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DECOLONIZATION



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WORK OF THE 1985 SESSION 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

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INTRODUCTION

At its sixteenth session, in 1961, the General Assembly established the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, consisting of 17 members, and requested the Committee to examine the application of the Declaration, contained in Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, and to make suggestions and recommendations on the progress and extent of the implementation of the Declaration (resolution 1654 (XVI)). At each subsequent session, the Assembly, after considering the report of the Special Committee, adopted a resolution extending the Committee's mandate in relation to the remaining Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories.

By renewing the mandate of the Special Committee in 1984, the General Assembly entrusted the Committee with a dual task to be carried out during the latter's 1985 session:

(a) To undertake a series of activities in observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration (see General Assembly resolution 39/93 and decision 39/420 of 14 December 1984);

(b) 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, to formulate specific proposals for the elimination of the remaining manifestations of colonialism and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fortieth session.

Pursuant to its renewed mandate, the Special Committee undertook during the year a number of commemorative activities, an account of which was published in Decolonization Bulletin No. 23 of October 1985. An account of subsequent commemorative activities of the General Assembly during its fortieth session was given in Decolonization Bulletin No. 24 of December 1985.

Set out below is an account of the activities of the Special Committee during 1985 in the discharge of the above-mentioned mandate in relation to specific items on its agenda, which brings up to date the information on the Committee's work during its 1984 session, contained in Decolonization Bulletin No. 22 of June 1985.

In 1985, the membership of the Special Committee, increased in 1962 to 24 and in 1979 to 25, consisted of: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Congo, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ivory Coast, Mali, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela and Yugoslavia. A vacancy in the membership, created as a result of the withdrawal as from 9 January 1985 of Australia from the Committee, remains unfilled.

I. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

For its 1985 session, the Special Committee re-elected the following members to serve as its officers: Mr. Abdul G. Koroma, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, Chairman; Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva, Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, Mr. Jan Lundvik, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, and Mr. Jiri Pulz, First Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to the United Nations, Vice-Chairmen; and Mr. Ahmad Farouk Arnouss, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, Rapporteur.

In keeping with established practice, the Special Committee decided to maintain its three subsidiary bodies, namely, the Working Group, the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance and the Sub-Committee on Small Territories, with the following membership:

- Working Group: The officers of the Special Committee and its subsidiary bodies (Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia) and Congo and Iran (Islamic Republic of);

- Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Congo, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Mali, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and United Republic of Tanzania.

- Sub-Committee on Small Territories: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Chile, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ivory Coast, Mali, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

Mr. Pulz was re-elected Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance; and Mr. Ammar Amari (Tunisia) served as Chairman, and Mr. Anders Bjurner (Sweden) as Rapporteur, of the Sub-Committee on Small Territories.

In organizing its work for the year, the Special Committee, on the proposal of its Chairman, allocated certain items for consideration in plenary meeting and others to its subsidiary bodies for their consideration and report (see A/AC.109/L.1537 and Corr.1). In considering items on its agenda, the Committee took into account information contained in working papers prepared by the Secretariat, drawn from the annual reports transmitted by administering Powers under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as published sources and material.

The two Sub-Committees met on a regular basis from February through June and submitted reports containing conclusions and recommendations, which the Special Committee considered during its session in August. The Working Group also met and submitted its recommendations to the Committee in August. These conclusions and recommendations served as a basis for the Special Committee's recommendations for consideration by the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly at its fortieth session.

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE'S MEETINGS IN AUGUST AT HEADQUARTERS

A. General

In addition to carrying out a series of activities in observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration, the Special Committee, during its 1985 session, considered all the questions referred to it and submitted to the General Assembly, for consideration at its fortieth session, 14 draft resolutions and four draft decisions. The Assembly adopted the Committee's recommendations at that session with very few changes. A brief account of those recommendations is given below.

B. Question of Namibia

The Special Committee considered the question of Namibia at its extraordinary session held at Tunis in May 1985 within the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration and unanimously adopted a consensus decision on 16 May. An account of the Committee's consideration of this question is contained in Decolonization Bulletin No. 23 of October 1985. The question of Namibia will also be the subject of a future issue of the Decolonization Bulletin.

C. Specific Territories

In addition to the working papers prepared by the Secretariat on specific Territories, the representatives of the administering Powers concerned continued to furnish the Special Committee and the Sub-Committee on Small Territories during the year with supplementary information concerning those Territories. The co-operation of the administering Powers in the work of the Committee further enhanced its capacity to assist in expediting the decolonization process of those Territories.

The Sub-Committee on Small Territories examined the situation prevailing in 13 Territories, mainly located in the Caribbean or Pacific regions. With the active participation in its work of the administering Powers concerned and taking into account information contained in the working papers prepared by the Secretariat, the Sub-Committee drew up conclusions and formulated recommendations, which were subsequently considered and endorsed by its parent body.

In reviewing the Sub-Committee's findings and recommendations relating to small Territories, the Special Committee once again reaffirmed its conviction that such factors as territorial size, geographic location, size of population and limited natural resources should in no way delay the speedy exercise by the peoples of those Territories of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in conformity with the Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The Committee reiterated that it was the obligation of the administering Powers to create such

conditions in their respective Territories as would enable their people to exercise freely and without interference their inalienable right to self-determination and independence; and, in that connection, reaffirmed the importance of fostering an awareness among their peoples of the possibilities open to them in the exercise of that right.

The Special Committee requested the administering Powers, in co-operation with the territorial Governments, to safeguard the inalienable rights of the peoples of colonial Territories to the enjoyment of their natural resources by taking effective measures to ensure their right to own and dispose of those resources and to establish and maintain control of their future development.

The Special Committee urged the administering Powers to take the necessary measures, in co-operation with the territorial Governments, to facilitate a sustained and balanced growth of their economies and to intensify their assistance in the development of all sectors of those economies, with particular emphasis on programmes of diversification, in order to promote the economic and financial viability of those Territories.

The Special Committee requested the administering Powers, in consultation with the territorial Governments, to continue to provide the assistance necessary for the training of qualified local personnel in the skills essential to the development of various sectors of the economy and the society of the Territories.

The Special Committee called upon the administering Powers to ensure that the peoples of the Territories under their administration were not exploited for political, military and other purposes detrimental to their interests. It also urged them to take all necessary steps to preserve and promote the cultures, language and heritage of the indigenous populations of the Territories.

Mindful that United Nations visiting missions provide an effective means of ascertaining the situation in small Territories, the Special Committee considered that the possibility of sending visiting missions to the Territories at an appropriate time should be kept under review.

The Special Committee considered the questions of East Timor, Western Sahara, the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and Gibraltar directly in plenary meeting. With the exception of Gibraltar, the Committee granted a number of requests for hearing and heard petitioners from those Territories.

Taking into account the information furnished to it and having heard statements by the representatives of the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Special Committee adopted a resolution on the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), in which it urged the two Governments to resume negotiations in order to find as soon as possible a peaceful solution to the sovereignty dispute relating to the question.

With respect to the questions of East Timor and Western Sahara, after having heard the statements of the petitioners, the Special Committee agreed that, subject to any directives which the General Assembly might give in that connection at its fortieth session, it should continue consideration of these questions at its 1986 session. The Committee also decided to continue consideration of the question of Gibraltar at its 1986 session.

D. Sending of visiting missions to Territories

In response to requests addressed to them by the General Assembly, the administering Powers have continued to co-operate with the Special Committee by permitting the access of United Nations visiting missions to Territories under their administration. In this regard, the Permanent Representative of New Zealand, on behalf of his Government and the General Fono of Tokelau, extended an invitation to the Committee to send a visiting mission to Tokelau in 1986. The Special Committee decided to accept the invitation with appreciation and authorized the Chairman, on the basis of his consultations, to constitute the visiting mission for the purpose of making a further first-hand assessment of the situation in Tokelau and of ascertaining the wishes of the people of the Territory concerning their future status. The Committee, at the invitation of the Government of New Zealand, dispatched two previous visiting missions to Tokelau, in 1976 and 1981.

On 1 August 1985, the Special Committee adopted a resolution on the question of sending visiting missions to Territories. By this resolution, the Committee, in noting with satisfaction the dispatch in September 1984 of a United Nations Visiting Mission to Anguilla at the invitation of the Government of the United Kingdom and taking note with appreciation of the invitation extended to the Special Committee by the Government of New Zealand to send a visiting mission to Tokelau in 1986, stressed the need to dispatch periodic visiting missions to colonial Territories in order to facilitate the full, speedy and effective implementation of the Declaration with respect to these Territories; called upon the administering Powers concerned to continue to co-operate with the United Nations by permitting the access of visiting missions to the Territories under their administration; and requested its Chairman to continue consultations with the administering Powers concerned and to report thereon to the Special Committee as appropriate.

E. Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Namibia and in all other Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination

In 1985 the Special Committee devoted a number of its meetings to the consideration of the item relating to foreign economic activities in colonial Territories, with particular reference to those in Namibia, and adopted a draft resolution thereon which it recommended for adoption by the General Assembly.

The Special Committee reaffirmed that the natural resources of all Territories under colonial and racist domination were the heritage of the peoples of those Territories and that the exploitation and depletion of those resources by foreign economic interests constituted a direct violation of the rights of the peoples. The Committee thus condemned the intensified activities of those foreign economic, financial and other interests which continued to exploit the natural and human resources of colonial Territories and to accumulate and repatriate huge profits to the detriment of the interests of the inhabitants, particularly in Namibia.

The Special Committee was concerned about the conditions in some of the Territories where foreign economic, financial and other interests deprived the indigenous populations of their rights over the wealth of their countries and where their inhabitants suffered from the loss of land ownership as a result of the failure of the administering Powers concerned to restrict the sale of land to foreigners.

The Special Committee condemned the policies of Governments that continued to support or collaborate with those foreign economic and other interests engaged in exploiting the natural and human resources of Namibia. The Committee strongly condemned also the collusion of the Governments of certain Western and other countries with the racist minority régime of South Africa in the nuclear field and called upon those and all other Governments to refrain from supplying that régime, directly or indirectly, with installations that might enable it to produce uranium, plutonium and other nuclear materials, reactors or military equipment.

The Special Committee declared that all activities of foreign economic interests in Namibia were illegal under international law and that consequently South Africa and all the foreign economic interests operating in Namibia were liable to pay damages to the future lawful Government of an independent Namibia. The Committee reiterated that the exploitation and plundering of the marine and other natural resources of Namibia by South African and other foreign economic interests, including the activities of those transnational corporations which were engaged in the exploitation and export of the Territory's uranium ores and other resources, were illegal, contributed to the maintenance of the illegal occupation régime and were a grave threat to the integrity and prosperity of an independent Namibia.

The Special Committee decided to continue to monitor closely the situation in the remaining colonial Territories so as to ensure that all economic activities in those Territories were aimed at strengthening and diversifying their economies in the interests of the indigenous peoples and in that connection requested the administering Powers concerned to ensure that the peoples of the Territories under their administration were not exploited for political, military and other purposes detrimental to their interests.

F. Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration which might be impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

In considering the above item, the Special Committee reaffirmed its strong conviction that the presence of military bases and installations in the colonial and Non-Self-Governing Territories could constitute a major obstacle to the implementation of the Declaration and that it was the responsibility of the administering Powers to ensure that the existence of such bases and installations did not hinder the populations of the Territories from exercising their right to self-determination and independence in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration. Furthermore, aware of the presence of military bases and installations of the administering Powers concerned and other countries in those Territories, the Committee urged the administering Powers concerned to continue to take all necessary measures not to involve those Territories in any offensive acts or interference against other States and to comply fully with the purposes and principles of the Charter, the Declaration and the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations relating to military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration.

The Special Committee once again called upon the colonial Powers concerned to terminate all military activities and arrangements in Territories under their administration and to eliminate such military bases in compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Noting that the militarization of Namibia had led to the forced conscription of Namibians, to a greatly intensified flow of refugees and to a tragic disorganization of the family life of the Namibian people, the Special Committee strongly condemned the forcible and wholesale displacement of Namibians from their homes for military and political purposes and the introduction of compulsory military service for Namibians and declared that all measures by the illegal occupation régime to enforce military conscription in Namibia were null and void. In that connection, the Committee urged all Governments, the specialized agencies and other intergovernmental organizations to provide increased material assistance to the thousands of refugees who had been forced by the apartheid régime's oppressive policies in Namibia and South Africa to flee into the neighbouring States.

The Special Committee deprecated the continued alienation of land in colonial Territories for military installations. While it had been argued that the servicing of such installations created employment, nevertheless, the large-scale utilization of local economic and manpower resources for that purpose diverted resources which could be more beneficially utilized in promoting the economic development of the Territories concerned and was thus contrary to the interests of their populations.

G. Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

As in the previous year, the Special Committee, in considering this question, took into account the report of the Secretary-General containing information on action taken by the organizations of the United Nations system; the report of the Chairman on his consultations with the President of the Economic and Social Council; and the report of its Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance, containing an account of the consultations held by the Sub-Committee with the representatives of a number of specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system. The Committee also received the continued co-operation and benefited from the active participation of the representatives of Organization of African Unity (OAU) and representatives of the national liberation movements in the related work.

The Special Committee noted with deep concern that the assistance extended so far to the colonial peoples, particularly the people of Namibia and their national liberation movement, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), by the organizations of the United Nations system remained far from adequate in relation to their actual needs. In that regard, while expressing its appreciation to those agencies and organizations which had continued to co-operate with the United Nations and OAU in the implementation of the Declaration, the Committee requested the agencies and other organizations concerned to render or continue to render, as a matter of urgency, all possible assistance to colonial peoples struggling for their liberation from colonial rule.

The Special Committee reiterated its recommendation that the organizations concerned should initiate or broaden contacts with the peoples and their national liberation movements and that they should review and introduce greater flexibility in their procedures with respect to the preparation of assistance programmes and projects. In addition, the Committee requested all agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the United Nations, to withhold all assistance from the Government of South Africa until the people of Namibia had exercised fully their inalienable right to self-determination and independence and to refrain from taking any action which might imply recognition of, or support for, the legitimacy of the domination of the Territory by that régime.

The Special Committee expressed its regret that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund continued to maintain links with the racist régime of Pretoria and requested that the two agencies should put an end to all links with that régime.

The Special Committee also requested the General Assembly to recommend that all Governments intensify their efforts in the specialized agencies and organizations of which they were members, to ensure the effective implementation of all the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

The Special Committee once again urged the executive heads of the agencies and organizations concerned to formulate, with the active participation of OAU, and to submit, as a matter of priority, to their governing bodies and legislative organs, concrete proposals for the full implementation of the relevant decisions of the United Nations, in particular specific programmes of assistance to the peoples in the colonial Territories and their national liberation movements.

A review of the action taken to date by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations in the implementation of the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly is set out in Decolonization Bulletin No. 25 of December 1985.

H. Dissemination of information on decolonization

In its resolution 39/92 of 14 December 1984 relating to dissemination of information, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to continue to take concrete measures through all the media at his disposal, including publications, radio and television, to give widespread and continuous publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization". The Assembly then requested the Special Committee to follow the implementation of that resolution. In considering the item, the Committee took into account the related recommendations adopted by its Sub-Committee on Petitions, Information and Assistance.

In view of the further deterioration of the situation in and around Namibia as a result of the obdurate refusal of the Pretoria régime to comply with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and in view of the attempts by South Africa to misrepresent the struggle for freedom and independence in southern Africa as terrorist activities and to label the national liberation movements as terrorist organizations, the Special Committee considered it imperative for the United Nations to take all possible steps to intensify its activities in the field of dissemination of information in order to counter such attempts, particularly in Western and other countries.

The Special Committee expressed the view that non-governmental organizations were playing an important role in the decolonization process and in this regard encouraged them to continue and intensify their support for all colonial peoples, in particular those in southern Africa and their national liberation movements, in their struggle to attain freedom, self-determination, national independence and human rights.

In the same context, the Special Committee, in 1985, held two regional seminars at Port Moresby and Havana, in March and April, respectively, with the participation of some 50 representatives of non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental bodies as part of the activities to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration. The conclusions and recommendations emanating from those seminars were adopted by the Special Committee at its extraordinary session held at Tunis in May 1985. These conclusions and recommendations are reproduced in Decolonization Bulletin No. 23.

I. Other matters

In its consideration of information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter, the Special Committee reaffirmed that, in the absence of a decision by the General Assembly itself that a Non-Self-Governing Territory had attained a full measure of self-government in terms of Chapter XI of the Charter, the administering Power concerned should continue to transmit information under Article 73 e with respect to that Territory and, in that regard, requested the administering Powers concerned to transmit, or continue to transmit, the information prescribed in Article 73 e, as well as the fullest possible information on political and constitutional developments in the Territories concerned.

The Special Committee reviewed once again the question of the list of Territories to which the Declaration is applicable. Within the context of this question, the Committee considered a decision it had taken at its previous session concerning Puerto Rico. Having heard representatives of a number of organizations concerned, the Committee reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the full applicability of the fundamental principles of that resolution with respect to Puerto Rico. The Committee expressed its hope and that of the international community that the people of Puerto Rico might exercise without hindrance their right to self-determination, with the express recognition of the people's sovereignty and full political equality, in conformity with paragraph 5 of the Declaration. The Special Committee decided to keep the question under continuing review.

During the year, the Special Committee maintained a close working relationship with other United Nations bodies concerned, including in particular the Special Committee against Apartheid, the United Nations Council for Namibia, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Special Committee followed closely the work

of those bodies as it related to colonial issues and took into account, in connection with its consideration of the various items on its agenda, the relevant decisions adopted by them.

The Chairman of the Special Committee represented the Committee at a number of important international conferences, seminars and symposia organized by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.