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**GENERAL
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FOURTH COMMITTEE
20th meeting
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New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway)

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12 November 1976

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 25: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES: 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 (A/31/23 (parts II, IV and V), A/31/23/Add.1, A/31/23/Add.5 and Corr.1, A/31/23/Add.6, A/31/23/Add.7 (parts I-II), A/31/23/Add.8 (parts I-III), A/31/23/Add.9 (parts I-III), A/31/23/Add.10, A/31/42, A/31/48, A/31/52, A/31/55, A/31/56, A/31/59, A/31/91, A/31/106, A/31/109, A/31/112, A/31/114, A/31/121, A/31/136, A/31/138, A/31/197, A/31/237, A/31/269, A/31/283, A/31/286, A/31/306; A/C.4/31/8 and Add.1-3) (continued)

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1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Abdallah Mohamed Kamil, President of the Government Council of the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas, took a place at the petitioner's table.

2. Mr. TCHICAYA (Gabon) asked the petitioner to clear up what seemed to have been a contradiction in the statement he had made at the 14th meeting. He had said that there were no longer any territorial claims on the Territory on the part of its neighbours and yet, elsewhere in his statement, he had requested commitments from neighbouring countries that they had no such claims. He asked what the status of those territorial claims was.
3. Mr. FARAH (Somalia) appealed to the representative of Gabon to postpone his question until some later stage and allow the Committee to continue its debate. The Committee had fallen behind in its schedule, owing mostly to deliberate attempts on the part of some delegations to delay progress. Members of the Committee had come to hear the views of the parties concerned and to gain first-hand information on the problems of the Territory.
4. Mr. TCHICAYA (Gabon) said he had no wish to prolong the debate and would be satisfied with a quick reply. He only wished to have an apparent contradiction cleared up.
5. Mr. ABDALLAH MOHAMED KAMIL* (President of the Government Council of the French Territory of the Afars and the Issas) said that in his statement of 3 November he had informed the Assembly that the struggle engaged in Djibouti was to win and retain genuine independence. He had also stated that the two neighbouring countries, Ethiopia and Somalia, were being requested to make a solemn declaration at the United Nations and elsewhere that they recognized Djibouti's right to exist as an independent entity, in other words, as a State and a nation with the same rights as them to live an independent life and to conduct a policy of its own choice. Those States had also been urged to undertake to abstain from any intervention in the internal affairs of Djibouti. He had warned those countries that any attempt to dictate Djibouti's foreign policy was chimerical and that Djibouti refused to become the protectorate of any other country.
6. He had pointed out in his previous statement that, as everyone knew, the Territory had previously been the object of annexationist claims which today had fortunately disappeared. It seemed that that statement was not clear for everybody. In saying that such claims had disappeared, he had been basing himself on the statements repeated on several occasions before international bodies by the two countries in question and also on the many resolutions they had endorsed.
7. The President of the Democratic Republic of Somalia, General Siad Barre, had said at Kampala that he reaffirmed the support of Somalia for the unconditional independence of the Territory and urged the Summit to take the necessary measures so that the last French colony could occupy its rightful place in the community of nations.
8. Speaking to the Fourth Committee on 19 November 1975, the representative of Somalia, Ambassador Abdourazik Hadji Hussein had stated that, on the occasion of the two Conferences at Kampala and Lima, Somalia and Ethiopia had undertaken to

* Mr. Abdallah Mohamed Kamil's statement on the question of French Somaliland is reproduced in extenso in accordance with the decision taken by the Committee at the 17th meeting.

(Mr. Abdallah Mohamed Kamil)

renounce any claim they might have on the Territory for historic reasons. Mr. Hussein had continued by stating that the Somalia Government had often declared and now reaffirmed that it had no intention of annexing the Territory.

9. On 3 November 1976 the representative of Somalia had declared that Somalia would be the first country to recognize the new State and hence to respect its independence, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity, in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the charter of OAU.

10. For its part, Ethiopia had stated, in the words of General Teferi Benti, President of the Provisional Military Government, at Colombo in August 1976, that the Military Government of Ethiopia had announced in unequivocal terms that Ethiopia had not had and would not have in the future any territorial claims of any sort over the whole or part of an independent Djibouti.

11. Those declarations had been made by the two States. The resolutions they had supported were: resolution 431 adopted by the Council of Ministers of OAU at Kampala in July 1975, resolution 480 adopted at Port Louis in July 1976, the resolution adopted at Lima in August 1975 by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Countries and the part of the Colombo declaration dealing with the question of Djibouti.

12. It was clear from all those statements and resolutions that the claims to Djibouti had ceased. That was fortunate. In his statement of 3 November, he had requested - a request he repeated today - that the two Powers should renew their undertakings solemnly before the Fourth Committee, as they had done on all the other occasions, in other words, that they should pledge to respect and honour the sovereignty of Djibouti and its territorial integrity. They should also undertake to refrain from any intervention in the internal affairs of Djibouti under any pretext.

13. Those undertakings could be made in identical terms although separately, so as to avoid any misunderstanding and any misinterpretation.

14. He also requested the members of the Fourth Committee to adopt a resolution emphasizing as clearly as possible the undertakings of those two States with regard to respect for the sovereignty of the future State and the integrity of its Territory on which they no longer had any claims.

15. On behalf of the people of Djibouti he thanked the Committee for its interest in the Territory and for the honour it had done him by allowing him to put forward his point of view. He expressed the hope that a resolution in conformity with the aspirations of the people of Djibouti would be adopted.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that, as members of the Committee would recall, the Committee had decided at its 10th meeting to grant a request for a hearing from a petitioner representing the Union nationale de l'indépendance (UNI). The request, which had been circulated in accordance with the decision of the Committee as document A/C.4/31/S/Add.2, had been signed by Mr. Ahmed Youssouf, Secretary-General of UNI.

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On 5 November, he had received the following letter from Mr. Hassan Youssouf Mahamoud, Assistant Secretary-General of UNI:

I should like to inform you that we the petitioners of UNI, consisting of my colleague Ahmed Youssouf and myself, instead of the four members announced initially (A/C.4/31/8/Add.2 of 22 October 1976), are in serious disagreement with regard to the presentation of our Party's position on the independence of our country and the procedures to be followed to that end.

My colleague has, I believe, taken a position opposed to that of our Party.

Given the difficulties in communicating with the leadership of our Party with a view to resolving this fundamental difference, it has become necessary for each of us to present to you what he feels to be the position of our Party.

I am convinced that my statement will assist the Committee, both with regard to information and with regard to the real position of my Party.

In the hope that my request will be taken into consideration, I ask you, Sir, to accept my thanks in advance and I extend to you my greetings.

(Signed) Hassan Youssouf Mahamoud
Deputy Secretary-General of UNI

17. Upon receipt of that letter, he had urged the people concerned, Mr. Ahmed Youssouf and Mr. Hassan Youssouf Mahamoud, to seek a friendly solution to their problems. He had also asked them to get in touch with the Executive of their organization so that one spokesman might be appointed for the Party. That request had been based, first, on the fact that the original request for a hearing received by him did not explicitly name who was to be the spokesman for UNI, and, second, on the following opinion from the United Nations Legal Counsel, addressed to the Secretary of the Fourth Committee on 8 November 1976, on the subject of the hearing of petitioners, which he read out:

1. You have asked for my opinion on a question which has arisen regarding the number of representatives of the Union nationale pour l'indépendance (UNI) of French Somaliland who may be heard in the Fourth Committee.

2. By a telegram of 20 October 1976 (A/C.4/31/8/Add.2), the Secretary-General of UNI informed the Chairman of the Fourth Committee that 'delegation four persons from UNI will arrive New York to participate in debate on French Territory of Afars and Issas.'

3. If I understand the position correctly, a practice has grown up in the Fourth Committee, under which the Committee has agreed to hear either an individual petitioner -- appearing personally and without particular affiliation to an organization -- or an organization which designates a representative. Thus, for example, at the twelfth session of the General Assembly, at the 702nd meeting of the Fourth Committee, the Chairman, in response to a question said that:

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(The Chairman)

'... requests for hearings had to be submitted by persons in their own name or on behalf of an organization. In the former case, the hearing, if granted, was personal and the petitioner himself appeared before the Committee. ...

'If the request was on behalf of an organization, the hearing was granted to the organization. Occasionally the organization, in its request for a hearing, mentioned the name of its representative, but more often it designated him only when its request had been granted. In such cases, as soon as the Secretary General was informed of the name of the representative he informed the Committee in an addendum to the request. It was presumed that in the absence of express objection the Committee agreed to hear the representative thus designated. Needless to say, if a member of the Committee had any objection to the representative of the petitioning organization he could raise the question in the Committee and it would then be for the Committee to decide whether or not it would hear the representative.' /Official records of the General Assembly, twelfth session, Fourth Committee, Summary Records, 702nd meeting, pp. 275-276, para. 53./

4. Clearly, therefore, where the Committee agrees to hear an individual, that person must appear. Where, as presumably would be the present case, an organization is granted a hearing, the organization may designate its representative subject to Committee approval if any question is raised. However, while the organization has the initial right to name its representative, possibly from a delegation numbering more than one person, it would not accord with normal practice for that organization to make more than one main statement and, consequently, for more than one person from a particular organization to make such a statement. The same principle, incidentally, applies with respect to Member States on each item, where the principal statement is made by only one representative.

5. As it is usual for a decision to hear an organization to be limited to one principal statement, a departure from this practice would require an express decision by the Fourth Committee. Such a departure would presumably only be authorized in exceptional circumstances, as it would seem clearly undesirable to have resort to a multiplicity of statements from different persons, which statements could be repetitious or even conflicting.

6. It is to be concluded, therefore, that while the UWI may designate its representative from among the members of its delegation, the hearing of a principal statement from more than one representative would not accord either with normal practice or with the principles usually applied and would consequently require a special decision of the Committee.

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18. On the morning of 10 November 1976, he had received two telegrams, one signed by Oma Farah, President of UNI, and the other signed by Mohamed Kamil Mohamed, Vice-President of UNI, both stating that Mr. Ahmed Youssouf, the Secretary-General of the Party was the only person authorized to speak on behalf of the Party. For that reason and on the basis of the legal opinion he had read out, it was his intention, if the Committee had no objection, to ask Mr. Ahmed Youssouf, Secretary-General of UNI, to take a seat at the petitioner's table as the representative of UNI.

19. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Ahmed Youssouf (Secretary-General, Union national de l'indépendance) took a place at the petitioner's table.

20. The CHAIRMAN read out the following request which he had also received from Mr. Hassan Youssouf:

"I, Hassan Youssouf, national of Djibouti, have the honour to request you to authorize me to speak in your Committee as a petitioner.

"I think that I can add to the current discussion on the decolonization of my country information which would contribute to an objective understanding of the problem.

"In the hope that my request will be taken into consideration, I ask you, Sir, to accept my thanks in advance.

"(Signed) Hassan Youssouf"

21. In view of the fact that the Committee was pressed for time and that he hoped to conclude the debate on Djibouti at the current meeting, he suggested that the Committee should allow Mr. Hassan Youssouf to speak at the current meeting.

22. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia) said that, while his delegation would agree to allow anyone with new information to speak on the item, it would prefer the request for a hearing and the legal opinion just read out by the Chairman to be circulated to the Committee for study before the Committee was required to decide on the matter. He knew of other interested individuals who would also like to speak in the Committee on the item and he requested the Chairman to indicate the procedures for receiving and accepting requests for a hearing.

23. The CHAIRMAN said that it was traditional in the Committee that individuals might appear as petitioners. He hoped that the representative of Ethiopia would agree to his suggestion in view of the delay of at least 24 hours which would be caused by the need to circulate the request for a hearing. The Committee was master of its own procedure and could decide whether Mr. Hassan Youssouf should be invited to take a place at the petitioner's table to make a statement at the current meeting.

24. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia) said that the question was of some importance for the Committee, due to the somewhat suspicious circumstances surrounding the request.

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(Mr. Dinka, Ethiopia)

The problem should be studied in depth and he requested the circulation of the new request for a hearing.

25. Mr. FARAH (Somalia) said it was obvious that there had been a serious rift in the leadership of UNI. However, the Deputy Secretary-General of UNI was not a suspicious person and, as a ranking officer of the Party, he had indicated that the position of the Secretary-General of the Party did not reflect the position of the Party as a whole as prepared at Djibouti. In the interest of moving the Committee's work forward, his delegation had not challenged the authenticity of the telegrams read out by the Chairman and he objected to the delaying tactics being employed by certain delegations. He supported the Chairman's suggestion that Mr. Hassan Youssouf should be granted a hearing at the current meeting of the Committee.

26. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia) said that his delegation objected seriously to the procedure being followed. While it had nothing against the individual concerned, who was entirely unknown to his delegation, the circumstances surrounding the request were suspicious and his delegation needed to study the relevant documents. The two telegrams received by the Chairman suggested that Mr. Ahmed Youssouf was the sole authorized representative of UNI. The letters received from Mr. Hassan Youssouf attempted to contradict those telegrams. His delegation seriously requested that the letters from Mr. Hassan Youssouf should be circulated, together with the legal opinion read out by the Chairman.

27. The CHAIRMAN said that he had made a suggestion in the interest of saving time. The representative of Ethiopia had objected to the procedure suggested, claiming that it was not in conformity with the rules of procedure of the Committee. He disagreed with the representative of Ethiopia concerning the interpretation of the rules of procedure. If the representative of Ethiopia insisted on his point, he would put the question of the request for a hearing from Mr. Hassan Youssouf to a vote.

28. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia) asked whether the Chairman could inform him as to the normal procedure concerning requests for a hearing. He believed that such requests were supposed to be circulated as documents of the Committee.

29. The CHAIRMAN agreed that it was normal practice to circulate such requests as documents of the Committee. However, in view of the legal opinion he had read out and the fact that the Committee was master of its own procedure and could waive normal practice when it deemed it necessary to do so, he would not withdraw his suggestion and he asked whether the representative of Ethiopia insisted on his objection.

30. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia) said that, as he understood the statement by the Chairman, it was clear that requests for a hearing from petitioners were normally circulated as documents of the Committee. The Chairman was apparently asking the Committee to violate its own procedure and his delegation insisted on its objection.

31. Mr. FARAH (Somalia) expressed his surprise at the deliberate attempt to delay the Committee's work on the item. It was clear that Mr. Hassan Youssouf had

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(Mr. Farah, Somalia)

requested a hearing as an individual and that he was in a position to provide the Committee with useful information. He supported the Chairman's suggestion.

32. The CHAIRMAN said that, in view of the objection of the representative of Ethiopia to the procedure he had suggested, he would put the matter to a vote.

33. The Committee decided, by 20 votes to 1, with 86 abstentions, to grant Mr. Hassan Youssouf's request for a hearing.

34. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Hassan Youssouf took a place at the petitioner's table.

35. Mr. AHMED YOUSOUF* (Union nationale pour l'indépendance) said that it was an honour for him and for the Union nationale pour l'indépendance party, which he represented, to address the Committee, all of whose work was devoted to the noble cause of human dignity and freedom for the benefit of all those throughout the world who were still suffering from the evils of colonialism. He therefore wished to pay a well-earned tribute to the United Nations, that great international organization without an equal in the world, which since its establishment had worked actively and unceasingly to put an end to the inhuman, degrading oppression which colonialism brought in its wake. He brought the Committee greetings from the members of UNI, who, aware of the importance of the Committee's work, expected it to accomplish a great deal in furthering the attainment of their sacred goal.

36. The Union nationale pour l'indépendance party had set as its objective the speedy attainment of genuine, lasting independence in conditions of peace and unity; it embodied the deepest aspirations of the people of Djibouti and did not identify with any one man, however important he might be. UNI took the view that genuine, lasting independence meant Djibouti's attainment of unconditional, unrestricted national sovereignty. If it was to be genuine and lasting, that independence must not be jeopardized by the untimely and outmoded claims of neighbouring States whose sacred duty as elder African brothers should, rather, prompt them to support the people of Djibouti in their difficult struggle for national liberation. Finally, respect for the territorial integrity of the future State was quite properly a major, continuing concern of UNI, which sought in that way to ensure genuine, lasting independence. At the domestic level, UNI believed that independence in conditions of peace was conceivable only in an atmosphere of national trust and harmony. It felt that the unity of all the nation's vital forces was essential in order to cope with the severe trials of the final stage in Djibouti's political evolution.

* Mr. Ahmed Youssouf's statement on the question of French Somaliland is reproduced in extenso in accordance with a decision taken by the Committee at the 17th meeting.

(Mr. Ahmed Youssouf)

37. The colonial Power, applying the well-known principle of "divide and rule", employing ethnic criteria and fomenting conflicts of interest, was seeking by every possible means to perpetuate its domination and thus continue to humiliate the people of Djibouti. While he did not wish to go back over the events of the remote colonial past of that part of Africa, he would outline to the Committee some of the salient facts of the most recent colonial manoeuvres, which were completely at variance with the French Government's solemn commitment of 31 December 1975 recognizing Djibouti's right to independence.

38. Despite the many loud and reassuring statements aimed solely at lulling international opinion and preserving its image, France had in recent months engaged unceasingly in intensive manoeuvres characterized by attempts to sow division, acts of provocation, intimidation and brutal repression aimed at putting off the inevitable end of colonialism.

39. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, UNI had repeatedly demonstrated its firm determination to strive, beyond all partisan dissension, personal considerations and defence of special interests, to bring about the broad consensus which was so essential to the process of nation-building by approaching the various political movements with a proposal for a frank dialogue free of any spirit of exclusiveness.

40. It was in that constructive spirit that its leaders had taken an active part in the Paris talks of May-June 1976, which had ended in failure as a result of the colonial Power's deliberate effort to keep the various groups divided.

41. It was also in that spirit that UNI had made specific, realistic proposals at the Summit Conference of African Heads of State in Mauritius in June-July 1976, calling upon that august assemblage:

- To organize as soon as possible a round-table conference of all Djibouti's political leaders with a view to working out a joint programme that would lead to genuine, lasting independence;
- To demand that France take all necessary steps to ensure that the referendum was held by the end of 1976, as originally planned;
- To ensure that Djibouti's neighbours respected its territorial integrity so that France would have no pretext for perpetuating its presence in that part of Africa.

42. Endorsing the main elements in the constructive proposals put forward by the UNI delegation, the African Heads of State attending the Summit Conference in Mauritius had unanimously adopted a resolution urgently appealing to all political groups and parties and to the two liberation movements recognized by international organizations to agree to take part in a round-table conference, to be held in a neutral African country under the auspices of OAU, for the purpose of preparing a joint political platform before the referendum.

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(Mr. Ahmed Youssouf)

43. UNI's sacred goal was clearly defined, as were all the steps which had been taken with a view to its attainment.

44. However, the round-table conference called for by OAU had ultimately been boycotted by the so-called coalition Government resulting from the coup de force of 29 July 1976, which was composed mainly of deputies who had left UNI when it made its solemn commitment to independence and of the leadership of LPAI, which was really seeking only to overthrow one man.

45. The self-styled coalition Government, which was in reality merely a creature of the Minister of Colonies, could not represent the people of Djibouti, much less claim to be preparing them properly for independence, particularly since UNI, LIPL and MLD, three political groups encompassing an overwhelming majority of the people, remained deliberately excluded from it.

46. In those circumstances, could anyone seriously talk of a representative government and of the restoration of national unity, as the representative of France and its protégé had vainly striven to do on Wednesday, 3 November 1976, before that Committee? While it was not necessary to dwell on the manifold criminal activities of the colonial Power, the representative of UNI felt that he must draw attention to the seriousness and the explosive character of the situation artificially created by the colonialists and their agents who persisted in putting obstacles of all kinds in the path of independence, contrary to all the reassuring statements made before the Assembly a few days earlier.

47. To put an end to that disturbing situation, UNI considered that only the urgent convening of a round-table conference, organized under the auspices of the United Nations and OAU and bringing together all the political tendencies in the country, on neutral ground, as, indeed, had wisely been decided by the Summit Conference of the Organization of African Unity in Mauritius in July 1976, could avert political chaos.

48. In the opinion of UNI, only such a conference could result in a representative government of national union, entitled to speak and negotiate on behalf of the people of Djibouti.

49. Until such a conference was held and a true government of union was formed, UNI would oppose and forcefully denounce any unilateral act of the French Government compromising the future of the country, which it would rightly regard as prejudicial to the general interest, just as it did the improper and arbitrary distribution of French identity cards.

50. As the representative of UNI had stressed earlier, Djibouti had been claimed by the two neighbouring States, Somalia and Ethiopia.

50a. If the Ethiopian revolutionary government had, since the Conference at Kampala in 1975, clearly renounced all its claims to Djibouti, the same could not be said of the Somali Coast.

51. The fact was that the Somali Democratic Republic, on the pretext of ethnic considerations, continued to affirm that Djibouti was an integral part of its

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(Mr. Ahmed Youssouf)

national territory, as was very clearly attested by its Constitution, its geographical map and the frequently reiterated statements of its leaders, as well as its flagrant and inadmissible interference in the internal affairs of the Territory.

52. It was for the members of the Committee to distinguish the true from the false and not to let themselves be misled either by the reassuring and mendacious statements of the direct representatives or the scarcely disguised defenders of the colonial Power which was responsible for the serious situation currently existing in Djibouti or by the representatives of opportunist and annexationist tendencies which in reality were only using the demagogic language that suited their purposes in the circumstances.

53. The manoeuvres in which France was currently engaging in that part of the world were hardly any different from those carried on by imperialist diplomacy in East Africa and elsewhere, manoeuvres aimed at preserving their selfish interests by all possible means, to the detriment of the oppressed peoples; after long years of difficult struggle, the people of Djibouti could not content themselves with a neo-colonialist independence compromised in advance by so-called co-operation agreements which in reality were nothing but colonialism in a new form.

54. Thus, aware of the interest which the Committee had in the very special situation of Djibouti, aware likewise of the spirit of discernment and equity of its members, aware, finally, of their concern and their constant efforts to confer the dignity of free men on those who were still under the colonial yoke, the Union nationale pour l'indépendance party, which was working for a real and lasting independence, forcefully requested them:

55. First of all, strongly to condemn France, the colonizing Power, for its criminal manoeuvres, for its deliberate policy of outright division, intimidation, repression and systematic provocation within the country and for its constant misrepresentations abroad.

56. Secondly, to demand of France full respect for its official undertaking of 31 December 1975 and the fixing of an exact date for the referendum and the proclamation of independence.

57. Thirdly, to oblige it to create favourable conditions making possible the free exercise of self-determination and to associate all the political parties with the decolonization process forthwith.

58. Fourthly, to demand from Somalia and Ethiopia a solemn undertaking in writing guaranteeing respect for the independence and territorial integrity of Djibouti.

59. Finally, UNI requested the Committee to contribute actively to the victory of the people of Djibouti by assisting them in every appropriate way so that the country could accede to international sovereignty in unity and peace at the earliest possible date.

60. The Union nationale pour l'indépendance party wished to thank the Committee once again for permitting it to set forth before the Committee's members the real

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(Mr. Ahmed Youssouf)

facts of the situation prevailing in Djibouti and to express the hope it placed in them for the appropriate solutions.

61. Mr. Ahmed Youssouf withdrew.

62. The CHAIRMAN invited Mr. Hassan Youssouf to make a statement.

63. Mr. HASSAN YOUSSEUF* thanked the Chairman for authorizing him to make a statement to the Committee. The request which he had submitted for a hearing, which the Chairman had read out, was sufficiently explicit concerning the reasons which had led him to seek such a hearing. He would try to be brief while giving as clear an idea as possible of the basic elements of his Party's policy and its real position in the current stage of the Territory's political development.

64. His Party was fighting for genuine, unconditional and unrestricted independence. Anything which might help to achieve and subsequently to reinforce such independence warranted its co-operation and met with its understanding. It was in that spirit that his Party had participated in the Paris talks in June 1976 and the President of the Party, Mr. Omar Farah Iltiré, had signed the statement of 8 June 1976.

65. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia), speaking on a point of order, objected that, although Mr. Hassan Youssouf had been authorized to make a statement in his individual capacity, he was using the opportunity to reinterpret the position of UNI and the agreements signed by that Party, it was out of order for him to speak on behalf of UNI.

66. Mr. FARAH (Somalia) said that the Ethiopian representative's point of order was irrelevant since, in his capacity both as an individual and as a major politician in his own country, Mr. Hassan Youssouf was fully in a position to interpret or to express an opinion on any decision or political arrangements made for his country, in order to give the Committee his view on the situation regarding French Somaliland.

67. The CHAIRMAN asked Mr. Hassan Youssouf not to refer to his Party when making his statement to the Committee, but simply to give his own views on the situation in French Somaliland.

68. Mr. HASSAN YOUSSEUF pointed out that he was still part of the leadership of UNI, even though he was speaking in an individual capacity in order to clarify political developments in French Somaliland.

69. Continuing his statement, he repeated that Mr. Omar Farah Iltiré had signed the 8 June 1976 statement at the same time as the leaders of other political forces which had taken part in the Paris talks. That statement read:

* Mr. Hassan Youssouf's statement on the question of French Somaliland is reproduced in extenso in accordance with a decision taken by the Committee at the 17th meeting.

(Mr. Hassan Youssouf)

"We state our desire for true independence for the future State, whose sovereignty and territorial integrity will be respected.

"We hope that such independence will be recognized by international organizations and the neighbouring States.

"After the attainment of independence, we favour agreements on co-operation between the new State and France.

"We take note of the decision of the French Government to submit to the vote at its present session a bill revoking article 161 of the Nationality Code. The repeal of that article will be retroactive to the period 1942 to 1963.

"We note the readiness of the French Government to issue official identity documents before the consultation to all inhabitants, including those who will continue to be recognized as aliens.

"With respect to the forthcoming electoral consultations, we approve the provisions of the law guaranteeing an equitable balance of the population; only persons born in the Territory or originating in it will be permitted to take part.

"Finally, in case of a change of government, we would be in favour of forming a government of durable union, which we would support.

70. He had been anxious to quote that statement in full since it constituted a written undertaking signed by Mr. Omar Farah Iltiré, who had been the head of the UNI delegation to Paris. That statement made it perfectly clear that the real position of his Party was the following.

71. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia), speaking on a point of order, said that the very situation which he had wished to prevent by requesting that Mr. Hassan Youssouf's application to speak be circulated in the Committee had now arisen. However, since the Chairman of the Committee had chosen to violate Committee procedure, the Committee would have to suffer the consequences. Mr. Hassan Youssouf could not make a statement on behalf of UNI and had no reason to interpret that Party's actions or to refer to it as "his Party". If he was to continue to speak, he must speak in an individual capacity.

72. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that he had not violated Committee procedure by allowing Mr. Hassan Youssouf to make a statement. He had authorized Mr. Ahmed Youssouf to speak in his capacity as Secretary-General of UNI, but Mr. Hassan Youssouf had been called upon to speak as an individual. It might be difficult for the latter not to refer to the Party, but he must not attempt to speak as its representative.

73. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia) said that, as he interpreted the role of petitioners speaking as individuals, such petitioners should give their own assessment of the situation or provide new information. However, Mr. Hassan Youssouf was insisting on referring to "his Party", a procedure which was unacceptable even if he was speaking from a personal point of view. He therefore urged the Chairman to be scrupulous in ensuring that the Committee's rules of procedure were respected.

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74. The CHAIRMAN said that he took note of the Ethiopian representative's interpretation of the role of petitioners speaking as individuals and again urged Mr. Hassan Youssouf not to speak as a representative of his Party.

75. Mr. DIAKITE (Mali), speaking on a point of order, said that Africa was still the continent which suffered most from colonial domination and that, apart from French Somaliland, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa also remained to be liberated. The Committee had a customary way of hearing petitioners, whether they spoke for a given Party or as individuals. If, therefore, a petitioner spoke for his Party, he should express himself on its behalf, but if he spoke as an individual, in order to provide the Committee with further information, he must be understood to be speaking as such.

76. Mr. TCHICAYA (Gabon), speaking on a point of order, said that the Committee was discussing a very important problem and that the current debate was an extremely serious matter from which important information might be gained. According to the two telegrams read out by the Chairman, Mr. Hassan Youssouf had been denounced by his Party; if, therefore, he was speaking as an individual, he should speak as such and not on behalf of UNI. He supported the representative of Ethiopia in ruling the petitioner out of order and requested that he be instructed not to refer further to UNI.

77. The CHAIRMAN called on Mr. Hassan Youssouf to proceed with his statement in accordance with the guidelines given him earlier in the meeting.

78. Mr. HASSAN YOUSOUF informed the Committee that, while he was making his statement as a petitioner in an individual capacity, he was none the less a member of UNI and, indeed, its Deputy Secretary-General. It was therefore essential that he record the statements and the real views of that Party.

79. Continuing his statement, he said that his Party was committed by the documents signed at Paris to favour agreements on co-operation between the new State and France after the attainment of independence.

80. Mr. DINKA (Ethiopia), speaking on a point of order, pointed out that the petitioner had misinformed the Committee in requesting to speak as an individual if he now claimed that, as a member of UNI, he could speak on its behalf. He therefore appealed to the Chairman to rule once and for all whether Mr. Hassan Youssouf could speak for his Party. The Committee was, of course, aware that UNI had indicated that Mr. Hassan Youssouf could not speak on its behalf.

81. Mr. FARAH (Somalia) said he deeply regretted the frequent interruptions to the petitioner's statement, which seemed to constitute a systematic way of preventing him from speaking. Such action was completely contrary to the customary practice of the Committee in hearing representatives speak as petitioners. The representative of Ethiopia was fully aware that the petitioner was a member of UNI and it was therefore somewhat excessive to say that he should not refer to "his Party". That did not mean that he was speaking on its behalf or as its representative. After all, he was a citizen of French Somaliland and a member of UNI. The Somali delegation was losing patience with the current turn of events in the debate. It had expected Ethiopia to make a meaningful contribution to that debate and it urged that delegation to refrain from its futile attempt to destroy the whole purpose of the meeting.

82. Mr. RUPIA (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on a point of order, said that, as far as possible, the Committee should try to follow its customary practice regarding the hearing of petitioners or representatives of liberation movements. The Committee had always tried to get as much information as it could to guide it in resolving the issues with which it had to deal and to help it to adopt resolutions which were acceptable to all members and to the parties concerned. The Committee had already witnessed an unprecedented and unfortunate spectacle in the form of the vote on whether the Committee should grant a hearing to Mr. Hassan Youssouf or not. However, now that the Chairman had ruled that the petitioner should speak as an individual, he hoped that the latter would help the Committee by confining himself to providing as much information as he could. While he was aware that the petitioner had before him a prepared speech which contained references to his Party, he appealed to him to abide by the Chairman's ruling so that the Committee could continue to hear whatever information he had to give them. Little would be lost if he gave his own personal interpretation of events, while if he continued to insist on his right to speak for his Party the Committee might be forced to take action which would benefit no one. In any case, he was confident that the Committee would judge for itself from the petitioner's statement what information was useful to its deliberations and what was not.

83. The CHAIRMAN endorsed the appeal by the Tanzanian representative and cautioned the petitioner that if he continued to refuse to abide by the guidelines outlined by the Chairman, and now endorsed by the Tanzanian representative, he would have no alternative but to consider ruling him out of order. He therefore called on the petitioner to continue with his statement and to be as brief as possible.

84. Mr. HASSAN YOUSOUF said that, in order to prevent a further waste of time, he would shorten his statement and read out only its conclusion.

85. Continuing his statement as he had indicated, he said that, in conclusion, he wished to impress on the Committee that the following three essential factors must serve to keep all statements on the question under discussion within a framework of objectivity. First, the Territory was a colonized African country whose people wished to and were entitled to, accede to independence, and the international community, assembled in the Committee, must help its people to achieve that end. Second, the administering Power had finally acknowledged that the country was destined for independence and had promised to bring it to independence while establishing the necessary time-limits and procedure. That Power must be taken at its word rather than taken to task, although it was important to ensure that the decisions taken were translated into reality, in co-operation with local political forces and international bodies. Third, the United Nations must be given objective information, if it was to work effectively in helping to carry out the process which would lead his country to independence under the best possible conditions. As the Committee could see, there was no place for sterile mutual accusations and unnecessary complications.

86 He was further convinced that the respect for the political rights of the minority, the moderation and the tolerance shown by the Government of Mr. Abdallah Kamil were such as to promote joint action and a dialogue between the Government in power and the opposition.

(Mr. Hassan Youssouf)

87. He appealed to the Committee to disregard what had just happened between the representatives of Ethiopia and Somalia, which led one to assume that each of those countries had taken sides on the question of French Somaliland.

88. Mr. Hassan Youssouf withdrew.

89. Mr. RAMPHUL (Mauritius) thanked the petitioner for heeding the appeals made to him and for respecting the ruling by the Chairman.

90. As the representative of the Organization of African Unity at the ministerial level in the Committee, and after consultations with the representatives of Ethiopia and Somalia and the secretariat of OAU, he wished to assist the Committee in its consideration of the question of Djibouti by stating the position adopted by OAU on the matter. He then read out OAU resolution CM/Res.480 (XXVII) adopted at the twenty-seventh regular session of the Council of Ministers of OAU, held at Port Louis, Mauritius, from 24 June to 3 July 1976 (A/31/196, annex, pp. 11-12).

91. He hoped that the position of OAU as spelled out in that resolution would help the Committee to reach a just solution.

92. Mr. WODAJO (Ethiopia)* said that the future of Djibouti was one of several sensitive political issues which the Committee was considering. His delegation was confident that, under the wise and experienced leadership of the Chairman, the Committee would contribute to providing solutions to all the problems that it had before it.

93. His delegation was very much encouraged by the fact that the current debate on so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti) had opened with a positive statement by the representative of the administering Power. It welcomed the definite commitment of the administering Power to a time-table and a programme for the independence of Djibouti and expressed the hope that it would be scrupulously and equitably implemented.

94. The statement by the representative of Somalia and the hearings given to the President of the Government Council as well as to the representatives of the liberation movements and the political parties were particularly instructive and revealing.

95. Since the present debate was the last that the United Nations would have before Djibouti acceded to independence, he wished, at the outset, to emphasize its importance. It was the last opportunity that the United Nations would have to help the people of Djibouti to move forward to independence in peace and security and with the knowledge that their independence and territorial integrity would be

* Mr. Wodajo's statement on the question of French Somaliland is reproduced in extenso in accordance with a decision taken by the Committee at its 17th meeting.

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respected by all States. If, however, the present session failed to meet that challenge in all its aspects, then the United Nations would not have fully utilized that last opportunity. It would, regrettably, have left some aspects of the problem unattended which might, sooner or later - perhaps sooner than later - manifest themselves in adverse effects on the Territory's independence and on the peace and stability of the region. The United Nations now had a singular opportunity to contribute to the future of Djibouti by making its independence a positive factor for consolidating peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. The challenge that faced the United Nations was therefore to help the people of Djibouti to obtain their independence in peace, unity and security, while at the same time making sure that the future of Djibouti would not become, in one guise or another, a cause that would affect regional peace and security.

96. Because of its perception of that challenge during the past year, the Organization of African Unity had devoted a good deal of time and effort, in all its political organs, to finding a solution which would advance both the cause of Djibouti's independence and regional stability. By sending a fact-finding mission to Djibouti, OAU had developed a better assessment of the situation and the requirements for a solution. On the proposal of that fact-finding mission, the highest political organ of OAU - the Assembly of Heads of State and Government - had adopted a number of recommendations on the aspects of national unity and security. Those recommendations had also been endorsed by the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held recently at Colombo, Sri Lanka. His delegation sincerely hoped that the Committee would find in those OAU decisions sufficient guidance so that, to the extent possible and appropriate, they would be reflected in the recommendations of the Committee.

97. The link between the genuine independence of Djibouti and the prospect of peace in the region made Djibouti a special case of decolonization. In his statement, he would endeavour to indicate those characteristics that differentiated Djibouti from other colonial situations, to review the salient developments of the past year, and to suggest the requirements for its immediate decolonization and for the contribution of its independence to peace.

98. He first wished to consider those elements which made Djibouti a special colonial problem requiring an appropriate solution that would ensure not only its unconditional independence but would also contribute to the well-being and stability of the region. The special situation of the Territory arose mainly from the specific history of its colonization and the pattern of population movements in the region.

99. With the completion of plans for the construction of the Suez Canal, the French had begun to scan the coast of Tajura for a suitable port of call for their ships that would soon be plying the waters from Europe to South-East Asia and the Far East. French colonial interest in the area had also, to some extent,

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been a response to the British colonial presence in the region. Probably to keep an eye on the British, who were well established in Aden and the Suez Canal, and also hoping to bring Ethiopia under the French sphere of influence - as the British and the Italians were hoping and trying to do at that time - French colonial agents had first obtained concessionary rights to Obock in 1862, by making arrangements with a local chieftain, and had then extended that foothold to Djibouti.

100. The expansion of that foothold as a French colony had been given further impetus by the construction of the Port of Djibouti as a coaling station. Even more important for the growth of Djibouti had been the construction of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway at the beginning of the century. The port and the railway had created employment opportunities which had attracted people from the adjacent areas. The port area, climatically forbidding and barren had, up to that time, been hardly populated. Thus, the colonial development of the Territory was of relatively recent origin. Secondly, the people who now inhabited the Territory were also relatively new arrivals, having left behind in the adjacent areas many relations and ties. On the other hand, the political boundary created by colonialism had never become a barrier to the free movement of the people who led a nomadic life.

101. The outcome of that history was that Djibouti's population was now composed of two principal ethnic groups, the Afars and the Issas, whose parent groups were to be found in Ethiopia and, to a lesser extent, in the case of the Issas, in the Somali Democratic Republic. Perhaps, some figures might better illustrate that kaleidoscopic picture. Out of approximately 630,000 Afars living in the Horn of Africa, about 130,000 lived in the Territory of Djibouti while the rest (500,000) lived in Ethiopia. Similarly, the majority of the Issa people lived in Ethiopia as Ethiopians, while the second sizable group of Issas lived in Djibouti. A small group numbering about 50,000 to 75,000 Issas lived in the Somali Democratic Republic.

102. Furthermore, a disproportionately large group of expatriate residents who came from neighbouring countries, as well as a sizable European population, resided mostly in Djibouti. According to the latest United Nations estimate, that group accounted for 30.4 per cent of the entire population of the Territory. With the tradition of constant movement of people in the area, the size of that expatriate group had ebbed and flowed according to the ups and downs of economic activities in the Territory.

103. Because of the close organic links between the people of Djibouti and the peoples of the two neighbouring countries of Ethiopia and Somalia, the history of the decolonization of the Territory had been affected by seemingly competing territorial claims by the two countries to Djibouti. In the case of Somalia, that claim had been one of official policy since its independence, whereas in the case of Ethiopia, up to the change of Government, it had been one of ambiguity and failure to clarify official policy.

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104. Confronted with such a situation, it had been only natural that, until recently, the leaders of the various political groups operating inside the Territory had been reluctant to press vigorously for independence for fear that they would never be able to protect the Territory against the claims of their neighbours. In 1958, under the Loi Cadre, the people of Djibouti had been given the choice to continue to live under French rule or to opt for independence. Again, in 1967, the people of Djibouti had been given a similar choice. On both occasions, led by the same politicians who were now demanding unconditional independence, they had expressed a preference to continue their association with France. With the unequivocal declaration by the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia over two years earlier that Ethiopia did not have any territorial claim to Djibouti, the fear arising from territorial claims had been substantially reduced, although not altogether eliminated, since Somalia had still not made a similarly unequivocal renunciation of its claim.

105. Given that unique history of Djibouti, the main outline of which he had indicated, the international community had to appreciate the special difficulties that presented themselves at the current final stage of the decolonization process.

106. Because of the constant movement of people to and from adjacent areas in Somalia and Ethiopia, there was now a specific problem as to who should be considered a bona fide citizen or resident of the Territory with full rights to participate in its political process. The uncertainty surrounding that question was capable of opening a potential avenue for external interference. Attempts had been made in the past to alter the demographic composition of the Territory with the hope of influencing the outcome of elections. Unless some criterion was established, similar attempts were likely to be made in the future. The international community should therefore be particularly alerted to the fact that the groundwork for such a manoeuvre was now being carried out. Exaggerated claims were being made by Somalia as to the number of "refugees" from Djibouti it had in its territory. Somalia claimed that those "refugees" had been excluded up to now from participating in the political process of Djibouti as they had been forcibly evicted.

107. According to the information Somalia had communicated to the Organization of African Unity, Report of the OAU Fact-Finding Mission to so-called French Somaliland (Djibouti), (OAU/CM/759 (XXVII), p. 21), Somalia claimed that it harboured 100,000 "refugees" from Djibouti. That figure was twice the number of registered eligible voters in Djibouti. In the same communication to OAU, Somalia had given its estimate of the population of Djibouti as being 600,000. Again, that figure was almost twice the official estimate of the population. Although no other census had been carried out since the last official census 10 years earlier, the population of Djibouti had always officially been estimated at between 250,000 and 300,000. It was therefore pertinent to ask why Somalia had preferred to inflate that estimate.

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108. Another characteristic which distinguished Djibouti from other colonial situations was the unresolved issue of territorial claims. He would have more to say later on that point, but would like to stress that the history of actual and potential claims by Djibouti's neighbours had retarded progress towards independence.

109. Understandably, the people of Djibouti and their leaders had been reluctant to press for immediate independence. Even now, when they had begun to voice a strong desire for immediate independence, they had been painfully constrained to indicate that they wished their neighbours to renounce any and all claims to their territory, to abandon all designs for annexation and to cease interference in their internal affairs. Their apprehension was the more real because they knew too well that, unless they exercised self-restraint, the two neighbouring countries would never be short of collaborators from among the Territory's population, although only a small minority, who would work with them in the furtherance of their objectives.

110. So interwoven were the interests of the people of Djibouti with the destiny of the peoples of the neighbouring countries that any unilateral attempt on the part of one of the neighbouring countries to effect changes that would favour the objective of territorial aggrandizement would no doubt bring about regional instability. Somalia's territorial claim to Djibouti was based on grounds similar to its claims to the territory of its two other neighbours. If its claim to Djibouti was pursued as a means of achieving those other territorial objectives and endangering Ethiopia's vital economic and security interests, there was no doubt that conditions which would be susceptible of threatening peace in the region would be created. If such a situation developed, the people of Djibouti, who had no other desire except to live in peace, would be the ones who would have lost all they could have obtained from their independence.

111. One last feature of the Djibouti political scene that merited the particular attention of the United Nations was the lack of any visible resources to ensure the well-being of the people and to provide for their future economic development. The administrative budget of the Territorial Government of 2.5 billion Djibouti francs (\$US 11 million) was almost entirely subsidized by the French Government. Furthermore, as the Territory did not dispose of any agricultural hinterland, most of its economic activities were based on the transit trade of Ethiopia, especially on the railway traffic between the port city of Djibouti and the interior of Ethiopia. Djibouti handled almost 60 per cent of Ethiopia's external trade. It was obvious therefore that an independent Djibouti, more than any of the least developed of the developing countries, would require the most generous international assistance for the development of its economy and the closest economic co-operation with its neighbours. Those realities would lead one to appreciate the difficulty that the new State would face in order to provide for its own defence from its resources.

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112. From his description of the historical development of Djibouti as a colony and the situation that now obtained there, he hoped that the Committee would understand the special features that distinguished the decolonization process in Djibouti from other colonial situations. Even at a time when the Committee was discussing the question of transferring the powers of government to the people of Djibouti, it had to envisage how the independence of the Territory could become a positive factor contributing to the stability of the region rather than a source of contention. He hoped that he had said enough - although he regretted that he could not say more for fear of giving pretext for acrimony - to indicate that, because of the unique history of the Territory and the pattern of population movements, Djibouti's two neighbours had the potential to interfere in the internal affairs of the Territory, unless they exercised the utmost restraint.

113. However, reflecting the all too familiar problem which was to be found in all colonial situations, there was also a difficulty in the case of Djibouti in obtaining a wide measure of agreement among the various political groups inside and outside the Territory so that a representative group might emerge and receive independence on behalf of the people.

113a. That brought him to the second aspect which he wanted to cover, namely, a review of significant developments during the past year. During the past year, both the Organization of African Unity and the administering Power had taken initiatives to create a transitional government of national unity to pave the way for independence, in which all political groups, inside and outside the Territory, would be represented. Unfortunately, those initiatives had not as yet yielded the desired results.

114. In May-June 1976, the French Government had sought to convene a round-table conference of the principal political groups that had been active internally. As a result of the intransigence of one of the political parties, however, what had been heralded as a round-table conference had ended up being a series of parallel discussions that the administering Power had conducted with each of the political groups, namely, UNI, LPAI and the parliamentary group. Those discussions had led to the signing of a joint communiqué which had given rise to some hope that it represented an agreement among the political groups which could provide a basis for a government of national unity. However, all such hopes had been dashed, because no sooner had the agreement been signed than one of the main political parties had disavowed the communiqué, throwing the status of the agreement into doubt and confusion. In the attendant circumstances of confusion and uncertainty, the administering Power had sought to create a transitional government, representative of all participants in the Paris discussions, but had failed to do so. What had emerged instead was a coalition of two political groups and the exclusion of all the others.

115. It was not for his delegation to indicate why the Paris discussions had not succeeded in yielding the desired results. His Government would have liked the conference to have succeeded because it had always attached great importance to the need for unity among all nationalist groups which wanted to see their country

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secure in independence. It appeared, however, that there had been undue prompting by the administering Power for the establishment of a certain type of government of national unity without providing the political groups with sufficient opportunity for free and direct negotiations among themselves. By excluding the liberation movement from the Paris Conference, contrary to the request by OAU, the Paris agreement, even if it had held together, would not have met the requirements for a government of national unity. There was, therefore, a need to bring into the consultations the liberation movement that espoused the cause of national unity and authentic independence and opposed all annexationist designs, whatever their source.

116. When it had become clear that the initiative undertaken by the administering Power to create a transitional government of national unity had not succeeded, OAU, in keeping with its tradition of helping nationalist groups in all colonial Territories to form a united front, had provided its good offices to bring about agreement among all nationalist groups. Acting on the advice it had received from a fact-finding mission, the highest political organ of OAU - the Assembly of Heads of State and Government - had recommended a round-table conference of all groups to be convened under its auspices. OAU had hoped that such a conference would allow all political groups to sit together and, without the interposition of an external party, to engage in a direct and frank exchange of views on the future of their country. That proposal had not as yet elicited the agreement of the administering Power.

117. The administering Power, adopting a very narrow and legalistic attitude regarding its role, appeared to believe that, by agreeing to the OAU proposal, it would be surrendering its responsibility to that organization. It should be understood, however, that OAU, by offering its good offices to convene a round-table conference, had not intended to supplant French responsibility. On the contrary, OAU insisted that France should accept all responsibility for what happened in Djibouti until the people themselves assumed sovereignty in independence. What OAU, in fact, had intended was to help the political groups to resolve their differences and, by so doing, facilitate the task of the administering Power.

118. Some of the political groups which felt that the present coalition arrangement was favourable to them had also been reluctant to respond positively to the OAU initiative for a round-table conference. If those hesitant groups were committed to a programme of national unity, as they said they were, surely they should appreciate the fact that there could be no real national unity that would provide the basis for genuine national independence without the participation and contribution of all the principal political groups inside and outside the country. One could create the semblance of unity for the sake of appearances, but that kind of superficial unity could not be a substitute for the unity of purpose and action that the people of Djibouti would require to make a going concern of their independence. Only genuine national consensus could guarantee respect for their independence.

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119. If, disregarding the yearnings of his people, the head of the transitional Government of national unity could go so far as to be deliberately oblivious to the danger of existing territorial claim to his country, surely one could understand why doubt should still persist as to the representative nature of the coalition he headed, as well as the nature of his own commitment.

120. One of the principal controversies among the political groups had been the question of revising the electoral roll with a view to making it reflect the present demographic data. Each group was looking at the revision of the electoral roll in the light of how it would affect its constituency. Each group had made proposals which, naturally, had the tendency to increase the number of its likely supporters. That problem, as he had indicated earlier, was very much linked with the history of recent population movements in the Horn of Africa.

121. The determination as to who should be considered eligible to participate in the political process of the country was a problem which was both complex and sensitive. Because of the many organic links that the population of Djibouti had with their parent groups in Ethiopia, and to some extent in Somalia, and the constant movement of people across the borders, the determination of eligibility to vote in the Territory should not be so elastic as to allow the delicate internal equilibrium to be upset, or to open the door for attempts by neighbouring States to influence the outcome of the political process in Djibouti by introducing people from outside. The United Nations had to appreciate, as OAU had done, the importance of that sensitive problem and it was the sincere hope of his delegation that the United Nations would address itself to that aspect of the problem and examine the specific recommendations of OAU and, in its wisdom, support them.

122. As the Committee had already been informed, OAU had recommended that its Convention on Refugees, which had been approved and ratified by member States and was now in force, should provide the principal guidance in the determination of one group of potential voters. That group consisted of bona fide refugees from Djibouti who might be temporarily residing in the neighbouring countries, or people on whose behalf refugee status was being claimed for purposes of changing the demographic composition of the Territory. In that respect, he would like to recall the claim made by Somalia that there were 100,000 refugees from the Territory in Somalia.

123. Another important aspect with which the United Nations and OAU had been concerned had been the question of actual and potential claims on the Territory by the two neighbouring States. It should be recalled that the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 3480 (XXX) had called upon "all States to renounce forthwith any and all claims to the Territory and to declare null and void any and all acts asserting such claims". Despite that appeal by the United Nations and an earlier appeal by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, meeting at Kampala (OAU resolution CM/431/Rev.1 (XXV)), Somalia had not

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made an unequivocal declaration that could be considered a renunciation of its territorial claim to Djibouti. In another resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers of OAU, meeting in Mauritius, (CM/Res. 480 (XXVII)), OAU had renewed its appeal to the two neighbouring States to renounce any claims they might have to the Territory, and also, by endorsing the recommendation of the OAU Co-ordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa, had called upon Ethiopia and Somalia specifically to commit themselves to respect the independence and territorial integrity of Djibouti.

124. Somalia had continuously stated that it supported the independence of Djibouti and the right of its people to self-determination. It had continuously sought to appear as the foremost champion of the independence of Djibouti. Whatever the purpose of such assertions might be, however forcefully they might be worded, and however loudly they might be uttered and repeated, the fact remained that, so far, Somalia had not said anything about renouncing its claim. Some of the frantic posturing about the ardour of its support for the cause of Djibouti's independence was perhaps designed more than anything else to conceal Somalia's non-renunciation of its claim.

125. On the other hand, the Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia had not only declared its unequivocal renunciation of its claim to the Territory, but had also sought to enlist the co-operation of Somalia on a joint declaration of renunciation of claims and an undertaking to respect the independent existence and the territorial integrity of Djibouti. With that in view, Ethiopia had submitted to OAU in Mauritius a draft declaration which Somalia had turned down on the false grounds that such a joint declaration would impose a limitation on the sovereignty of an independent State of Djibouti.

126. Furthermore, Somalia had sought to attach to Ethiopia's draft declaration a meaning which it did not have, by suggesting that the proposal for the joint declaration of renunciation of claims would create a special right for Ethiopia and Somalia to interfere in the internal affairs of Djibouti. Nothing could be further from the truth. What Ethiopia had sought to achieve was to pre-empt any claim of right, on whatever grounds, to the Territory of Djibouti by either of the neighbouring States. Somalia's reference to the Cyprus analogy on that issue was not only false, but also misleading. The Treaty of Guarantee, contained in Appendix A of the Zurich Agreement, under which Cyprus had become independent, conferred upon Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom special rights as guarantor States "to take action with the sole aim of re-establishing the state of affairs created by the ... (Zurich) Treaty" (article IV).

127. The draft declaration presented by Ethiopia, on the other hand, did not create any special right for any State. It was in fact a disavowal of any and all claims of special rights in Djibouti by those who might in the past have claimed special rights. What, in effect, Ethiopia's proposal sought to achieve

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was the exact opposite of what the Agreement on Cyprus had created. There was no provision in the draft declaration conferring on Ethiopia and Somalia any right to guarantee, jointly or separately, the independence of the Territory, or conferring any special right on either one of them to take unilateral action by alleging that the other neighbour had taken a move to affect the territorial integrity of Djibouti.

128. It seemed to his delegation that the length to which Somalia had gone to distort the objective of the draft declaration showed its unwillingness to be on record as having abandoned its designs to take over Djibouti. Ethiopia's hope had been that, by jointly subscribing to the declaration, not only would the neighbouring States be removing an obstacle that would encumber the independent State of Djibouti, but would in fact contribute to enhancing the sense of security of the people. Moreover, that would be the least they could contribute without any sacrifice. If Somalia did not want to subscribe to a joint declaration as proposed, he hoped that parallel declarations issued by the two neighbouring States would have the same effect. But the central question was whether Somalia would be willing to declare its renunciation of claims in any form.

129. He could well anticipate that the representative of Somalia was likely to react vigorously to his raising the issue of territorial claims and might even say that his Government's continuous support of the principle of independence for Djibouti should have been enough to dispel any and all doubts on the matter, and also remind the Committee of his Government's oft-repeated words that Somalia did not have any "annexationist" objective regarding Djibouti. To all such statements that the representative of Somalia might make, he would like to reply in advance that there was a world of difference between a State renouncing a claim and merely stating that it would not annex territory. As commonly understood, annexation implied the forceful seizure by a State of territory belonging to another State. The mere disavowal of annexation as a policy did not cover the attempt to achieve the same objective through subversion or indirect aggression. There had been several instances in the history of the United Nations where States claiming non-independent Territories had supported their independence while still pressing their territorial demands and tempering with the process of self-determination in those Non-Self-Governing Territories. It was perfectly logical for a State claiming a territory as part of its national territory to speak forcefully for its liberation, independence or self-determination and continue to mean by those terms nothing but integration.

130. If he had dwelt at some length on that aspect of the problem, it was because he believed it to be the least understood aspect. The conflicting statements surrounding the question - as had been observed from some of the statements made in the Committee - had not helped to resolve that uncertainty. The only person who could dispel any lingering doubts was the representative of Somalia. In the absence of any unequivocal renunciation of territorial claims by Somalia, his

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Government had to go by the records. The question was: what were those records? He would briefly mention a pertinent few.

131. The first Constitution of Somalia, in article 6, paragraph 4, provided for "the union of Somali territories". When the present revolutionary Government had taken power in Somalia, it had abolished that Constitution and, in its place, had proclaimed what was known as the Charter of the Revolution, which provided legal guidance to the Somali State. In section B, paragraph 3, of that charter, the same principle proclaimed in the old Constitution had been maintained, in the following words: "To struggle to strengthen Somali national unity". In case there was any doubt as to what was meant by "Somali national unity", the Government of Somalia had offered its explanation in a special document entitled "Our Foreign Relations: A Review of Our Revolutionary Policies", published by the Ministry of Information and National Guidance of the Somali Democratic Republic in June 1974. Speaking on the continuing policy of territorial claims and the integration of Somali-speaking peoples, and amplifying Somali foreign policy in that regard, that official publication stated the following on page 61:

"On the foundation of the first Somali political party, the Somali Youth League, on 15 May 1943, the first article of the party's Constitution was to unify the dismembered Somali nation. A similar article was enshrined in article 6, section 4, of the now defunct Somali Constitution of 1961. It is therefore obvious that the unification of all Somalis under one flag has always been the prime aim of every responsible person that has the interest of his nation at heart."

132. The same publication further stated, on page 63:

"The unification of the entire Somali territory crowns all other achievements, for this fundamental goal is subordinated to all other national aspirations."

133. Those who might not be familiar with the Somali concept of "Somali nation" and "Somali territories" might find it difficult to appreciate their significance. Once again, the Government of Somalia had obliged members by making those concepts absolutely clear in two official maps, widely circulated within Somalia, one showing the habitation areas of the "Somali nation" and the other simply entitled "Somali territories". Those two maps, compiled, as noted in the maps, by the Committee of the Supreme Revolutionary Council of the Somali Democratic Republic, clearly showed Djibouti as being both part of the "Somali nation" as well as a constituent part of its "territories". The importance of those maps was so significant that his delegation had seen fit to circulate them to members of the Committee together with his own statement. He hoped members of the Committee would study them closely.

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134. The charter of the Somali Socialist Party, which had been adopted in August 1976, continued to assert the goal of the unification of the "Somali nation".

135. Regarding Somalia's specific claim to Djibouti, he wished to quote from a Somali Government memorandum submitted to the Special Committee of 24 on 25 May 1965 on the question of Djibouti:

"The Somali Republic's intentions are the reintegration of all territory inhabited by the Somali peoples into one nation-State, the Somali Republic, on the basis of the right of self-determination of the people of the Territory." (Memorandum on French Somaliland submitted by the Government of the Somali Republic to the Special Committee of 24 on 25 May 1965. (A/AC.109/121, para. 37, entitled "The Somali Republic's intentions towards the Territory").

136. Many examples could also be cited from statements by Somali Government leaders referring to Djibouti as part of Somali national territory under foreign occupation. A few months after the meeting of the Assembly of Heads of State or Government of OAU at Kampala, which had called upon the neighbouring countries to renounce any claim they might have on Djibouti, President Siad Barre of Somalia had said:

"The Revolutionary Policy towards the French Somali Coast and other occupied areas is a distinctly clear one, in which both friend and foe know where we stand on the issue. The Policy of the Revolution towards the parts of our country occupied by foreign powers is that our people should be allowed peaceful self-determination to gain their freedom. This is an internationally accepted principle."

137. The former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia, Mr. Omar Arteh Galeb, had further elucidated what Somalia meant by the "peaceful resolution" of Somalia's territorial claims. In an interview with Fajr-Al-Jadid, a Libyan journal, Mr. Omar Arteh had stated on 28 August 1975:

"The policy of the Somali Government has the objective of re-establishing the unity of the Somali people. France is occupying part of our territory. We want to bring about this unity by peaceful means. In case that does not work, there are other means."

138. In another interview with the Algerian News Agency (APS) on 4 May 1975, speaking about Djibouti, Mr. Arteh had declared:

"... The Arab nations shared with us the responsibility for persuading France to recognize Somalia's right to recover this part of its homeland."

139. For those who might wish to be brought up to date on Somali Government pronouncements on the matter, he would like to refer them to the words of the Vice-President of Somalia, General Kulmiye, who, on 15 May 1976, a few weeks after his Government had received the OAU Fact-Finding Mission, had addressed a youth group with the following words.

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"The aspirations of the Somali nation symbolized by the five-point star in the centre of the Somali national flag should be made a reality."

140. Obviously in a bid to obtain Arab support for Somalia's territorial claims, the Minister of Information of Somalia, addressing the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of Ministers of Information of the League of Arab States, declared the following:

"France's aggression against Somalia and its subversion of the people of Djibouti is an act committed against territory that is part of Arab land and aims at obstructing the reunification of greater Somalia, an event which will bring significant gains for Arab strategy and boost the Arab struggle against zionism, the puppet of imperialism. We call upon our Arab brothers to support the reunification of all Somali territory, parts of which remain under the tutelage of neighbouring states that refuse even at this late stage of the twentieth century to let all the Somali-Arab people be reunited."

141. So much for the evidence that there existed a Somali claim to Djibouti. Notwithstanding the great body of evidence -- only a fraction of which he had cited -- it might be asserted, in protest, that Somalia supported independence and that that should be sufficient to lay the matter to rest once and for all. It would appear to his delegation, however, that if the Somali representatives in the Committee, and indeed the Government of Somalia, did not concede that the evidence indicated the existence of claims, they should at least agree that it was sufficient to create doubts in the minds of objective people. If there were, therefore, grounds for genuine doubt, it would not take much of an effort on the part of Somalia to dispel that doubt by a simple declaration that Somalia did not now have, nor would it assert in the future, any territorial claim to Djibouti. For the records of the United Nations, such simple words would say more than any righteous indignation over the questioning of Somalia's self-proclaimed, disinterested support for the independence of Djibouti.

142. As he had endeavoured to show, Djibouti posed a special problem of decolonization requiring some specific action. In addition to the usual problem of transferring the powers of Government, the outcome of its decolonization and the prospect of its remaining an independent State, free from external interference and territorial claims, was closely related to the peace and stability of the region. Today, when the United Nations was considering the last phase of its decolonization, it could not ignore the aspect of security, lest Djibouti's independence might become a source of conflict rather than a positive factor opening new opportunities for regional co-operation. OAU had addressed itself to that twin challenge and had made several recommendations. It was only logical to expect that the United Nations would also, at that last opportunity, address itself, as it had done the year before, to the question of assisting in the arrangements for the transfer of the powers of government, and the prospect of obtaining for the people of Djibouti a renunciation of any and all claims to their territory.

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143. The question of determining who should be allowed to participate in the political process in the Territory was a difficult issue. In the coming months, that problem would present itself as a question of revising the electoral roll. The United Nations would make a useful contribution if it were to look at that problem in the same light as OAU had done and recommend guidelines which would provide the basis for an equitable solution.

144. The responsibility of the administering Power at that stage of the decolonization process could not be over-emphasized. France had to create the necessary conditions for genuine negotiations which would lead to accommodations among the political groups. It could not afford to play one group off against another, or make it appear that it was throwing the weight of its authority to one group to the exclusion of others. Most of all, it should avoid substituting for real unity an arrangement which only gave the appearance of national unity. It must be clear that a national political consensus capable of providing an underpinning for unity could only be created by a process of political give and take among all political groups.

145. As he had already suggested, OAU had made a number of useful recommendations reflecting Africa's assessment of the seriousness of the problem and its thinking regarding the required solutions. He would like to request the members of the Committee to reflect on that African consensus in any decision they might wish to recommend to the General Assembly. In the view of his delegation, the following principles underlying OAU decisions should provide the framework for any United Nations recommendations that might emerge from the current debate. Those should include: an appeal to the administering Power to implement equitably the programme of independence it had outlined in the Committee within the indicated time-frame; a request to the administering Power to co-operate with OAU in convening a round-table conference, under the auspices of that organization, of all political groups inside and outside the Territory with a view to creating a Government of national unity which would pave the way for independence; an appeal to all States, particularly the neighbouring State which had not yet done so, to renounce any and all claims on the Territory, and an appeal to Ethiopia and Somalia, the two neighbouring States, to provide jointly or separately an undertaking that they did not now have, nor would they assert in the future, any claim to the Territory, that they would respect the territorial integrity and the independent existence of the Territory and that they would refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Djibouti.

146. In conclusion, he wished to state that his Government was ready to co-operate with OAU and the United Nations to provide whatever assistance was required of it to help the people of Djibouti to achieve genuine independence in peace, unity and security. Ethiopia had never concealed the fact that it had historical and ethnic links with Djibouti and its people, as well as vital economic and security interests in common. Ethiopia viewed the independence of Djibouti as a prospect that would not only safeguard those links and interests, but as one that would enhance them for the mutual benefit of all the peoples of the region. However,

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despite Ethiopia's disposition to help the independence of the Territory to become a salutary factor for regional peace and co-operation, if outside interests wished to use it to advance their national objectives, Ethiopia could not be blamed for the consequences. Ethiopia sincerely hoped that such unfavourable consequences could be avoided, but since there was a remote possibility that they might not be, the United Nations was duty-bound to foreclose any possibility that could justify any untoward action.

147. Mr. FARAL (Somalia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation would reply in full, at a later stage, to the remarks made by the representative of Ethiopia.

148. On the whole, the representative of Ethiopia had not addressed himself to the issue before the Committee. His statement had been an act of provocation which his own delegation viewed with serious concern. Unfortunately, the lengthy statement by the representative of Ethiopia had contributed little, if anything, to the Committee's work for the decolonization of the Territory. His unfounded remarks were a reflection of the Ethiopian Government's ill will towards Somalia and towards the people of French Somaliland. He had demonstrated no interest in the importance which the Committee attached to action to lead the people to genuine independence. His delegation was well aware of the obsession of the representative of Ethiopia because it had heard those remarks before both at meetings of OAU and at meetings of non-aligned countries; the claims made by the representative of Ethiopia had been rejected both at Port Louis, Mauritius, and at Colombo, Sri Lanka. The representative of Ethiopia was therefore doing a disservice to the people of French Somaliland and to the work of the Fourth Committee.

149. Many of the quotations cited by the representative of Ethiopia had been taken out of context. For example, he had referred to the matter of a territorial dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia. It was a well-known fact that such a dispute existed because some Somali territory was under Ethiopian domination. He wondered, however, whether the current debate in the Fourth Committee was the time and place to dwell on that issue. It was because some Somali territory was under Ethiopian domination that the representative of Ethiopia was asking Somalia to renounce all claims with respect to French Somaliland, even though he was well aware of Somalia's clear cut position on that issue. The territorial dispute between Somalia and Ethiopia was a result of Ethiopia's policy of aggrandizement and expansion, which had begun in the nineteenth century. The map which the representative of Ethiopia had distributed to members of the Committee showed only the extent of habitation of the Somali people, they did indeed live in the areas indicated and the map was for information only. At a later stage, his delegation would reply to the attempts by the representative of Ethiopia to mislead the Committee and to confuse the issues.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.