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Chairman: Mr. FAKHREDDINE Mohamed (Sudan).

AGENDA ITEM 69

Question of Fiji: 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) (A/6300/Rev.1, chap. VIII; A/C.4/L.844 and Add.1 and 2)

GENERAL DEBATE (concluded) AND CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.4/L.844 AND ADD.1 AND 2 (continued)

1. Mr. CARRASQUERO (Venezuela) said that it had emerged from the debate, and particularly from statements by the representatives of India and the United Kingdom, that the lack of racial harmony in Fiji was

causing some concern and threatened to impede the political development of the Territory. Some progress had been achieved but the ethnic differences were still reflected in the legislature, for example. It was the duty of the United Nations to promote harmony among the people of the islands and to ensure that the existence of different ethnic groups did not hamper their common political development.

2. His delegation agreed with the provisions of draft resolution A/C.4/L.844 and Add.1 and 2, in particular operative paragraphs 3 and 4. The abolition of discriminatory measures would promote racial harmony, and it was important that a sub-committee should visit Fiji to study the situation at first hand and recommend practical measures for the political, economic and social development of the Territory in an atmosphere of harmony. He hoped that the administering Power would implement the draft resolution. He realized that the Territory presented certain problems which were not capable of rapid solution, but with the co-operation of all concerned they could eventually be overcome.

3. Mr. YAMANAKA (Japan) said that, Fiji being a Non-Self-Governing Territory, the ultimate goal of the United Nations must be to ensure self-determination and independence for its people. His delegation hoped that freedom would be achieved on the basis of communal harmony and national unity and that the administering Power would take all necessary steps to that end, including such measures as would enable the people of the Territory to gain further experience in self-government. His delegation did not wish to exaggerate the communal question but the islands, with their mixed population, posed a unique and complex problem. His delegation considered that every effort should be made to foster good relations among the various communities and that, to that end, the idea of sending an impartial fact-finding mission to the Territory was worthy of closer study.

4. His delegation shared the general principles of the draft resolution and would vote in favour of it as a whole. It wished, however, to reserve its position in regard to operative paragraph 3 (b), for it would seem desirable for the necessary conditions for communal harmony to be firmly established before a date was fixed for independence.

5. Mr. SY (Senegal) suggested that it might be advisable to delete operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, since operative paragraph 4 proposed that a sub-committee should visit Fiji to study the situation, after which the Committee would be able to proceed in full possession of the facts. It might be wiser to allow the sub-committee to suggest a date

for the independence of Fiji and to make arrangements for the elections.

6. Mr. SHIH (China) said that the special circumstances in Fiji required particular attention. The inalienable right of the population to self-determination and independence was recognized by all, including the administering Power. A visit to the Territory by a sub-committee would be invaluable in providing further information on which the Committee could base its judgement, but his delegation considered that it was for the Fijians themselves to set the date for independence. Another important consideration was that due regard should be paid to the interests of the minorities in the process of constitutional development.

7. For those reasons his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution.

8. Mr. SOUZA e SILVA (Brazil) said that his delegation endorsed the general principles and aims of draft resolution A/C.4/L.844 and Add.1 and 2 and would vote in favour of it. He had some reservations, however, about paragraph 3 (a) which, judging from the United Kingdom representative's statements, was not adapted to current realities.

9. Mr. PINTO ACEVEDO (Guatemala) said that his delegation endorsed the principles of the draft resolution under consideration and would vote in favour of it.

10. Mr. BRUCE (Togo) said that, as the debate proceeded, his delegation was increasingly convinced of the need for more information on the Territory, the lack of which was reflected in the draft resolution. There seemed to be a contradiction between paragraph 4, referring to the dispatch of a sub-committee, and paragraph 3. Since the draft resolution should be supported by as many delegations as possible he proposed, on behalf of various delegations, that the vote should be deferred.

11. Mr. FOUM (United Republic of Tanzania) did not agree that there was a contradiction between paragraphs 3 and 4. Paragraph 3 was based on statements by the administering Power, while paragraph 4 provided for the dispatch of a sub-committee to satisfy the Committee that those statements were correct.

12. Mr. EASTMAN (Liberia) supported the Togolese representative's proposal; more time was needed for consultations with the sponsors of the draft resolution about possible changes in the text.

13. Mr. ISMAIL (Malaysia) agreed with the Togolese representative that paragraphs 3 and 4 were contradictory, since paragraph 3 anticipated the result of the visit recommended in paragraph 4. His delegation felt serious misgivings in regard to paragraph 3.

14. Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Cyprus), Mr. DIALLO Seydou (Guinea) and Mr. OMAIER (Libya) supported the Togolese representative's proposal that the vote on draft resolution A/C.4/L.844 and Add.1 and 2 should be postponed.

15. The CHAIRMAN said that if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee agreed to defer the vote until the following afternoon.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 23

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples: 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: French Somaliland (A/6300/Rev.1, chap. XII; A/6401, A/6538, A/C.4/676)

16. Mr. ALJUBOURI (Iraq), Rapporteur 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, introducing that Committee's report on French Somaliland (A/6300/Rev.1, chap. XII), said that it was submitted in pursuance of operative paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 2105 (XX). The Special Committee had decided that it would consider the question of French Somaliland during its meetings in 1967, subject to any decision that the General Assembly might take.

17. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would begin discussion on the question of French Somaliland at the next meeting.

18. Mr. EL HADI (Sudan) requested that the representative of the administering Power should be the first to speak in the debate.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat had taken note of the request and would transmit it to the representative of the administering Power.

AGENDA ITEM 13

Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/6304, A/6363, A/6364)

20. Miss BROOKS (Liberia), Vice-President of the Trusteeship Council, introduced the Council's report (A/6304) on behalf of the President of the Council.

21. Of the eleven Trust Territories in existence when the Council had begun its work in 1947, only three remained. They were in remote areas and had special problems of size, geographical area and diversity, characteristics which had certainly influenced the rate of progress towards the ultimate goals of the Trusteeship System. During the current year, the Trusteeship Council had continued to pay particular and careful attention to those problems. It had made a serious and conscientious study of the Territories and had produced recommendations and conclusions which would be of value not only to the United Nations but to the Administering Authorities. Before the Fourth Committee began its discussion of the chapters of the report relating to New Guinea and Nauru (A/6304, part II), she would like to draw attention to certain of the Council's principal recommendations which related particularly to General Assembly resolutions initiated by the Committee.

22. With regard to political progress in New Guinea, she said that the House of Assembly had appointed a Select Committee to make contact with the people at all levels and to draft for the consideration of the House a set of constitutional proposals to serve as a guide for future constitutional developments in the

Territory. It was the Trusteeship Council's hope that, in giving earnest and prompt consideration to the recommendations of the Select Committee, the Administering Authority would be guided by the United Nations Charter, the Trusteeship Agreement and certain resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolution 2112 (XX). The Council had reiterated its conviction that the next step of constitutional development was to bridge the gap between a fully representative parliament and a fully responsible Government. The question of closer unity between New Guinea and Papua had been considered by the Council, which had taken note of the fact that the two Territories were administered as one and had recognized the importance of a close affinity between the Territories if they were eventually to attain self-government or independence as an entity rather than as separate countries.

23. In the important spheres of economics and education, the Council had noted the Administering Authorities' announcement of further measures to implement the relevant recommendations made by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

24. With regard to the Trust Territory of Nauru, the Council had recalled that the Nauruan people, through their elected representatives, had freely expressed their wish to achieve independence by 31 January 1968 and that the General Assembly, in resolution 2111 (XX), had requested the Administering Authority to fix the earliest possible date, but not later than 31 January 1968, for the independence of the Nauruan people in accordance with their wishes. The Council had welcomed the establishment in 1966 of a Legislative Council, with a majority of indigenous elected members, and an Executive Council, with an equality of official and indigenous elected members, as an important step in the direction of self-government. It had also noted that the Legislative Council had set up a Select Committee to prepare a report on the means by which independence might be attained by 31 January 1968. The Nauruan representatives had requested that talks on those matters should be held in 1967 and the Council had noted the view of Councillor Hammer De Roburt, Head Chief of the Nauruan people, that the arrangement of such talks would present no difficulty. The Head Chief had also informed the Trusteeship Council that there was a strong desire on the part of his people to remain a distinct small nation. They wanted a permanent homeland, on which they could survive as an independent community, and a viable economy.

25. The Council had given full consideration to the problems of achieving that objective, including proposals for rehabilitating the island, and had requested the Administering Authority to make the report of the Committee of Experts on rehabilitation available to its members as soon as possible. It had noted that the joint discussions between the Australian Government and the Nauruan representatives would deal with the future of the phosphate industry and it hoped that those discussions would resolve both problems.

26. Speaking as the representative of LIBERIA, she observed that the Fourth Committee had not in the past devoted sufficient time to the examination of the Trusteeship Council's report and suggested that, at

the twenty-second session of the General Assembly, consideration should be given to discussing the item at an earlier stage. At a subsequent meeting of the Committee, she would submit a statement setting forth the views which her delegation had expressed in the Trusteeship Council.

AGENDA ITEM 23

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples: 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: Ifni, Spanish Sahara and Equatorial Guinea (A/6300/Rev.1, chaps. IX and X; A/C.4/677 and Add.1-3)

HEARING OF PETITIONERS

27. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at its 1644th and 1649th meetings the Committee had granted the requests for hearings concerning Spanish Sahara appearing in documents A/C.4/677 and Add.1-3.

28. With regard to the request for hearing from Mr. Sidi Mohamed Ould Haidalla and his colleagues (A/C.4/677/Add.3), he was informed that, owing to certain language difficulties, the petitioners had submitted a written statement in lieu of an oral presentation. The petitioners had previously submitted an identical statement to the Special Committee and that statement was incorporated in the Special Committee's report to the General Assembly (A/6300/Rev.1, chap. X, paras. 152-154). At the request of the petitioners, however, he would arrange, if there was no objection, for copies of the statement to be made available to members.

29. Mr. THIAM (Mali), supported by Mr. DIALLO Seydou (Guinea) and Mr. BRUCE (Togo), proposed that the statement in question should appear in extenso in the record of the meeting.

It was so decided.

30. Mr. SIDI BABA (Morocco) said that, in a spirit of co-operation, his delegation had not objected to the Malian representative's proposal. He felt, however, that the procedure which had been adopted was quite unorthodox and, as far as he knew, without precedent in the history of the Fourth Committee. His sole concern was that the Committee's work should proceed in an orderly manner.

31. Mr. OULD DADDAH (Mauritania) said that his delegation had been surprised to hear the reservations of the Moroccan representative in view of the fact that that representative had previously indicated to the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee that all information relating to the Territory should be made available to members.

32. Mr. DIALLO Seydou (Guinea) recalled that the Moroccan representative had agreed that every sector of the population of Spanish Sahara should be heard. The Guinean delegation had therefore been surprised to hear the Moroccan representative express reservations regarding a proposal which was designed to ensure that the Committee was fully informed.

33. Mr. SIDI BABA (Morocco) said that he had not objected to the procedure but had merely observed that it was unprecedented.

34. Mr. THIAM (Mali) pointed out that the problem involved human rights, a question to which his delegation attached particular importance. It was only fair that petitioners who had submitted written statements because of language difficulties should have those statements reproduced in the summary record in the same way as if they had delivered the statements in the Committee.

35. In their written statement, Mr. SIDI MOHAMED OULD HAIDALLA, Mr. DAHI OULD NAGEM, Mr. SLAMA OULD SIDI OULD OUMAR and Cheikh OULD MOUHAMED SALEH thanked the Committee for having granted their request for a hearing. They hoped that their statement would make a positive contribution to the solution of the problem of the so-called Spanish Sahara.

36. The region was one which, on a geographical, ethnic and human basis, it was hard to differentiate from independent Mauritania. The latter country extended from 5° to 17° W. and from 15° to 27° N., while the so-called Spanish Sahara was situated between 9° and 17° W. and between 21° and 27° N. It was a region of 280,000 square kilometres bounded on the east and north-east by the Algerian region of Tindouf, on the north by the province of Tarfaya and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, while in the south it was separated by an imaginary line from independent Mauritania. The so-called Spanish Sahara and the neighbouring provinces of Tiris Zemmour and Baie du Lévrier comprised a single region characterized by neither geographical nor ethnic differences. The Ulad Delim, Regueibat, Gourée and other tribes inhabiting the Territory, which consisted of Rfo de Oro and Saguia el Hamra, numbered between 25,000 and 28,000. The petitioners were genuine representatives of the peoples of the Saharan regions. The major groups of nomadic camel-herds which inhabited both the present Spanish Sahara and independent Mauritania belonged to the same tribes, observed the same customs and religious practices, and spoke the same language, Hassama, a pure Arab dialect. It had been only under the colonial occupation that an attempt had been made to draw a frontier between western and eastern Tiris, two parts of the same province of Zemmour, and to subdivide other regions in which the same tribes tended their animals.

37. The colonial history of the so-called Spanish Sahara had begun in 1884, when, on the basis of the Berlin Declaration which provided that any "free" territory was open to occupation, Spain had informed the other Powers that it was establishing a protectorate over that part of the west coast of Africa situated between the 20th and 27th parallels. Not until the signing of the conventions of 27 June 1900, 3 October 1904 and 27 November 1912, however, had the frontier between French and Spanish "possessions" been fixed, and then only very approximately. At present, the 280,000 square kilometres of the Spanish Sahara were regarded as an "African province of Spain" and were under the jurisdiction of the General Department for African Outposts and Provinces, an organ of the Executive Office of the Spanish Council of Ministers. The people

of the Sahara had an innate love of freedom and longed for independence. They were anti-colonialist; much as they believed in friendship, they repudiated and condemned the injustice inherent in the domination of one people by another. They therefore regarded the strict implementation of their right to self-determination, an inalienable right recognized by the United Nations and accepted by the Spanish Government, as the best means by which they could decide upon their future in friendship with Spain. That would make it possible to preserve the many firm ties which already united that northern region of independent Mauritania with Spain.

38. The Saharans, although far removed from the Kingdom of Morocco both geographically and in their way of life, had great respect for that sister nation, even if they had not always appreciated its expansionist ambitions. The ties binding them to Mauritania were so obvious that they scarcely needed to be mentioned. There was no difference in physical appearance, in dress, or in any other respect between the indigenous inhabitants of the so-called Spanish Sahara and those of independent Mauritania. The similarity was reinforced by their common outlook and way of life, in addition to the many ties of blood between them. The people of the so-called Spanish Sahara were prepared, however, to refrain from mentioning those fundamental truths for some time and would gladly agree to the application of the principle of self-determination. They would urge those who showed themselves most eager for the liberation of the Territory to refrain from using the Saharans for other ends which had nothing to do with the desire for freedom, independence, harmony and peace. The Saharans were proud, vigilant and intuitive men, who knew where their interests lay. They would prefer not to be subjected to propaganda or to be involved in the political affairs of Morocco, which certainly had no connexion with the true interests of the so-called Spanish Sahara. They wanted to choose their own destiny, in friendship, while preserving the many strong ties between Spain and themselves. They were convinced that their future was closely linked with that of independent Mauritania and they had great admiration for their brothers in that country, who had always stubbornly defended their national independence.

39. The people of the so-called Spanish Sahara were profoundly anti-colonialist, but that did not prevent them from recognizing the interests of the Saharan people, who desired peace above all. They wished to choose their own destiny without bloodshed and without the help of supposed benefactors who were in fact using the Sahara as a pawn in a vast Machiavellian game incompatible with the interest and even the existence of the peoples of the so-called Spanish Sahara. It was important for the peoples of the Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination in peace and on friendly terms with everyone, including the administering Power.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. El Abadila Ould Cheikh Mohamed Laghdaf, Mr. Hamdi Ould Salek Ould Ba Ali, Mr. Braika Ould Ahmed Lahcen, Mr. Brahim Ould Hassena Douihi, Mr. Abdallah Ould El Khatat and Mr. Habouha Ould Abeida, of the Front de

libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole, took places at the Committee table.

40. Mr. EL ABADILA OULD CHEIKH MOHAMED LAGHDAF (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole) thanked the Committee for giving him the opportunity to explain the situation in his country and to make known the aspirations of the Saharan people before a body which had spared no effort to abolish colonialism and eliminate its after-effects.

41. He paid a tribute to the members of the Special Committee, by whom his delegation had also been heard, for the special interest they had shown in the cause of his people and for the resolution they had adopted on 16 November 1966 (A/6300/Rev.1, chap. X, para. 243). The resolution had been welcomed by the Saharan people; it had revived their hopes and strengthened their confidence in, and attachment to, the United Nations and its noble principles. He hoped that the Fourth Committee would adopt a decisive resolution which would finally put an end to Spanish colonialism in his country and would enable the Saharan people to gain freedom and independence.

42. Spanish colonialism had always kept the country in such isolation and enveloped it in such mystery that most people knew very little about it. He would therefore mention some historical and geographical facts which would make the Committee better acquainted with the problem and with the present situation in the country.

43. The Sahara under Spanish domination consisted of Río de Oro and Saguia el Hamra and was situated on the west coast of the African continent. It covered an area of approximately 280,000 square kilometres and extended from 27°40'N. to 20°47'N. Its population was estimated to be 250,000. The administering Power claimed that it was only 25,000 in order, firstly, to ensure that only a limited number, recruited from among the tools of colonialism, would be able to take part in the referendum which would then produce the result which Spain hoped for; and, secondly, to persuade the world that it was a sparsely populated Territory, inhabited by a few unimportant nomadic tribes, which was not worthy of attention, so that Spain would be able to dispose of the Territory as it chose. There should be no mistake, however. The people of Sahara were brave, united and fully determined to make every sacrifice necessary in order to achieve liberation. They were an Arab people who had always fought against foreign invaders and who had only succumbed in 1934. The population consisted of the following tribes: Regueibat, Ulad Delin, Isargufen, Ait Lahsen, El Arosien, Ulad Tidrarin, Filala, Ahl Cheikh aa El Ainaine, Iaggut, Fuicat, M'jat, El Amyar, and others. They had always belonged to the Kingdom of Morocco and had played an important rôle in the history of that country. They had helped to establish the Almoravides dynasty, which had reigned for a time in Morocco and a descendant of which, Yousef Ben Tachfine, had founded Marrakech. The Territory had always formed an integral part of Morocco, from which it had been separated only recently, when it had come under colonial domination.

44. Colonial penetration had started in 1884, when the Sociedad de Africanistas y Colonistas had landed on the coast of Río de Oro and Cabo Blanco. Its operations, under the direction of Emilio Bonelli, had originally been purely commercial. Mr. Bonelli had constructed wooden huts at a place called Dakhla, which had since been known as Villa Cisneros, and had hoisted the Spanish flag. At the same time, on 26 December 1884, Spain had informed the European Powers that it had placed under its protection all the West African coast from Cabo Bojador to Cabo Blanco. That was how Spain had arrogated to itself the right to dispose of the Territory and had attempted to give its action a semblance of legality. That was the law of the nineteenth century, the law of the colonial Powers or, in other words, the law of the jungle. Although Spain had claimed that its domination extended along all the coastline mentioned, in reality that domination had remained purely nominal and there had been an effective Spanish presence, and purely commercial at that, at Villa Cisneros and Cabo Blanco only. When it had subsequently attempted to penetrate the Territory it had met with fierce resistance from Morocco and the Sahara tribes, and its influence had been confined to the two original settlements.

45. The second stage of colonial penetration had begun in 1898, when another European Power had begun to take an interest in Moroccan Sahara and had entered into negotiations with Spain to share the occupation of the Territory. The then Sultan of Morocco had decided to organize resistance and had ordered his representative in Sahara to construct a base to repel military attacks by the occupying Power. Thus the town of Semara had been constructed, eight kilometres south-west of Saguia el Hamra, with the participation of all the tribes in the region and with the help of Moroccan craftsmen. All attacks by the foreign invader had been repelled and the occupation had not become effective until 1934.

46. The third stage had begun in 1934, when colonialism had become effective. From that time, Spain had begun to extend its influence throughout the Territory but had had to exercise its authority in the name of the Sultan of Morocco, especially during the Spanish Civil War. The whole Territory had been under the authority of the Spanish Resident at Tetuán until 1958, when Spain had decreed that Ifni and Sahara were two Spanish provinces.

47. Since Morocco had regained independence, the desire of the people of Spanish Sahara for independence had become stronger and the struggle against Spanish colonialism had intensified. A national liberation front had existed in the Sahara under Spanish domination since 1950 and the great majority of the tribes had joined it. The front had been obliged to work in secret and many of its members had been killed, imprisoned, exiled or tortured by the colonial authorities. That oppression was still going on. Another member of his delegation would give further details of the conduct of the colonial authorities towards the people of the Territory.

48. A colonial army consisting of more than 40,000 Spanish soldiers was maintained in the Territory. There was no justification for such a large army,

unless it was intended to spread fear among the people and to oppress them. It was the army of occupation which administered the affairs of the country, disposed of its natural resources and carried out the arbitrary policy of the Spanish colonial authorities.

49. More than 20,000 Spaniards had settled in the Sahara in less than four years, which was evidence of a carefully prepared plan to organize massive Spanish immigration to the country. Every facility and privilege was granted to such settlers to enable them to dominate the country and exploit its resources. The people of Sahara were concerned about that immigration, which was a threat to the security of that part of Africa. It should be brought to an end at once, in order to avert a repetition of the tragedy which had occurred in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.

50. He denounced the manoeuvres of the colonial authorities to abolish the traditions and the moral and spiritual values of the people of the Sahara, and to obliterate their personality and Arab-African entity. For example, the Arabic language was no longer taught in the schools, nor was the history of Arabic civilization, nor Islamic teaching, nor anything connected with the spiritual heritage of the people. There were only three primary grades in the whole Territory in which some rudiments of Spanish were taught. Moreover, under a Spanish decree, the people had been made Spanish subjects, although they did not enjoy the same rights as those of Spanish origin.

51. The people of the Sahara were being driven from the country by repressive measures, in order to leave a vacuum to be filled by the Spanish. That was an essential element of the policy carried out by the military authorities with regard to the people in general and, in particular, the members of the Front de libération and all patriots. Another member of his delegation would describe the odious crimes perpetrated by the Spanish army against innocent people, but he wished to draw attention to the attention of the many refugees who had either been expelled by the Spanish authorities or forced to leave the country to avoid repression. Those refugees were in great need of assistance, both in their present precarious life and to enable them to help in the liberation of their homeland.

52. Spain's true policy in the Sahara was, in short, to settle a vast number of Spaniards in the Territory and to grant them every privilege, to drive out the indigenous inhabitants and to endeavour to persuade a small fraction of the population to carry out its policy. The aim of that policy was clearly to create favourable conditions for the establishment in the Territory of a foreign community based on racial discrimination and the exploitation of the resources of the country for the benefit of foreign companies. Yet Spain was trying to make the world, and the United Nations, believe that it was ready to abolish colonialism and apply the principle of self-determination.

53. The people of the Sahara and the Front de libération considered that if they were to exercise their right to self-determination Spanish immigration to the Territory should be stopped, there should be an end to all acts of repression and threats against the indigenous population and there should be freedom of

political activity. An effective United Nations presence was indispensable to ensure the free exercise of the right of self-determination and to create favourable conditions for an impartial referendum, free from all interference, to be held under United Nations supervision and in which only the indigenous adult population of the Sahara should participate, foreigners and those of Spanish origin being excluded.

54. He wished to draw attention to the evil consequences which might result from agreements concluded with foreign companies to exploit the Territory. His people would not consider themselves bound by such agreements, which they did not recognize.

55. It was only in the way he had described that the people of Sahara could free themselves from Spanish domination and exercise their right to self-determination. The people of the Territory had no confidence in the Spanish administration, which treated them with hatred and contempt. Instead, they placed their trust in the United Nations. All they wanted was to be free from colonial domination and to enjoy their sacred right to freedom and independence. They placed all their hopes in the United Nations and relied on it to adopt a decisive resolution which would put an end to all forms of colonial domination and thus enable them to live in freedom and dignity.

56. He thanked the members of the Committee for their interest in the cause of the people of the Sahara.

57. Mr. BRAIKA OULD AHMED LAHCEN (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole) said that, after the general statement just made by Mr. El Abadila, he wished merely to add some details which would give the Committee a picture of the acts of repression being committed by the colonialist authorities against the people of the Sahara and to stress some facts which would give a clear idea of the situation on the Territory.

58. The efforts of the propaganda organs of Spanish colonialism were aimed at giving the impression that the Spanish administration in Saguia el Hamra and Rfo de Oro was liberal and humanitarian and that it was building a paradise in the Sahara. The facts were quite different: Spanish colonialism was one of the worst forms of colonialism that mankind had ever known. At the moment when Spain, in order to deceive world public opinion, was trying to propagate the idea that it was ready to apply the principle of self-determination in the Territory, it was acting there in a manner which belied that claim and demonstrated the bad faith of the colonialist authorities. It was impossible to conceive of a faithful and disinterested application of the principle of self-determination in the face of the imposing military forces equipped with modern weapons and placed on a war footing, ready to repress any movement on the part of the indigenous people. The Spanish military forces stationed in the Territory consisted of approximately 40,000 soldiers under the command of three generals, distributed as follows: 20,000 in El Aaiún and the subsidiary posts of Daora, Hagunia, Meseied and Tafudar; 7,000 in Semara and the surrounding region, Hamsa, El Mahbas and Tifariti; and 13,000 in Villa Cisneros and the posts of Aargub, Bir Gandus, Bir Enzaran, Güera, Ausert, Tichla, Agténit, etc. That did not in-

clude the naval and air forces stationed at the bases of El Aaiún and Villa Cisneros, and those stationed in the Canary Islands, which were permanently ready to intervene with maximum speed. What was the purpose of all those forces covering almost the whole area of the Sahara, particularly in the inhabited areas, on roads, near wells and pasture zones and so forth? What reasons could justify the presence of that great number of soldiers and the total occupation of the Territory? Against whom were the weapons aimed? The fact was that the Spanish colonialist authorities had for some time been launching an offensive of intimidation against the Saharan people and had begun to force the inhabitants of Saguia el Hamra and Rfo de Oro to sign prepared statements to show that the Saharans preferred colonial rule in the Sahara to the independence of their country.

59. The Saharans, however, who yearned for freedom more than anything else, had rejected those documents, refusing to sign them and vigorously resisting all the attempts of the colonialist authorities to force them to sign away the future of their country. That was why the Spanish occupation forces were constantly committing acts of violence against the defenceless civilian population, expelling the nationalists who fought for freedom, torturing women and children, searching dwellings, sowing terror in homes and imprisoning citizens. To illustrate the barbaric acts of the Spanish occupation forces in the Sahara, he would quote some of the most recent incidents in Villa Cisneros and Saguia el Hamra. In March 1966 several officers of the detachment of Bir Enzaran had raped ten women from that region; when the relatives of the women had reacted in indignation against those crimes, they had been tortured and imprisoned in the military barracks for eight days. In April 1966, twenty-five persons, including women and children, had been tortured and expelled by Captain Estalayo, the commander of the post of Daora. In June, ten nationalists had been ill-treated and expelled from Semara; in May 1966, Caid Hamdi Ould Salek Ould Ba Ali of Regueibat, who was present as a petitioner, and 100 others had been expelled from the post of Mahbas, which was subsidiary to the post of Semara. In September 1966, two caids of Regueibat had been deposed and imprisoned in El Aaiún for having supported the cause of freedom. Sixty-seven workers of the mining company "ADARO" had been dismissed and imprisoned for having supported the freedom declaration submitted by the two caids in question.

60. Between 1957 and 1960, several villages in the Sahara had been bombed by Spanish air forces, with the aim of exterminating those who were struggling for the independence of their country; that act of barbarism had resulted in the deaths of hundreds of people, the destruction of many buildings and the slaughter of thousands of animals, while more than 200 people had been taken to the prison of San Francisco Derrisco in Las Palmas, whence they had later been transferred to the concentration camp of Fuerteventura, where they had remained for two years. The prisoners included Mr. Brahim Ould Hassena Douihi, one of the petitioners present with him.

61. The object of such blind and brutal repression of the Saharans was to prepare the Territory for self-

determination as the Spanish colonialist authorities conceived it, and to pursue the Machiavellian scheme of settling a large Spanish minority in the region and constructing a European State in the Sahara based on racial domination—domination of the indigenous people of the country by the Spanish colony. Spain was using every means at its disposal to achieve that objective; more than 20,000 Spaniards were now established in the Territory and immigration was continuing on a large scale at an increased rate, so that, if it was not brought to an end, within four years the number of Spanish immigrants in the Sahara would have reached the figure of 40,000.

62. All the country's riches and resources were in the hands of the foreign colony and the little that the colonialist authorities did was always for the welfare of that colony and not for the welfare of the indigenous people.

63. Attention should also be drawn to the large number of people expelled by the Spanish colonialist administration. Expulsions of the indigenous people had begun in 1957, when the Spanish authorities had uncovered the activities of the patriots belonging to the Front de libération. Since then the expulsions had increased. The exact number of Saharans who had been expelled or fled from persecution by the Spanish authorities was not known, but it could be affirmed that there were more than 25,000 of them, living in misery without any means of support. He asked for United Nations assistance for them.

64. It should also be noted that education for the indigenous people was practically non-existent. Less than 2 per cent of the children attended school, 98 per cent of children of school age receiving no education of any kind. There were only a few classes in various main centres in the Territory where some rudiments of Spanish were taught. Until recently the study of Arabic, the native language of the Saharans, had not been permitted. Now a pretence had been made of introducing the study of Arabic in the classes to which he had referred, but the time allotted to it in the curriculum was minimal and the teachers responsible for it had no competence or qualifications.

65. The Saharan people were struggling for their right to live in freedom in their own land. On behalf of the Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole, which represented all the Saharan people, the petitioners appealed urgently to all peace-loving and justice-loving nations to help the Sahara to obtain independence. The Saharan people were asking only for the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and of the resolutions of the United Nations on the matter. That was why they requested United Nations action to see that all necessary steps were taken to enable the population to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

66. Those were the objectives of the people and the aspirations for which they were fighting and would continue to fight. They were also the objectives of the United Nations, which was striving for the total elimination of colonialism and the triumph of freedom and respect for human dignity.

67. The people of the Sahara were resolved to build the future of their country in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and of law, justice and African brotherhood. They were convinced that the liberation and independence of their country would be a factor of progress, stability and peace in the region. They therefore trusted that all men who loved peace and justice and were determined to put an end to all forms of colonial domination would give active support to the Saharan people and show a true understanding of their cause.

68. Mr. HAMDI OULD SALEK OULD BA ALI (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole) said that the petitioners had come to the United Nations in the hope that it would represent a powerful weapon in their fight against Spanish colonialism. Colonialism was the worst thing that could befall any country and the petitioners wished to make it clear that they were determined to fight it to the end. Many people would doubtless appear before the Committee claiming to speak on behalf of the Territory, but he was sure that the members would be able to decide what was true and what was not. The Sahara was a Non-Self-Governing Territory and should be independent and under the control of the indigenous people. He wished to draw attention to the provisions concerning self-determination in the United Nations Charter and to express the hope that all members of the Committee would support the Saharan people's demands.

69. Mr. HABOUHA OULD ABEIDA (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole) said that the petitioners knew that the Committee's main purpose was to ensure that peoples could exercise their right to freedom and independence. Many countries throughout the world had attained independence in recent years or were on the threshold of independence. The Saharan people hoped that their cause would receive the consideration of all delegations and that the Committee would help them to attain independence and freedom like other peoples. Spanish colonialism had not only meant ill-treatment and torture for nearly all the inhabitants of the Sahara; it had also failed to promote education and had done nothing to prepare the ground for self-determination or to promote mining, agriculture and commerce in the Territory. It was a form of colonialism such as the world had never known. No action had been taken for the advancement of the people. Spanish colonialism was to be compared with that of Portugal and of other colonial Powers; the people of the Sahara would continue to struggle with all their might against it. Spain was powerful, but the people counted on the support of the United Nations and of those who loved justice. The United Nations would represent the people's strongest weapon; he was confident that colonialism, the enemy of mankind, would be defeated.

70. Mr. ABDALLAH OULD EL KHATTAT (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole) said that Spanish colonialism was the worst form of colonialism that mankind had ever known. The people of the Spanish Sahara were determined to fight it until they attained independence, because it was based on the destruction of all human values and of religion. He knew that most of the countries repre-

sented in the Committee had had experience of colonialism and he hoped that the members would understand the plight of the Sahara and do their utmost to enable the Territory to enjoy freedom like themselves.

71. Mr. BRAHIM OULD HASSENA DOUIHI (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole) said that the petitioners were grateful for the opportunity to explain their cause, which was the cause of human rights. The people of the Sahara had suffered every kind of torture at the hands of Spain; they had been ill-treated and imprisoned. He would mention but one case: he himself has been arrested by a Spanish official who was present in the Committee room; that Spanish official was a witness to the fact that he had been ill-treated and sent to prison.

72. Mr. OMAIER (Libya), supported by Mr. MAHMUD (Nigeria), proposed that the statements of the petitioners should be included in extenso in the record of the meeting.

It was so decided.

73. Mr. KAYUKWA (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that Mr. El Abadila had stated that the population of the Territory was 250,000 but that the Spaniards claimed that it was much less than that because they wanted only a limited number to participate in a certain referendum. He would like to know what referendum was referred to.

74. Mr. EL ABADILA OULD CHEIKH MOHAMED LAGHDAF (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination colonial espagnole) said that the population was 250,000 to the last census taken by the people, an operation which had given them much labour. The information which had been supplied by Spain to the Special Committee was erroneous in that respect, as in many others. The petitioners had not discussed such matters in detail, since all that was important for them was the attainment of independence.

75. With regard to a referendum, it was the petitioners' demand that the colonial Power should recognize the right of the Territory to self-determination and that either elections or a referendum should be held under United Nations supervision.

76. Mr. KAYUKWA (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that Mr. El Abadila had claimed that the Territory had always formed part of Morocco. He would like to know whether it was the intention of the organization represented by the petitioners that the Territory should become a sovereign independent State or that it should be reunited with Morocco.

77. Mr. EL ABADILLA OULD CHEIKH MOHAMED LAGHDAF (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole) said that he had merely wished to give a brief review of the history of the Sahara. The people of the Sahara were an Arab, African, Muslim people who had participated in world civilization and in the civilization of North Africa, and most of the kings of Morocco had come from the Territory. The Territory had formed part of Morocco until it had been separated from that country by the Spanish colonialists. As far as his organization's intentions were concerned, its mission would end once the right of the people to self-determination was recognized. It would then be for the

people to choose. The Front de libération took no position on the question of possible integration with any neighbouring State.

78. Mr. KAYUKWA (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that Mr. El Abadila had spoken of agreements concluded with foreign companies for exploiting the Territory. He would like to know whether those were agreements concluded between foreign companies and the Spanish authorities or between foreign companies and local companies, and whether such foreign companies were already operating in the Territory.

79. Mr. EL ABADILA OULD CHEIKH MOHAMED LAGHDAF (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole) said that the colonial Power had begun a geological survey of the Territory and that minerals such as phosphorus, iron and magnesium had been discovered. Several foreign companies had been invited to exploit those minerals. The agreements were signed between the colonial authorities and the companies. The indigenous inhabitants had no opportunity to participate in the exploitation of such resources; the Spaniards were masters and the people were slaves in their own country.

80. Mr. KAYUKWA (Democratic Republic of the Congo) assured the petitioners of his delegation's full support in their struggle for independence.

81. Mr. DIALLO Seydou (Guinea) said that it was clear from the petitioners' statements that the indigenous people of the Territory were denied almost all right to education. It seemed that nothing was being done to ensure that the necessary cadres would be in existence when the Territory became independent. He was not in favour of making independence conditional on prior preparation, but he disliked seeing an administering Power fail to prepare a people

for the responsibilities of independence, thus creating problems for the United Nations later. He would like to know from the petitioners whether they were ready for independence without any prior conditions.

82. Mr. BRAIKA OULD AHMED LAHCEN (Front de libération du Sahara sous domination coloniale espagnole) said that the people were ready for independence and hoped that peace-loving nations would help them to meet the problems with which they would be faced.

83. Mr. DIALLO Seydou (Guinea) said that his country felt bound to support independence for all peoples and was fully satisfied with the petitioner's reply. He would have some questions to put to the administering Power, however, at a subsequent meeting.

84. The CHAIRMAN said that the hearing of the petitioners would be resumed at the following meeting.

The petitioners withdrew.

85. Mr. DE PINIES (Spain) said that he would reply at the following meeting to certain assertions made by the petitioners.

Requests for hearings (continued)

REQUESTS CONCERNING OMAN (AGENDA ITEM 70) (continued)

86. The CHAIRMAN said that he had received a request for a hearing concerning the question of Oman. If there were no objections, that request would be circulated as a Committee document.

It was so decided.^{1/}

The meeting rose at 12 midnight.

^{1/} The request was subsequently circulated as document A/C.4/674/Add.1.