



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/44/PV.74
19 December 1989

ENGLISH

Forty-fourth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 5 December 1989, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. GARBA

(Nigeria)

later:

Mr. TELLMANN
(Vice-President)

(Norway)

- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [18]

- (a) 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
- (b) Reports of the Secretary-General
- (c) Draft resolutions
- (d) Draft decision

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 18

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

- (a) 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 (A/44/23, A/AC.109/975 and Add.1, A/AC.109/976-978, A/AC.109/979 and Add.1, A/AC.109/980, A/AC.982-990, A/AC.109/992-998, A/AC.109/999/Rev.1, A/AC.109/1000, A/AC.109/1007 and Corr.1)
- (b) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/44/634 and Corr.1, A/44/800)
- (c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/44/23 (Part I), chap. II, para. 5, A/44/L.55, A/44/L.56)
- (d) DRAFT DECISION (A/44/L.57)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at noon. If I hear no objection I shall consider that the Assembly agrees to this proposal.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request representatives wishing to participate in the debate to put their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, 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, who will present the Committee's report.

Mr. SHAHEED (Syrian Arab Republic), 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 (Special Committee of 24): I have the honour to present to the General Assembly for its consideration the report of the Special Committee (A/44/23) covering its work during 1989.

(Mr. Shaheed, Rapporteur,
Special Committee of 24)

The report, which relates, inter alia, to agenda item 18, is submitted in accordance with paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 43/45, of 22 November 1988, on the implementation of the Declaration, by which the Assembly requested the Special Committee to continue to seek suitable means for the immediate and full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) in all Territories that have not yet attained independence and, in particular, to formulate specific proposals for the elimination of other remaining manifestations of colonialism.

In pursuance of that resolution and other related resolutions the Special Committee reviewed during the year the implementation of the Declaration with regard to the remaining Territories and formulated a series of recommendations with a view to accelerating the pace of decolonization and facilitating the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the peoples in those Territories.

(Mr. Shaheed, Rapporteur,
Special Committee of 24)

In addition, the Special Committee submitted recommendations relating specifically to activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration; military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration; the implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations; and information transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter.

The Special Committee also devoted considerable attention during the year to the decolonization of the small island Territories. In that connection, the Special Committee was especially mindful of the fact that the United Nations visiting missions have provided effective means of ascertaining the situation in those small Territories. Accordingly, it once again stressed the importance of dispatching such missions to colonial Territories in order to facilitate the speedy implementation of the Declaration.

Within the context of the question of the list of Territories to which the Declaration is applicable, the Committee also took up separately an item entitled "Special Committee decision of 16 August 1988 concerning Puerto Rico". In that regard, the Committee, following the hearing of representatives of a number of organizations, took a further decision on the item, as set out in chapter I of the report.

As reflected in chapter III of its report, the Special Committee carried out a number of other tasks entrusted to it by the General Assembly under various resolutions, as well as those arising from its own previous decisions, relating to the question of publicity to be given to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

(Mr. Shaheed; Rapporteur,
Special Committee of 24)

In that regard, the Committee again stressed the need to mobilize world public opinion to assist effectively the peoples of the colonial Territories and, in particular, to intensify the widespread and continuous dissemination of information on the struggle being waged by the peoples concerned in southern Africa to restore their human rights. Bearing in mind the important role being played in the decolonization process by an increasing number of non-governmental organizations, the Special Committee once again requested those organizations to continue to intensify their campaign against the evils and dangers of colonialism.

During the year the Committee took part in a number of international conferences and meetings convened by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. In the light of the constructive results achieved in that regard, and in keeping with related decisions of the Assembly, the Committee decided to continue to maintain close contact with the organizations concerned and to participate in the related conferences, seminars and other special meetings dealing with decolonization arranged by those organizations, as well as by other United Nations bodies concerned.

I should like to draw the attention of members to the proposals outlined in chapter I, section K, entitled "Future work", which the Committee hopes will meet with the Assembly's approval in order to enable it to proceed with the effective discharge of the task that remains to be completed.

The Special Committee has recommended that the General Assembly renew its appeal to the administering Powers concerned to take all necessary steps for the implementation of the Declaration and the relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples of the Territories concerned. In that connection, the Special Committee, bearing in mind the useful results achieved as a consequence of the active participation of the administering

(Mr. Shaheed, Rapporteur,
Special Committee of 24)

Powers in its work, recommended that the General Assembly again urge the Administering Powers to co-operate or continue to co-operate with the Committee in the discharge of its mandate and, in particular, to participate actively in its work relating to the Territories under their respective Administration.

Further, bearing in mind the affirmation by the General Assembly that direct association of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies is an effective means of promoting the progress of the peoples in those Territories towards a position of equality with States Members of the United Nations, the Special Committee recommended that the General Assembly invite the administering Powers to allow representatives of the Territories concerned to participate in the discussion in the Fourth Committee and in the Special Committee on the items relating to their respective countries.

The General Assembly may also wish to renew its appeal to all States, specialized agencies and other organizations within the United Nations system to comply with the various requests addressed to them by the United Nations in its resolutions on the question of decolonization.

The year 1990 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In that connection, the Special Committee has formulated a series of recommendations for consideration by the Assembly, as set out in chapter II of the report now before the Assembly. By adopting the draft resolution contained in paragraph 5 of the chapter the Assembly would endorse the programme of activities to be undertaken by the United Nations bodies concerned, the United Nations system of organizations, Member States and non-governmental organizations in observance of the anniversary.

(Mr. Shaheed, Rapporteur,
Special Committee of 24)

In the preparation of the proposed programme, the Chairman of the Special Committee held consultations throughout the year with all concerned. The contributions he made in this connection are appreciated by the members of the Special Committee.

In conclusion, the Special Committee recommends that, in approving the programme of work outlined in chapter I, and the programme of activities for 1990 to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, as set out in chapter II, the General Assembly also make adequate financial provisions to cover all the activities envisaged by the Committee in 1990. Finally, the Committee expresses the hope that the Secretary-General will continue to provide it with all the facilities and personnel necessary for the discharge of its mandate.

On behalf of the Special Committee, I commend the report to the attention of the General Assembly.

Before concluding, I must express to all the members of the Special Committee and, in particular, to the Chairman, Ambassador Tesfaye Tadesse of Ethiopia, the three Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Oscar Oramas Oliva of Cuba, Mr. Sverre Bergh Johansen of Norway and Mr. Lubomir Dolejs of Czechoslovakia, and the Chairman and Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee on Small Territories, Mr. Mohamed Salah Tekaya of Tunisia and Mr. Dag Mjaaland of Norway, respectively, my deep gratitude for the co-operation and support I have received from them, which has greatly facilitated my task as Rapporteur.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): Recent events in Namibia offer the encouraging prospect that soon, very soon, one more decisive step will be taken towards the full implementation of resolution 1514 (XV), the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Despite a very long and difficult struggle, Namibia's people are now making an effort to put the many years of bitterness, betrayal and false hope behind them. Today, a new - but none the less cautious - optimism abounds in Namibia as its people work together to chart their country's future. We extend to them our congratulations on the successful conclusion of the election of the members of their Constituent Assembly. We offer them our encouragement, and wish them well.

We congratulate the South West Africa People's Organization and all of the Namibian political parties. Their courage, their statesmanship and their vision are rare, and bode well for Namibia's future. The conciliatory approach being taken will benefit not only Namibia, but also the entire region of southern Africa.

It is appropriate that Namibia is now in the process of assuming its rightful place within the community of nations during President Garba's outstanding stewardship of the General Assembly. What better symbol of Africa's perseverance and resolve than to have Namibia achieve its political independence during the presidency of such a distinguished son of Africa?

All of us should rightfully be euphoric at the current political evolution of Namibia. However, we must also understand the rather formidable obstacles that remain. Foremost amongst these obstacles, of course, are the very legitimate questions that exist concerning the long-term intentions of those who currently govern in Pretoria. South Africa is still a major political and economic factor in Namibia. This is a reality which we cannot ignore and which Namibia cannot escape.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Political independence is administrative independence. It is by no stretch of the imagination economic independence. Every former political colony knows this, and knows it well. Each and every day, every one of us grapples with the consequences of this fact. Only time will tell how successful Namibia will be in facing this reality. Only time will tell how forthcoming the international community will be in providing assistance to Namibia's efforts to address the economic and social consequences that are the legacies of colonialism.

In the course of the current session of the General Assembly, almost every delegation has, at one time or another, commented upon what is generally perceived to be an improved international climate. In a sense, the area of decolonization is one of those areas in which the climate is somewhat better now than it was in the past. In respect of Western Sahara, the parties to the conflict met and talked earlier this year in the historic city of Marrakech. It is to be hoped that this will eventually lead to a process that could contribute to a just and lasting solution to the conflict. The Fourth Committee has, by consensus, adopted an important draft resolution which we hope will encourage the parties to continue their search for common ground and a settlement. The fact that, for the first time since 1983, delegations were not asked to vote on the issue of Western Sahara means that the ongoing efforts of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and those of the Secretary-General of this Organization will be strengthened. We offer them our encouragement and our support as they endeavour to help the parties find a mutually acceptable solution which will benefit not only the people of Western Sahara, but also the other peoples of the Maghreb.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Two years ago, the question of New Caledonia was a hotly debated topic at the United Nations. Three years ago, the debate swirled around whether this issue even belonged at the United Nations. As difficult as it may seem to comprehend, the question was raised whether the United Nations would continue to be guided by its Charter and continue to be a forum for the world's dispossessed and disenfranchised - the victims of colonialism. Today, noticeable and significant changes have occurred. No one objectively disputes the fact that New Caledonia's decolonization is a proper concern of the United Nations. Equally important, New Caledonia's political landscape is now far more peaceful than it was in the recent past.

France and the colonized people of New Caledonia have commenced an unusual process of social and economic engineering. It is our hope that this process will in fact redress the legitimate grievances of those who were never consulted when their country was colonized. No one can dispute that, thus far, this process, and the concurrent dialogue, have had their positive aspects. Perhaps the most dramatic has been the easing of tensions and hostilities which, at one point, threatened to escalate into a full-fledged military conflict fraught with dire possibilities.

This year, as last year, the Fourth Committee, following the recommendation of the Committee of 24, adopted, by consensus, a draft resolution which is the product of extensive consultations, negotiations and compromise. Although the draft resolution is certainly not perfect - few resolutions are - it enjoys our support.

We hope that the important process under way in New Caledonia will continue. We pray that trust and confidence-building measures, will continue to replace the old hatreds and suspicions. However, we will always bear in mind that it is New

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

Caledonia's indigenous population, the Kanaks, who have been colonized. Therefore, it is their legitimate aspirations that must be the focus of efforts to bring New Caledonia out of the colonial and into the modern era. It is the Kanaks whose land was taken. It is the Kanaks whose identities were denied and whose culture was disparaged. It is the Kanaks who have paid the highest price for the economic development of certain sectors of New Caledonia's economy. Therefore it is the Kanaks who now appeal for justice and who legitimately claim the right to determine who they are and what they shall be.

New Caledonia is a land of great promise. To realize its full potential, all of its people must share in its future. This can be achieved only by encouraging the construction of mutual respect, legal equality, social tolerance and economic justice as integral components of New Caledonia's political evolution.

We trust that New Caledonia's colonized people will, in a manner consistent with the principles and practices of the United Nations, be permitted to exercise their right of self-determination and gain their political independence. As we, the international community, prepare to embark on the last decade of the twentieth century, a decade dedicated to the total eradication of colonialism, we can accept nothing less.

A current feature of our debates on the decolonization process is the view of a small number of delegations that decolonization should no longer be a high priority of the United Nations. They argue that this process is now so near completion that our focus should shift to other areas of concern. They propose a number of changes that will alter the manner in which decolonization matters are considered at the United Nations. We believe that there may be some merit in a few of the proposals we have heard and that they warrant our consideration. After all, none of us can quarrel with ideas which could enhance our effectiveness. However,

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with all due respect, we are very reluctant to join in efforts to fix something which is not only not broken, but is in fact working particularly well.

One of the reasons the decolonization process has achieved as much success as it has and is now entering a decisive state is the effectiveness of the United Nations decolonization machinery. Were the decolonization process not so effective, we could more readily understand to need to consider altering it. However, in fairness to the remaining non-self-governing territories and colonized peoples, we are far less inclined to tamper with success in this important area. This is particularly true when the foremost proponents of altering the process include those who are not currently discharging their obligations under the Charter by co-operating with the United Nations in the decolonization process.

In our view, the most effective manner in which to modify the United Nations decolonization machinery is for the remaining administrative Powers simply to help accelerate the decolonization process. A good beginning would be for all administering Powers, without a single exception, to discharge their explicit obligations under Article 73 of the Charter. Nothing could be clearer.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

In the course of its recent deliberations the Fourth Committee stressed the need to continue dispatching visiting missions to colonial territories. It also urged the administering Powers concerned to co-operate and to permit access to the Non-Self-Governing Territories by such missions.

Our delegation will support the various recommendations of the Fourth Committee. We find them to be moderate, restrained and reasonable. We also find them to be perfectly consistent with the undertakings Vanuatu made when it joined the United Nations shortly after gaining its own political independence.

This year I was accorded the honour of being the Chairman of the Fourth Committee. I was deeply touched by this honour and the opportunity it afforded me to work so closely with the outstanding professionals of the Secretariat staff of the Committee and the members of the Bureau. Once again I extend to them my great appreciation of their efforts and their effectiveness. They symbolize not only the best qualities of the United Nations, but also the best qualities of mankind.

In a similar vein we once again salute and applaud the Special Committee on decolonization, under the effective leadership of Mr. Tesfaye Tadesse, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, as well as the United Nations Council for Namibia under the effective leadership of Lieutenant General Peter Dingi Zuze, Permanent Representative of Zambia, on their outstanding efforts. They and the Secretary-General and his staff, through their tireless efforts, have helped to bring us one step closer to the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

As we celebrate their recent achievements and the generally improved international climate, let us remember that there is still important work to be

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done in the area of decolonization. Let us remember that throughout the world there are still people in need waiting to be invited to sit at our table and partake of the great feast of freedom. Let us not turn them away. Let us not deny them their rightful seat at the table.

Mrs. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): Almost 30 years have passed since the General Assembly, in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, acknowledged that all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory and that inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.

That Declaration, which is essentially the rejection of colonialism, its greed and the injustices deriving from it, has through its clear statement changed the course of history. To date 80 countries, either directly or indirectly, owe to it their accession or return to independence.

The present positive trend in the international situation provides us with an opportunity to take stock of decolonization and to mobilize our efforts to complete the task begun and make the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism a more tangible reality than 10 years of merely good intentions.

In this connection we cannot stress too strongly the role of the United Nations. A scant 50 years ago the idea that States could apply to an international body to put an end to wars and settle conflicts bordered on utopianism. Nevertheless, without claiming to be the world's conscience or to be able to right all wrongs, our Organization is succeeding, with tact but also with tenacity, in removing ambiguities and overcoming hesitations. We would encourage it to continue in its role of mediation and co-ordination.

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

Recent months have demonstrated this paramount role of the United Nations in the process of decolonization, in particular in Namibia.

Madagascar, which has followed with keen interest the elections held in the Territory, would like to express to the Secretary-General its appreciation of his tireless efforts, to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group for what it has accomplished, and to all men and women of good will who, near or far, have contributed to the success of that essential stage in Namibia's progress to independence. The international community is now focusing its attention on the work of the Constituent Assembly, and Madagascar would encourage the Namibians to work, without distinction as to race or political hue, for the reconstruction and development of their homeland and towards building an egalitarian and prosperous society.

My delegation would also like to support the Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity in their joint efforts to find a peaceful solution of the question of Western Sahara. We were heartened to note the establishment of the Technical Commission to clarify the terms and ways and means of carrying out peace proposals. We are convinced that despite the difficulties which still remain and certain regrettable delays, the Kingdom of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front will arrive at a brotherly understanding without further bloodshed.

A great deal has been done - and we would here like to commend the Committee of 24 on its perseverance and devotion - but a great deal still remains to be done. Item 18 is still on this Assembly's agenda because, despite undeniable results, the process of decolonization is by no means completed. Colonialism persists in certain parts of the world, and this because the colonial Powers are reluctant to give up what they regard as rights and advantages to which they are entitled.

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa, Madagascar)

Madagascar, which has experienced colonialism, supports any effort aimed at the liberation of peoples from the anachronistic yoke of colonialism and at their access to independence in conditions compatible with the Charter. We would associate ourselves with the appeal of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade, to the colonial Powers

"to cease obstructing and impeding the elimination of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations, to refrain from the exploitation of human and material resources of the colonial territories, and to cease their use of such territories for military ends, including the use or storage of nuclear arms, which represents a serious obstacle to the exercise by the peoples of said territories of the inalienable right to self-determination and independence and also constitutes a threat to their security and the security of neighbouring independent States." (A/44/551, annex, p. 59, para. 2)

To the Non-Self-Governing Territories and other territories which have been either refused or denied independence, we would like to convey the message given in the preamble to General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) concerning the Declaration:

"... the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible".

That is a certainty that those which persist in swimming against the current of history will finally have to accept.

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa,
Madagascar)

Madagascar urges the Administering Authorities of the Territories to set aside their selfish interests and return to the colonized peoples their land and their right fully to enjoy their resources, without interference.

The consequences of colonization are lasting and evil. They do not cease on the day a Territory attains independence. The colonized peoples, which for centuries have been denied their fundamental rights, have not taken part in the progress of the modern world or its construction. That backwardness, deliberately imposed on them by the colonizers, is perpetuated after they attain independence, putting them at the mercy of economic Powers, which thus maintain, although more subtly, their rigid ascendancy. Economic blackmail then becomes an effective means of influencing the future of a people. That is why my delegation, once again fully endorsing the opinion of the Non-Aligned Movement, calls upon the colonial Powers, both past and present, to shoulder their responsibilities and make reparations for the economic, social and cultural consequences of colonialism.

The work of decolonization will be completed only when the formerly colonized peoples have crossed the threshold of development. Only then will the United Nations be able to congratulate itself on having totally eradicated the colonial phenomenon.

One way of speeding up that process is by publicizing what the United Nations is doing. That is why Madagascar is a sponsor of draft resolution A/44/L.56, on the dissemination of information on decolonization, and why we call upon the Department of Public Information to intensify its efforts for the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with a view to the further mobilization of international public opinion in support of complete decolonization.

(Mrs. Rakotondramboa,
Madagascar)

As we are about to enter the last decade of our century, the delegation of Madagascar expresses the hope that, despite the bloody conflicts that have marked the twentieth century, and continue to mark it, it will go down in history as the real age of enlightenment, which has seen the irresistible drive of peoples towards freedom and in which mankind has come to understand that the survival of the human race depends on solidarity between equal individuals.

Mr. ERI (Papua New Guinea): Since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 and 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960 some 75 colonies and Dependent Territories, including Papua New Guinea, have become self-governing or independent. Most, if not all, again including Papua New Guinea, have gained independence with the guidance of the United Nations.

We are not the newest Member of the United Nations, but we are certainly among the new arrivals. We measure the value of our membership and the relevance of the United Nations today by one simple fact: it is no small matter for a former colony to be able to sit down with its colonizers, and to do so in trust and friendship and as an equal partner.

If the history of colonization could be expressed in a few words, I would choose these: nations of strength doing things to, and not always for, peoples of relative weakness. Colonization, no matter how benign, is usually carried out against the wishes of those being colonized.

I shall not talk about the methods of colonization. I wish the Melanesian Kanaks, the Namibians, the Palestinians, the black South Africans, the Sahraoui people and the Kampuchean had suffered as little violence and brutality as we did. Nor do I intend to talk about the results. Good results are often a by-product, and, again, we appear to have been less unlucky than many. The less

(Mr. Eri, Papua New Guinea)

said the better about the manner in which colonial borders were defined, often with a ruler and a setsquare in a kingdom thousands of kilometres away.

The point I wish to make is that colonization does not confine itself to the exploitation of resources and labour. It can be a rape of the senses, and the colonization of a collective mentality can destroy initiative, and breed feelings of inadequacy and inferiority hard to shake off.

On 22 November last year the General Assembly, by resolution 43/47, declared the 1990s the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The international community may have seemed over-optimistic about putting an end to colonialism, as some 19 dependent Territories, with a total population of over 3 million, still remain under colonial domination. But recent developments in some parts of the world, coupled with the Programme of Activities in Observance of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples - a historic Declaration - will give added impetus to the United Nations final goal of complete decolonization.

Papua New Guinea is convinced that the United Nations can continue to play its vital role in all decolonization processes in Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and elsewhere. But the United Nations cannot play that role effectively unless the Member States that make up the Organization give it their full support and extend their solidarity to those peoples struggling to free themselves from the yoke of colonialism.

The results of the recent elections in Namibia are a victory not only for the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), but for Africa's southern region as a whole and for the international community. What happened there is yet another of the United Nations decolonization success stories.

(Mr. Eri, Papua New Guinea)

On Western Sahara, Papua New Guinea is pleased to note that the joint efforts by the United Nations Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the King of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front have brought approval of the peace proposal leading to a referendum on self-determination for the Sahraoui people. Papua New Guinea would encourage all parties to maintain and pursue direct dialogue.

Many of the remaining Non-Self-Governing and Dependent Territories and the only Trust Territory of the United Nations are found in the Pacific region. As the last Trust to be terminated by the Trusteeship Council, Papua New Guinea is closely monitoring developments in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and the other Dependent Territories.

When my Foreign Minister, the Right Honourable Michael Somare, addressed the General Assembly on 12 October, he outlined the Papua New Guinea Government's basic attitude to developments taking place in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

On 2 December 1986 the General Assembly voted to reinscribe New Caledonia on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The current situation in New Caledonia clearly fits the description of colonialism in toto. France is not eager to divest itself of its empire in the Pacific, especially the five archipelagos of Tahiti, the Wallis and Futuna islands, and New Caledonia. Of all those islands, New Caledonia is the most important, because of its strategic mineral wealth - nickel, chrome, iron, manganese and cobalt. The waters in New Caledonia's 200-mile exclusive economic zone are also virtually untapped.

(Mr. Eri, Papua New Guinea)

Strategically, New Caledonia is an important potential backstop for the Centre for Experimentation in the Pacific on Muroroa atoll in Tahiti. With Algeria's independence in 1962, France was forced to move its nuclear-testing programme from the Sahara to the Pacific.

Recent events in New Caledonia clearly demonstrated France's intransigence and total insensitivity to the aspirations of the Melanesian Kanaks to determine their own destiny. While Papua New Guinea recognizes the political pact the tenth Prime Minister of the Fifth Republic, Mr. Michel Rocard, negotiated for New Caledonia, thus granting autonomy to the Kanaks, Papua New Guinea, however, remains sceptical about the sincerity, goodwill and commitment of the French Government to honour the Matignon and other agreements.

As my Foreign Minister remarked in his address to the General Assembly, that while we note the progress being made in New Caledonia:

"... more needs to be done by the Government of France to bring about changes which conform with the aspirations of the people of New Caledonia, especially the indigenous Kanaks". (A/44/PV. 30, p. 49)

Papua New Guinea firmly believes that the active involvement of the United Nations in New Caledonia will dispel any misgivings by the Kanaks about the good intentions of the French Government. Papua New Guinea saw the importance of United Nations visiting missions during its march to independence.

We therefore appeal to the Administering Authority to see its way clear to inviting the United Nations Special Committee on decolonization to dispatch visiting missions to New Caledonia to observe political, social and economic development in New Caledonia. Such a positive attitude by France would put an end to further occurrences of such tragic events as we have witnessed in New Caledonia.

(Mr. Eri, Papua New Guinea)

Papua New Guinea has been and will continue to be committed to the full implementation of the historic 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples wherever there remains vestiges of colonialism throughout the world. We stand ready to lend support to the Melanesian Kanaks of New Caledonia, the Chamorros of Guam, the Palestinians, the black South Africans, the Sahrsoui people and the Khmers in their struggle for independence and freedom.

Some Member States of this body, for the purpose of rationalizing the resources of the United Nations, are proposing to phase out the activities of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly. While such a step may seem relevant, Papua New Guinea firmly believes that the work of the Fourth Committee is very important for those peoples that are still toiling under the yoke of colonialism in some parts of the world.

Finally, we are grateful to the international community for its support and solidarity, but we also ask it to remain vigilant as we continue our fight for freedom and independence.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Ethiopia, who will speak in his capacity as Chairman 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. He will also introduce draft resolutions A/44/L.55 and A/44/L.56.

Mr. TADESSSE (Ethiopia), Chairman 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 (Special Committee of 24): The General Assembly has just heard a succinct account of the work 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 during 1989, which

(Mr. Tadesse, Chairman, Special
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was outlined by the Rapporteur of the Committee, our colleague Mr. Mohammad Najdat Shaheed of the Syrian Arab Republic.

I shall therefore confine my remarks to the main developments and the remaining tasks before us in the field of decolonization.

The past 12 months have witnessed important developments in the field of decolonization. Future generations will remember the year 1989 as the year of the beginning of the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) in Namibia, the year when the Namibian people, after over a century of colonialism and three decades of bitter struggle for freedom, at last succeeded to elect freely their representatives. The Special Committee which, since its establishment and within the framework of its mandate, has been following closely developments in that Territory, can only express its deep satisfaction at this positive outcome leading towards its speedy decolonization.

The Visiting Mission it dispatched to Namibia to observe the elections was able, during its two-week sojourn, to assess and appreciate the deep sense of political maturity demonstrated by the Namibian people. From its discussions with the representatives of the people and many visits to polling stations throughout the Territory, the Mission could observe that the conditions prevailing during the election period were conducive to free elections and that voting proceeded in a smooth and orderly fashion.

It is now the common view that the elections in Namibia were a job well done, owing to the exemplary co-operation of all parties involved, first among them the Namibian people; owing also to the determination of our Secretary-General, the sustained efforts of the Security Council and the unstinted support of the international community at large. However, while we the Members of the

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Organization can be proud of having been a part of that success, we must bear in mind that the United Nations responsibility in the independence process of Namibia does not stop there.

The international community must help ensure that the transitional period immediately following the elections, which constitutes the last but crucial stage of the decolonization process, is successfully completed.

As regards the political issues, the Mission is pleased to note that all parties concerned have accepted the results of the elections, which augurs well for the future of Namibia.

As stated in its report the Mission hopes that the wisdom the Namibian people demonstrated during the electoral process, and the co-operative spirit prevailing among the parties in the Constituent Assembly, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), will continue throughout the transition period and that Namibia will soon take its rightful place among the family of independent nations.

To this end, the process of healing bitter social divisions resulting from decades of apartheid colonialism, and the harmonization of legitimate political tendencies, which has begun through the instrumentality of the Constituent Assembly, should be enhanced towards the realization of full racial equality and national reconciliation.

In respect of the socio-economic spheres, the continuing rehabilitation and resettlement of returnees, the challenge of growing unemployment, reduced budget and poor conditions in housing, health, education and nutrition are but a few of the most pressing problems that need to be urgently addressed.

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The Mission believes that the United Nations should take a leading role in the difficult task of national reconstruction and development by providing ample resources, directed at meeting the urgent requirements of the transition period as well as the longer-term development objectives. In this regard it welcomes the appeal launched by the Security Council to Member States, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to extend generous financial, material and technical support to the Namibian people, both during the transition period and after independence.

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Of no less importance is the need to make the security arrangements necessary to ensure peace and stability in the country. The Namibian authorities need to be assisted in their efforts to evolve a viable national security arrangement to replace the colonial apparatus and to establish a structure that guarantees the unfettered completion of the independence process and ensures that their fledgling State is not made vulnerable to intimidation or destabilization from any quarter.

The Namibian people, particularly those valiant combatants who courageously fought under their liberation movement, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), and the various patriotic forces that have struggled for decades to cast off colonial occupation should feel proud of their achievement. The international community should likewise draw justifiable satisfaction from having made a valuable contribution to bringing the decolonization process to this stage under very difficult conditions.

It is imperative, however, that all efforts be continued unabated in order to ensure that this process, in which much has been invested, is brought to successful completion by the attainment of genuine independence by Namibia with the national unity of its people and the territorial integrity of the country fully restored, in accordance with Security Council resolution 432 (1978).

As we move closer to the independence of Namibia and await the early and peaceful settlement of the question of Western Sahara, it seems apparent that we should adopt a strategy aimed at the acceleration of the process of decolonization in the remaining Territories. It is true that most of those Territories are small, some are remote, some are sparsely populated. Scattered though they may be in

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their geographic location, they all share the same genuine aspiration to a better life, freedom, dignity and self-determination.

The gravity of the situation in some of the larger colonial Territories may for some time during the past 20 years have diverted the attention of the international community from the specific problems of the small ones. The time has now come for us to concentrate our efforts on the situation of those small Territories. While the majority of them are small island territories with similar features in terms of remoteness and size, the problems confronting them in the political, economic and social sectors are often different and therefore require specific solutions.

Despite their small size in terms of land and population, some of those Territories enjoy a degree of economic prosperity based on services, mainly those of tourism and international finance and insurance activities. Many of them, however, owing to their remoteness and the scarcity of their resources, tend to have fragile economies heavily dependent on assistance from the administering Powers concerned and from other foreign sources.

Moreover, because of their geographic location, many of those Territories are vulnerable to natural disasters, often of major proportions, resulting in loss of life and widespread damage and destruction, further burdening their fragile economies and environment. A sad example of that precarious existence is the recent damage caused by hurricane Hugo to some of the Caribbean Territories. In this connection, it is gratifying to note that the administering Powers concerned have taken measures to extend emergency assistance to the populations concerned. In addition, the United Nations system, through its appropriate agencies, as well

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as some Member States and regional organizations, have responded to requests for assistance.

The Special Committee can only reiterate its view that it is the primary responsibility of the administering Powers concerned to promote the development of the economies of the Territories under their administration. It is incumbent upon them to design special development programmes that take into account the vulnerability and the specific conditions in the area and are aimed at improving rapidly the situation in those Territories.

However, while encouraging the transfers of resources required to improve and develop the economies of the small Territories, the international community should see to it that they do not become the victims of ruthless foreign economic interests or dubious businessmen involved in illicit activities such as drug trafficking or money laundering.

Convinced as we are that the exploitation of the natural resources of those Territories should not be undertaken unless it is in the interest of their inhabitants and in accordance with their freely expressed wish, we shall continue to denounce those foreign economic interests which take little account of the fate of the populations concerned and tend to impede the exercise of their right to self-determination. We shall continue to demand the dismantling of all the military bases and other similar arrangements that constitute an impediment to the right of the peoples of those Territories freely to choose their own destiny. We shall continue to oppose the plundering of their marine resources. We shall persist in denouncing those that damage their environment by using those islands and their territorial waters as dumping grounds for their toxic and other wastes.

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At the same time, with the assistance of the administering Powers concerned, we should provide more opportunities for those populations to speak for themselves and make known their views on the issues at stake.

I have no doubt that the forthcoming thirtieth anniversary of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples will provide such opportunities. We must continue to foster public awareness in those Territories and to generate a renewed interest in the fundamental human rights, including the right to self-determination, of the remaining colonial peoples. Should the General Assembly approve the recommendations of the Special Committee with respect to the activities in commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, in 1990, it is the intention of the Special Committee to invite a number of leaders of the small Territories to participate in the seminars that will mark that commemoration. I hope the administering Powers concerned will extend their full co-operation in the matter.

Moreover, their full co-operation will continue to be essential for the work of the Committee in general. I wish to take this opportunity to appeal once more to those that have suspended their participation in the work of the Committee to reconsider their position.

Also, as the timely transmission to the Secretary-General under Article 73 e of the Charter of information on Non-Self-Governing Territories continues to be of great importance to the work of the Committee, we once again call upon the administering Powers to discharge their responsibility in time.

Last but not least, the dispatch of periodic visiting missions to those Territories remains the most appropriate means for the Committee to gather

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first-hand and comprehensive information on the Territories concerned. It is our hope that the administering Powers will soon show renewed interest in those visits.

At its forty-third session the General Assembly, by its resolution 43/47, solemnly declared the period 1990-2000 the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session a report that would enable the Assembly to consider and adopt an action plan aimed at ushering in, in the twenty-first century, a world free from colonialism.

I trust that the programme of action that the Secretary-General will propose will give us the opportunity to reflect upon the case of the small Territories. Without anticipating the programme he may suggest, I can assure the Assembly that the Special Committee will co-operate fully and do its utmost to enhance the process of self-determination and independence so that no colony will remain on earth when the bell of history tolls for the end of the century.

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I now have the honour, on behalf of the sponsors, to introduce the two draft resolutions submitted under item 18. They are contained in documents A/44/L.55 and A/44/L.56.

Draft resolution A/44/L.55 deals with the general aspects of decolonization and by it, among other things, the Assembly would renew the mandate of the Special Committee and approve its programme of work for 1990.

Draft resolution A/44/L.56 concerns the dissemination of information on decolonization and by it the Assembly would once again stress the importance of publicity as an instrument for furthering the aims and purposes of the Charter and the Declaration.

Speaking on behalf of the sponsors, I wish to commend these draft proposals to the members of the Assembly for their attention and - I hope - their unanimous approval.

Mr. RUTSCHAN (German Democratic Republic): As in previous years, the General Assembly has to deal with an anachronism of history. Notwithstanding the fact that the old colonial empires have long since collapsed, that at long last the bell of freedom is about to ring for Namibia, much remains to be done before the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted as resolution 1514 (XV) on 14 December 1960, is fully implemented in letter and in spirit.

Vestiges of colonial exploitation and oppression continue to exist. Quite a few peoples are being deprived of the right to independence and self-determination. This situation is inconsistent with the lessons of history, which bear out the fact that the implementation of the principles of self-determination and equal rights for all peoples as binding norms of

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international law is the only way towards building lasting peace and ensuring the free development of the nations on our globe.

It was therefore only logical for the General Assembly to adopt a resolution declaring the last decade of the twentieth century the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, in an overall effort to ensure that mankind might enter the next millenium without colonialism still existing. What we would hope, however, is that it will take the international community far less than 10 years eventually to eradicate the colonial practices that still persist in today's world.

With the independence process now having reached the decisive phase in Namibia, the substantive progress achieved in solving that question shows quite clearly, as the German Democratic Republic sees it, that the United Nations now indeed has greater possibilities and also capabilities in terms of its own contribution to negotiated political settlements of conflicts, including the complex issues regarding colonialism. It also shows that such solutions will not elude us if and when there is the requisite political resolve, a readiness for compromise and due respect for the legitimate interests of all sides involved. Drawing upon the positive experience gained in the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), the United Nations should now bring its international authority to bear in order to eliminate the remaining colonial structures and guarantee the enjoyment of the rights to independence and self-determination by peoples that are still under colonial domination. Those peoples must in the end have the chance to decide freely which way they want to go towards political, economic and social development. Any attempt designed to divorce the granting of the right to independence from the right to self-determination and to establish relationships of economic dependence and other conditions detrimental to the interests of the peoples involved is patently

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irreconcilable with the letter and spirit of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

Today the strengthening of international peace and security really has become the common concern of all States and peoples, regardless of their size or geographical location. They all have rights and duties and they are all called upon to make their distinct contribution to efforts in that direction. Obsolete power structures and dependencies must not prevent them from doing that.

Specific responsibility devolves upon the administering Powers in colonial Territories. They must make every effort to ensure that the populations in those Territories can properly prepare for statehood and independence without interference.

In the view of the German Democratic Republic that requires, among other moves, that the military bases and other military installations in those Territories be dismantled without delay. That is all the more imperative in the light of the fact that such installations and facilities are being used for perpetuating colonial-style dependencies and for stifling progressive developments. More often than not they are a potential source of interference in the internal affairs of other States. Justifiably, numerous resolutions and decisions adopted by the General Assembly call for the immediate dismantling of those installations and facilities. The achievement of that objective would serve both to improve the international situation and to facilitate progress in the quest for peace and disarmament.

The German Democratic Republic will continue to join in all efforts aimed at making headway on that path. Solidarity with all peoples under colonial domination and racial oppression, and active support for the universal implementation of the

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principles of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples remain fundamental tenets of the foreign policy of my country in its quest for peace, understanding and equitable co-operation between the nations on our globe.

Mrs. FLOREZ PRIDA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): One of the items which should command the greatest attention from the international community at this forty-fourth session of the General Assembly is the 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. That is due above all to the embarrassing fact that, as we approach the end of the present millennium, there are still over 20 territories on our planet which are languishing under the colonial yoke and living in the despair which that inevitably brings to millions of human beings.

(Mrs. Florez Prida, Cuba)

Since it was established the United Nations has been determined not only to save the world from the scourge of war, maintain international peace and security, and promote co-operation in a number of important areas, but to ensure the self-determination of peoples and enhance the dignity of the human being. The only way fully to respond to the legacy of those that made possible the birth and further development of the Organization is by eradicating once and for all the infamous practice of colonialism.

There are still colonial Territories throughout the world and all of them, without exception, experience the same practices as have helped to make colonialism an abomination in the era of space exploration and the scientific and technological revolution. The fact that the actions of the various metropolitan countries lead to the colonized Territories being stripped of their culture and alienated increasingly from their traditions, their national character and even their language, is compounded by their exploitation as sources of raw materials and cheap labour, which distorts their economy and makes them increasingly dependent, and by their use, almost without exception, as military bases - sometimes nuclear bases - and as testing grounds for new weapons, frequently at the risk of the life and health of the indigenous inhabitants. The Special Committee, at its session this year, has adopted relevant draft resolutions that relate to these phenomena and utterly condemn them.

Latin America also has its share of colonialism, and the colonial case of Puerto Rico has found echo and continues to be permanently reflected not only in the deliberations of the Special Committee on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) but also in the documents of important international bodies and groups, such as the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The Heads of State or Government of the Movement, at their ninth Conference, held in Belgrade from 4 to 7 September this year, reiterated that

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"Puerto Rico is an integral part of Latin America and the Caribbean on the basis of historical, cultural and geographical links and reaffirmed their support for the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV)". (A/44/551, p. 31, para. 13)

They emphasized that

"It is indispensable that any consultation relative to the political status of Puerto Rico should be done under such conditions as would guarantee the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence, without coercion or pressure." (ibid.)

Given the importance that many countries, including my own, attach to the colonial case of Puerto Rico, the Special Committee once again this year adopted a draft resolution that not only reaffirms the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), but also expresses its hope and that of the international community -

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the United States on a point of order.

Mr. MacDOUGAL (United States of America): General Assembly resolution 748 (VIII) removed Puerto Rico from the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories after the people of Puerto Rico chose its status as a commonwealth in a constitutional referendum. A vote in the General Assembly removed the question of Puerto Rico from its agenda and thereby recognized that the subject should not be considered by the United Nations.

There are a few countries which persistently refuse to accept the Puerto Rican people's acts of self-determination. It is ironic that those same countries are those that deny their own people the freedoms long enjoyed by Puerto Ricans.

(Mr. MacDougal, United States)

Particularly at this time of historic political change, my delegation suggests that the speaker would best serve by emulating at home the democratic examples of Puerto Rico instead of trying to contrive a non-existent decolonization here.

The PRESIDENT: The statement of the representative of the United States should have been made in exercise of the right of reply, not on a point of order.

I ask the representative of Cuba to continue her statement.

Mrs. FLOREZ PRIDA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): First, Mr. President, I should like to ask you to make it clear to the representative of the United States that paragraphs 40 to 49 of the report of the Special Committee (A/44/23 (Part I)) contains information on the colonial case of Puerto Rico. It is therefore relevant for me to refer to that case, since it has been discussed by the Special Committee.

As I was saying, given the importance that many countries, including my own, attach to the colonial case of Puerto Rico, the Special Committee once again this year adopted a resolution that not only reaffirms the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), but also expresses its hope and that of the international community that in any consultations the people of Puerto Rico will be able to exercise without hindrance its right to self-determination and independence, with explicit recognition of its sovereignty and full political equality, in conformity with the tenets of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

In the case of Western Sahara, we consider it a positive sign that the draft resolution on this subject this year was adopted by consensus by the Fourth Committee.

The recent conclusion of the elections in Namibia to its constituent Assembly brings closer the independence of that Territory. Nevertheless, the period of transition that now begins is not without dangers; nor is it necessarily immune

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to situations that may impede the success of the process. It is therefore essential that we all remain vigilant in order to uproot all vestiges of colonialism from Namibian Territory and guarantee its people full and unrestricted exercise of self-determination and accession to independence. The United Nations continues to bear full responsibility for the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) in its entirety and the Council must therefore guarantee, by adopting the necessary measures, the full implementation of that resolution in its original form and definitively.

In accordance with resolution 43/47, of 22 November 1988, next year will mark the beginning of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the aim of which is to ensure that the practice of colonialism will have been eradicated from the face of the earth before the end of the present millennium. However, for that to be possible the international community, as the continuation of the policy of decolonization pursued by the United Nations from 1950 to 1960, which made a decisive contribution to more than doubling the membership of the Organization, must take full account of the fact that all nations, irrespective of size, population, geographic location, economic characteristics or distance from major markets, have every right to exercise self-determination and enjoy full independence. We cannot forget for a moment that as long as a single Territory remains under colonial domination the task of the United Nations in the area of decolonization will not have been completed, nor will we have done our duty with regard to the oppressed peoples of the world.

Mr. ZIZKA (Czechoslovakia): Recently, an improvement in the situation in international relations has taken place. The process of establishing general security and building a world free of violence and nuclear weapons is gaining

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strength. A key place in this process is that of the concept of free choice of development by each and every nation. We are convinced of the universal applicability of that principle in international relations, especially today, when the very survival of mankind has become the essential problem.*

*Mr. Tellmann (Norway), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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The ensuring of free choice and of the exercise of the right to self-determination constitutes the basis of a document of historic importance - the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. When commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of its adoption next year we will undoubtedly note that its importance and viability have been confirmed by practice. The Declaration has played and will continue to play an extraordinary role in support of the just struggle of the colonial nations for freedom and independence and in the mobilization of the world community.

The success of the international community in its struggle for the eradication of colonialism is one of the most significant achievements of modern history. Our Organization has also made an important contribution through its decolonization activities. It is encouraging that only a few of the originally considerable number of colonial territories remain on the world map today. In spite of this, we must constantly bear in mind that the process of decolonization - as the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, said in his statement at the opening of the summer session of the Committee of 24 - is far from completed.

In spite of the significant changes that have occurred in the world in the course of the past few decades, the substance of relations between the administering Powers and dependent Territories has not changed. The relevant United Nations resolutions have repeatedly emphasized that the perpetuation of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations is contrary to the United Nations Charter and to the Declaration. Similarly incompatible with those documents is the violation of the right to self-determination and of the other rights of the population of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The preservation of colonialism runs counter also to the ideological, philosophical and ethical values of all mankind today. Therefore it is not possible to agree with efforts to create the impression

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that the decolonization process is practically complete, or with attempts to belittle the persistent manifestations of colonialism.

For a number of years United Nations bodies working on decolonization have dealt with the situation in Namibia, the last big colony on the African continent. Those endeavours of ours, together with the relentless and heroic struggle of the people of Namibia, the broad international support and also, last but not least, the positive changes in the international climate have been reflected favourably in the approaches of the parties concerned, and have together influenced the creation of the present, undoubtedly hopeful, situation. The New York agreements of last year opened the way for the initiation of the process of the decolonization of Namibia on the basis of a United Nations plan and have become evidence of the real opportunities inherent in methods for the peaceful settlement of disputes. In this endeavour the holding of general elections in Namibia was of key importance. However, that does not mean the completion of the whole process. The Constituent Assembly should draw up a constitution which will reflect the will of the Namibian people and result in the declaration of a new State.

The question of Namibia is part of a complex of problems in southern Africa. The eradication of the system of apartheid in South Africa, which is a source of tension in that country and in the whole subregion, was and still is a key to the solution of those problems. The relationship between apartheid and the question of Namibia is obvious. The future of the new State of Namibia, its security and stability, will also depend on the course taken by the South African Government on the question of apartheid. The real political will of the South African régime will be judged only by deeds. We are convinced that continued international pressure must be kept on the South African régime. Such pressure has an irreplaceable role as an effective and yet peaceful contribution by the international community to the elimination of the system of apartheid.

(Mr. Zizka, Czechoslovakia)

An inseparable component of the decolonization efforts is constituted by the struggle for the implementation of the right to self-determination of the population of the so-called small dependent territories. In spite of their own specifics, they must also be enabled to choose freely the way of their further development. These territories are fully covered by the provisions of the Declaration and, accordingly, must be enabled to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence. No one can be reticent about allegations of the negligible number and size of those territories, about the small size and the inadequacy of the preparedness of their populations to exercise their right to self-determination. Actually, all of those territories are on the Special Committee's decolonization list, including a colonial territory which is discussed in chapter I, paragraphs 40 to 49, of its report (A/44/23) and for which there is also given a relevant resolution.

The successful completion of decolonization in the next decade must become the touchstone of the effectiveness of the Organization. At the end of the twentieth century, when democratization and humanization of international relations are becoming conditions for the essential development of human civilization, the requirement of undelayed and sweeping decolonization is being raised in an unusually strong and urgent manner. The United Nations, its respective bodies and the international organizations of its system must fully honour the role to which the international community committed itself almost 30 years ago - to grant freedom and independence to all nations without exception.

Mr. BOUIS NO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Our Organization has today reached a special period in its history. Perhaps for the first time we can confidently list achievements that are of fundamental importance for further progress towards a durable, non-violent world, free from repression and inequality. The switch from confrontation to co-operation

(Mr. Boutsko, Ukrainian SSR)

in resolving difficult international problems is now yielding fruit and that is very gratifying. We are all aware of how difficult it has been to take each new step and we realize how far these processes are from completion but the peoples have become more certain and their hopes have become stronger.

It is precisely in this light that we regard the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Next year the world community will be celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of this historic document and there can be no doubt that it will be evaluated on its merits. The Declaration, together with the other resolutions and decisions of the United Nations adopted in its wake, has defined the elimination of colonialism as one of the main tasks of world politics and has played an important part in the inevitable downfall of colonial empires.

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The irrefutable fact that during this period dozens of young States have embarked upon the course of independent existence is evidence of how fruitful the decolonialization process has been. By becoming full-fledged Members of the United Nations they have given it a universal character in keeping with today's diverse but integrated world. We were particularly gratified to learn of the results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly of Namibia and the victory in the elections won by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which for more than 20 years has spearheaded the struggle for the country's liberation from its illegal occupation. We congratulate the Namibian people on this signal victory and wish it prosperity, peace and national accord. Thus, under the aegis of the United Nations yet another independent State has come into being. It is only just for us to pay a tribute to the Security Council for the firm position it took, to the Secretary-General for his constant efforts, and to the front-line States and the Organization of African Unity for their valiant support. An important part was also played by those who participated in the New York agreements of 1988 which paved the way to breaking the deadlock in the conflict. Collective actions have been rewarded. This is further proof that even the most difficult problems can be solved by joint efforts and by political means. The Ukrainian SSR sees the future mission of the United Nations as being to complete the process of the national liberation of Namibia and to ensure the effective and complete implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). It is now particularly important that all the parties concerned strictly observe and comply with their obligations under the settlement plan. We can understand the appeals for vigilance we have heard in this Hall. As long as the apartheid régime persists - a régime that is the root cause of the chronic tension in the southern part of the African continent, there will continue to be anxiety about peace and security in that part of the world.

(Mr. Boutsko, Ukrainian SSR)

Despite the reassuring statements and partially positive steps taken by the De Klerk Administration, we still cannot say that there have been any fundamentally important changes in South Africa or that the apartheid régime has been relinquished. That is why we cannot accept appeals to give up comprehensive sanctions against the Pretoria régime, or ever entertain the idea of co-operating with South Africa in the political, military, nuclear, economic and other fields. Examples of such co-operation abound in the reports and other United Nations materials, the Special Committee on Decolonization, and the Special Committee against Apartheid.

Many years of experience confirm that sanctions, boycotts, isolation and the impossibility of putting down the growing resistance of the people by force of arms or repression are forcing the racist régime to make concessions. We are not inclined to underestimate these concessions, but as our popular saying has it: "one swallow does not make a summer". Our detailed position in this connection was set forth during the Assembly's discussion of the item on the policy of apartheid of the South African Government. We shall have occasion to revert to this soon at the special session of the General Assembly. Now I should simply like to emphasize that we support the Declaration of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), in which all countries are called on to increase their pressure on the forces of apartheid in order to speed up its dismantling by peaceful means. We believe that in this period that is so special for South Africa, co-operation between the Special Committee on decolonization and the Special Committee against Apartheid must be stepped up through co-ordination of their activities in order to normalize the situation in that part of the world as quickly as possible. Everything must be done to ensure that the political settlement process is not placed in jeopardy but, rather, gains in strength and dynamism.

(Mr. Boutsko, Ukrainian SSR)

The fall of the last old-style colony in the southern part of Africa does not mean, unfortunately, that we have said good-bye for good to colonialism. On the list of the decolonization Committee there are still about 20 so-called small Territories whose fate is not a matter of indifference to the United Nations. These are mainly the island Territories in the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Caribbean. The historic Declaration on the Granting of the Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples should be applied to those territories also, without any exception. As established in the Declaration on decolonization no reference to small size or small number of population or low level of socio-economic development can warrant withholding their independence.

Recognizing the right of peoples to opt for their own path of development and the right freely to dispose of their own territory and their human and natural resources is in accordance with the Charter, the spirit of the times and the new thinking. Unfortunately, the administering Powers are not hastening to grant independence, and their economic and military activities and the scant efforts in educational work in the remaining Territories are in fact blocking the peoples' way to free development, and holding up the process of decolonization. Certain Territories are being illegally used as nuclear-testing sites, depositories for nuclear waste, and so on. What sort of educational work is that?

One of the Trust Territories for various specious reasons has had imposed upon it the neo-colonialist status of association - in violation of the Trusteeship obligations. This is annexation, in practical terms. Such acts can have no legal force since they are at variance with the Charter. The fate of the small Territories, as we can see, is extremely nebulous.

In respect of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, proclaimed by the General Assembly at its forty-third session, we think that a positive contribution to achieving the goal of the Decade would be a concrete plan

(Mr. Boutsko, Ukrainian SSR)

of action aimed at ushering in the twenty-first century with a world free from colonialism. In order to attain that noble objective, the work of the Special Committee must be stepped up, and the interests of various fields - economics, information, education and ecology - must be included in its sphere of activities. The Ukrainian SSR will continue to be actively involved in the joint efforts of the world community aimed at eradicating colonialism once and for all.

Mr. SISILO (Solomon Islands): The year 1990 is another commemorative year for the United Nations. It will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Since the adoption of that Declaration 29 years ago a lot has been achieved in the field of decolonization. More than 50 countries, including my own, have exercised their right to self-determination and independence, and in taking their seats in this body have given the United Nations the universality it rightly deserves. Decolonization is indeed one of the success stories of the United Nations.

The election in Namibia last month was but the beginning of another chapter of this success story. We congratulate the people of Namibia and all parties concerned on what has been achieved thus far and we look forward to welcoming an independent Namibia into this community of nations in the very near future.

But the prospect of an independent Namibia should not in any way lull the international community into complacency on issues of decolonization. Much remains to be done, for there are other peoples that also aspire to independence. They too, irrespective of their location, limited resources, or population and territorial size, must be accorded the right, their legitimate right, to make their own decisions in respect of their future.

(Mr. Sisilo, Solomon Islands)

In Article 1 of the United Nations Charter the principle of equal rights of peoples is affirmed. It also affirms the right of peoples to self-determination. General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), adopted in 1960, reaffirms the right of peoples to self-determination and independence, declaring it to be inalienable. Therefore it is incumbent upon us, the international community, to ensure that these fundamental principles are not perverted to shield the narrow interests of a few. That is the responsibility we must continue to shoulder until all forms and manifestations of colonialism are completely eradicated.

On the question of Western Sahara, Solomon Islands is pleased to note that the joint proposals of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the holding of a referendum in Western Sahara have in principle been agreed to by the two parties to the conflict. We urge the parties concerned to give these proposals a chance, which we hope will pave the way for a genuine act of self-determination in Western Sahara.

Although the number of dependent Territories has decreased, there are some Territories that are still under colonial bondage and in their own right are aspiring for independence. For the most part the Territories in question are small not only in size but also in population. This state of affairs must not, however, deter us from according them the same right to self-determination as that accorded to larger Territories.

Closer to home is the question of New Caledonia. We note the positive measures taken by the Administering Authority and are encouraged by the various reforms now under way in that Non-Self-Governing Territory. It is my delegation's hope that these reforms will continue to form the basis for New Caledonia's progress to self-determination. Therefore we urge the parties concerned to maintain their dialogue and refrain from acts of violence.

(Mr. Sisilo, Solomon Islands)

Having said that, I must state that, in an act of self-determination in New Caledonia, Solomon Islands places a premium on the aspirations of the indigenous population - the Kanaks. It is the Kanaks who are victims of colonialism, and it is the Kanaks who are requesting their legitimate right to self-determination. I must also reaffirm the conviction of my Government that a free and genuine act of self-determination in New Caledonia must be consistent with the principles and practices of the United Nations. Therefore it is our ardent hope that the Administering Authority will in the very near future co-operate with the United Nations as called for under Article 73 (e) of the Charter and also invite United Nations visiting missions to New Caledonia. This will ensure the speedy implementation of the Declaration.

Decolonization and the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination are fundamental principles of our Organization, and consequently their full implementation remains a priority goal. Colonialism must come to an end. As regards the fate of colonialism, let me conclude by recalling the very appropriate words spoken at the final meeting of the Fourth Committee, on 20 November 1989, by our friend Mr. Robert Van Lierop, Permanent Representative of Vanuatu and current Chairman of the Fourth Committee. As he so aptly stated:

"If anything can be said with absolute scientific certainty in this somewhat uncertain world of ours, it is simply this: Nothing can last for ever; everything, no matter how good or how bad, must sooner or later come to an end. Some day we will even come to the end of colonialism."

Until that day comes, this is the task and the labour to which we must all now bend our efforts as we enter a decade that we, the United Nations, have dedicated to the complete eradication of colonialism.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.