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held on  
Monday, 23 October 1989  
at 6 p.m.  
New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 15th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu)

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The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued) (A/44/23 (Part VI), A/44/137: 178, 236, 291, 303, 355, 463, 477 and 634; A/C.4/44/L.2 to L.4; A/AC.109/975 and Add.1, 976 to 978, 979 and Add.1, 980, 982 to 990, 992 to 998, 999/Rev.1, 1000 and 1007 and Corr.1)

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1. Mr. WOLFE (Jamaica), speaking on the issue of the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, said that the United Nations was playing a significant role in assisting many people in the transition from colonial domination to freedom and independence. The United Nations, and indeed the entire international community, were facing a critical juncture in the history of the decolonization process relating to the fulfilment of its responsibilities over the Territory of Namibia, whose successful outcome was likely to have a profound impact in the final phases of the decolonization era. With the emplacement of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) on Namibian soil and the transitional arrangements now in progress for elections to be held in the Territory, Namibia stood at the threshold of national independence. At the same time, Jamaica believed that the international community must remain vigilant to ensure that South Africa did not succeed in subverting the electoral and constitutional arrangements for Namibia's independence and that it complied fully with the provisions of resolution 435 (1978). Jamaica was disturbed that South Africa had still not complied with certain key provisions of the settlement plan, and shared the concern of the African Group about the need to ensure the existence of proper conditions for the holding of free and fair elections. It was therefore entirely appropriate that the Security Council should remain actively seized of the matter, and Jamaica stood ready to support whatever further actions were taken to apply pressure on South Africa.

(Mr. Wolfe, Jamaica)

2. The question of Western Sahara was another pressing issue on which the United Nations had been actively involved in the search for a negotiated settlement under the aegis of the Secretary-General's good offices and the diplomatic mission entrusted to his special representative in accordance with Security Council resolution 621 (1988). The agreement in principle expressed by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front regarding the joint proposals of the Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was an important step in the right direction. His delegation also welcomed the initiation of a dialogue between Morocco and the Polisario Front, as evidenced in the high-level meeting between King Hassan II and representatives of the Front. Jamaica hoped there would be further meetings of that nature, and was pleased at the establishment of the United Nations Technical Commission in order to facilitate and accelerate the process of implementation of the settlement proposals, and welcomed the progress made at United Nations Headquarters in processing the data contained in the 1974 Spanish census. As a result of those positive developments, it should be possible to hold the proposed referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. Jamaica would maintain its support for the draft resolution, which evidenced the sincere efforts which had been made to reflect the latest developments in a constructive manner.

3. Jamaica wished to reiterate its call for the Fourth Committee to address the problems of the small Non-Self-Governing Territories. Those Territories, which were mostly island developing nations, had suffered the devastating effects of hurricane Hugo, which underlined the serious vulnerability and fragility of their socio-economic structures. Jamaica therefore supported the request which had been made for the amendment of the resolutions being proposed by the Special Committee of 24 to include an urgent call upon Member States, regional organizations and United Nations specialized agencies to extend the maximum assistance possible to the reconstruction efforts in those Territories.

4. Plans for future constitutional advancement and progress towards self-determination and independence had also been seriously set back as a result of the hurricane. The national referendum to be held in Montserrat in 1990 had been postponed, and plans for a November 1989 referendum in the United States Virgin Islands had been frustrated. Consequently, it was of vital importance to lend full support to efforts for the reconstruction of the economies of those Territories through, for example, long-term measures to be included in the assistance programmes. That would also help overcome apprehensions about the sustained viability of the Territories without a substantial level of economic progress and fears about the vulnerability of the Territories without the protective shield of the colonial Powers. Jamaica reiterated its full solidarity and support for the efforts of colonial peoples to achieve their legitimate aspirations.

5. Jamaica also believed that it was urgent to ensure the continued dissemination of relevant information to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the establishment of more direct contacts with their representatives. His delegation was pleased to note that in the programme of activities for the observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, it was proposed to hold regional seminars in the

(Mr. Wolfe, Jamaica)

Caribbean to which representatives of the dependent Territories would be invited. The objectives outlined by the Special Committee of 24 for the commemorative activities were most commendable.

6. Dame Ann HERCUS (New Zealand) said that, with elections about to take place, Namibia was naturally at the centre of world attention. New Zealand welcomed the giant steps taken towards that people's expression of self-determination, and was pleased to participate in UNTAG operations. New Zealand had attended for the first time, as a guest, the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in Belgrade, where it was observed that decolonization was entering a "decisive stage". The developments in Namibia were a major step in that process but the journey was not yet complete.

7. New Zealand was among the vast majority of States Members who supported the proposal to proclaim the 1990s as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The administering Powers should reaffirm their adherence to Article 73 of the Charter and to resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). As stated by Mr. Peter Fraser, Prime Minister of New Zealand, who had presided over the Commission which drew up the chapters of the Charter dealing with Non-Self-Governing Territories, independence or self-government were of questionable value unless they were preceded by sufficient preparation. For independence to benefit a people, respect for human rights and the rule of law, an adequate standard of living and balanced social structure must exist in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the population.

8. In considering particular decolonization situations, the United Nations should continue to act with its characteristic understanding and flexibility, but New Zealand agreed that neither geographic location nor population size of Territories diminished its obligations. New Zealand had responsibility for Tokelau, a Territory whose people had decided not to choose independence, after considering their options. Instead, the inhabitants had given priority to the progress of their political institutions and economic interests. New Zealand, supported those measures, believing it would be improper to impose an arbitrary form of autonomy without ensuring that the social, economic and development needs of the Territory would be met, with respect for the wishes of the people.

9. New Zealand deeply deplored the assassination of two of New Caledonia's independence leaders, Jean-Marie Tjibaou and Yeiwene Yeiwene. However, it was heartened by the political development that had taken place in that Territory, under the provisions of the Matignon Accords. Nevertheless, the task was not completed; New Zealand believed that the United Nations should continue to follow the situation in New Caledonia and examine it annually. That position was supported by the twentieth South Pacific Forum, which reaffirmed that an act of self-determination was necessary, in accordance with United Nations principles, to safeguard the right of all inhabitants of New Caledonia to live in a multiracial society. New Zealand urged the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution.

10. Mr. SHAHEED (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the end of colonialism had given rise to a new era in contemporary history, and the United Nations was responsible for the successful decolonization process. Security Council resolution 435 (1978) had established the United Nations commitment to guarantee the independence of Namibia. A decade after its adoption, the first phase of the implementation of that resolution was taking place. Now more than ever, the responsibility fell to the United Nations to protect the basic interests of the Namibian people through free and fair elections.
11. The Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, drafted during the current General Assembly session, emphasized the importance and urgency of ensuring Namibia's independence through full implementation of resolution 435 (1978) in its original and definitive form. On 10 October 1989, the Co-ordination Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries issued a declaration on the situation in Namibia, asserting that favourable conditions for the holding of free and fair elections had still not been created.
12. The dissemination of specific information on decolonization by the United Nations helped to reaffirm the principles of the Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It also mobilized world public opinion to offer support to colonial regions and their national liberation movements in their efforts to achieve self-determination, independence and freedom. Furthermore, he emphasized the need to send regular observer missions to colonial Territories in order to obtain first-hand information and enhance the capacity of the United Nations to assist those peoples in fulfilling their aspirations under the Declaration.
13. He urged the specialized agencies and related international organizations of the United Nations to broaden their assistance programmes in order to respond to the urgent needs of the people and thus implement the Declaration. In addition, more facilities were needed to enable a greater number of students from South Africa and Namibia to take advantage of educational and training opportunities. Finally, he praised the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa for their work and urged a continued increase in the generous contribution to that programme.
14. Mr. KABORE (Burkina Faso) expressed his sympathy to the delegations of the United States and of China in connection with the earthquakes which had recently occurred in those countries.
15. Burkina Faso reaffirmed its adherence to the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, embodied in Article 1 of the Charter. From the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in 1960 until the proclamation of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in 1988, the United Nations had achieved a great deal, and it was hoped that in the next millenium peoples would exercise their right to self-determination, which would undoubtedly help to consolidate international peace and security.

(Mr. Kabore, Burkina Faso)

16. With the elections in Namibia, just a few days away, the racist régime of South Africa was still attempting to prevent them from taking place. No effort should be spared in taking immediate measures for full implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). The international community should offer Namibia the real possibility of exercising its right to self-determination along with logistical, technical, economic and political support. Burkina Faso expressed its solidarity with the cause of peoples fighting for their independence. It gave homage to the heroic struggle of the Namibian people, and reaffirmed its support for the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO).

17. The question of Western Sahara was a continuing decolonization problem that should be solved through the exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Western Saharan people. The African community, in resolution AHG/104 (XIX), adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) had agreed that the solution to the question of Western Sahara would be achieved through direct negotiations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO). That agreement had received the support of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the international community in general, as demonstrated by General Assembly resolutions 38/40, 39/40, 40/50 and 43/33. The joint good offices mission carried out by the Acting Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations Secretary-General had brought results, but some matters were still unresolved. Burkina Faso urged the interested parties to continue the contacts begun in order to achieve implementation of the pertinent resolutions of the OAU and the United Nations so that the Saharan people could exercise their right to self-determination.

18. Mr. TUMWINE-KAMERAHQ (Uganda) expressed condolences to the people of the United States of America and China regarding the recent earthquakes in their countries.

19. Uganda's position on colonialism was clear. Colonialism, apartheid and sionism were the last remaining strongholds of imperialism. To enable the oppressed peoples of the world to attain sovereignty and exercise their human and democratic rights, the struggle against domination, oppression and exploitation must be intensified.

20. Many delegations had expressed concern about the situation in Namibia. The report of the Secretary-General (S/20883) prepared pursuant to Security Council resolution 640 (1989) of 29 August 1989 exposed the obstacles to the implementation of resolution 435 (1978). South Africa's failure to comply with key provisions of the Settlement Plan, at that late stage in the implementation process raised doubts and concern as to whether the conditions existed for the holding of free and fair elections in Namibia under United Nations supervision.

21. His delegation paid tribute to the Government of Cuba for the sacrifices it had made in the struggle against the racist South African régime. It was after the defeat of the South African Defence Force and the União Nacional para a

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(Mr. Tumwine-Kameraho, Uganda)

Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) by Cuban and Angolan forces at Cuenavalle in southern Angola that the racist régime had agreed to negotiate with SWAPO and other parties that were mediating, as a result of which the Tripartite Agreement between Angola, Cuba and South Africa had been signed.

22. His delegation maintained that Walvis Bay and the Penguin Islands were part and parcel of Namibia and that consequently resolution 435 (1978) must also apply to them. The continued occupation of Walvis Bay by South Africa was designed to exert a stranglehold on independent Namibia and to provide a base for continued destabilisation of the front-line States.

23. Namibia's independence prospects were in jeopardy. The reports by the Secretary-General, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the front-line States and information provided to the Committee by leaders of human and civil rights organisations in the United States revealed that South Africa was frustrating Namibia's independence process.

24. The United Nations had sufficient evidence that South Africa was not prepared to see free and fair elections held in Namibia. South Africa had not complied with the demilitarisation plan, insecurity was rife, and SWAPO leaders and supporters routinely suffered intimidation. Consequently, the international community must exert still more pressure on South Africa to heed and comply with Security Council resolutions 435 (1978), 632 (1989) and 640 (1989). Mandatory sanctions should be stepped up and the South African régime totally isolated until the apartheid system was dismantled, since the racist régime could never withstand internal opposition without foreign support.

25. After independence, Namibia would need assistance in integrating the various military units into the National Defence Force. In that regard, his delegation was of the view that the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) could play a vital role in ensuring orderly and peaceful integration. It therefore called on the United Nations to consider retaining a significant number of UNTAG forces in Namibia until the political process was deemed secure.

26. Uganda drew the attention of the United Nations to South Africa's brutal policy of destabilization in the front-line States. That policy inflicted heavy losses in terms of resources and human lives, caused the destruction of infrastructure and hindered development.

27. He paid tribute to the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the front-line States for the important role they played in liberating the oppressed. He also commended those countries that granted scholarships to Namibians and South Africans in exile as part of nation-building efforts.

28. With regard to Western Sahara, Uganda supported efforts by the United Nations and OAU to organize a referendum in which the Saharan people would be given the right to decide the political destiny of their country. Uganda also wished to see New Caledonia become an independent State, bringing peace, self-determination, stability and equal opportunity to all citizens in that part of the Pacific.

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(Mr. Tumwine-Kameraho, Uganda)

29. His delegation appealed to the international community to put pressure on Israel to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) with a view to finding a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem, and supported the convening of a United Nations conference for that purpose, in which the PLO would participate fully.

30. Finally, he called upon the Committee to remember the fallen heroes who had lost their lives in the cause of liberty and independence for southern Africa, Palestine and elsewhere.

31. Mr. WILKINSON (United States of America) said that self-determination had been a central tenet of United States policy ever since the country achieved independence. Similarly, the right of Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination had been a concern of the United Nations since its inception. In 1960, the General Assembly had adopted resolutions 1514 and 1541, which should be read as a single document. The key element in both was that the citizens of a Non-Self-Governing Territory must have the right to exercise their judgement about their future, free from coercion of any kind.

32. The United States Government believed that the three Territories administered by the United States - Guam, the United States Virgin Islands and American Samoa - had become virtually self-governing. Each Territory was represented in the United States House of Representatives by a delegate who could vote in any congressional committee. It should be borne in mind that those committees were the fundamental structures on which the entire federal law-making process rested.

33. Free elections were held on a regular basis in each of the three Territories administered by the United States. While wishing to maintain their unique cultural identities, the peoples of American Samoa, Guam and the United States Virgin Islands had affirmed in election after election their strong desire to maintain a close relationship with the United States. The United States Government stood ready to respond to the wishes of those peoples regarding their political status whenever they indicated the direction in which they wished to proceed.

34. The Governor of American Samoa, who had been elected in the past year, had made it clear that the close relationship with the United States could continue to co-exist in harmony with the territory's traditional land tenure system and the cultivation of Samoa's common cultural heritage with its Pacific Island neighbours, and in a manner which would foster the development of future leaders of its society.

35. As the Fourth Committee was aware, the United States had no military bases or troops permanently stationed in American Samoa or the Virgin Islands. The presence of military facilities and personnel in Guam was a direct manifestation of co-operative arrangements negotiated with Guam's leaders, who had told the Special Committee of 24 that their people considered it an honour to serve in the United States army, so much so that a high percentage of military personnel in Guam were Guamanians, including many indigenous Chamorros. The United States remained committed to the rights and cultural identity of the Chamorro people, in the same

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(Mr. Wilkinson, United States)

manner as it sought to protect the rights of all its citizens under the United States Constitution. It supported provisions in any eventual commonwealth legislation which aimed at preserving the culture and the social and economic advancement of the Chamorro people.

36. Hurricane Hugo had had caused devastation in the United States Virgin Islands. Before the tragedy, the Territory's economy had been expanding rapidly and the population had enjoyed a wide array of services. Sadly, much of the Territory had sustained damage. His Government had been quick to respond to the tragedy and, as a first step, had declared the Territory a disaster area, thereby entitling hurricane victims to federal assistance in the form of loans and other kinds of relief. The Federal Emergency Management Agency had allocated over \$14 million for immediate and long-term relief in the form of emergency medical supplies, communications, energy needs, water purification, food supplies, transportation and housing.

37. The emphasis of the recovery programmes under way was gradually shifting towards long-range recovery. A number of agencies of the United States Government were co-operating in that process, including the National Guard, the Navy and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, which had been sent in with equipment to begin the process of restoring power lines virtually eliminated by the hurricane. Medical facilities and staff had been provided to meet the population's health needs. The United States had also launched a campaign in which community leaders, volunteers and officials from various agencies, together with representatives from various United States disaster relief programmes, had come together in an island-wide clean-up effort. His delegation was proud to bring those facts to the Committee's attention, demonstrating that the Government had acted responsibly and compassionately in fulfilling its obligations to the Virgin Islands.

38. His delegation wished to associate itself with the remarks made by the representative of France, speaking on behalf of the European Communities, as well as with individual delegations members of the European Communities, which had advocated moves to rationalize the work of the Fourth Committee.

39. The United States had strong reservations about the themes contained in the three draft resolutions on Guam, the United States Virgin Islands and American Samoa. There was a suggestion in all three resolutions that the United States administration of its dependent Territories was inadequate. That did not accord with reality. His Government wished to maintain a constructive approach in anticipation of further consideration of those issues. It would work very actively in the coming year, as it had in the past, to resolve concerns.

40. Lastly, he noted a substantial improvement in the other draft resolutions before the Fourth Committee, by comparison with previous years, and hoped that that reflected the positive trend towards a co-operative approach to issues throughout the current session.

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41. Mr. MALAPA (Vanuatu) said that those who were attempting to implement the decolonisation process in New Caledonia in accordance with the United Nations principles were imbued with the same democratic, popular spirit that had inspired the French Revolution of 1789.

42. In that context, his delegation welcomed the report on New Caledonia submitted by the representative of France under Article 73 of the Charter. It reflected a commendable effort which he hoped the Government of France would sustain in the future.

43. Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that, contrary to the impression given by the representative of France at the Committee's previous meeting regarding the welcome which Pacific Island countries had extended to the Matignon Agreement, not all those countries supported the terms of the Agreement. Papua New Guinea had welcomed the Agreement's conclusion as part of a peace process that would facilitate the decolonization of New Caledonia. It had expressed quite clearly its view that a decolonization programme that extended to 1998 would be unduly long, particularly in view of the fact that the annexation of the territory of New Caledonia dated back to 1853. Moreover, there would be presidential and parliamentary elections in France in the coming years and there was no guarantee that a new Government would permit New Caledonia to achieve its independence.

44. His delegation agreed with the comments made by the representative of Vanuatu regarding the information provided by the Government of France under Article 73 (e) of the Charter. The members of the South Pacific Forum would undoubtedly welcome that positive signal. The Government of France must therefore be urged to give the Special Committee, in the same spirit, an opportunity to send visiting missions to New Caledonia to evaluate the situation in the Territory. It should not be forgotten that the United Nations had a responsibility to provide all necessary assistance to make the population of New Caledonia aware of the options available to it under the referendum provided for in the Matignon Agreement.

The session rose at 7.15 p.m.