

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

MEETING



Friday, 27 October 1972,
at 3.30 p.m.

NEW YORK

Chairman: Mr. Hady TOURÉ (Guinea).

AGENDA ITEM 38

- The policies of *apartheid* of the Government of South Africa (continued) (A/8666 and Corr.1, A/8670, A/8689, A/8703, paras. 501-519; A/SPC/L.239-242):**
- (a) Reports of the Special Committee on *Apartheid* (A/8722 and Add.1, A/8770);
- (b) Reports of the Secretary-General (A/8822, A/8833)

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Guinea, Trinidad and Tobago and Zaire had asked to be included among the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/L.240.
2. Mr. TEYMOUR (Egypt) introduced draft resolution A/SPC/L.241 on the programme of work of the Special Committee on *Apartheid*. The draft resolution itself was clear and concise and required little explanation. His country was particularly pleased to introduce the draft, since it was one of those which had initially proposed the creation of the Special Committee.
3. The Committee had been established on 6 November 1962 under General Assembly resolution 1761 (XVII), which had called on States to take diplomatic, economic and other measures against South Africa and had asked the Security Council to consider the question of the continued membership of South Africa in the United Nations. The resolution had been adopted after two years of struggle by the African States, which had already decided to break off all relations with the Government of South Africa. His own country, which had been the only African State maintaining a legation in South Africa, had severed all relations with the racist Republic at that time and had extended every possible assistance to the South African liberation movement, thus recognizing that South Africa belonged to its people, especially the African majority, and not to the whites who had usurped power and declared a racist republic in May 1961.
4. The Special Committee on *Apartheid*, which by virtue of General Assembly resolution 2671 A (XXV), had been expanded to comprise 16 members, had been performing an important role since its inception. The work of the Special Committee, as reflected in its reports (A/8722 and Add.1, A/8870) and in the state-

ments made by its Chairman and Rapporteur before the Special Political Committee, showed that much had been accomplished during the past year. Draft resolution A/SPC/L.241 was designed to lend further impetus to its work during the coming year.

5. In that connexion, he paid a tribute to the current and past members of the Special Committee, singling out the Republic of Guinea, which had provided its first two Chairmen, for their sustained efforts to keep the issue of *apartheid* alive and to take effective action in spite of great obstacles. He noted that the Special Committee had been the first organ to be boycotted by the Western Powers, which continued to collaborate with the racist South African régime while disregarding the resolutions of the United Nations.

6. In the past the Special Committee had been able to deal successfully with a number of questions. Its special sessions with experts and representatives of the oppressed peoples of South Africa and with anti-*apartheid* movements and other non-governmental organizations active in the campaign against *apartheid* had served as a means of holding indispensable consultations aimed at improving and co-ordinating broadly based efforts to step up the campaign against *apartheid*. The Special Committee's efforts had led to the virtually unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 1881 (XVIII), calling for an end to the trials of leaders of the liberation movement in South Africa and the release of all prisoners. On the proposal of the Special Committee, the General Assembly had directed the Secretary-General to establish the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa to provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of *apartheid*. The Special Committee had proposed the holding of the United Nations Seminar on *Apartheid* at Brasilia in 1966, which had led to the decision to conduct an international campaign against *apartheid* under the auspices of the United Nations. It had also proposed that 21 March, the date of the Sharpeville massacre, should be proclaimed the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and its annual special sessions on that date had become an important event in anti-*apartheid* activities. The International Seminar on *Apartheid*, Racial Discrimination and Colonialism in Southern Africa, held at Kitwe, Zambia, in 1967, at which the interrelationship between the problems of southern Africa and the need for co-ordinated action had been emphasized, had also been organized on the initiative of the Special Committee. Action against *apartheid* by the Commission on Human Rights and by the specialized agencies, particularly UNESCO and the ILO, had been encouraged by the Special Com-

mittee, which had made a great contribution to the promotion of anti-*apartheid* activities throughout the world, and especially in Western countries. Its session in Europe in 1968, the International Year for Human Rights, and the later visits of its missions to Europe and Africa had been of great value in that connexion.

7. The Special Committee's programme of work for 1973, as indicated in its report (A/8722 and Add.1) and in draft resolution A/SPC/L.241, included plans to promote international trade union action against *apartheid*, participation in the International Conference of Experts for the Support of Victims of Colonialism and *Apartheid* in Southern Africa, to be held at Oslo in 1973 under the sponsorship of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, as well as other national and international conferences, and consultations with liberation movements, anti-*apartheid* movements, the specialized agencies and other organizations active in the campaign against *apartheid*. In addition, it was important that the Special Committee should be represented at the observance of the tenth anniversary of OAU in May 1973, in view of the close co-operation which existed between the two bodies.

8. He drew attention to the operative paragraph, sub-paragraph (d), of the draft resolution, which related to continued co-operation with other United Nations bodies concerned with *apartheid*, racial discrimination and colonialism in southern Africa, recalling that the Special Committee had already held a joint session with the Council for Namibia and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and stressing the value of further co-operation along those lines. He appealed to all members to give the draft resolution their unanimous support.

9. Mr. PHEDONOS (Cyprus) endorsed the comments made by the representative of Egypt and expressed his delegation's support for draft resolution A/SPC/L.241. The Special Committee, which had been established to review all aspects of the policies of *apartheid*, including their international repercussions, had also been assigned certain specific tasks, especially the promotion of the international campaign against *apartheid*. In that regard, it had been quite active in promoting public anti-*apartheid* activities and action aimed at halting collaboration with the Government of South Africa. If the Special Committee had not succeeded in reversing the deteriorating situation in South Africa, it was because South Africa's trading partners had refused to co-operate in the implementation of United Nations resolutions.

10. Cyprus, for its part, had always co-operated with the Special Committee. It had declared its abhorrence for the policies of *apartheid*, contributed to the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa and the OAU Assistance Fund for the Struggle Against Colonialism and *Apartheid* and observed the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

11. Even certain delegations that had not supported the recommendations of the Special Committee had commended the quality of its work. The year 1973 would mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and that occasion should be reflected in the expansion of the Special Committee's activities. Its programme of work, as set out in paragraphs 245 to 250 of its report (A/8722), had been thoughtfully prepared and deserved the full support of the General Assembly. It was important that the Special Committee should be in a position to send representatives to participate in major international conferences to be held in 1973 in order to explain the concern of the United Nations regarding the question of *apartheid* and to urge support for the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations.

12. Mr. BHATT (Nepal) introduced draft resolution A/SPC/L.242, concerning the dissemination of information on *apartheid*. He noted that practically all the representatives who had taken part in the general debate had emphasized the importance of information as a means of obtaining greater public support for the campaign against *apartheid*.

13. The education of public opinion was one of the main roles of the United Nations, and the least it could do was to continue its information activities in support of the legitimate and heroic struggle of the people of South Africa for their dignity and freedom.

14. In that connexion, his delegation, which had the honour to serve on the Special Committee, wished to express its appreciation for the untiring efforts of Mr. Farah, former Chairman of the Special Committee, and for the valuable work of its Sub-Committee on Information under the guidance of the representative of Ghana. It also wished to pay a tribute to the Secretariat's Unit on *Apartheid* and Office of Public Information for their contributions to the campaign against *apartheid*.

15. Nevertheless, in view of the virtual silence of the information media in the Western countries and the tremendous propaganda effort made by the South African régime and its allies to confuse and deceive public opinion, much more needed to be done if the efforts of the United Nations were to have the desired impact. South Africa's expenditures for propaganda had been increasing ever since the establishment of its Department of Information in 1961. Its Minister of Information had recently stressed the relationship between information and security for South Africa and had called for high priority for information activities. The 1972-1973 budget for the Department of Information amounted to almost \$10 million. It was regrettable to note that the South African régime was receiving assistance from certain information media, in addition to its own propaganda operations.

16. The Minister of Information of South Africa had recently paid an unintended compliment to the United Nations information efforts by stating that if he had access to no information other than that provided

by the United Nations, he would be induced to hate his own country. The information activities of the United Nations must be pursued on a broad front, using all media. Publications should appear in more languages, and greater use should be made of television, films, posters and radio broadcasts. In that context, it was important to secure the full co-operation of the specialized agencies—UNESCO and the ILO in particular. The education kit prepared by UNESCO could be extremely useful in reaching the youth of all countries. He hoped that it would be distributed as widely and as expeditiously as possible.

17. The Special Committee had maintained close and fruitful relations with anti-*apartheid* movements and similar bodies which were playing a commendable role in educating public opinion in many countries. Greater efforts should be made to secure wider implementation of past recommendations of the General Assembly for the establishment of such organizations in all countries. While the specific nature of such organizations must depend on the conditions and traditions in each country, the recommendation of the General Assembly for a central body or bodies to co-ordinate and develop the campaign against *apartheid* where such bodies did not already exist deserved serious consideration. Public organizations of that type would not duplicate the work of existing bodies, but would devote their attention to the public campaign against *apartheid*.

18. The effectiveness of United Nations activities in the field of information depended greatly on the co-operation of the Governments of Member States, organizations and information media, which could help to disseminate information as widely as possible, *inter alia*, by translating United Nations publications and adapting United Nations films for local distribution. A concentrated effort should be made to reach public opinion in countries that continued to maintain relations with South Africa. Only when the public in those countries became conscious of the enormity of the crimes perpetrated in the name of *apartheid* and of the support that the racist régime derived from the collaboration of Governments and corporations could the recommendations of the General Assembly be fully implemented. Information activities should likewise be stepped up in countries committed to the struggle against *apartheid*, and above all in South Africa itself, where they could offset the distorted propaganda of the racist régime concerning the purposes of the United Nations and could stress the determination of the international community to eliminate *apartheid* by every available means.

19. The draft resolution itself was very simple and contained few new elements. He hoped, however, that information activities would be increased in 1973 on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which happened to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the National Party régime in South Africa.

20. He recalled that the Secretary-General, in consul-

tation with the Consultative Panel on Public Information, had been giving serious attention to the improvement of United Nations public information activities. In that connexion, special emphasis should be given to activities against *apartheid* and racism, and he hoped that Governments, non-governmental organizations, and information media would offer their full co-operation in that respect. He appealed to members to express their support for those efforts by giving draft resolution A/SPC/L.242 their unanimous approval.

21. Mr. LA (Sudan) said that his delegation fully supported draft resolution A/SPC/L.242, introduced by the representative of Nepal. After a quarter of a century of debate on the question of *apartheid*, the position of the United Nations had become one of virtually unanimous opposition to that policy, and South Africa was no longer able to find defenders of its policies among the ranks of the United Nations, for Members had become aware of the flagrant acts of injustice perpetrated by that régime. It hanged more Africans each year than the total number of persons executed in the remainder of the world, arrested half a million people annually for doing no more than walking through so-called "white areas", broke up families to send women and children to distant, barren reserves, and based its policies towards non-whites on subjugation, famine, degradation and police brutality.

22. Some two thirds of the Members of the United Nations had come to subscribe to the view that South Africa's policies constituted a threat to world peace. The only reason why the United Nations had been unable to play an effective role in improving the situation in South Africa was the fact that some Western Powers had not been persuaded to adopt that view. The commendable efforts of the Special Committee to reach workers and students in those countries had already produced results. A number of Western corporations which profited from *apartheid* had come under considerable pressure from such groups, although their response could not yet be considered satisfactory. Despite the fact that South Africa devoted intensive propaganda efforts to minimizing the effect of international opposition to its policies, it had proved vulnerable to international and national information activities, which forced it to clarify its own thinking and discard outmoded concepts. The international publicity campaign against *apartheid* was a highly significant weapon, and he appealed to all delegations to support the draft resolution.

23. Mr. AHMAD (India) said that he wished to provide some clarification regarding two of the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution on dissemination of information on *apartheid* (A/SPC/L.242). Operative paragraph 6, which related to the establishment of non-governmental organizations actively concerned with the campaign against *apartheid*, differed somewhat from the provisions of previous resolutions concerning "national committees against *apartheid*". That change had been made in view of the fact that conditions and traditions varied in different Member States and that it was therefore not appropriate to call for the same

type of organization in each country, as the representative of Nepal had just explained. In many Western countries and in Japan, organizations called anti-*apartheid* movements were actively concerned with *apartheid*, and, in many cases, with the whole question of liberation from racist and colonial domination in southern Africa. In many other countries, Afro-Asian peoples' solidarity organizations were engaged in similar activities, while the American Committee on Africa played an analogous role in the United States of America. In some countries, it had been found necessary to establish more than one anti-*apartheid* organization. In New Zealand, for instance, the *Apartheid* Information Service, the Citizens' Association for Racial Equality and an organization called Halt All Racist Tours, which was concerned with the campaign against sports exchanges with *apartheid* teams, all played an active role.

24. The Special Committee had recommended the establishment of committees and organizations devoting special, continued attention to the campaign against *apartheid*, as distinct from organizations such as trade unions or student organizations, which, although opposed to *apartheid*, could not give their undivided attention to that question. He expressed the hope that Governments and organizations would furnish the Special Committee and the Unit on *Apartheid* with necessary information on such groups so that close contact could be maintained with them with a view to the exchange of information. He noted that the Special Committee was considering the publication of a guide to such organizations. Although active groups had been set up in response to previous General Assembly resolutions, like the national anti-*apartheid* committees

in Ghana and Nigeria, no information had yet been received from many other countries, and he hoped that greater progress would be made in that regard during 1973.

25. Under operative paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/SPC/L.242, the Secretary-General would be requested to make appropriate arrangements for wider and more effective publicity by the Office of Public Information. The work done so far by that organ, although useful, was less than what could be expected if the resolutions of the General Assembly were to be taken seriously. The Secretariat could not be neutral or hesitant with regard to the problem of *apartheid*. While recognizing that it was for the Secretary-General to make any pertinent administrative or other arrangements, he stressed the need for more effective activities on the part of the Office of Public Information. It might, for instance, consider employing experts on *apartheid* in addition to experts on information techniques. The work of the Unit on *Apartheid* had been highly effective, despite its small size, because of its expertise and its close working relationship with the Special Committee. The need for co-ordination in information activities on southern Africa could not be overemphasized, and he expressed the hope that the Secretary-General, in consultation with the three organs directly concerned, would look into that matter in the near future. It was essential that adequate resources should be provided for such activities, but the first priority was to make the necessary arrangements and plans for a co-ordinated information campaign to support the work of the political committees.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.