per cent of the participants had voted for Guam to remain a part of the United States. The United States Government was firmly committed to the principle of self-determination and felt, like the Committee of 24, that the presence of its bases should not - and did not - inhibit the people of the Territory from freely exercising their rights. The legislature, freely elected by the population, had in December 1976 adopted a resolution expressing its support for the continued presence of United States military personnel on Guam. In general, the inhabitants of Guam were United States citizens and enjoyed the rights and protections guaranteed by the United States Constitution to all citizens of the United States. The Federal Government was aware of the need for diversification in the economy of Guam, and was working hard to achieve that end with the Guam Chamber of Commerce.

49. The United States Virgin Islands had elected delegates to a Territory-wide Constitutional Convention which had met on 3 October 1977 to begin working on a local constitution. As in the case of Guam, the constitution would be put to a vote in a referendum before taking effect. The inhabitants of the Virgin Islands, like those of Guam, were United States citizens and they also enjoyed the protections and benefits of the United States Constitution. One particular aspect of the development of the institutions of self-government in the United States Virgin Islands and Guam was that delegates, who were freely elected by the people, served in the House of Representatives of the United States, where they had the right to vote in committee and participate actively in the work of the Congress. In that capacity they were involved in matters affecting all United States Territories. In short, each of the three United States Territories now under consideration by the Committee was progressing towards a full measure of self-government in accordance with the provisions of Article 73 of the Charter and the freely expressed will of the local people.

50. His delegation supported and would vote for draft resolution A/C.4/32/L.11, and was in complete agreement with the view expressed in paragraph 5. On the other hand, his delegation, while taking note of the statement made by the representative of Viet Nam concerning Guam at the morning meeting, was opposed to draft resolution A/C.4/32/L.10, because of its unjustified criticism of the United States and its unsupportable assertions about the situation on Guam. The United States was convinced that its administration of Guam and its military presence on the island were fully consistent with the United Nations Charter, its obligations thereunder, and with the will of the people of Guam.

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51. Mr. MARVILLE (Barbados) expressed disapproval of the territorial ambitions of Indonesia, which had led it to invade East Timor on 7 December 1975. One week later, the representatives of the so-called provisional Government had proclaimed the integration of the Territory with Indonesia for the sole purpose of obtaining certain favours from that State. That semblance of legality had been maintained when the Indonesian Government had stated, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General, that it had sent a mission to East Timor to assess the wishes of the people of the Territory. The fact that the Indonesian Government had sent troops to invade East Timor showed that it knew the wishes of the population. It had represented FRETILIN as a tool of international communism, so that it could carry out its expansionist plans, which were motivated by very powerful economic considerations. East Timor was known to have immense deposits of oil, natural gas, and other minerals and, furthermore, major oil deposits had been discovered off the coast of East Timor. Economic considerations explained the ignominious silence of countries that professed to respect human rights, and the principle of territorial integrity, over the atrocities, executions and murders committed in Indonesia. It had been estimated that the Indonesians had killed some 100,000 persons in East Timor.

52. In resolution 384 (1975) the Security Council had called upon the Indonesian Government to withdraw all its forces from East Timor without delay. The Council had reiterated that demand in resolution 389 (1976) and had requested Indonesia to co-operate in the decolonization of the Territory. Indonesia had flouted international opinion, as expressed again in General Assembly resolutions 3485 (XXX) and 31/53. The fact that a powerful State used its military capacity to annex the territory of a small State in the midst of widespread indifference was very disturbing for small States such as Barbados. His delegation called upon Indonesia not only to respect the inviolability of the colonial boundaries in East Timor but also to respect the well established principles embodied in all the relevant United Nations resolutions, so that the Democratic Republic of East Timor could take its rightful place in the Organization.

53. The paradox of former colonies relentlessly pursuing imperialistic objectives found its most brutal expression in the tragedy of Western Sahara, and his delegation rejected all claims to Western Sahara, except those of the Frente POLISARIO, which was the only organism representative of the people of the Territory.

54. Mr. SAUNDERS (Bahamas) noted that at the end of 1945 more than 750 million people had been living in dependent Territories, and that in 1977 less than 10 million remained under colonial domination. More importantly, approximately 70 nations, former colonial Territories, had joined the United Nations as sovereign States since the establishment of the Organization in 1945. However, approximately 30 Territories were still under colonial domination. The United Nations had played, and was still playing, an important role in the decolonization process; thanks to the International Trusteeship System which it had established, 20 million people had won their freedom. By adopting resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the General Assembly had accelerated the process. In that Declaration it had insisted on the necessity of bringing colonialism in all its forms to a speedy end and had recognized the right of all peoples to self-determination. In spite of the progress

(Mr. Saunders, Bahamas)

achieved since that time by the United Nations, approximately 10 million people in various parts of the world were still not free; the United Nations must therefore continue its efforts to enable those peoples to achieve independence.

55. While it commended the colonial Powers which had helped the United Nations to achieve the concept of universality, his Government could not accept the view that any country could have the right to perpetuate colonialism by brute force or coercion.

56. He cited the case of Belize, which should have been a Member of the Organization more than 10 years ago, but had been unable to achieve independence because of the territorial claims of Guatemala. He stressed the importance which his Government attached to the strengthening of regional ties and to the territorial integrity of a sister country, but he wished to point out that all Territories still under overt colonial domination should be able to determine their own destiny and choose the road to independence if they so wished.

57. The United Nations should take action to prevent a Member State from prolonging the colonial status of another State.

58. Mr. KATO (Japan) stressed that decolonization was a complex process which took different paths, depending upon the particular situation of each Territory, and the ethnic and cultural background of each people. Colonialism itself differed from one Territory to another, and so did its destructive effects on the people concerned. It was therefore necessary to avoid the simplistic attitude of assuming that the decolonization process should follow a single predetermined pattern in all Territories.

59. In the case of East Timor, the primary responsibility lay with Portugal, which had gradually abandoned the Territory, creating a state of disorder in which civil war could break out.

60. It was regrettable that the administering Power had had no programme for the transfer of power at the end of the colonial era; it was precisely to remedy that omission that Indonesia had considered it its duty to play a major role in the decolonization of East Timor.

61. At its thirtieth and thirty-first sessions, the General Assembly had adopted resolutions 3485 (XXX) and 31/53, in which it had one-sidedly put the blame for developments in East Timor solely on Indonesia. Japan had voted against both resolutions, being convinced that neither one of them would be helpful in solving the problem, and that only the people concerned could, through negotiations, achieve a final solution. The United Nations should not hinder the process of direct negotiations.

62. Mr. Allaf (Syrian Arab Republic) resumed the Chair.

63. Mr. GUTIERREZ MACIAS (Mexico) said that during the current session the Fourth Committee had been concerned to a greater extent with the small Territories, which was a commendable trend since, whatever the size and the political, economic and strategic importance of those Territories, it was the Committee's task to erase the

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(Mr. Gutierrez Macias, Mexico)

problem of colonialism from the face of the globe and to guarantee to the inhabitants of the Non-Self-Governing Territories the right to choose their own destiny, in accordance with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

64. His delegation had taken note with satisfaction of the reports submitted by the Special Committee on the decolonization of small Territories in the Pacific and the Caribbean. It had also been pleased to find that, in contrast to the practice of previous years, and with a few exceptions, the administering Powers had decided not only to co-operate with the Special Committee but also to agree to the dispatch of visiting missions to the Territories under their administration. That close co-operation was the effective basis for the delicate process of implementation of resolution 1514 (XV).

65. In its recommendations and resolutions, the Special Committee, true to the spirit and letter of the principles of the Charter and of the Declaration, was seeking to ensure the application of the principle of self-determination by such practical measures as the provision of political education programmes and information to the indigenous people concerning the options available under the Declaration, and economic diversification.

66. The Mexican delegation noted with satisfaction the joint commitment of the administering Powers to grant independence to the Territory of the New Hebrides, and their efforts to unify the administration of the Territory. The Territory of the Tokelau Islands seemed to have achieved a considerable measure of self-government, and the development activities carried on by New Zealand, the administering Power, were commendable. His delegation also noted that Tuvalu would become independent in 1978, and that the Gilbert Islands had reached the stage of internal self-government and would also become independent in 1978. However, it was concerned over the difficulties presented by the question of the rights of the Banabans of Ocean Island, who wished to have special status within the Gilbert Islands.

67. Mr. NCHAI (Lesotho) recalled that the United Nations had been dealing for more than 10 years with the question of Spanish Sahara. Any solution of that question must be based on the relevant resolutions of the Organization and take account of the will and aspirations of the Saharan people, while complying with the rules of international law. The Organization and the parties concerned must arrive without delay at an acceptable solution so as to put an end to a situation which had serious implications for the maintenance of peace and stability in the region, and they must give the people of Spanish Sahara the opportunity to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

68. The good intentions expressed by Spain and its partners in the Madrid tripartite Agreement of 14 November 1975 had not been reflected in concrete action, for if the Agreement had been judiciously implemented the Territory could have exercised its right to self-determination and achieved independence, in accordance with resolution 3458 A (XXX). The United Nations, which was supposed to be party to a solution of the problem, had been confronted with a fait accompli.

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(Mr. Nchai, Lesotho)

69. Lesotho, as a member of the Organization of African Unity, attached great importance to the maintenance of peace on the African continent, and it was therefore convinced that, in situations of conflict, mutually acceptable solutions could be achieved only through peaceful negotiations. The solution of the question of Spanish Sahara must necessarily be based on the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination and independence, which was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

70. Mr. EREDICS (Hungary) recalled that colonialism had reached its peak at the time of the First World War. The rise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the world-wide socialist system created, had brought about the historical conditions for the collapse of the colonial system and the victorious advance of the national liberation movements. Furthermore, peaceful coexistence had made possible the relaxation of international tensions and had accelerated the struggle for the elimination of the last vestiges of colonialism, racism and apartheid. That process of liquidation had also been promoted by the United Nations, which had actively participated in it, often obtaining successful results.

71. At its fifteenth session, the General Assembly had adopted, on the initiative of the Soviet Union, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, in which it had reaffirmed the right of all peoples to national unity, territorial integrity and self-determination. The Organization had then drawn up a programme of action in that field in its resolution 2621 (XXV), and had reaffirmed year after year the inalienable right of colonial peoples to independence and self-determination. Flouting those resolutions, the colonial imperialist Powers stubbornly defended their last strongholds, using every means, including political and economic pressure and even force of arms, to subdue the people who were demanding radical economic and social changes, because they wanted to preserve the economic advantages they derived from colonial exploitation. In continuing to occupy colonial territories, and often setting up military bases on them, they posed a threat not only to the peoples of the Territories in question and to neighbouring countries but also to international peace and security.

72. The accession to independence of some 100 States made the complete liquidation of the colonial system one of the most urgent tasks of modern times. His delegation considered that efforts must now be concentrated on southern Africa so as to eliminate the most stubborn and cruel remnants of the colonial system. It would therefore fully support any initiative to call on Member States to apply against South Africa and Southern Rhodesia the sanctions provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

73. Mr. PIERCE (Jamaica) said that the colonial era was drawing to a close and that many territories which had become independent were joining the United Nations in order to help search for solutions to global problems. Nevertheless, much remained to be done in the field of decolonization, particularly since, as each year passed, the situation became more complex. Many small Non-Self-Governing Territories were in fact isolated island communities, with small populations and limited natural resources. While on the surface their problems seemed to be the same, in reality each was different in its way. The reports of the visiting missions, such as those which had visited the Cayman Islands and the United States Virgin Islands, contained useful information in that regard.

(Mr. Pierce, Jamaica)

74. The remaining small Territories on the agenda of the Special Committee had reached various stages of constitutional progress. Some, such as the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, were on the brink of independence. Others were proceeding to internal self-government and would, in keeping with the wishes of the inhabitants and in co-operation with the administering Power, decide on the rate of progress towards independence. In still other Territories, for example in the Cayman Islands, the people had clearly expressed their satisfaction with the current state of political and constitutional development and their desire to maintain the status quo. However tempted others might be to think that they could interpret the wishes of the people and that they could act in their best interests, in the final analysis it was the will of the population of the territories that overrode all other considerations and must be scrupulously respected. That was a cardinal principle which applied to all colonial territories, including East Timor and Western Sahara.

75. There was yet another category of territory, where the right to self-determination, demanded by the inhabitants and recognized by the administering Power, was denied by neighbouring countries. Thus, Belize remained a Non-Self-Governing Territory because of the claims made by the Republic of Guatemala on its territory. However, the present territory of Belize had never been part of Guatemala, had never been occupied or administered by Guatemala and had existed as a separate entity within its present boundaries, long before Guatemala had become an independent country. Belize remained a colony, against the will of its people, whose inalienable right to self-determination and independence was stressed in General Assembly resolutions 3432 (XXX) and 31/50.

76. His Government hoped that a negotiated and peaceful solution would be found to that problem and stood firmly behind the Government of Belize, which rejected any demand for cession of its territory. It was time for Belize to take its rightful place among the community of sovereign nations.

77. Mr. HERRERA IBARGÜEN (Guatemala) said that he reserved the right to reply, at a subsequent meeting, to the accusations made by the delegations of the Bahamas and Jamaica.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.