

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



DOCUMENTS
INDEX UNIT MASTER

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.35/SR.124
6 June 1955

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

JUN 13 1955

COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

Sixth Session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 9 May 1955, at 3.10 p.m.

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PRESENT:Chairman:

Mr. SCOTT New Zealand

Rapporteur:

Mr. JAIPAL (India)

Members:

Mr. LOOMES Australia

Mr. FRAZAO Brazil

U HLA AUNG Burma

Mr. YANG China

Mr. BARGUES France

Mr. ARENALES Guatemala

Mr. SHIVA RAO India

Mr. VIKTORSE Netherlands

Mr. CALLE y CALLE Peru

Mr. GIDDEN United Kingdom of Great Britain
and Northern Ireland

Mr. SEARS United States of America

Representatives of specialized agencies:

Mr. GAVIN International Labour Organisation

Mr. ARNALDO United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural
OrganizationSecretariat:

Mr. COHEN Under-Secretary

Mr. BENSON Secretary of the Committee

FUTURE STUDIES RELATING TO NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (a) FUNCTIONAL FIELDS
(b) REGIONAL ASPECTS (A/AC.35/L.191) (continued)

QUESTION OF THE RENEWAL OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING
TERRITORIES (A/AC.35/L.199, L.209, L.211) (continued)

REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMITTEE AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATIVES
(A/AC.35/L.189 and Add.1) (continued)

U HLA AUNG (Burma) said that his delegation considered the question of the renewal of the Committee to be one of principle rather than of procedure. It was the kind of question which might well determine whether the free countries of Asia and Africa could continue to believe that the foundations of world peace could be laid through the collaboration of East and West.

At the San Francisco Conference, in 1945, some 600 million people, constituting the populations of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, had not been represented. His delegation was glad to note, however, that, with the co-operation of some of the Administering Members, the number of dependent peoples was being reduced and they now accounted for only some 150 million of the world's population.

The Burmese Government had always supported the existence of the Committee, to whose work it attached considerable importance. Nevertheless, it was not the question whether the Committee should continue that would decide the future of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. That they would achieve independence was inevitable and the question might rather be how the United Nations could make the best use of the short time available to promote the advancement of their people.

The Administering Members, who had played an active part in the drafting of Chapter XI of the United Nations Charter, must have realized that they were approving a declaration that was of great significance for the future; indeed, their statements had shown that they regarded that Chapter as a momentous departure in the history of colonialism. In 1946 and 1947, it had appeared doubtful whether those Members were prepared to go forward in that direction or

(U Hla Aung, Burma)

would retreat from their earlier position. That question remained, but he still hoped that continued co-operation, in the spirit of San Francisco, would be possible.

Accordingly, the Burmese delegation had joined the Indian and Iraqi delegations in co-sponsoring the joint draft resolution (A/AC.35/L.209). The sponsors would have preferred the establishment of a permanent committee in which the political claims of the Non-Self-Governing Territories could be discussed. Nevertheless, they were ready to accept every possible compromise and had accordingly proposed a solution which provided for very much less, in the hope that the Administering Members would meet them half way. They were firmly convinced that the Committee must continue in existence, with the help of those Administering Members who saw in Chapter XI of the Charter a means of contributing to world peace, and they hoped that the draft resolution, drawn up in a spirit of conciliation, would be discussed in that same spirit.

Mr. SEARS (United States of America) pointed out that there were tremendous forces at work, some seeking to create self-government, others seeking to destroy it. The Committee should be concerned with both trends. The constructive trend was evident in the constantly diminishing number of people remaining in a non-self-governing status. In Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and Asia, developments were in progress which would further reduce the number of such people in the foreseeable future. The remaining number would represent less than one-tenth of the number of people taken over by Communist colonialism in a little more than a decade. The loss of self-government through the latter kind of colonialism was recognized in the discussions of colonialism at the Bandung Conference. It was only by contrasting the two trends that one could clearly understand the nature of the colonial question as it was evolving today.

In conclusion, his delegation would support the continuation of the Committee.

Mr. FRAZAO (Brazil) expressed his full agreement with the draft resolution which represented a compromise in relation to the position adopted by many delegations three years previously. Nevertheless, realizing that some of its provisions were bound to give rise to differences of opinion, he had

undertaken some informal consultations with other delegations with a view to agreeing upon some acceptable amendments, which he would circulate later in the afternoon.

The meeting was suspended at 3.35 p.m. and resumed at 5 p.m.

Mr. FRAZAO (Brazil) introduced a working paper (A/AC.35/L.211) relating to amendments to the three-Power draft resolution. The suggested amendments were intended merely to focus the discussion on a text which might eventually form the basis for agreement; they should not be regarded as Brazilian amendments.

His delegation had consistently seen in the Committee an indispensable contribution to the work of the United Nations to promote the advancement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the spirit of Chapter XI and it felt that the Committee should be renewed. Differences of opinion on certain points connected with that issue were inevitable. The working paper was a sincere attempt to reconcile those differences and to make the best use of the experience gained in the Committee in recent years. He appealed to the members of the Committee to avoid the discussion of principles and to concentrate on the essentials of the case. With goodwill and good faith on both sides, a practical solution could be found.

Non-administering and Administering Members alike had commented in the Fourth Committee and in the Committee on Information on the value of the latter's technical work. The Administering Members in particular were in favour of increased emphasis on the technical aspects of the Committee's reports and conclusions. The first amendment was based on the view that a specific reference to those comments might be more appropriate than the general statement appearing in the second paragraph of the preamble of the three-Power draft resolution.

The second amendment was the logical outcome of the first. It was, moreover, a concession to those delegations which wished it to be plainly stated that the new committee would be the same Committee with the same competence. There was no intention of introducing anything that could subsequently be turned against the Administering Members.

The purpose underlying the third amendment was entirely practical. The main point was that the Committee should be renewed in some form or another.

(Mr. Frazao, Brazil)

He himself, would prefer to omit the reference to a further period of three years but if a number of other delegations wished to retain it, he would raise no objection.

The only difference between paragraph 3 of the three-Power draft and the text suggested in the fourth amendment was the substitution of the term "technical advisers" for the term "persons specially qualified". Some reference to those advisers must be included and their valuable contribution to the Committee's work should be specifically recognized, as it was in the fifth amendment. He warmly commended the delegations which had complied with earlier General Assembly resolutions on the subject and had incurred heavy expenses in allowing technical experts to participate in the Committee's work.

Turning to the sixth and seventh amendments, he said that the need for attaching indigenous inhabitants to the Administering Members' delegations had been thoroughly discussed in the past. The Committee should express its satisfaction that certain Administering Members had done so. It was to be hoped that other delegations would follow their example.

The purpose of the new paragraph 7 suggested in the working paper was merely to clarify paragraph 5 of the three-Power draft resolution. It should be clearly understood that the Committee would admit observers from the Non-Self-Governing Territories only on the initiative of the Administering Members. There was no intention of interfering with any of the legal rights reserved to the Administering Members within the framework of the United Nations. Given the frank and co-operative attitude adopted by the Administering Members, it was difficult to see how the admission of observers could be detrimental to their legal position or undermine the principle of unity of representation which his delegation had always sought to preserve. On the other hand, the admission of observers from Territories on the eve of self-government might be in the interest of the Administering Members themselves and would certainly be very useful to the Territory concerned. Such a step would be in keeping with Article 73 e as a whole and with the general philosophy of the Charter and the times. The proposed paragraph 8 would give further reassurance to those Administering Members who felt that the Committee was trying indirectly to reduce their constitutional powers or to introduce the principle of dual representation.

(Mr. Frazao, Brazil)

The proposals to delete the reference to territories in a single regional group and to insert a new paragraph 11 were based on past experience. At the previous session, for example, the Sub-Committee on Economic Conditions had experienced extreme difficulty in finding general formulae acceptable to all members and applicable to all Territories. It had come to the conclusion that the Committee's hands were tied and the perspective of its reports distorted by fear of exceeding its terms of reference. When the Committee had been criticized in the Fourth Committee for being too general, both he and the Chairman of the Committee had explained that that fault could not be overcome unless the Committee were authorized to differentiate between Territories where appropriate. General Assembly resolution 847 (IX) represented an attempt by certain delegations, which were not members of the Committee on Information, to see through the awkward compromise phrasing of the Committee's reports and the consequent generalities. Nevertheless, the suggested regional studies would themselves impose a limitation on the Committee. In many cases the problems considered by the Committee were peculiar to one region or to one country. If the Committee was authorized so to place them, its reports would be better and its conclusions more scientific. His delegation had no intention of suggesting that the Committee should make specific recommendations on individual territories, as did the Trusteeship Council, but it should be entitled to emphasize specific problems by reference to individual territories. Many delegations apparently felt that that would be an important step towards enlarging the Committee's terms of reference. In reality, it was only the logical outcome of past experience and a sincere attempt to improve the Committee's work.

Mr. SEARS (United States of America) congratulated the Brazilian representative on his efforts to reconcile the various views about the Committee's future. The United States delegation would support any compromise which would have the effect of prolonging the Committee's existence and would obtain the co-operation of the two principal Administering Members. Hence, it would support proposals along the lines of the Brazilian suggestions, which were constructive and should provide a satisfactory basis for a solution of the problem.

Mr. CALLE y CALLE (Peru) said that his delegation favoured the continuation of the Committee and hoped that it would be re-established for an indefinite period. Its existence was indispensable for the consideration of the information supplied by the Administering Members under Article 73 e of the Charter. The United Nations was called upon to promote international co-operation in the economic, social and agricultural fields, and the Non-Self-Governing Territories could not remain outside the framework of such co-operation. That alone was a sufficient justification for the Committee's existence. The Committee's constitutionality had been discussed and it had been claimed that nothing in Chapter XI of the Charter provided for its establishment. On the other hand Article 22 had been cited, as had rule 98 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which provided for the establishment of such committees as the General Assembly deemed necessary for the performance of its functions. The question inevitably arose whether under Chapter XI any specific functions were allocated to the General Assembly. In the opinion of the Peruvian delegation Article 10 of the Charter filled the gap. Peru would support the Brazilian proposal that the Committee should continue under its present terms of reference.

Turning to the joint draft resolution, he said that paragraph 5 did not reflect accurately the wishes of the General Assembly or of some of the members of the Committee. It should authorize the Committee, with the consent of the Administering Members, to admit as observers indigenous persons appointed not by Governments of Non-Self-Governing Territories but by the local authorities of territories in which the inhabitants had attained a large measure of direct responsibility for economic, social and educational policies.

With reference to paragraph 6, he pointed out that paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 332 (IV), which laid down the terms of reference of the Special Committee on Information transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter, invited that Committee to examine the summaries and analyses of information transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter, not to examine the information itself. If it was intended that the Committee should consider the

(Mr. Calle y Calle, Peru)

information supplied by the Administering Members, the resolution should say so; if not, the fact should be made clear. In that event the Committee should insert in paragraph 6, after "the summaries and analyses", the words "prepared by the Secretariat on the basis".

Mr. BARGUES (France) said that he would like time to consider the Brazilian proposals, which introduced radical alterations to the joint draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.