

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FOURTH SESSION
Official Records

FOURTH COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Monday, 23 October 1989
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

AGENDA ITEM 116: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

AGENDA ITEM 118: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 119: UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

AGENDA ITEM 120: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

General debate (continued)

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned within one week of the date of publication to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, Room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and are incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

Distr. GENERAL
A/C.4/44/SR.14
9 November 1989
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

89-56522 17076 (E)

16p.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/44/23 (Part VI), A/44/139, 178, 236, 291, 303, 355, 463, 477; A/AC.109/975 and Add.1, 976-978, 979 and Add.1, 980, 982-990, 992-998, 999/Rev.1, 1000, 1007 and Corr.1)

AGENDA ITEM 116: INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES TRANSMITTED UNDER ARTICLE 73 g OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/44/23 (Part IV); A/44/262, 553)

AGENDA ITEM 118: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (A/44/23 (Part IV), A/44/297 and Add.1 and 2; A/AC.109/L.1705; E/1989/112)

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/44/3 (chaps. I and VI))

AGENDA ITEM 119: UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA (A/44/557)

AGENDA ITEM 120: OFFERS BY MEMBER STATES OF STUDY AND TRAINING FACILITIES FOR INHABITANTS OF NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES (A/44/613)

General debate (continued)

1. Mr. SITHOLE (Zimbabwe) said his delegation noted with satisfaction the many successes that had been achieved in the area of decolonization, thanks to historic General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). However, because of the obstructionist tendencies of certain colonial Powers, colonialism had not yet been completely eliminated. Thus, in Namibia, the Pretoria régime was not adhering to its commitments under Security Council resolution 435 (1978). The South-West African Territorial Forces had not been dismantled, the Koevoet remained a problem, restrictive laws continued to be operational, and certain official declarations were far from encouraging. There had also been a marked increase in the intimidation of SWAPO cadres. Urgent action must be taken to remedy the situation. An increase in UNTAG police units and electoral monitors would be a welcome development. It was to be hoped that the United Nations would ensure the success of the Namibian post-election period. His delegation gave credit to SWAPO for its tenacity in the face of overwhelming odds, to the Government of Angola for its unflinching solidarity and to Cuba for its sacrifices in checking the apartheid war machinery.
2. The provisions of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) should also apply to the vestiges of colonialism in other dependent Territories. His Government hoped that the question of New Caledonia, among others, would be resolved in a manner which respected the rights and aspirations of all the inhabitants of the Territory, including the indigenous population, in accordance with the principles of decolonization.

(Mr. Sithole, Zimbabwe)

3. While his delegation had been encouraged by apparent signs of movement on the question of Western Sahara, it noted with dismay that Morocco had decided to suspend the negotiation process. The final resort to armed struggle by the courageous people of Western Sahara was a legitimate act to attain their sacred right of being masters of their own destiny. Zimbabwe hoped that Morocco would realize the gravity of the situation and that OAU and the United Nations would be able to continue the good-offices process. The joint proposals by OAU and the United Nations enshrined in the agreement of 30 August 1988 to hold, under their supervision, a referendum on self-determination in the Territory, without any administrative or military constraints, remained a sound basis for resolving the problem.
4. Mrs. DIAMATARIS (Cyprus) said that her delegation welcomed the international efforts to speed up the good-offices process for a just and final settlement to the conflict of Western Sahara. It was also happy to note the promising developments mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General (A/44/634). The meeting between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO in January 1989 had marked a turning-point, and she hoped such contacts would continue. A Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara had been appointed to monitor the implementation of the settlement proposals accepted by the parties, and a United Nations Technical Commission had been set up to facilitate and accelerate the process. Finally, the processing of data collected in the 1974 Spanish census in Western Sahara, which would serve as the basis for the preparation of a voters' list for the referendum, was well under way.
5. Much remained to be done, however. What was of cardinal importance was the recognition on the part of both parties that the ultimate objective in Western Sahara was to enable its people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in a free and fair referendum, without any administrative or military constraints.
6. Mr. SMITH (United Kingdom) said that his country's record on decolonization was good. Forty-nine countries that had at one time been administered by the United Kingdom were now Members of the United Nations. Only 10 Territories remained under British administration, compared with 43 when the United Nations had been established.
7. Regardless of the size of the Territory and the number of people involved, the wish of the inhabitants had remained the guiding principle of his Government's policy. Its aim was to ensure that the people decided for themselves what kind of political future they wanted. Too often, however, Members of the United Nations equated self-determination solely with independence and forgot that there were other choices. The peoples of the remaining British dependent Territories had chosen to retain their links with the United Kingdom; they had not been forced to do so. Each Territory was in a position, through its own democratic political structure, to reach a decision on its future relationship with the United Kingdom. His Government remained ready to respond positively in cases where independence was the constitutionally expressed wish of the people concerned.

/...

(Mr. Smith, United Kingdom)

8. Actually, the term "Non-Self-Governing Territory" had become misleading. The United Kingdom remained responsible for the external relations, defence and security of its dependent Territories, and scrupulously observed its obligations under Article 73 of the United Nations Charter. But in all other respects, the Territories governed themselves through democratically elected systems of government. His Government believed it had been successful in developing self-government as mandated in the United Nations Charter.

9. With regard to the organization of work, his delegation agreed with others that it was time to take a good look at the procedures of the United Nations in the field of decolonization to determine how they might be adapted to changing times. Other pressing problems were being brought to the attention of the United Nations, whose resources were limited. Hence, it might be advisable to rationalize the work of the Fourth Committee, the Committee of 24 and its two sub-committees in order to avoid the considerable overlapping which occurred at present, for example, in the discussion of draft resolutions. Likewise, it might be advisable to combine certain agenda items and to consider every two years certain items which changed little from year to year, or even to eliminate some. The Committee owed it to the peoples of the Territories remaining on its agenda to adopt a more pragmatic and rational approach to its work.

10. Mr. BLANC (France) said that although France still had reservations about the consideration by the United Nations of the question of New Caledonia, which fell within its exclusive sovereignty, that would not in any way prevent it from keeping Member States fully informed about the prospects facing that Territory.

11. Since June 1988, stability and law and order had been restored in New Caledonia, thanks to the constructive dialogue initiated under the auspices of the French Prime Minister between the leaders of the two main opposing parties, which had culminated in the signing of the agreements of 26 June and 20 August 1988. Those agreements, which had been approved by the French people in a referendum held on 6 November 1988, made provision for the Caledonians to express their wishes for the future of the Territory in 1998, in a referendum on self-determination. The only persons eligible to participate in that referendum would be those who had been continuously resident in New Caledonia for more than 10 years. Until that point, the development of the Territory would be the responsibility of elected bodies from the provinces, furnished with very extensive decentralized powers, and would be promoted by a policy of economic expansion and social justice.

12. He paid homage to two of the principal architects of reconciliation, who had been assassinated several months previously. The assassins had none the less failed to attain their objective, namely, to undermine the foundations of the newly restored confidence, and the agreements were being implemented in all areas, on schedule and in accordance with the stipulated procedures. The new territorial institutions were in place. Three provinces vested with a large degree of autonomy had come into existence and had elected their assemblies on the basis of universal suffrage, with a high electoral turn-out, 85 per cent of the voters having demonstrated their confidence in the organizations which had signed the agreements,

/...

(Mr. Blanc, France)

while parties opposed to the process had suffered a sharp set-back. Furthermore, a large number of legislative and statutory measures, drawn up in close consultation between France and the Territory, had been adopted in preparation for the future: an administrative personnel training programme, measures relating to agriculture and land ownership, initiatives to develop Kanak culture, and the promotion of bilateral contacts with other countries in the region. The state of implementation of the agreements was being monitored on a regular basis. The Prime Minister and members of the French Government had already made several visits to the Territory, and a committee responsible for monitoring the agreements had just met, with the participation of the signatory organizations.

13. The harmonious integration of the Territory in the Pacific region as a whole was also important for the future of New Caledonia. His Government had taken measures to promote active participation by the Territory in regional co-operation and had noted with interest the favourable response of all the Pacific nations towards the agreements, which would provide the ideal conditions for the people to express themselves freely and democratically, in a fully informed manner, on the subject of their own destiny.

14. Mr. MAHMOUD (Mauritania) stated that the present world situation was characterized by the growth of détente in international relations. The conflict in Namibia was nearing settlement and the Namibian people would at last be able to enjoy full sovereignty and to demonstrate, in free general elections, their mass support for SWAPO.

15. Mauritania welcomed the efforts by the United Nations to find a solution to the question of Western Sahara, such as the implementation by the Secretary-General of practical measures to organize a referendum on self-determination, the establishment of a technical monitoring commission and the commitment shown by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the current Chairman of OAU to pursue their mission of good offices. The Western Sahara problem had lasted too long, and the Mauritanian people, who had been directly affected by it for a number of years, continued to suffer from its adverse effects. Mauritania would spare no effort to ensure that peace was achieved, and ardently hoped that a just and final settlement could soon be reached on the basis of the joint proposals put forward by the United Nations and OAU in August 1988.

16. Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand), recalling that decolonization stemmed from the principle of equality of rights and the universal right to self-determination enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, stated that in Namibia, after more than a century of colonialism and almost 30 years of diplomatic efforts, independence could become a reality. It was, however, necessary to ensure that South Africa scrupulously adhered to all the provisions of the United Nations plan. Thailand, for its own part, would be sending personnel to join UNTAG in overseeing the electoral process. There had also been developments in the situation in South Africa, as was witnessed by the release from prison of members of the African National Council (ANC). But many other opponents of the régime remained incarcerated. The policy of apartheid was leading the country to its

/...

(Mr. Pibulsonggram, Thailand)

ruin, and only the eradication of that racist system, a stain on humanity, would make it possible to establish peace and security in the region.

17. With regard to Western Sahara, Thailand welcomed the efforts by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of OAU to ensure the holding of a referendum on self-determination, without any administrative or military constraints. It hoped that the recent meetings between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO would be a positive stimulus to the process of settling the conflict.

18. The economic and social situation in Africa was a matter of deep concern and necessitated an intensification of international co-operation, on the understanding that each recipient country must retain its sovereign right to decide what suited it best. For its part, Thailand would continue to do its utmost to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.

19. In the conviction that education was the key to development, Thailand would offer a number of scholarships in 1990 to inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Much had already been done for those Territories in the political field, and it was now essential to complete that work by improving their economic and social situation.

20. Mrs. AGUILERA (Mexico) reaffirmed her country's opposition to any form of colonialism. The competent agencies of the United Nations were making good ground in their combined endeavour to secure the right of all peoples to determine their own destiny. The international community, provided it remained steadfast, would eventually vanquish a colonial phenomenon which, although it had become more subtle, had always had only one aim, namely, to perpetuate subjugation.

21. Mexico, as a member of the United Nations Council for Namibia, was following with close attention the implementation of the Security Council resolutions and the preparations for free and fair elections under the supervision of the United Nations. It was essential to ensure that those elections ushered in genuine independence and genuine freedom in the Territory, for that would to a large extent determine the stability and security of the entire region.

22. The opening of a dialogue on the Malvinas between Argentina and the United Kingdom and the establishment of bilateral relations were positive steps. It was to be hoped that the two countries would fully normalize their relations so that they might arrive at a just and definitive solution.

23. With respect to the Western Sahara, direct negotiations between the Frente POLISARIO and Morocco were a welcome development. The solution to the problem, based on the framework proposed by resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), remained a referendum for self-determination, supervised by the international community. The results of mediation efforts, contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/44/634), were encouraging.

(Mrs. Aguilera, Mexico)

24. Mexico endorsed the resolutions concerning New Caledonia adopted by the General Assembly and the Special Committee on Decolonization; those resolutions alone would facilitate the achievement of an effective and lasting solution to the problem.

25. Mr. LABANI (United Republic of Tanzania) said that in spite of the progress made in the area of decolonization, there were still pockets of colonialism with a total population of approximately 3 million people, who were looking to the United Nations for assistance in their liberation struggles. For its part, his country was committed to work toward those objections.

26. Nevertheless, the task was a challenging one. Even as the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia was being launched, members of SWAPO cadres and their supporters continued to be subjected to acts of intimidation and the South African régime, as indicated by the Secretary-General in his report S/20883, was still not in full compliance with its obligations, maintaining certain of the most reprehensible aspects of its administration or attempting to tamper with pre-election procedures. The United Nations must ensure that the elections were free and fair so that it might soon welcome among its members a Government which was truly representative of the majority of the Namibian people.

27. With regard to Western Sahara, the direct negotiations held in February 1989 between the Frente POLISARIO and Morocco represented a step toward the solution advocated by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. His delegation welcomed also the declaration of a cease-fire by the Frente POLISARIO, which was at once a confidence-building measure and a contribution to efforts to settle the conflict. Yet, far from responding in a positive manner, Morocco continued to maintain a strong military presence in the territory, where hostilities were said to have resumed, and to refuse new direct negotiations with the Frente POLISARIO. Such an attitude constituted a serious impediment to the holding of a peaceful and fair referendum free from any military or administrative constraints. Tanzania supported the inalienable right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination and urged the two parties concerned to resume direct negotiations immediately and to co-operate fully with the mediating bodies. In that connection, he wished to express particular appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and the current Chairman of OAU.

28. Mr. POLOWCZYK (Poland) stressed the importance of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which had enabled colonial countries to achieve independence and thus to join other countries in shaping world policy. Nevertheless, independence had not been gained by all and there still remained about three million human beings dominated by powerful economic and strategic interests and the annexationist tendencies of certain States.

29. In Namibia, the United Nations settlement plan was being implemented, and despite concerns about irregularities, which threatened the election process, it was to be hoped that the efforts of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and

/...

(Mr. Polowczyk, Poland)

UNTAG would enable the territory to take its place in the very near future among the independent nations.

30. Poland had noted with great interest new factors which could facilitate the resolution of the conflict in Western Sahara. Noteworthy among them were the direct contacts which had been established between the parties to the conflict; the arrangements between the United Nations and Morocco concerning the implementation of the Settlement Proposals; and the regional co-operation which had been greatly facilitated by the good offices of the United Nations Secretary-General and the current Chairman of OAU.

31. With regard to New Caledonia, the international community should promote the opening of a dialogue that would take into consideration the interests of all the parties concerned.

32. A number of small territories remained colonized in order to serve the military and economic interests of other countries. Those situations represented potential threats to the security and stability of the regions concerned. The privileges of the colonizers must never be confused with the rights of the colonized. The Charter of the United Nations demanded the immediate and unconditional implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples with respect to all territories under colonial rule, regardless of their population, size, geographical location and economic potential. Those territories were entitled to exercise their right to self-determination free from external pressures and influences. Attempts to modify the status of those territories unilaterally, as had been the case with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, constituted a violation of the Charter; it was not up to the colonial Power to determine whether or not a territory under its control was self-governing - only the Security Council was competent to decide that question.

33. Mr. KUNDA (Zambia) said that in various areas of the world, regional conflicts which until recently had seemed intractable were on the verge of peaceful settlement. That was true in Western Sahara, where the issue was clearly one of decolonization. It was essential that the solution there should be based on the exercise of the inalienable right of the population concerned to self-determination. As a consequence, in its resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX), OAU had requested the parties to the conflict to open direct negotiations. With the United Nations, OAU had elaborated peace proposals advocating a referendum without military or administrative pressures; the Frente POLISARIO, for its part, had proclaimed a cease-fire in order to create a favourable climate for a peaceful settlement. But Morocco had turned a deaf ear and continued to maintain its forces in the territory, even though it was essential that those forces should be withdrawn. While the opening of direct negotiations between the two parties at the beginning of 1989 had been a positive step, it was to be hoped that there would be further negotiations and also a cease-fire on both sides, that being the only way to resolve the problem. His country supported the good offices of the United Nations Secretary-General and the current Chairman of OAU. There was no doubt that

(Mr. Kunda, Zambia)

those efforts had been responsible for the positive developments in the situation, as indicated in document A/44/634.

34. Mr. SAVUA (Fiji) said that all individuals yearned to be independent and self-sufficient but not everyone agreed on the means to achieve that end, and from that controversy came the difficulties of decolonization. Decolonization should be based on three principles. First, any attempt at demographic manipulation must be stopped, in order to assure that those participating in the process of self-determination were fully eligible to do so. Secondly, the choice must be left to the people, after they had been made fully aware of all the options; and those options should not be restrictive. Lastly, the international community must ensure that the administering Power respected the decision of the population. It was heartening to see that those three principles were currently operating in the settlement of the conflict in Namibia. Although there were differences in aspirations, the views and hopes of everyone should be taken into consideration; in addition, flexibility was important even if it meant less than rigorous adherence to deadlines, so that the final goal could be attained.

35. There were signs of progress in other territories also. That was the case in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and in Western Sahara, where the parties concerned should co-operate fully with mediators from the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations.

36. His delegation commended the Government of New Zealand for its consistent determination to administer the population of Tokelau in the best manner possible, allowing the people complete freedom to decide on their future. All the other territories should follow that example. Clearly, all colonies should be able to become independent if they so desired and to exert pressure on the administering Powers to that end; at the same time, all voices must be heard, including those that did not favour a change in status.

37. It was to be hoped, of course, that the remaining non-self-governing territories would achieve independence before the end of the century, but independence should not bring with it poverty, famine and displacement. In that respect, it was worth noting the spirit of co-operation demonstrated by those administering Powers which provided information on conditions in the territories, as required by the Charter. For its independence to be economic and social as well as political, a new nation needed economic assistance, particularly from the industrialized nations. The urge to sweep away all vestiges of colonialism felt by a people which had been colonized was understandable, but it should also be realized that foreign interests were not always self-serving and unscrupulous, and that their presence sometimes assisted the host country's development. That was true of certain transnational corporations, whose activities merely required a certain amount of regulation. In that connection, the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations was to be commended for doing a great deal to ensure that the operations of those corporations did not have negative effects on the host countries but, on the contrary, promoted their economic and social development.

/...

38. Mr. TALAAT (Egypt) said that the greatest successes of the United Nations had been achieved in the sphere of decolonization, so much so that the map of the world had been entirely changed. The Non-Aligned Movement, of which Egypt had been one of the founders, had also played an appreciable role in making world public opinion alive to the importance of decolonization and in working concretely towards its achievement. The task was, however, not yet completed, and the United Nations, as the conscience of the world, was called upon to assume its responsibilities towards peoples still deprived of the right to freedom and independence. In its resolution 845 (IX) the General Assembly had spelt out one of the aspects of that responsibility by inviting Member States to offer to the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories educational facilities which would enable them to prepare for independence. Egypt, for its part, offered grants for study and training in various fields to inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories or of newly independent countries, and had also instituted new technical co-operation funds operating on a bilateral level. It was to be hoped that the present economic conditions would not prevent a growing number of countries from also providing assistance. His delegation wished to express its satisfaction with the efforts made by the Advisory Committee on the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, a programme which should be given financial support and should strengthen its co-operation with various United Nations bodies. The latter, in turn, should achieve better co-ordination of their activities and should expand and diversify their efforts on behalf of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories with a view to accelerating their independence.

39. His delegation had noted with interest the report on Western Sahara prepared by the Secretary-General (A/44/634) and the Secretary-General's observations on that question in his report on the work of the Organization (A/44/1). Egypt, which currently held the Chair of the Organization of African Unity, associated itself fully with the efforts made by the Secretary-General in his mission of good offices. The parties to the conflict should show the necessary flexibility and political will needed in order to arrive at an early agreement. His country hoped that the draft resolution to be submitted by the Committee to the General Assembly would reproduce the terms of the consensus text adopted at the Meeting of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries held in Belgrade in September 1989, a text which reflected the spirit of concord and co-operation prevailing at present in the Arab Maghreb. Such a resolution would certainly contribute to the success of the mediation efforts now taking place.

40. Mr. MITAU (Kenya) said that his country, which itself was a product of the decolonization process, still remembered the sufferings associated with colonialism and therefore supported the aspirations of peoples still under foreign domination. With regard to Namibia, it therefore welcomed the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and commended the efforts of the Secretary-General. The international community should, however, be more vigilant than ever in view of South Africa's non-compliance with the key provisions of the United Nations settlement plan. South Africa would do everything within its power to interfere with the transition process and turn it to its own advantage and would shift the blame onto UNTAG and SWAPO.

(Mr. Mitau, Kenya)

41. With regard to Western Sahara, Kenya welcomed the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General and of the Chairman of OAU. As Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO had accepted the peace plan in principle it was to be hoped that they would both continue to co-operate and that the referendum on self-determination could soon be held.

42. Mr. DOUMA (Congo) said that, within the framework of the implementation of the Charter of the United Nations, the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples represented an important landmark in contemporary history. The Declaration had enabled the United Nations to take decisive action which had led to the tripling of the number of Member States. More than 80 million persons who had once been under foreign domination today enjoyed fully their right to independence. Those very real successes were the result of struggles waged by the colonial peoples themselves as well as of the extraordinary awakening of minds caused by the Charter of the United Nations. The adoption, in 1960, of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had been supplemented by the creation of the Special Committee of 24, an instrument designed to assist the General Assembly in the Declaration's implementation.

43. With regard to the question of Namibia, his delegation was pleased that the long-deferred process of implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) containing the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia, had now begun in earnest. The plan should be implemented in full, in conformity with the timetable drawn up by the Security Council, and South Africa should remove all serious obstacles to its implementation. It was, for example, unacceptable and, to be condemned that Koevoet, the death squad of the South-West African Police (SWAPOL), should still be pursuing its activities in Namibia. The maintenance of restrictive and discriminatory laws in the territory and the threats directed against SWAPO militants and sympathizers were among the obstacles to the Plan's implementation referred to by the Secretary-General in his report of 6 October 1989 (S/20883). The Security Council should assume its responsibilities in that respect and should exercise its authority so as to guarantee the implementation of the United Nations plan. In South Africa itself, the situation was deteriorating; the racist régime was still in power and was pursuing its odious practices of apartheid. His delegation wished to reaffirm that apartheid could not be reformed but must be completely dismantled.

44. With regard to Western Sahara, his delegation welcomed and supported the mediation efforts being made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the current Chairman of OAU to arrive at a political solution. The international community could only be encouraged by the fact that the parties to the conflict had agreed in principle to a peace plan jointly proposed by the United Nations and OAU; the dialogue on the question should be maintained. With regard to the question of New Caledonia, his delegation was happy to note the constructive measures which continued to be taken in co-operation with all sectors of the population in order to promote the Territory's political, economic and social development. It was to be hoped that those measures, as well as others, would make New Caledonia's peaceful development towards self-determination irreversible.

/...

(Mr. Douma, Congo)

45. On the subject of the small dependent territories, his delegation took the view that the administering Powers should respect the wishes of the peoples of those territories and their right to self-determination. The administering Powers should endeavour to build diversified and self-reliant economies in those territories, raise the standard of living of the populations and promote educational programmes. Unfortunately, the reality was hardly encouraging, in particular for certain territories situated in the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean which continued to form the subject of serious controversy. The credibility of the United Nations was seriously at risk so long as all peoples had not been freed from all forms of foreign domination. His country and its people remained dedicated to the ideals of justice and liberty; as President Denis Sassou Nguesso had told the IVth Regular Congress of the Congolese Labour Party, "the Congolese people considered itself united by a common destiny with all those anywhere in the world engaged in any form of struggle for a new humanity".

46. Mr. ORTIZ (Bolivia) said that his country resolutely supported the just and noble cause of oppressed peoples struggling for observance of their fundamental individual and collective rights and of their right to self-determination and independence. It also reiterated its confidence in the United Nations, which remained the best chance for peoples to secure justice, peace and freedom. It was evident from the discussions and the documents submitted to the Committee that the general situation with regard to decolonization had improved by comparison with previous years. The favourable situation should be further improved by administering Powers showing greater understanding and co-operating more actively in developing and protecting the economies and natural resources of Non-Self-Governing Territories for the benefit of the local population. The birth of a new State in Namibia was a striking example of the favourable course of events and of the role of the United Nations in the decolonization process, as well as being a symbol for those peoples still struggling for their freedom and independence. However, the road still to be travelled before Namibia became independent was not without its dangers and obstacles; the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) was encountering serious difficulties due to South Africa's refusal to undertake all the obligations imposed on it by the resolution.

47. In its communiqué of 12 October, the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had declared itself deeply concerned by the situation created by South Africa in Namibia. It had stated that South Africa was continuing to pursue its policy of intimidating the Namibian population, and that was preventing the normal evolution of the activities necessary for holding the elections in November. It was therefore imperative that the United Nations and the international community should redouble their efforts to ensure the full implementation of the United Nations Plan for the independence of Namibia. The United Nations, having assumed direct international responsibility in the Territory of Namibia, was obliged not only to supervise the holding of free, fair and democratic elections but also to ensure the viability of the new Namibian State in a climate of peace and security. Despite all the obstacles, Bolivia hoped that the

(Mr. Ortiz, Bolivia)

transition process would end in success and the establishment of an independent, sovereign State of Namibia.

48. In South Africa itself, the situation remained intolerable because of the institutionalized practice of apartheid. Bolivia reiterated its violent opposition to the policy of apartheid and its solidarity with the courageous, authentic people of South Africa. It was convinced that the world would soon witness the final eradication of apartheid in South African territory. His delegation wholly supported the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of OAU to find a political solution to the question of Western Sahara in conformity with the peace plan proposed by the two organizations. It hoped that their mediation would make possible the speedy establishment of the conditions necessary for holding a referendum on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

49. Despite the positive developments, the continued existence of colonialism remained a serious concern for the United Nations; his delegation therefore reiterated its support for the efforts undertaken by the Committee of 24, and for the Secretary-General's activities aimed at achieving a peaceful solution to the questions that remained on the Fourth Committee's agenda. It was also appropriate to emphasize the importance of the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa. In that connection, his delegation wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution on the Programme submitted under agenda item 119. Lastly, his delegation reiterated its solidarity with and support for the colonial peoples struggling for freedom and independence, in particular the peoples of South Africa, Namibia and Western Sahara.

50. Mr. SARWAR (Afghanistan) said that his country, as a sponsor of the draft resolution on Western Sahara, welcomed recent positive developments in international relations, including those affecting Western Sahara. The evolution of the latter question was mainly due to the effects of Security Council resolution 621 (1988), resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) of the Organization of African Unity and the political declaration adopted by the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries in Belgrade. However, the importance of the role of the legitimate struggle waged by the people of Western Sahara should not be overlooked. His delegation welcomed the holding of direct negotiations between the parties concerned early in 1989. The continuation of direct contacts would contribute to the scrupulous observance of the cease-fire and would pave the way for a referendum that would enable the Saharan people to express their will without outside interference.

51. Afghanistan reiterated its support for the effective efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Chairman of OAU aimed at promoting a just and viable solution to the question in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the relevant General Assembly resolutions on Western Sahara. His delegation particularly appreciated the initiatives by the Secretary-General and the Chairman of OAU that had ended in the conclusion of an agreement in Geneva on 30 August 1988. Notwithstanding all those positive

(Mr. Sarwar, Afghanistan)

developments, a final settlement had not been achieved and the question continued to pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability in the region. His delegation believed that the problem of Western Sahara could only be solved through the more flexible application of the following principles: seeking a solution to the problem by political, not military means; establishing all necessary conditions for the United Nations and OAU to organize, supervise and facilitate the holding of a free and fair referendum; and supporting the Saharan people so that they could decide their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development in a peaceful climate. Afghanistan firmly supported the Saharan people and their internationally recognized Government, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, in their just struggle for self-determination and independence.

52. Mr. BROWN (Panama) said that the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was one of the most important contributions of the United Nations to developing the notion of the right of peoples to self-determination and was obvious proof of the international community's will to eradicate every form of colonialism. General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) had become one of the basic instruments of international law and had laid the foundation for the struggle of several national liberation movements to achieve independence.

53. With regard to the question of Namibia, his delegation was disturbed by the obstructionist attitude that the South African authorities were continuing to adopt in opposing implementation of the plan for the independence of the territory. The South African Government was still not observing certain provisions of Security Council resolutions 435 (1978) and 632 (1989) by refusing to disband the paramilitary forces, the commando units and the command structures that had been deployed in the Territory since the beginning of the transition process and had become the main factors in intimidating, repressing and terrorizing the Namibian people. With the holding of elections in Namibia only a few days away, the South African Government's attitude called not only for strong condemnation by the international community, but also for the adoption of immediate measures by the Security Council. In that connection, his delegation supported the measures proposed by the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in its communiqué on the situation in Namibia published in New York on 12 October 1989. It also welcomed the efforts undertaken by the Group of 18 on Namibia with a view to the adoption of immediate measures to correct the dangerous irregularities affecting the transition process.

54. Since 1975 the Saharan people had been subjected to a colonial invasion which prevented them from exercising their right to self-determination. Through their struggle, the Saharan people had demonstrated their will to lay the foundations for a free, democratic, independent and sovereign society. Panama remained convinced that the rapid decolonization of that territory could be achieved only on the basis of direct and sincere negotiations between the parties. The legal framework for a peaceful settlement of the conflict had been set out clearly in General Assembly resolution 40/50 and in OAU resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX), which enjoyed the full support of the international community. His delegation welcomed the efforts made

(Mr. Brown, Panama)

personally by the Secretary-General to resolve that colonial conflict and hoped that Morocco would respect its commitments under the settlement plan agreed upon with the Frente POLISARIO and thus facilitate the task of the technical commission responsible for studying and proposing formulas for the implementation of that plan. Within the framework of the decolonization process, Panama was aware of the fundamental importance of the colonial question of Puerto Rico to the independence and integral unity of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

55. Mr. RUSSEL (United States of America), speaking on a point of order, said that under resolution 748 (VIII), Puerto Rico was no longer on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Furthermore, the Office of Legal Affairs had endorsed that decision at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly in an opinion to the effect that the Committee was not competent to examine the question of Puerto Rico. In 1982, the General Assembly had adopted by a vote the recommendation of the Office that the question of Puerto Rico should not be placed on the agenda. For those reasons, Puerto Rico was not represented at the United Nations and the United States considered that the reference to that question constituted a refusal to accept the decision of the General Assembly, the opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs and the freely expressed wishes of the Puerto Rican people.

56. Mr. BROWN (Panama) said that despite the point raised by the United States, Panama continued to consider that the question of Puerto Rico was an integral part of the decolonization of Latin America. In that connection, Panama shared the view expressed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Countries in the Political Declaration of the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau held at Harare in May 1989, reaffirming that Puerto Rico was an integral part of Latin America and the Caribbean by reason of its historical, cultural and geographical ties and reiterating their support for the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The Ministers had also said that before any consultation on the political status of Puerto Rico was organized, it was necessary to create conditions guaranteeing the exercise of the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence without coercion or pressure and that, consequently, any consultation should take place within the framework of the full application of the guarantees provided for by international law and the resolutions of the United Nations.

57. The situation of colonial subordination imposed on the Puerto Rican people by the United States was, under the Charter on decolonization, a violation of the fundamental human rights of that people, which was contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and a threat to international peace and security.

58. With regard to New Caledonia, his delegation reiterated its support for the right of the people of that Territory to self-determination, in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Special Committee of 24. Panama, which had itself waged a lengthy struggle to establish its national independence and sovereignty, understood and supported the struggles of other

(Mr. Brown, Panama)

peoples to decide their own destiny. The proclamation of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2000) in General Assembly resolution 43/47, which had been adopted by the vast majority of countries in the world with the exception of the United States, highlighted the policy of intervention and aggression of the United States and its plans to carry out assassinations and acts of terrorism. Faced with that new colonial policy in Latin America, Panama would continue its struggle to reaffirm its sovereignty and to complete the decolonization process, with the firm support of all countries which upheld peace and legal equality among nations.

59. Mrs. KING-ROUSSEAU (Trinidad and Tobago) said that in order to take full advantage of the improvement in the international political climate and the renewed faith in the Organization, the international community should devote the new decade to the search for innovative and realistic approaches to the problems afflicting the remaining dependent Territories and to the consolidation of the progress achieved in the field of decolonization by ensuring the systematic and diligent implementation of the various relevant resolutions. The proclamation, in 1990, of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, which would coincide with the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, should provide an opportunity to tackle that new phase in the decolonization process with freshness and enthusiasm.

60. With regard to the question of Namibia, which was currently the most potentially explosive task, measures should be adopted to oblige South Africa to comply with the United Nations settlement plan and to support fully the action of the Secretary-General in order to ensure that all the activities relating to the electoral process and the various transitional stages to independence took place as planned.

61. It was to be hoped that the draft Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism would place sufficient emphasis on the special needs and problems of the small-island Non-Self-Governing Territories and that the specific measures set forth by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/189 would be applied to those countries, failing which their economic viability and, consequently, their opportunities for independence, would be compromised. The facilitating role which UNCTAD was called upon to play in that regard was all the more crucial at the current stage, since some of those Territories had recently been devastated by a hurricane. Therefore, the draft resolutions which the Committee was to submit to the General Assembly should be updated in order to refer to the tragic losses suffered, in particular in Montserrat, the British Virgin Islands and the United States Virgin Islands and the desperate needs of the afflicted peoples.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.