United Nations

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

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# FOURTH COMMITTEE, 1795th

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# Chairman: Mr. P. V. J. SOLOMON (Trinidad and Tobago).

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Dashtseren (Mongolia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

## AGENDA ITEMS 12, 13, 23, 63, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70 AND 71

[For the text of the agenda items, see table of contents above. The relevant documents are indicated in the heading of the summary record of the 1791st meeting.]

### GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. SLOWIKOWSKI (Poland) noted that almost twenty-five years had passed since the equal rights of all nations to freedom and sovereignty had been solemnly proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations and since the colonial Powers had agreed to accept the principle of self-determination and to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples then under their administration. The documents before the Committee and all pertinent information indicated that the final stage of decolonization had met with stubborn resistance from the colonial Powers, particularly in Territories in southern Africa. It was clear that the activities of foreign economic interests, allied with the colonial Powers, were impeding the implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) in those Territories. Particularly in the Territories under Portuguese administration, it was common for generous concessions to be granted to foreign monopolies for the exploitation of natural and human resources. In the face of that situation, some countries adopted paradoxical positions: on the one hand, they declared their full support for the United Nations and repudiated Portugal's policy; on the other, they tried to justify the activities of the foreign monopolies, on the ground that they were operating in accordance with the laws in force in the Territories. However, they overlooked the fact that those laws were not in accord with the interests of the indigenous population. It should be recalled that the right of peoples to self-determination included permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, as was recognized in General Assembly resolutions 1314 (XIII) and 1803 (XVII). That aspect of the colonial problem was particularly urgent, because in many instances the high rate of exploitation posed a real threat of total exhaustion of natural resources. Long-term concessions unlawfully granted by colonial régimes to foreign companies enabled them to entrench themselves in the economy and endangered the Territories' future as independent nations.

- 2. Another significant feature of the current debate was the problem of the smaller Territories, many of which had not been affected by the great liberation movement of the past few years. There too, the colonial Powers were resorting to very varied methods and delaying tactics in order to prolong their domination. The argument most frequently advanced was that the peoples of those Territories were not ready to govern themselves and still needed guidance from the administering Powers. Thus, in many cases, despite some recent constitutional changes, effective power was not in the hands of the indigenous population. At the same time, foreign capital and settlers were gradually taking over the Territories' economies, thus further hampering their free political development. The situation in Fiji, the New Hebrides, Guam and American Samoa, the Gilbert and Ellice Islands and the Solomon Islands was a perfect example of that type of colonial policy. The most significant factor, however, was the tendency for the small Territories to be converted into military bases of the administering Powers. In addition to being a serious obstacle to the self-determination of the dependent peoples, such bases distorted the Territories' economic structure. The United Nations had repeatedly condemned the installation of military bases in dependent Territories; that stand was confirmed in resolutions 2326 (XXII) and 2357 (XXII). The latter should, however, be supplemented by a decision of the General Assembly prohibiting the inclusion of such Territories in any military and political commitments and their use for purposes inconsistent with the Charter and the principles of peaceful international co-operation. At the same time, the complex question of small Territories should be studied with the aim of creating conditions conducive to their political emancipation.
- 3. At the present stage in the process of decolonization, great effort was required of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. At its twenty-second session, the General Assembly had requested the specialized agencies to take urgent and effective measures to assist the peoples struggling for their liberation from colonial rule, especially those in Southern Rhodesia and in the Territories under Portuguese administration. Some of the agencies had taken positive steps, but others had considered that support for decolonization was incompatible with their status. The report of the Economic and Social Council clearly showed that the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development had ignored the recommendations of the General Assembly and had not stopped giving assistance to the Governments of South Africa and Portugal. The Committee should again call for the cessation of such assistance, which was not only encouraging those régimes in their defiant stand but was tantamount to direct support for the policy of suppression of the peoples under their domination. In addition, all States members of international organizations should do everything they could within those organizations to guide them in such a direction that they could contribute to the speedy eradication of colonialism.
- 4. Mr. LUARD (United Kingdom) welcomed the fact that the Committee had an opportunity to hold a general discussion of the colonial problems which still remained. Originally the Fourth Committee had considered only Trust

- Territories. Now almost all those Territories were independent and, in those which were not, the decolonization process was nearing its end. The vast majority of the United Kingdom Territories had achieved independence and were represented in the United Nations. Those which remainedwith the exception of Rhodesia, which had just been discussed, and Hong Kong, which was a very special case-had a combined population of a little over 1 million. Only one of them had a population approaching half a million, four had a population of between 100,000 and 200,000 and the population of the rest ranged from eighty-six in Pitcairn to 87,000 in St. Vincent. As had been recognized in recent years, the Committee would certainly have to consider what status was most appropriate for such Territories-independence, association with another State, or some other constitutional status.
- 5. The Territories in southern Africa were another problem, the largest and most serious of all. Since there was nearly universal agreement on the need to bring about the freedom of those Territories, it should be possible to formulate resolutions which would command almost universal support. That would depend to a considerable extent on the procedure adopted for the drafting of resolutions and on the degree of consultation between the different groups of countries. The precedent set by the draft resolution recently adopted on the Territories under Portuguese administration was encouraging.
- 6. Finally, there were some problems affecting colonial Territories as a whole. For example, it would not be inappropriate for the Committee to discuss the economic problems of the smaller Territories, in conformity with Article 73 of the Charter, but the discussion should be objective and avoid polemics reflecting only ideological prejudices or cold-war aims. Dependent Territories, especially the very small ones, had real development problems deserving careful attention. The Committee should make an impartial study of the situation in the different Territories, compare their standards of living with those in others already independent and weigh the benefits and disadvantages of foreign investment, whether private or public. Economic growth usually promoted rather than hindered the attainment of independence. It should be remembered that the decisive element in that process was the policy of the colonial Power; the existence of foreign investment was secondary. The fact that most countries, once they became independent, accepted such investment and even tried to attract it suggested that such assistance almost always served to increase rather than reduce independence. It was the policy of the United Kingdom Government to ensure that, even before independence, the elected authorities in United Kingdom Territories exercised their right freely to choose the type of economic relations they wished to establish. It was particularly to be deplored, in that connexion, that within the past few months, even in Europe, a Power had prevented the Government of a country whose territory it had occupied from freely establishing such economic relations. That was a true case of neo-colonialism.
- 7. With regard to the process of decolonization in United Kingdom Territories over the past year, there had been substantial constitutional progress. Most of the Territories were small islands with limited resources, far from the main

<sup>1</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-third Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/7203), chapter XVI, section C.

lines of world communications. As the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had rightly recognized, that created for them difficult and peculiar problems requiring special attention. Although it could not yet say exactly what would be the constitutional future of many of those small Territories, the United Kingdom Government would be guided by the principle which it had adopted in the past: the wishes of the people concerned would be its main guide to action.

- 8. In the past year, two countries which had been under United Kingdom administration had been admitted to membership in the United Nations: Mauritius and Swaziland. In addition, Nauru had obtained independence in accordance with decisions taken in the United Nations.
- 9. In the Solomon Islands Protectorate, the number of elected members in the Legislative Council had been increased, and an Executive Council had been established. New measures for constitutional progress were currently under review.
- 10. In the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, a House of Representatives and a Governing Council had been established. The House had thirty members, of whom twenty-three were elected and chose from among themselves the Chief Elected Member and four other members to serve on the Governing Council. The United Kingdom had given a specific undertaking to consider the next step in constitutional advance when so requested by the House of Representatives.
- 11. In the British Virgin Islands, the Legislative Council consisted of eleven members, seven of whom were elected. The Executive Council consisted of three Ministers, one of them the Chief Minister, all appointed from among the elected members of the Legislative Council. In both the Legislative and the Executive Councils, there were only two ex officio members, the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary.
- 12. A new constitution had been brought into effect in the Seychelles, establishing a single Governing Council with executive and legislative functions and a system of executive committees to supervise groups of government departments. The Governing Council had a majority of elected members.
- 13. Under the new constitution in St. Helena, the Legislative Council elected in February 1968 consisted of twelve elected seats with two ex officio members. Council committees had been established, charged with general responsibilities for government departments and with certain executive responsibilities. The Executive Council consisted of two ex officio members and the six Chairmen of the Committees, who were elected members of the Legislative Council. In all those Territories, elections had been held either in 1968 or in 1967, on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
- 14. In Bermuda, the new constitution, introduced in June 1968, recognized a wide measure of internal self-government and established a ministerial system. There was

- a Legislative Council with limited powers and a House of Assembly of forty elected members. The Executive Council, which was in effect a cabinet, consisted of a Government Leader and not fewer than six members of the Legislative Council or the House of Assembly appointed on the advice of the Government Leader. The members of the Executive Council had been allocated portfolios. The Governor retained responsibility only for defence, external affairs and internal security and police matters. In recent years, the franchise, which before 1963 had been based mainly on property, had been radically broadened, and the elections in May 1968 which had preceded the introduction of the new constitution had been conducted on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
- 15. A constitutional conference had been held in September in the Bahamas, and elections had been held on the basis of universal adult suffrage in April 1968. The new constitution would confer a wide measure of internal self-government on the islands. The additional powers for the future Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahama Islands would include authority to negotiate and conclude certain trade agreements with other countries and to conclude agreements of purely local concern or relating to technical assistance or emigration. The Governor would entrust immediate responsibility for police matters to a Minister designated on the advice of the Prime Minister and would retain responsibility for defence and external affairs, but would consult Bahamas Ministers, through the islands' Security Council, on matters relating to the political and economic interests of the islands.
- 16. It was likely that in 1969 the Island Council of Tristan da Cunha would establish committees, in order that the community's elected representatives might play a greater role in the running of affairs.
- 17. In St. Vincent, it seemed clearly the wish of both local political parties that the Territory should proceed to associated statehood with the United Kingdom. They had made proposals to that effect at the general elections in 1966 and 1967, and the United Kingdom Government was fully in agreement with that goal. The current Government, which had been in opposition when the proposals were first drawn up, had proposed certain minor changes concerning the number of elected seats and the voting age, but the United Kingdom Government expected that St. Vincent would proceed to associated statehood after the proposal had been debated in the Legislative Council and considered by the people of the Territory. That status gave the Associated State a unilateral option to proceed to independence. The United Kingdom Government would have no say in the matter if an Associated State chose to become independent or to associate itself with another country.
- 18. With respect to the Falkland Islands, the United Kingdom Government had continued negotiations with the Government of the Argentine Republic during the past year in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) with a view to reaching a peaceful settlement of the question as soon as possible. The Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Lord Chalfont, had been visiting the Territory during the current month.
- 19. In regard to British Honduras, the United Kingdom Government, which recognized the legitimate aspiration to

independence of the people of the Territory, had always stood ready to consider any proposals for achieving independence. In the course of 1968, the proposals put forward by the mediator for a solution to the problem had been rejected by both the Government and the Opposition in British Honduras. However, Guatemala and the United Kingdom were still investigating means of reaching an amicable and peaceful solution with respect to the Territory which would take into full account the interests of its people.

- 20. Finally, he pointed out that the type of constitutional development in small Territories must vary according to their circumstances and would depend first and foremost on the wishes of the people. In nearly all the Territories he had mentioned there was active discussion among the political parties and public opinion of the next stages in constitutional advance and the most appropriate legal status for each of them, and there was every prospect of continuing progress during the coming year towards the goals of Article 73 of the Charter.
- 21. Mr. DENIAU (France) said that, having participated in the work of the Trusteeship Council and the Fourth Committee for ten years, he was pleased now that his country had concluded its work of decolonization, to speak freely and without any special concern other than that of considering objectively the status of the Territory of New Guinea, whose progress his delegation, as a member of the Trusteeship Council, had been following for more than twenty years.
- 22. New Guinea covered a vast and mountainous area, where communications among the different segments of the population were difficult. As a result, air transportation had been developed considerably, but it was expensive and ill-suited to the transport of primary commodities. In addition, the people of the central part of the Territory had lived for centuries without contact with the outside world, and their sudden transition to the conditions of the modern world raised problems of adaptation.
- 23. The report of the Trusteeship Council (A/7204) contained the information gathered by the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territory of New Guinea, 1968, of which a representative of France had been a member. The members of the Mission had noted that the Administering Authority had made substantial efforts to secure the social, economic and political development of the Territory, as was clear from the amount of the Australian subsidy (87 million Australian dollars in 1968).
- 24. With reference to education, he said that all or almost all children attended school in the coastal areas but attendance was very low in the interior and the problem of the shortage of teaching staff still had to be solved. In that connexion, the Visiting Mission had been impressed by the Teachers' Training College at Goroka and in general by the growth of higher education in the Territory. Moreover, it had found that the public health situation was good, although improvements were still required.
- 25. While the main responsibility for the development effort rested with the Administering Authority, it should be noted that the Territory itself was participating signifi-

- cantly in the task, its own budgetary resources having totalled \$50 million in 1967-1968. Those revenues were due to the expansion of the economy, which should be further improved by the new five-year economic development plan, prepared in accordance with the recommendations of IBRD.
- 26. Of special interest was agricultural development, which the Visiting Mission had found to be satisfactory and even in some cases noteworthy. Industry was relatively undeveloped, despite some recent achievements, and great hopes were being placed on the possible development of copper deposits on the island of Bougainville.
- 27. The Visiting Mission had noted that trade-union activity was insignificant and that there were some short-comings in housing for workers, particularly on plantations, and had requested that measures be taken to remedy the situation.
- 28. The Mission had also expressed a desire to see expanded participation by New Guineans in local administration and had noted the satisfactory results achieved in that respect from time to time. It had drawn attention to the importance of encouraging and strengthening a sense of national unity in Papua and New Guinea, which were administered as a single Territory, in accordance with the recommendations of the Trusteeship Council.
- 29. The people of the Territory participated in legislative organs and, at the last elections whose highly satisfactory organization represented a considerable effort, a small but significant number of political parties had emerged. However, the powers of the House of Assembly should be increased and the representatives of the people should participate to a greater extent in the exercise of political power. It should be noted, in that connexion, that the Australian Administration itself had stated that the existing system of "ministerial members" was a transitional measure.
- 30. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the statements of the Governor-General of Australia and the Minister for External Territories to the effect that the basic policy of the Australian Government had been to promote self-determination for the Territory.
- 31. In conclusion, he said that he agreed with the Visiting Mission that the political education of the people of New Guinea should continue to be encouraged in order to prepare them to exercise their right of self-determination and he was gratified to observe that that was the objective of the Administering Authority's policy.
- 32. Mr. TARABANOV (Bulgaria) said that the discussion of Southern Rhodesia and the Territories under Portuguese rule had demonstrated once again that colonialism was a fact and that efforts were being made to strengthen it, mainly in southern Africa, by opposing the people's struggle for national liberation.
- 33. The activities of foreign monopolies, particularly those of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany, in colonial Territories exemplified the characteristics of colonialism and racism. The exploita-

tion of the Territories' natural resources and manpower by foreign monopolies, the long-term concessions granted them by the colonial administrations and the backing they gave to the repression of national liberation movements were clear evidence of close co-operation between colonial Governments and the monopolies.

- 34. The Special Committee's report revealed that the colonial Powers had taken no practical steps to implement General Assembly resolution 2288 (XXII). The conclusions and recommendations contained in the Special Committee's report on that subject (A/7320) would help the Committee to work out measures to put an end to the scandalous activities of foreign monopolies in colonial Territories. The co-operation of such Western Powers as the United States, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany and of their monopolies, and the political, economic and other support they gave to Portugal, South Africa and the Ian Smith régime, were the backbone of the opposition shown by those Governments to the decolonization process; it was imperative that colonialism should be completely eliminated and that all the resources of the United Nations and all the specialized agencies should be mobilized for that purpose. The time had come to co-ordinate the decolonization work of the United Nations, as General Assembly resolution 2311 (XXII) had stressed; every specialized agency should contribute to that historic process and give humanitarian aid to peoples under colonial rule, and particularly to the peoples and the national liberation movements of southern Africa.
- 35. Some international institutions had begun to consider measures for achieving that objective in compliance with the recommendations addressed to them: UNESCO, WHO and the ILO, for instance, had considered the General Assembly's recommendations on the subject, but most of the measures taken to implement resolution 2311 (XXII) were still limited in nature, as the reports and documents before the Committee clearly showed. Specific mention should be made of the continuing indifference shown by some specialized agencies, such as IBRD and IMF; organizations which were connected with the United Nations should give more active assistance to the victims of colonialism, especially in such fields as youth education, general medical care and child nutrition: as the petitioners who had appeared before the Committee had made clear, assistance of that type from the specialized agencies would make a significant contribution to national liberation movements.
- 36. As long as colonialism existed, the Assembly should reaffirm the provisions of resolution 2311 (XXII) and should once again call on the specialized agencies to co-operate in achieving the objectives of resolution 1514 (XV) and request them to refrain from granting assistance to the racist and colonial régimes of southern Africa. In particular the Assembly should once again call on IBRD to suspend its financial aid to South Africa and Portugal and withdraw the loans it had granted them, since those Governments were still taking repressive measures against national liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies and Namibia.
- 37. Experience showed that the Economic and Social Council could play an important role in that respect and it should again be requested to consider, together with the

- Special Committee, measures for the co-ordination of the programmes and activities of the specialized agencies in implementing the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. In that connexion, he fully supported statements by the President of the Economic and Social Council and by the President of the Special Committee on the desirability of having representatives of the specialized agencies and the international institutions participate in the debate on the question, an arrangement which would give them an opportunity to provide information directly on their policies and activities in implementing United Nations resolutions concerning the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and to make valuable suggestions on the measures required to co-ordinate those policies and activities. Furthermore, the Secretary-General should be requested to continue his collaboration with the specialized agencies and the international institutions in working out measures to that end and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its next session.
- 38. His delegation approved the chapters of the Special Committee's report on the remaining items of the agenda and on the situation in the Territories of Oman, Fiji, Gibraltar, Ifni and Spanish Sahara. All colonial countries, irrespective of their size or their economic or geographical position, had the right to independence and self-determination. Small colonial Territories could not and should not be treated as pawns on the political and strategic chessboard of the colonial Powers, which only too often showed a dangerous inclination to use those Territories as links in their chain of military installations and bases.
- 39. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the decisions adopted by the Committee with regard to the items it had discussed would make a practical contribution to the implementation of the Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and to the struggle of colonial peoples for freedom and national independence.
- 40. Mr. HASRAT (Afghanistan) said that eight years ago, when the General Assembly had adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, there had been great hopes that colonialism in all its forms and manifestations would disappear. Now that those eight years had elapsed, nowever, it was deplorable to find people who were still subjected to foreign rule and exploitation. Nevertheless, there was reason to hope that the determination of subjugated peoples struggling for their independence would succeed in eliminating the last vestiges of colonialism. Although it had not yet achieved its final goal, the Declaration had clearly had a considerable influence. During those eight years, many countries had become independent. Afghanistan, for its part, had strongly supported and would continue to support all measures to put an end to the evils caused by foreign rule.
- 41. His delegation took note of the Trusteeship Council's report (A/7204) with satisfaction and supported its recommendations with regard to the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. It shared the views of the Trusteeship Council concerning the administering Power, as expressed in paragraph 342 of the report, and urged that the administering Power should adopt all possible measures leading to rapid and complete implementation of the Declaration on the

Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

- 42. After briefly summarizing the background of the question of the Territory of Fiji, he said that the report of the Special Committee (A/7200/Rev.1, chap. XVI) stated that the administering Power had failed to implement General Assembly resolution 2350 (XXII). His delegation asked the United Kingdom Government to reconsider its position and co-operate with the United Nations in bringing about the decolonization of the Territory.
- 43. The question of Oman was another unresolved colonial problem. Once again, the Special Committee had informed the Fourth Committee that the policy of the administering Power had not changed. His delegation therefore reaffirmed its support for the rights of the people of Oman to self-determination and independence and deplored the fact that the United Kingdom Government had failed to comply with the General Assembly's recommendations.
- 44. With regard to the activities of foreign interests which were impeding the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV), his delegation, as a member of the Special Committee, concurred in the view that all such activities were against the interests of indigenous peoples and that benefits accruing from the exploitation of the natural wealth of colonial Territories, and of Namibia in particular, were not being used to improve the economic and social conditions of colonial peoples, as was evident from chapter VI of the Special Committee's report. The activities of foreign economic and other interests in colonial Territories had a negative effect on the progress of those Territories and his delegation supported the conclusions contained in document A/7320.
- 45. With regard to the importance of the role of the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations in the implementation of the Declaration, he thought that the recommendations contained in resolution 2311 (XXII) should convince all those organizations to co-operate with the United Nations in a common front although some of the specialized agencies would not be able to implement the recommendations for administrative reasons. Consequently, it was quite proper for the Fourth Committee to endorse the Special Committee's general observations on the matter as contained in chapter III of its report.
- 46. In conclusion, he said that the co-operation of all Member States and particularly the colonial Powers was

essential for the implementation of the measures adopted by the General Assembly on colonial questions. He was confident that respect for General Assembly decisions would soon enable the United Nations to help the oppressed peoples in colonial Territories to achieve freedom and independence.

47. Mr. MARTINEZ (Argentina) said that after considering the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) the General Assembly had adopted resolution 2065 (XX), which invited the two Governments concerned to proceed without delay with the negotiations recommended by the Special Committee. The Republic of Argentina had immediately signified its willingness to comply with that resolution and, as the United Kingdom representative had said, the two Governments had held confidential negotiations on the question on which his delegation hoped to report in the near future.

#### **AGENDA ITEM 65**

Question of Territories under Portuguese administration: 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 (concluded)

DRAFT REPORT OF THE FOURTH COMMITTEE (A/C.4/L.915)

48. Mr. AGGREY-ORLEANS (Ghana), Rapporteur, introduced the draft report on Territories under Portuguese administration (A/C.4/L.915) and said that in paragraph 9 the words "1791st meeting" should be replaced by the words "1793rd meeting".

The draft report of the Fourth Committee was adopted.

### Requests for hearings

REQUEST CONCERNING OMAN (AGENDA ITEM 67) (continued) (A/C.4/715)

49. The CHAIRMAN recalled that he had received a request for a hearing concerning Oman from the representative of Oman, Cairo. If there were no objections, he would assume that the Committee wished to grant the request.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.