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ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FIRST SESSION

Official Records

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MEETING**

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*Chairman:* Mr. FAKHREDDINE Mohamed  
(Sudan).

Organization of work

1. The CHAIRMAN said that if there were no objections, the Committee would first hear the petitioners and then proceed to the election of the Vice-Chairman. Several delegations had requested that procedure so that they could continue to hold consultations.

*It was so decided.*

AGENDA ITEM 65

Question of South West Africa: report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (continued)

HEARING OF PETITIONERS (concluded) (A/C.4/666 AND ADD.1-3)

*At the invitation of the Chairman, the Reverend Michael Scott and Mr. Zedekia Ngavirue, Mr. Uatja Kauketu and Mr. Charles Kauraisa, representatives of the South West Africa National Union (SWANU), took places at the Committee table.*

2. Mr. NGAVIRUE (South West Africa National Union) said that during the past twenty years irrefutable proof of the abominable conditions existing in South West Africa had been accumulating, yet the resolutions adopted year after year by the United Nations had remained ineffective. South Africa had tried to justify the application of apartheid to the Territory but those who made such attempts only gave evidence of their madness.

3. The judges of the International Court of Justice had lacked the courage to pronounce on the substance of the question. The representative of South Africa was trying to make use of that undeserved victory to deceive the world on the subject and was asserting that he had wished to cross-examine the petitioners

but had not had the opportunity to do so. However, the question arose whether South Africa had not withdrawn from the Committee through fear of the petitioners: where was Mr. de Villiers and why were the seats of the South African delegation empty? SWANU would like to be able to confront the latter in the Committee.

4. In any case, South West Africa's right to self-determination was inalienable and did not depend upon the sympathy which its sufferings aroused in the United Nations. SWANU had come to ask why the United Nations had failed to take action in the case of South West Africa and to help work out a solution to the problem.

5. The United Nations resolutions had failed because South West Africa had not co-operated and its co-operation was indispensable. It had then become necessary to proceed to the unilateral application of sanctions but that had had no practical effect because it had lacked the support of the great Powers which were South Africa's trading partners. The "unholy alliance" of the Western monopolists who had great economic interests in that part of Africa would always oppose any action against South Africa.

6. The countries which had given up the role of colonial overlords, however reluctantly, were still trying to exploit other peoples economically and they used the pretext of "Western liberties" to avoid taking action which might affect their interests. There were countries which, although their opposition to racism had led them to war against the nazis and fascists and even to abolish racial discrimination within their own frontiers, were not prepared to take action against apartheid at the expense of their economic interests in South Africa. South Africa was thus able to practise a kind of economic blackmail with certain products, for example gold.

7. On the other hand, the countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe were opposed to colonialism, and their attitude had led the former South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Eric Louw, to say that one of the chief reasons why the Western nations were losing confidence in the United Nations was the growth of the African bloc, which at the present time was in full control there. That assertion was contradicted by the fact, pointed out by the Guinean representative, that, unless the Western Powers exerted pressure on South Africa, United Nations measures would be completely ineffective.

8. Another group, consisting of the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Canada and Ireland, had tried to persuade the Western Powers and strike a balance between the groups which were

helping South Africa and those which were radically opposed to it.

9. Lastly, no radical resolution on South West Africa would have the full support of the Western Powers, for their veto in the Security Council could nullify any General Assembly resolution.

10. The Afro-Asian group of countries was now proposing that the South African Mandate over South West Africa should be revoked. SWANU was of the opinion that that step was the best the United Nations could take and asked all countries to support it although it had no illusions about the effectiveness of the Organization. Therefore, revocation of the Mandate must be accompanied by positive steps to ensure a United Nations presence and control in South West Africa.

11. South Africa's economic and political control of the Territory had enabled it to establish a powerful and effective structure which stifled any opposition to the supremacy of the white minority and to apartheid.

12. The party system which the Mandatory Power had established in the Territory was nothing more than an integral part of the monolithic white-dominated social, political, economic and church structure. In the elections of March 1966, the United National South West African Party, although it was like its opponents in favour of the maintenance of white supremacy, had suffered a crushing defeat because it had argued that some of the cruder aspects of apartheid should be modified to lessen the impact of the growing tide of African nationalism. The Nationalist Party of South West Africa, which was a branch of the South African Nationalist Party, now dominated the parliaments of both countries.

13. There were even churches which, being white institutions, supported apartheid because they were inherently conservative or because they lacked the courage to oppose it. As a result African groups were breaking away from them and founding their own churches, as had happened in the United States of America. There were, however, some religious groups which did not show antipathy to the Africans: as early as the days of German imperial rule, Finnish missionaries had saved the Ovambos from the fate of the Hereros. In that connexion, he quoted from a Finnish missionary society's report, written in 1951, in which the actions of the Reverend Michael Scott were praised.

14. In South Africa there were some liberal white men who were opposed to apartheid, but that was not the case in South West Africa. The Sharpeville massacre had made an impression in South Africa, but when a similar incident had occurred four months previously at Windhoek, only a misleading and biased report had appeared in the South West African Press. It was not surprising that such brutality existed in the Territory, since it was perhaps the only place outside Germany in which the Germans had maintained a fully fledged Nazi Party with its own territorial Führer. That total white hostility was not new: as long ago as 1922 the Administrator of the Territory had stated in a report that public opinion had not yet been sufficiently educated to make possible an improvement

in racial relations, which were worse than in South Africa itself.

15. Revocation of the Mandate was likely to cause the whites in South West Africa to declare unilateral annexation of the Territory to South Africa. Accordingly, serious consideration should be given to operative paragraph 8 of the Afro-Asian draft resolution (A/L.483 and Add.1 and 2) which urged all States to extend whole-hearted co-operation and to render assistance in its implementation. SWANU was convinced that sooner or later the Western Powers must intervene in South West Africa, where the life of a people was at stake. They were unmoved today but tomorrow, when their diamonds and copper dividends were at stake, they would intervene somewhat belatedly to save their monopolies. It would only be necessary to create such a threat and they would come running with their guns, dragging the United Nations along with them. But their intervention, though springing from neo-colonialist motives, would help in the long run to liberate South West Africa.

16. He appealed to all the members of the Committee to support the Afro-Asian draft resolution. Despite the lack of sincere co-operation on the part of the Western Powers, many States were sympathetic toward South West Africa but their attitude should take the form of positive action.

17. The establishment of the Mandates System had allowed the peoples no other means of expression or protest than through petitioners. SWANU urged that, when the administering authority, proposed in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, was established, the United Nations should consult the people instead of merely relying on the voluminous records of what petitioners had said. In view of the importance of that paragraph, SWANU wished to be allowed, together with the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the Reverend Michael Scott, to suggest tactics for the guidance of the United Nations in implementing the resolution.

18. SWANU and SWAPO had demonstrated their desire to co-operate in the interests of South West Africa as, for example, in their joint appeal to student members throughout the world to form the National Union of South West African Students. They could co-operate also with veteran fighters such as Chief Hosea Kutako and Chief Witbooi.

19. A sub-committee on credentials should be established because it would help to prevent South African infiltration. That was a point which deserved serious scrutiny.

20. If the United Nations revoked the Mandate, it might inadvertently provide an opportunity for South African and South West African whites to follow the example of Southern Rhodesia.

21. Mr. KAUQUETU (South West Africa National Union) said that he hoped that the Governments represented in the Committee would seriously reflect on their responsibility and obligations toward the people of South West Africa and that they would recognize that the petitioners' presence was due to a situation which those Governments had helped to create.

22. He would not catalogue the errors and misdeeds of the régime in South West Africa, not because his attitude to it had changed but simply to avoid a tedious repetition of what was already well known about the violation of the Mandate.

23. The institutionalization of white dominance under the policy and practices of apartheid, the violation of the human and political rights of the Africans, the economic and human exploitation and the *de facto* annexation of South West Africa by South Africa were all well known. Probably the only States that had not yet expressed support for the people of South West Africa were Portugal, Spain and South Africa. Nevertheless, the apparent consensus had not yet revealed itself in practical action and it was dangerous because it was deceptive.

24. Many of the Western Powers, by frustrating the efforts of the Afro-Asian group of States to liberate South West Africa, had encouraged South Africa to persist in its defiance of the United Nations and world opinion. Those Powers had made hypocritical protestations of their opposition to apartheid but were now saying that it was for the African nations to take the initiative.

25. South West Africa was an issue affecting the whole world and the United Nations could not shirk its direct responsibility without thereby becoming guilty of complicity in the oppression of the people of the Territory. The white nations were avoiding any serious study of effective measures and only paid lip service to the liberation of South West Africa. It was the Western countries which, through the League of Nations, had created the Mandate for South West Africa and assigned it to South Africa. South Africa's qualifications to exercise the Mandate had been no better then than they were today. Ten years earlier, the United Kingdom had surrendered power to the white minority there to the exclusion of the Africans. The Western countries in the League of Nations had conspired together to support South Africa for commercial and racial reasons.

26. The Western countries should act now in support of the Afro-Asian draft resolution to prevent some of the great Powers from selling the right of the people of South West Africa in exchange for South African products.

27. The recent judgement of the International Court of Justice<sup>1/</sup> had served to convince the Africans that, in a world dominated by institutions which sought to preserve the interests of the white imperialists, there would be no justice for the black masses. SWANU rejected the Court's judgement, which was not worth the paper it was written on and was irrelevant to South West Africa's fight for national liberation. SWANU would continue the fight against South Africa to the end.

28. Mr. KAURISA (South West Africa National Union) said that the Fourth Committee's debates on colonial issues and in particular on the question of South West Africa had strengthened his conviction that the United Nations was incapable of acting when it should,

especially when the culprits were the racist régimes in southern Africa. The United Nations, evidently, was no more than its Member States and, if the great Powers did not co-operate in the sanctions against South Africa, whatever the General Assembly decided would be of no avail. The attitude of the imperialists was understandable, but the role of the socialist countries in the United Nations was a mystery. In particular, the Soviet Union's conciliatory policy towards imperialist interests in the area was highly questionable and a clear departue from its policy during the 1940's.

29. Reflection and experience had shown the need for a decisive break with the past. The failure of the United Nations to end colonialism in the Territory could not be concealed. Attempts to negotiate with the South African Government had proved futile. Between 1946 and 1960 over sixty resolutions condemning South African policy in South West Africa had been adopted by the General Assembly and the Fourth Committee but the South African régime's position remained unchanged. In the same period, three opinions handed down by the International Court of Justice<sup>2/</sup> had made it plain that South Africa's obligations toward the Territory had not lapsed and that South Africa could not unilaterally change the status of South West Africa. Nevertheless, South Africa had done so.

30. On 28 November 1961, the representative of Mexico had stated in the Fourth Committee 1226th meeting that it would be impossible to secure the political, economic and social advancement of the people or their attainment of self-government or independence with the voluntary co-operation of South Africa. In 1966, a representative of the Government of South Africa was still telling the United Nations that the system of apartheid promoted the welfare of the people of South West Africa, whereas it was clear from the documentation of the United Nations that apartheid was the most oppressive form of racial discrimination in the world and that that system was today the institutional foundation of government in South Africa as completely as nazism had been in Germany under Hitler. Mr. de Villiers maintained that apartheid was not discriminatory or oppressive, that it was the only system which could foster the growth of a "multi-community society" and that it offered the various indigenous groups in the Territory, which had a long history of warfare with each other, the possibility of living together in peace; what he forgot to mention was that, despite the mutual slaughter of Britishers and Boers at the beginning of the twentieth century, those two groups had been reconciled and had formed the Union of South Africa, a union of whites. Various witnesses who were experts on indigenous affairs had appeared before the International Court to testify that apartheid was functioning very well in South West Africa and that its abolition would cause great suffering and bloodshed. Mr. Gross, the agent of Liberia and Ethiopia before the Court, had demonstrated that apartheid was nothing but the merciless

<sup>1/</sup> South West Africa, Second Phase, Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 1966, p. 6.

<sup>2/</sup> International status of South-West Africa, Advisory Opinion: I.C.J. Reports 1950, p. 128; South West Africa—Voting procedure, Advisory Opinion of June 7th, 1955; I.C.J. Reports 1955, p. 67; Admissibility of hearings of petitioners by the Committee on South West Africa, Advisory Opinion of June 1st, 1956; I.C.J. Reports 1956, p. 23.

exploitation of a black majority by a privileged white minority.

31. Now something had happened which could not be ignored: the International Court of Justice had decided to evade the problem, thus reducing it to its exclusively political aspect. South West Africa must confront South Africa militarily, and the Security Council should hold South Africa responsible for its policy of apartheid and for the suppression of human rights in the Territory. It was logical that certain Members of the United Nations should resist the application of sanctions; the United Kingdom, the United States and France had much to lose. They insisted that sanctions could not be effective and that they would inflict suffering on the African population, but when the United Kingdom had to deal with the illegal régime in Southern Rhodesia it affirmed, on the contrary, that economic sanctions would be sufficient and it gave no thought to the possible sufferings of the Africans. Moreover, it was evident that the Western countries were ready to have recourse to war when they saw fit, as the present situation in Viet-Nam indicated. In any case, whatever measures the United Nations might take to further the process of decolonization in South West Africa would be complementary to the efforts of the inhabitants themselves to win freedom and independence.

32. Mr. DIALLO Seydou (Guinea) requested that the statements of the petitioners should be issued verbatim. Their contribution to the work of the Committee had been extremely interesting; the first petitioner had asked what the Members of the United Nations could do for them; the second had said that the time for accumulating further data and statistics had passed and a solution must now be found. It was therefore unnecessary to ask any further questions. The accused were not even taking part in the debate. France, the United Kingdom and the United States were listening with indifference, while the Soviet Union advised having recourse to the Organization of African Unity. Such was the attitude of the great Powers while peoples were being slaughtered under their indifferent gaze. But the world was going ahead without them. The Afro-Asian group was on the side of the oppressed peoples and would do whatever might be necessary to assist them. The Committee had done well to grant the petitioners a hearing. Their evident faith inspired confidence in the future and gave assurance that they would ultimately win the independence of which they had been deprived.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat had taken note of the request that the petitioners' statements should be included in extenso in the records. He thanked them for appearing before the Committee.

*The petitioners withdrew.*

34. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 1414th plenary meeting, the Committee had to submit to the Assembly a report on the question of South West Africa (hearing of petitioners) before the debate on the item was concluded in plenary. The Rapporteur would therefore submit a draft report at the next meeting.

35. Mr. MENDELEVICH (Union of Soviet Socialist Republic), referring to the remarks made by the representative of Guinea, explained that the Soviet Union's position on South West Africa was identical with that which it had always held with regard to peoples in any part of the world who were striving to liberate themselves from colonialism. Those peoples could count on the Soviet Union's moral and material support—the latter a very important consideration. That was not a new attitude but was in accordance with the socialist principle of self-determination. The USSR supported the legitimate demands of the African countries, which were calling for effective measures to put an end to racist rule in South Africa and South West Africa. The Mandate should be withdrawn from South Africa as provided in the draft resolution (A/L.483 and Add.1 and 2) submitted in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly. If South Africa did not heed the injunctions of the United Nations and did not withdraw from South West Africa, the Security Council should, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter, take steps to compel it to withdraw from a Territory which had not belonged to it in the past, did not belong to it now and would never belong to it in the future. Although some members of the Security Council ignored them, the interests of the people of South West Africa would find their most resolute defender in the USSR.

36. At the 1425th plenary meeting of the General Assembly the representative of the USSR had said that if, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter, the Security Council should decide to take effective measures against South Africa, the Organization of African Unity should participate in their application. That did not mean that exclusive responsibility for those measures should be transferred to that Organization. Once the Mandate was withdrawn, it would be necessary and just to give the people of South West Africa the opportunity to establish an independent State and join the community of free, equal and sovereign peoples. However, the Soviet Union had certain doubts about the technical aspects which might arise in connexion with the transfer of the administration of the Territory. Although it would not be adamantly opposed to such a course, it thought it would be inappropriate to establish a United Nations administering authority to assume responsibility for the administration of the Territory, for it believed that once South Africa withdrew, whether voluntarily or under compulsion, the people of South West Africa, with the help of all countries and particularly the African countries, could establish an independent State. To entrust the administration of the Territory to a United Nations administering authority, on the other hand, would in a sense be tantamount to prolonging the colonial régime.

37. Also, the financial implications of the establishment of such a body were not yet known. If the administering authority had its headquarters in New York during the transition period, it was likely that there would be no expenses since it would be composed of members of the permanent missions and be able to use the technical services of the United Nations Secretariat. If, on the other hand, it was to be established from the outset in South West Africa, the financial implications and the possibility of their

being covered by the income of the Territory would have to be given very careful study. For that reason the Soviet Union had expressed reservations with regard to operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution in question. It was premature to assume commitments the scope of which could not yet be clearly determined.

38. Mr. DIALLO Seydou (Guinea) said the fact that the representative of the Soviet Union had replied to his observations showed that he was a friend, for the enemy did not even deign to reply. He had never doubted the anti-colonialist policy of the USSR and took note of the intention of that country, a permanent member of the Security Council, to support the draft resolution.

39. Mr. NKAMA (Zambia) welcomed the assurance given by the USSR representative that the Soviet Union would continue to support the fight for freedom in all African territories. The Soviet Union was one of the great world Powers and its position was extremely important, particularly in view of the fact that the

anti-colonialist struggle was the fundamental problem for Africans.

Election of the Vice-Chairman (continued)\*

40. The CHAIRMAN said that some representatives had asked for a brief suspension of the meeting so that consultations could be held with regard to the election of the Vice-Chairman. If there were no objections, the meeting would be suspended.

*The meeting was suspended at 12.15 p.m. and resumed at 12.40 p.m.*

41. The CHAIRMAN announced that the consultations held during the brief recess had produced no agreement on the candidates for the office of Vice-Chairman. He therefore suggested that the election should be held at the beginning of the Committee's next meeting.

*It was so decided*

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*

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\*Resumed from the 1596th meeting.