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Chairman: Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu)

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AGENDA ITEM 117: ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH ARE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN NAMIBIA AND IN ALL OTHER TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (continued)

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10p.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 117: ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH ARE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN NAMIBIA AND IN ALL OTHER TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (A/44/23 (Part III); A/AC.109/976, 984, 987, 989, 990, 994, 996 and 997) (continued)

1. Mr. SLABÝ (Czechoslovakia) said that the success achieved by the United Nations in the field of decolonization was indisputable. Since the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, more than 50 countries had become free of colonial oppression. The process of granting independence to Namibia continued, and his delegation believed that the people of Western Sahara would also be enabled to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination in the foreseeable future.
2. However, decolonization would not have been completed even after the achievement of independence by Namibia and settlement of the question of Western Sahara. One of the fundamental obstacles impeding the eradication of colonialism was the activities of foreign economic and other interests in dependent Territories.
3. The current interests of the administering Powers extended beyond the economic exploitation of the Territories; they included, to an even greater degree, the political, ideological and military spheres. An important role in their strategy was also played by transnational corporations, which operated in many ways as colonial Powers and helped restore colonial practices. As before, the transnational corporations were motivated by the possibility of high profits and continued to use cheap labour and to deplete local resources.
4. The administering Powers often spoke of the economic assistance they provided to the Territories, but that assistance often created suitable conditions for investment, which was far from meeting the interests of the population. It also pursued political and military-strategic goals, and was directed not towards establishing the foundations of self-reliant economic development but merely towards moderating the impact of the activities of foreign economic interests in Non-Self-Governing Territories. Those activities were in some cases motivated by the existence in the Territories of tax shelters.
5. The activities of foreign capital did little to foster the social development of the colonies; in many cases their social situation had deteriorated. High unemployment had often resulted in emigration, low living standards and vulnerability of the population to outside pressure.
6. The investment policies of foreign economic and other interests were guided by selfish criteria and consequently the economies of most dependent Territories were steadily declining. The lopsided nature of those economies made them vulnerable, which in turn heightened political dependence and made for easy manipulation of the local bodies by the administering Powers.

(Mr. Slabý, Czechoslovakia)

7. In the struggle for decolonization, the international community should devote equal attention to the military activities of the administering Powers in dependent Territories as another obstacle to the full implementation of the Declaration. Those activities impeded development of a national identity. The setting up of military bases changed the composition of the population and reduced the land available for food production.

8. Obviously, the military bases and activities of administering Powers, contrary to their claim, did not contribute to an improvement of the living conditions of the local population. The primary aim was to implement foreign military plans in the respective regions and to interfere in the internal affairs of other independent States. Hence, the military activities of administering Powers and their allies in dependent Territories also posed a threat to international peace and security.

9. Despite repeated calls by the United Nations for the termination of military activities in dependent Territories and the unconditional removal of military bases and installations from those Territories, their number was not decreasing.

10. The dependent Territories in the Pacific Ocean, particularly Guam, played a primary role in the military strategy of some administering Powers. In the light of current developments in the South Pacific, the foreign military presence on Guam could be expected to expand.

11. Military and strategic interests were the main reason for pressure by the administering Power to annex the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. It thereby sought to remove that Territory from United Nations supervision by dividing Micronesia into artificial State entities and imposing on it unequal agreements.

12. The activities of foreign economic, military and other interests in dependent Territories must again be condemned as a gross violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter and as an obstacle to the full implementation of the Declaration.

13. Mr. AMARI (Tunisia) said that the activities of foreign economic and other interests which were depriving colonial peoples of their legitimate right to exercise full control over their natural resources constituted a major obstacle to the political and economic independence of the Territories concerned. His delegation called upon all administering Powers to abide by their obligations under the Charter and urged them to promote the political, economic and social progress of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to protect their human and natural resources from exploitation in accordance with the principles of the Declaration on decolonization.

14. His delegation naturally accorded the greatest attention to Namibia, the last stronghold of colonialism in Africa. It looked forward to the day when that Territory would join the ranks of independent nations. While the efforts made by the Secretary-General and by all the parties which had contributed to the

(Mr. Amari, Tunisia)

implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) were to be commended, the international community must remain vigilant and wary of possible manoeuvres by the South African régime against Namibia and against SWAPO.

15. The depletion of Namibia's human and natural resources over long decades had harmed its economy and sapped the energies of its people. By depleting the country's natural resources and repatriating the enormous profits made, transnational corporations had had a major share in the long suffering of the Namibian people and continued to represent a major obstacle to political independence and to the achievement of equality among the various groups in the indigenous population. With the approaching independence of Namibia - a delicate stage in its history - his delegation called upon all countries and all organisations of the United Nations system to act decisively in helping the Namibian State and in strengthening its institutions and its economy.

16. The racist policies and practices of the South African régime, which were incompatible with the most elementary human values and in breach of all the relevant international instruments, represented a constant source of concern. His country supported the struggle of the people of South Africa for equality and the establishment of a democratic system, and condemned the policy of racial discrimination pursued by the South African régime and its persistent use of repressive methods. Such intractability and such disdain for international instruments required the adoption of individual and collective measures for the political, economic, military and cultural isolation of the régime, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, until such time as comprehensive and mandatory sanctions could be imposed and an end could be put to a situation that remained unresolved in a world in which a climate of détente and of enhanced international peace and security was beginning to prevail.

17. Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia) said that the precarious position of the Non-Self-Governing Territories via-à-vis foreign economic and other interests compelled his delegation to restate its views on the question. It was clear that the driving force behind the operations of foreign entities within the Territories had always been the desire for financial gain, and that they had felt no obligation to the welfare of the peoples of the Territories. Such interests had invariably come into existence either at the invitation or with the consent of the administering Powers and in many cases operated at their behest. Such arrangements were at variance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the responsibility of the administering Powers for fostering the balanced growth of the Territories and encouraging their peoples to take a more decisive role in charting their future destiny.

18. A number of those Territories continued to be exploited by economic interests with no concern for the welfare of the population. In Namibia, for example, South African interests had worked hand in glove with transnational corporations in the merciless exploitation of its resources. Many foreign companies continued to profit from the mining and export of key minerals, causing irreparable ecological wounds which an independent Namibia would be compelled to nurse. The social

(Mr. Tadesse, Ethiopia)

implications of the homelands schemes, the forcible removal and deployment of Namibians and the iron-fist policy pursued by the illegal régime via-à-vis the Territory's work force had yet to be assessed. None the less, the activities of the foreign economic interests operating within Namibia had been extremely detrimental to the social welfare of the people.

19. Despite difficulties during the initial stage of implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), there was every reason to believe that the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was fairly well positioned and that the independence plan for Namibia was well under way. Nevertheless, the current stage had not been reached without obstacles arising from the attitude displayed by South Africa. Loss of life had been caused by the intransigence of certain paramilitary elements which had attempted to instil fear in the Namibian people and create instability. If the upcoming elections were to be fair and free, no such situations should be allowed to arise. Indeed, extraprecautionary measures must be undertaken with a view to ensuring the secrecy of the ballot and the full and unimpeded participation of all Namibians in the electoral process.

20. The decision of the Special Committee on decolonization to dispatch a visiting mission to Namibia was praiseworthy, and it was to be hoped that the presence of that mission as well as the resident observer missions of OAU and the front-line States would help to ensure the fairness of the coming elections.

21. While the basic prerequisites of the electoral process in Namibia were a current concern, importance must also be attached to the preparations incumbent on the international community in order to enable independent Namibia to grapple with the exigencies of statehood. UNHCR and UNICEF were making laudable efforts to settle all Namibians and enhance their livelihood, but all specialized agencies should be called on to map out and implement projects aimed at building a basis for an independent and self-reliant Namibia.

22. The situation in the other Territories was of the utmost interest. Although the problem of Western Sahara had yet to be resolved, the move towards an ultimate solution were encouraging, particularly the establishment of a technical team entrusted with working out the basic elements involved in the conduct of a referendum in that Territory.

23. One particular area of concern to his delegation remained the unenviable situation of the small Territories, which were particularly vulnerable to exploitation by various economic interests. Neither the remoteness of their geographical location nor the sparsity of their population should affect the Committee's discharge of its collective responsibilities towards those Territories.

24. He reiterated his country's unswerving commitment to the exercise of the right to self-determination by all peoples under colonial domination in accordance with the Declaration.

Action on the draft resolution and the draft decision in document A/44/23 (Part III)

25. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the draft resolution on the activities of foreign economic and other interests contained in chapter V, paragraph 10, and the draft decision contained in chapter VI, paragraph 10 of document A/44/23 (Part III), and called on those delegations wishing to explain their vote before the vote to do so.

26. Mr. VAINOLA (Finland), speaking on behalf of Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, Norway and Finland, reaffirmed the Nordic countries' long-standing support for realistic measures in accordance with the principles of the Charter to implement the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The Nordic countries did not hesitate to condemn those activities of foreign economic and other interests which impeded decolonization. However, the draft resolution before the Committee failed to recognize that foreign economic and other activities could be beneficial to the economic and social development of the Territories, and that failure to distinguish between different kinds of activities in the Territories detracted from its fundamental aims.

27. The Nordic countries also had reservations of principle with regard to a number of specific paragraphs in the draft resolution which failed to take into account the Charter provisions concerning the division of competence between the General Assembly and the Security Council, and they deplored the continued practice of singling out individual countries and groups of countries as supporters of the policies of the South African Government.

28. For those reasons, they would abstain in the votes on the draft resolution and draft decision.

29. Mr. OSANAI (Japan) said that the activities of foreign economic and other interests in dependent Territories should be controlled so as to prevent them from having adverse effects on the right of those Territories to self-determination and independence or from prejudicing their economic, social and cultural development. However, he could not subscribe to the assertion, which seemed to be the thrust of the draft resolution, that such activities were necessarily harmful. Moreover, his delegation had noted with strong disapproval that once again Member States had been singled out in the draft resolution, individually and in groups, for criticism. The effects of that practice could only be counter-productive. His delegation would therefore abstain in the vote on the draft resolution.

30. Mr. MENAT (France), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Economic Community, reaffirmed their support for all efforts under the Charter to eliminate colonialism, the inhuman apartheid system and racial discrimination in South Africa, and their commitment to the right of Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination. They opposed the depletion of indigenous natural resources and the harmful activities of foreign economic and other interests that might impede self-determination. The Twelve were very pleased that amendments regarding the prospects in Namibia had been introduced into the text of the draft resolution.

(Mr. Menat, France)

31. However, the draft resolution failed to take into account that foreign economic interests often contributed greatly to the economic and social development of Territories, and it made no distinction between their beneficial and their harmful activities, whereas, in previous such resolutions the Committee had in fact appealed for acceleration of the economic development of the Territories. The Twelve also had reservations of principle regarding paragraphs in the draft resolution that did not conform to Charter provisions regarding the separate mandates of the General Assembly and the Security Council. They further deplored the singling out, especially in paragraph 5, of the actions of one country.

32. Regarding the draft decision, the members of the European Economic Community felt that it should not be put to a vote since it dealt with a matter not on the Committee's agenda. They would therefore not be able to vote in favour of either draft.

33. Mr. WILKINSON (United States of America) said that his Government remained committed to decolonization, the elimination of apartheid and the right of self-determination for all people. It was proud of its record in promoting those principles, as also of its record in promoting economic advancement through not only development assistance but also the openness of its markets and the encouragement of beneficial commercial activity. The United States would, however, vote against both proposals before the Committee because of the imbalances, inaccuracies and flawed assumptions which underlay them. For example, the draft resolution ignored the significant contributions that foreign investment and training made in Non-Self-Governing Territories. Both proposals were flawed in that they singled out certain groups of countries and one specific country for criticism. The United States categorically objected to that deplorable practice of name-calling, which should be beneath the dignity of the United Nations and damaged its credibility.

34. Ms. MILLER (Canada), observing that there could be no doubt about Canada's policies on southern Africa and its readiness to co-operate in removing all impediments to self-determination in the region, said that while it accepted much of the content of the two proposals and appreciated the removal of the references to Namibia that had been contained in the previous year's proposals, Canada could not accept assumptions such as the blanket condemnation of activities by foreign economic and other interests and the advisability of the immediate withdrawal by colonial Powers of all their military bases. There was, moreover, a procedural irregularity in including under agenda item 117 a decision on military activities. The objectionable name-calling in both proposals, furthermore, could not contribute to achieving the results sought by all. Canada would therefore abstain on the draft resolution and vote against the draft decision.

35. Miss AL-MULLA (Kuwait) said that she would vote in favour of both drafts. Noting, however, that more and more oil-transporting countries were applying the oil embargo against South Africa, she observed that Kuwait would have liked paragraph 9 of the draft resolution to include oil-transporting as well as oil-producing and oil-exporting countries in its appeal.

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36. Mr. MATNAI (Israel) said that he would vote against both drafts. Israel firmly opposed colonialism, apartheid, racial discrimination and any activity perpetuating them. Israel itself had suffered from racism, it had had the experience of becoming an independent country, and it was now co-operating with many newly independent States, some of which had no diplomatic relations with it but came to study in Israel and share its experience in many fields. Even so, Israel had been singled out for criticism in the drafts, a counter-productive practice that had become entrenched as a result of unfair pressure from certain countries in conflict with Israel. The Middle East question was amply dealt with in other forums and references to it should not be inserted at random under items not relevant to that issue. The Committee should instead be dealing with the real problem of southern Africa. Israel, moreover, categorically denied any nuclear co-operation with South Africa, of which it was accused in the draft resolution and in the Special Committee's report, accusations stemming from allegations and hearsay with no basis in fact. Israel had decided, however, not to ask as in past years for a separate vote on the paragraphs in which it was singled out, because it knew that the automatic majority in the Committee would adopt them in any case.

37. A recorded vote was taken on the draft resolution in document A/44/23 (Part III), chapter V, paragraph 10.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Belgium, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Austria, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey.

38. The draft resolution was adopted by 84 votes to 10, with 16 abstentions.

39. Mr. SAHINGUVU (Burundi) said that, had he been present during the vote, he would have voted in favour of the draft resolution just adopted.

40. A recorded vote was taken on the draft decision in document A/44/23 (Part III), chapter VI, paragraph 10.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Turkey.

41. The draft decision was adopted by 86 votes to 12, with 12 abstentions.

42. The CHAIRMAN invited those members who wished to do so to speak in explanation of vote.

43. Mr. CISTERNAS (Chile) said that he had voted in favour of the draft resolution because of his country's anti-colonialist position. It did not, however, agree with the premise that all foreign economic activities were obstacles to the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization. Some were clearly favourable to the development of dependent Territories and improved their inhabitants' standard of living, and the funds such activities brought in provided a solid economic foundation for their future as independent States. Chile regretted that the draft resolution had not explicitly acknowledged that fact. It also had reservations about the singling out of a country or group of countries for criticism, a practice that worked against the coexistence that should characterize the United Nations.

44. Ms. CAÑAS (Argentina) said that although her delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, it wished to reiterate its opposition to the practice of criticizing specific countries or groups of countries since that was discriminatory and only undercut support for a draft text.

45. Mr. EHLERS (Uruguay) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it supported the underlying principles, ideals and objectives. However, it would have preferred only general comments in certain paragraphs rather than the singling out of specific countries for criticism, which made the text unbalanced, ran the risk of being selective and reduced ultimate support for it.

46. Mr. KEMBER (New Zealand) recalled that his delegation had in the past voted in favour of draft resolutions similar to the one just adopted because of its concern that foreign economic and other interests, which should be beneficial but were too often exploitative, should not impede the progress of dependent Territories. He expressed deep regret that language had been added to the text just adopted that had prevented New Zealand from supporting it, even though it shared its general objectives. The principle that an administering Power's economic and social development plan should facilitate the freedom, dignity and independence of the people of a Territory in accordance with their democratically expressed wishes lay at the heart of New Zealand's development policies with respect to Tokelau, the Territory it administered, and would continue to do so.

47. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had concluded consideration of agenda item 117 and suggested, in accordance with established practice, that the Committee should request the Rapporteur to submit the report on that item directly to the General Assembly.

48. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.