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Official Records

Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

1442nd Meeting

Monday, 10 July 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

Acting Chairman: Mr. Bangura (Sierra Leone)

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: The Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance completed its work last month, and I should like to highlight some of the major initiatives undertaken during its 1995 session.

This year, the Subcommittee consolidated its work into two weeks, with meetings held daily, and the working papers prepared by the Secretariat were shorter and more concise than in the past. In order to streamline its work and to economize on time and resources, the Territories were considered *en bloc*, and this new approach resulted in lively deliberations and appeared to encourage a better attendance than last year. The Subcommittee was also able to come up with shorter and more focused resolutions. The Subcommittee also decided this year to adopt draft resolutions, instead of draft decisions, on Pitcairn and St. Helena, for the sake of uniformity. The Subcommittee issued a consolidated report (A/AC.109/L.1829) containing its consideration of each of the 12 Non-Self-Governing Territories, as well as its consideration of the question of the dissemination of information on decolonization.

It should also be noted that the members of the Subcommittee expressed the need to receive up-to-date information on the future political status of the Non-Self-Governing Territories from the administering Powers, as well as to send visiting missions to the Territories.

Report of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance (A/AC.109/L.1829)

Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands

Question of dissemination of information

The Chairman: To introduce the report of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, I call on the Rapporteur of the Subcommittee, Ms. Cecilia Mackenna of Chile.

Ms. Mackenna (Chile), Rapporteur of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance (*interpretation from Spanish*): In my capacity as Rapporteur of the Subcommittee on Small Territories, Petitions, Information and Assistance, I have the honour to introduce for adoption by the Special Committee the report of the Subcommittee on the agenda items allocated to it during the current session. As the Chairman has already indicated, this year it was decided to consolidate four reports into a single report, and the Subcommittee's proposals on the questions of Pitcairn and St. Helena have been incorporated into the main body of the report as draft resolutions rather than draft decisions.

The report has been divided into three sections, the first covering consideration of the Territories of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands. The Subcommittee considered the Territories *en bloc* at its 688th to 694th meetings, between 22 May and 1 June 1995.

Section I, Part A, of the report, entitled "Consideration by the Subcommittee", provides an overview of discussions held by the Subcommittee during its 1995 session. The text of the consolidated draft resolution on these Territories is contained in Section I, Part B; and Part C contains a draft resolution on each Territory.

Section II of the report concerns the question of dissemination of information on decolonization, which was considered by the Subcommittee at its 692nd to 694th meetings, on 30 and 31 May and 1 June 1995. Part A contains a brief introduction, and Parts B and C contain summaries of the statements by the representative of the Department of Public Information and the representative of the Department of Political Affairs. Part D covers the issue of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of All Colonial Territories, Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights. The draft resolution on dissemination of information on decolonization is contained in Part E of this section.

On 6 June 1995, at its 695th meeting, the Subcommittee adopted the draft resolutions by consensus, as well as the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report. The conclusions and recommendations were arrived at during consultations which took place at a number of formal and informal meetings.

Requests for hearing

The Chairman: Before the Committee takes up the report of the Subcommittee, I wish to draw the attention of members to the requests for hearings, distributed in *aides-mémoire* 5/95 to 8/95 and 13/95 to 14/95, relating to East Timor, Western Sahara, New Caledonia, the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and Gibraltar.

First, we shall take up the requests for hearing on the question of East Timor contained in *aide-mémoire* 5/95 and Add.1.

May I take it that the Committee agrees to accede to these requests?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: We shall next take up the request for hearing on the question of Western Sahara contained in *aide-mémoire* 6/95.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Committee agrees to accede to this request?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: We shall next take up the request for hearing on the question of New Caledonia contained in *aide-mémoire* 7/95.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Committee agrees to accede to this request?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: We shall next take up the requests for hearing on the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) contained in *aide-mémoire* 8/95.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Committee agrees to accede to these requests?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: We shall next take up the request for hearing on the question of Gibraltar, contained in *aide-mémoire* 13/95.

If there are no objections, I shall take it that the Committee agrees to accede to this request.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: The Committee will now consider the report of the Subcommittee in document A/AC.109/L.1829. Are there any comments on the report?

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation wishes to propose that the question of the consideration of the report be postponed until the report on the seminar that took place in Trinidad and Tobago is available so that, when this matter is reviewed, account can be taken of the results of the seminar, which have a direct bearing on the subject under discussion today.

As far as our delegation is aware, the report on the seminar is almost ready. It just needs to be translated from English into the other languages, and it has not yet actually been circulated as an official document. So as to expedite work on this question, my delegation would like to request the Secretariat to circulate the report on the seminar in English, in the form in which it is now available, so that we can promptly consider all questions in the course of our work. We would then be in a

position to consider the question of the report itself and the consolidated draft resolution immediately thereafter.

The Chairman: We have heard a proposal by Russia for a postponement of the consideration of the report until the seminar report is out. I just wish to point out that the Secretariat has informed me that the seminar report will be out today. I also wish to notify members that it has been agreed by the Bureau that the report will appear only in English. No translations will be undertaken.

Are there any other comments?

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I just wanted to voice my support for the Russian Federation's proposal to postpone the consideration of the Subcommittee's report. Since we have just come back from the seminar with new ideas and perceptions and so on, this would give us more time to look at the Subcommittee's report. I think it would be useful to postpone consideration for the time being.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): I should like to echo the views expressed by my colleagues from the Russian Federation and India on postponing this item in order to allow discussion of the report of the seminar, which will indeed provide some useful information that will assist us in the course of our meetings at this session of the Special Committee.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the task of chairing this session, particularly in view of the sudden departure of Ambassador Pursoo. Having been associated with you for some time, I am confident that your leadership capabilities and wisdom will guide us throughout this session. Papua New Guinea will give you its fullest support as we go about our work in discussing and assessing the important issues of decolonization before us.

I also wish to take the opportunity to offer my delegation's sincere regrets that Ambassador Pursoo was unable to complete his tenure as Chairman of the Special Committee because of his early recall by his Government.

Mr. Chairman, I wish you the best of luck.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Papua New Guinea for the kind words he addressed to me and, of course, for the sentiments he expressed in respect of Ambassador Pursoo, which, I am sure, all of us share. We do wish him well.

I take it that it is the general wish that we postpone consideration of the report until after the seminar report has been issued.

It was so decided.

Question of sending visiting missions to Territories (A/AC.109/L.1831 and L.1832)

The Chairman: I wish to draw the Committee's attention to the report relating to the question of sending visiting missions to Territories, which is contained in document A/AC.109/L.1831, giving an account of the consultations held by the Chairman with the representatives of the administering Powers concerned. Members also have before them, in document A/AC.109/L.1832, a draft resolution on the item.

If no member wishes to speak on this item, I shall take it that the Committee is prepared to adopt the draft resolution contained in A/AC.109/L.1832 without a vote.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I was not aware that we were going to adopt the draft resolution. I thought it was going to be discussed in the Working Group.

I was wondering, if other colleagues agree, if we could include in this draft resolution the proposal which was reflected in the report of the Subcommittee — namely, that the Committee could send a visiting mission to Bermuda, where there is going to be a referendum shortly. I think it would be useful if that could be reflected in this text, since the referendum is coming up soon.

The Chairman: The representative of India has suggested the inclusion of a visiting mission to Bermuda. Are there any comments?

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): First of all, I congratulate you, Sir, on your chairmanship of the Committee, and I wish you luck. We are confident that under your leadership we can succeed in our work.

Since we have discussed in the Subcommittee the proposal regarding the upcoming referendum in Bermuda made by our colleague from India, and we decided in the Subcommittee to include it in the report, I should like to support the idea of referring to that in the draft resolution that we are going to adopt within the main Committee. I would like to support the idea of our Indian colleague.

Ms. Yao Yuhua (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): First of all, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee. I believe that your experience and leadership will ensure the success of this session. The Chinese delegation will, as always, give you and this Committee our full support.

Having said this, I should like to support the proposals made by the representatives of India and the Islamic Republic of Iran. We believe that the question of sending a visiting mission to Bermuda and the decision on that question should be included in the report of the Subcommittee.

Mrs. Khan-Cummings (Trinidad and Tobago): I too should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your appointment to chair this Committee, and I assure you of my delegation's support during the course of our work. I wish also to support the recommendations of my colleagues from India and China on making mention of the visiting mission to Bermuda to observe the referendum.

The Chairman: I have been informed that we must make a distinction between the usual practice of sending visiting missions and sending a mission to observe a referendum. I myself do not quite understand this distinction, but the Committee may wish to note that the proposal that has been made should be considered under another item, not the one we are currently dealing with.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I agree that we should be scrupulous in following the correct procedure, but I see that in the Annex to the report on the question of sending visiting missions to Territories (A/AC.109/L.1831), which lists the missions dispatched to various Territories, there is mention of a visiting mission in 1980 to Turks and Caicos Islands to observe the elections. Similarly, there are other references to visiting missions that were dispatched to observe referenda in other Territories, and that is why I thought this could apply here. But we would be willing to go along with whatever procedure is appropriate.

The Chairman: If it is the wish of this Committee, then obviously the proper procedure will be followed, in consultation with the administering Power. I take it that it is the Committee's wish that the question of the mission to Bermuda be included in the Subcommittee's report. If that is so, the procedure of consulting with the administering Power would then be followed. Is that agreed?

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I too should like to support the formulation that you have just proposed, and I should like to inquire if we have already started discussing the draft resolution on this question contained in document A/AC.109/L.1832.

The Chairman: Indeed, I requested earlier that members discuss this question. I stated that representatives had before them document A/AC.109/L.1832, which contains a draft resolution on the item, so the discussion is now under way.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I have a proposal in this connection concerning the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. It seems to us that using language to the effect that United Nations visiting missions provide an effective means of assessing the situation in the Territories does not accurately reflect the situation. In the view of my delegation, it would be more appropriate if we were to say that United Nations visiting missions are "a means" — in other words, we would omit the word "effective", because there are many other ways of assessing the situation in the Territories. Furthermore, eliminating this word from the text would in no way weaken the language.

The Chairman: I thank the representation of the Russian Federation for his suggestion to modify the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution contained in document A/AC.109/L.1832 by removing the word "effective", so that the paragraph reads, "provide a means of". If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the removal of the word "effective" is acceptable.

It was so decided.

To be frank, my delegation has doubts about operative paragraph 3 of the draft. I think, given the situation that has come into being, it is perhaps not a good idea for us to bring such open pressure to bear on the administering Powers. We are not so sure that that will produce a positive effect. I think perhaps it would be wiser for the Committee to confine itself to the language we find in the last preambular paragraph. It seems to me that this might be taken as a constructive step on our part, all the more so since we all understand perfectly well that in the present circumstances the administering Powers are not likely to resume direct participation in the work of our Committee.

But there are other ways of working with them, and those ways are quite well known to the members of the Committee. In the final analysis, our Committee's task is to ensure the practical implementation of decisions in connection with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and that should be our focus.

Guided by these considerations, my delegation would propose that operative paragraph 3 be deleted. That would still leave the last preambular paragraph, which reflects with sufficient clarity the Committee's feeling about the need for administering Powers to participate in the work of our Committee and also expresses appropriate regret over the absence of the administering Powers from the work of the Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his suggestion.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): I do not wish to reopen the debate on a question that has already been decided, namely, the deletion of the word "effective" in the fourth preambular paragraph. But my delegation's understanding is that the word "effective" is intended to relate to the effectiveness of the visiting mission in ascertaining the wishes and aspirations of the people of the Territories. Although the missions may not be the most effective way of assessing the overall situation in the Territories, they are the only means of assessing what the wishes of the people really are. Therefore, while accepting the deletion of the word "effective" from the text as currently drafted, I would suggest that we insert an appropriate formulation to express the idea that visiting missions are an effective means of ascertaining the wishes of the people. Nevertheless, I will accept the decision of the Committee.

The Chairman: When the suggestion was made by the Russian Federation, I asked if there were any objections or modifications to that, and it seemed to me that we had agreed that we would remove the word "effective", as suggested.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): My delegation will abide by decisions made or adopted by the Committee as a whole.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Papua New Guinea for his understanding.

Does any delegation wish to comment on the suggestion for the deletion of paragraph 3?

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation considers that there is no need to delete paragraph 3, as there is a close relationship between that paragraph and the role of our Committee. The visiting missions remain just as important, and we have to bear in mind the views that were expressed in the course of the three seminars. At the most recent of those seminars, we emphasized the importance of cooperation between the administering Powers and this Committee in order to facilitate the dispatch of visiting missions. My delegation therefore believes that it would not be appropriate to delete the paragraph in question.

Mr. Chtcherbak: (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for stating his delegation's position on this matter. It seems to me that in his statement he did in fact propose a somewhat flexible and realistic formulation when he placed the emphasis on the need to ensure that the administering Powers cooperate with our Committee. I think it is precisely in that spirit that we should redraft paragraph 3. That is a first alternative that we would now like to propose.

A second possibility would be to transfer the idea put forward by our colleague from the Syrian Arab Republic to the end of the final preambular paragraph of this draft resolution. Quite frankly, my delegation would prefer the latter alternative.

However, we could also agree to maintain, in the operative part of the text, the idea of calling upon the administering Powers to cooperate with our Committee, without going into details such as reviewing decisions about the need for active participation in the work of the Committee and so on. This is because, as I have already emphasized, forms of cooperation and participation in the present circumstances need to be sufficiently flexible so that they leave open the opportunity for establishing businesslike working contacts with the administering Powers and supporting and maintaining such contacts, while producing a more effective result.

I can say that the language as it now stands is not going to be considered constructive by our potential partners among the administering Powers. It is not going to be perceived in those terms, and that is precisely why

I am proposing the language that has been used by our colleague from Syria.

The Chairman: If the representative of the Russian Federation is not going to insist on his initial proposal of deletion, can we then have a precise reformulation of operative paragraph 3, either from him, from the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic or from anyone else who may wish to contribute?

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): If you have no objection, Sir, perhaps in a few minutes' time, following consultation with my colleagues, I will be in a position to propose an acceptable formulation.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): First, I should like to express my appreciation to my colleagues from the delegations of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Russian Federation for the flexibility they have shown with regard to this paragraph.

I have a small suggestion in this respect. The paragraph could be reformulated to say, "continues to call upon the administering Powers to take note of the new approach of the Special Committee and reconsider participation" — something along those lines. But I agree with the basic approach taken by my Russian colleague, that we have to send the appropriate signals for seeking cooperation with the administering Powers, and also with the general philosophy, which is also that of my delegation, that we should not seek confrontation but cooperation and give them a chance. Using that philosophy, we are quite flexible on the issue.

I want to raise two more points in connection with this draft resolution. First, one way to assess the situation in the Territories is by sending visiting missions; another is to receive the representatives of those Territories, which is also envisaged in the Subcommittee's report. Perhaps we could add a new paragraph here requesting the administering Powers to encourage the participation of the representatives of those Territories in the work of this Committee. If this is agreeable to my colleagues, it could be included here.

Secondly, you might recall, Mr. Chairman, that in the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, reference is made to a proposal that the Secretary-General or his representative visit those Territories. The Committee may wish to consider asking the Secretary-General about the implementation of the Plan of

Action and encouraging him to consider visiting whichever remaining Territories he has not visited.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of India for his suggestions. As to the first one, I doubt that it would be appropriate to discuss his suggestion to encourage representatives from the Territories to attend our meetings in the context of the question of sending visiting missions to the Territories. I myself do not think that this is the appropriate time to do that, but his suggestion will be borne in mind. When we get to the point at which it could appropriately be considered, it will then be taken up.

As to the second suggestion, I believe that it could be discussed here and that whatever we decide, or whatever views are expressed, could then be communicated to the Secretary-General.

However, that still leaves unsettled the question of the reformulation of operative paragraph 3. The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for more time and the representative of India has made some suggestions. Perhaps we can proceed on that basis.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Following consultations with our colleagues on a revised text of paragraph 3, we seem to have arrived at language which we believe will be generally acceptable to all the other members of the Committee. We propose the following:

(*spoke in English*)

"Requests the administering Powers to take note of the new approaches in the work of the Special Committee and calls on them to cooperate with the Committee in its endeavours".

(*spoke in Russian*)

In the opinion of our delegation, this language more accurately reflects the requirements of the Committee and our real options. Most important, it would facilitate forward movement in respect of the acute problem of cooperation between the Committee and the administering Powers.

We all know that, on a whole series of questions, the absence of the administering Powers has led the Committee to an impasse from which we must do our best to extricate it.

The Chairman: Is the language proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation acceptable as a replacement for the present paragraph 3?

Mr. Doudech (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to put forward a small amendment to the proposal of the Russian delegation. If the paragraph requests the administering Powers simply “to take note”, it will not seem that they are expected to take the new approaches very seriously. I think it would be better for the paragraph to call upon the administering Powers to consider the new approaches that the Special Committee intends to take in its work.

Thus, we favour the words

“to consider the new approaches in the work of the Special Committee”

rather than

“to take note of the new approaches ...”.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): It seems to me that the language proposed by our Tunisian colleague is extraordinarily felicitous. It strengthens the positive aspect, and my delegation is quite prepared to support it.

Ms. Yao Yuhua (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): I believe that in the mid-term review of the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism we should emphasize the need for cooperation between the administering Powers and the Committee. Therefore, on the basis of my understanding of it, I believe that paragraph 3 should be retained. It is very necessary for us to send missions to those territories. I therefore fully agree with the revision suggested by the representative of Tunisia. New Zealand and Portugal cooperate with the Committee and participate in our meetings, but other administering Powers do not. We do not understand their views, and this is not conducive to good communication. We should therefore call upon the administering Powers not just to take note of the Committee’s new methods of work, but to consider them.

We therefore sincerely hope that the administering Powers will cooperate with us in our work and consider our new methods. They should take a positive attitude towards the provision of support for the work of our Committee.

The Chairman: Apparently it is agreed that “consider” should replace “take note of”.

Mrs. Khan-Cummings (Trinidad and Tobago): We have no objection, and I should like to compliment the delegation of the Russian Federation on its efforts and the representative of Tunisia on his proposed amendment.

The language could perhaps be improved by changing the final words “in its endeavours”. “Endeavours” suggests simply efforts. The Special Committee has a mandate from the General Assembly. That being the case, the paragraph could end as follows:

“and calls on them to cooperate with the efforts of the Special Committee to effectively carry out its mandate.”

Thus it would end on a stronger note.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Frankly, that is extremely strong. I quite understand the sound motive of the representative of Trinidad and Tobago. Furthermore, I understand the concern that has arisen about the situation. However, I think that at this stage it would be more advisable for us to confine ourselves to the language that has already been agreed. If we make reference to the mandate we shall be opening up a very broad field for discussion, especially as the interpretations of the very word “mandate” by the various administering Powers tend to be completely different. They all place different constructions on the term.

To avoid creating problems, we would do better to confine ourselves at this stage — and I stress “at this stage” — to the formulation we have already agreed.

I would therefore urge the representative of Trinidad and Tobago not to press her suggestion, although I emphasize that my delegation fully understands her motivation and her good intentions.

The Chairman: May I take it, then, that the representative of Trinidad and Tobago is agreeable to this appeal?

Mrs. Khan-Cummings (Trinidad and Tobago): I will go along with whatever the Committee’s final decision is, but I wonder if, “efforts” could be acceptable instead of “endeavours”.

I also want to mention that, in the draft resolution, we direct our request to all the administering Powers, even though some have been cooperating. So I wonder if we should somehow qualify the phrase “the administering Powers”.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Gamito (Portugal): I think it is preferable to retain the original language, because it is necessary to make a distinction between those administering Powers that are cooperating with the Special Committee and those that are not. The Committee may wish to request the administering Powers that are not participating in the work of the Special Committee to consider its new approaches, and so on.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): It seems to me that there is no need to do so, because paragraph 3, as proposed, is closely bound up with the last preambular paragraph, and in this context it is perfectly clear which countries we are talking about. I think we simply do not need any extra words in paragraph 3.

The Chairman: If there are no other suggestions, I shall take it that the paragraph will read as follows:

“*Requests the administering Powers to consider the new approaches in the work of the Special Committee and calls on them to cooperate with the Committee in its efforts*”.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that that paragraph stands, as orally revised.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: If there are no other speakers, I shall take it that the Committee is prepared to adopt draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1832 without a vote.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I made reference to the proposal that the Secretary-General or his representatives should visit these Territories. This proposal is contained in the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. I was waiting for a reaction from my colleagues, but in its absence, may I request the Secretariat to enlighten us as to whether the Secretary-General or his representatives have visited any of these Territories or whether there are any proposals for visits in the near future.

Mr. Dmitrichev (Secretary of the Committee): As far as the Secretariat knows, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has been to East Timor. We do not know of any visits by the Secretary-General or his Special Representatives to other Territories, except, of course, Western Sahara, in connection with negotiations there.

The Chairman: The question is, can we include in the draft resolution, reference to the question of the Secretary-General's visiting the Territories, as suggested by the representative of India?

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): In my delegation's opinion, the language we already have in the preambular and operative parts is sufficiently broad and flexible and does not predetermine the possible forms that the dispatch of such missions might take. If our Committee did specify such forms, I do not think that would have any positive effect. These are quite difficult and delicate matters, as we are all aware, and we should not try to tie the Secretariat's hands and predetermine the form of the dispatch of missions. I really doubt whether that would be effective. Moreover, it would probably not reflect adequately the approach we are talking about, so my delegation does not think it would be a good idea now to say something along the lines of what has just now been proposed.

I think this draft resolution already reflects the Committee's concerns sufficiently well and I think we should leave it at that. The proposal put forward by the representative of India can certainly be taken into account when this matter is discussed with the Secretariat and with other interested parties in order to find a better, more faithful means of incorporating it. But I do not think it should be done in this particular draft resolution.

The Chairman: I would then propose that instead of including the Indian proposal in the draft resolution, it be reflected in the Committee's report.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I understand the delicacy involved in this matter, as explained by our colleague from the Russian Federation, so I will not press for this. But I think that somewhere in the report of the Committee we must discuss the Plan of Action for the International Decade and review it in the light of what actions have already been implemented and which ones remain to be implemented in the next four years or so. I think that would be useful. I particularly suggest that the Committee consider this wherever appropriate.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of India for his understanding, and I assure him that what he has said will be reflected in the verbatim record of this meeting.

If no other member wishes to speak on this item, may I take it that the Committee is prepared to adopt draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1832, as orally amended, without a vote?

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1832, as orally amended, was adopted (A/AC.109/2031).

Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (A/AC.109/L.1833)

The Chairman: In connection with this agenda item, members have before them a draft resolution (A/AC.109/L.1833) prepared by the Chairman. Are there any comments?

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I wish to make a few comments on this item.

We are all aware that the information at the disposal of this Committee to enable it to deal effectively with the issues at hand has been generally inadequate. Those of us who participated in the seminar know that in one or two cases the information was inaccurate. Information is very important. Apart from the acquisition of information through the administering Powers, there is scope for our receiving information from non-governmental organizations and regional organizations that have been active on these issues.

I want to suggest consideration of these points and their inclusion in the appropriate paragraphs. I suggest a preambular paragraph in the following words:

“Noting that the information from Non-Self-Governing Territories that has been made available to the Special Committee has been generally inadequate”.

This is the truth, and since it is factual I hope that it is acceptable to other representatives. With regard to the language, I am, of course, flexible. The words that I have just proposed could be added as the fourth preambular paragraph.

I suggest the addition of another preambular paragraph in the following terms:

“Recognizing the importance of adequate, accurate and timely information regarding developments in the Non-Self-Governing Territories to assist the Special Committee in discharging its mandate effectively”.

With regard to the operative part of the draft resolution, I suggest the addition of the following as paragraph 4:

“Considers that useful information on the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories could also be collected through regional organizations and non-governmental organizations involved in these issues”.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I thank the representative of India for the very interesting amendments that he has suggested. I have two comments.

With regard to the first of these proposed amendments, which refers to the inadequacy of information provided under Article 73 *e* of the Charter, we should be objective. Some of the administering Powers do provide the Committee with regular reports on the situations in the Territories concerned in accordance with the requirements of the United Nations. That being the case, we should not generalize in the proposed amendment.

With regard to the proposal that information could be provided through non-governmental organizations, Article 73 of the Charter clearly indicates that the administering Powers should transmit information on the Territories to the Committee. No text mentions non-governmental organizations or regional organizations. No text asks those organizations to send information to the United Nations. Such information might be useful, but we must abide by the letter of the texts governing this Committee, as well as the Charter, which entrusts certain tasks to us.

We could amend the text in order to bring it fully into line with the Charter.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Like the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, I feel that we must take account of the quite detailed information that we receive from a number of administering Powers. In my delegation's view, it would be wrong and improper to

generalize this thesis excessively. If we deal with the matter in the sort of language proposed by the delegation of India — if we suggest that all the information on the basis of which the Committee has been working is generally inadequate — the people reading our resolutions will start to ask how, in these circumstances, can the Committee take decisions at all? How can it adopt draft resolutions if the information available to it is really inadequate?

The danger is that the use of such language could give rise to additional criticism of the Committee, the more so because — speaking objectively — the third preambular paragraph, even as it stands, quite clearly reflects two principal points. The first is that it is very important that information should be made available in a timely fashion; the second is that the information should be adequate. It seems to me that this language, to a considerable extent, already meets the concerns of the representative of India.

With regard to the proposal that bodies such as non-governmental and regional organizations should be involved in the information-gathering process, I do not think there is anything to prevent this Committee or the Secretariat from making use of all possible sources. Thus, there is absolutely no need to place emphasis on this point.

Finally, I should like to know what non-governmental organizations take such a keen interest in the affairs of the Non-Self-Governing Territories that they are engaged in the collection of information. Perhaps the Secretariat could furnish this information. We must construct our draft resolution in the light of these facts.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First, we should like to associate ourselves with the concerns expressed by the representative of India to the effect that information received by the Committee is not really sufficient or adequate. As has been pointed out by the representative of the Russian Federation, however, a reference to this reality might, create the danger of intensified criticism of the Committee. We face a reality with which many of us are familiar. Unfortunately this is the situation facing the Committee. Therefore, it seems to my delegation that we must forestall possible future criticism and preclude certain future developments. Perhaps this is the appropriate time to do so.

Given these considerations, my delegation expresses its support for the concerns voiced by the representative of India. We would, of course, be flexible as to the actual language employed in the new paragraph.

It might be necessary to take a realistic position and, rather than lumping all the Powers together, come up with a more specific formulation that in some way takes into account the situation that really exists, not a situation generalized to include all the Powers. This means requesting more credible, appropriate and reliable information.

With regard to the participation of non-governmental organizations, it has been said repeatedly in many United Nations forums that the various actors in international relations include the non-governmental organizations. I believe our Committee could also echo this point, or at least appraise the extent to which our Committee might accommodate such activities. We believe that the proposals we have heard here about the possibility of the Secretariat carrying out a study of interested non-governmental organizations might help us consider the proposal made by India.

For the moment, my delegation will refrain from expressing a substantive position on this point, but we do believe that there are interested non-governmental organizations and that it would not be in contravention of the spirit or the letter of the Charter for our Committee to evaluate them. The implications of the participation or provision of information by non-governmental organizations interested in conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories would, of course, call for a substantive debate. But the Cuban delegation believes that that proposal could be the subject of study after all the questions of procedure and of the Committee's general course of action have been dealt with.

The Chairman: At issue is whether the draft resolution, as it stands, captures the concerns expressed about the adequacy and timeliness of the transmission of information, or whether, in fact, it needs to be strengthened in the manner suggested by India.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): Maybe I was too quick in proposing those amendments, but basically I wanted to highlight the concerns and the constraints of the members of the Committee in dealing with the issues because of the information gap and the question of timeliness.

Members will recall that in the case of the United States Virgin Islands, we had in fact adopted a draft resolution in the Subcommittee recognizing the referendum held there. But it was clarified during the seminar held in Trinidad and Tobago on the question of New Caledonia that the referendum had been declared

null and void because not enough people had participated in it. Similarly, in the case of Guam, this Committee took the referendum held in 1982 as an act of self-determination, as was reflected in our resolutions. But again, the representatives of Guam clarified that those were all interim measures and should not be taken as the final act of self-determination.

This is basically to highlight the issues and difficulties, but I do not want to stand in the way of the general consensus in the Committee, so if Committee members are satisfied with the present text I will withdraw my proposed amendments.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I wish to express to the representative of India my gratitude for his constructive approach.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In my earlier statement I was not expressing opposition to the amendments suggested by India. I was only opposed, for the sake of complete objectivity, to some of the terms used in the text. However, now that the representative of India has withdrawn his proposed amendments in the light of the various comments made, it remains only for us to thank him. To be sure, the proposed amendments are perfectly objective and logical, but since he is now withdrawing them I do not think there is any need to continue discussing them.

The Chairman: As there are no further comments, may I take it that the Committee is prepared to adopt draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1833 without a vote?

Draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1833 was adopted (A/AC.109/2032).

The Chairman: The Committee has thus concluded its consideration of this agenda item.

Activities of foreign economic and other interests which impede the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Territories under colonial domination (A/AC.109/2013-2016, 2019, 2020)

Military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers in Territories under their administration (A/AC.109/2014, 2018, 2020)

The Chairman: Members have before them the various working papers prepared by the Secretariat which

contain references to the two items relating to foreign economic interests and military activities.

Mr. Viswanathan (India): I should like to initiate the discussion with some comments.

During the seminar we had an opportunity to hear the views of many of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in addition to those of other concerned participants. One of the things which came out very clearly was that, at least in the case of the 12 small Territories being dealt with by the Subcommittee, these are small islands with limited natural resources. In these cases, foreign investment is an important contribution to the development of the Territories, so there was greater emphasis on the valid contribution that could be made to the economies of those Territories by foreign investment. Of course, the foreign investment has to be compatible with the wishes of the people, their own economic priorities and so on.

I think this calls for a review of the Committee's approach, in that we should not look at this question in a generalized way. We should differentiate, and we should take into account these new realities instead of simply condemning them or saying that they are not useful. I should like to suggest for the consideration of the members of the Committee that we need to have a review and take a positive look at the contribution that could be made by foreign economic investment.

In the case of foreign military installations, we did hear some comments to the effect that the military installations were an important factor in local employment and the local economic situation, and that because of the decision to close or downsize some of them there were adverse consequences that some of the Territories were unable to face without adequate cooperation from the administering Powers. Again, I think the Committee need not take a blanket approach with universal and uniform implications to all these separate issues. Instead, it should take a differentiated tack and tone down its approach to foreign military installations, since they are a factor in the local economic situation.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): I should like to express my support for the views of my colleague from India regarding foreign investment activities and the activities of foreign military installations in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

I should like to shed additional light on the argument that the activities of foreign investors in the Non-Self-Governing Territories provide positive support for and also affect economic conditions in terms of equity and participation. Indeed, the manner in which economic programmes and foreign investment are directed can limit the local population's equity participation in and control of the available resources. This in turn limits the ability of the peoples of the Territories to expand their technical capacity and to take control of their economic resource development, which would enable them to pursue political, educational and technical development. This adds another dimension to the argument, which was very much appreciated at the Trinidad and Tobago seminar.

This relates also to arguments concerning the presence of military installations in some Territories. We are aware, as are, I am certain, other representatives, of the fact that the activities of foreign military installations do contribute to sustaining those Territories' economies by helping to provide jobs and income to the local people. However, these activities also impair the capacity of those Territories to diversify into other areas of economic development that would be sustainable over the long term.

These are very important arguments, both sides of which must be taken into account when considering the issues before us. When Non-Self-Governing Territories are heavily dependent on income from the activities of military installations, they do not focus on diversifying the economy into agricultural and other sectors, which are also very important in assisting the overall socioeconomic development of the peoples concerned.

Ms. Yao Yuhua (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): I should like to thank the representative of India for his views on this subject, and I think the views put forward by the representative of Papua New Guinea are also very important. At the Trinidad and Tobago seminar, we talked about the impact of foreign military installations, and both sides of the question were discussed. As was pointed out by the representative of Papua New Guinea, these foreign economic activities and military installations provide economic support to the local people. However, they also limit the diversification of the economies of the Territories and the local use of national resources. Foreign economic groups do not take into consideration the environmental impact of their activities. Therefore, in reviewing the impact of foreign economic activities and installations on the Non-Self-Governing Territories, we should discuss both sides of the issue.

Mrs. Cueto (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In the light of the discussions held at our Committee's recently concluded seminar — which the Cuban delegation, unfortunately, was unable to attend — we would like to place on record our position on the views expressed there on the impact of military bases and foreign investment in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Cuban delegation would reiterate that the arguments put forth concerning the positive impact of these foreign investments and military bases on such Territories are unquestionable. However, we feel that the appeal addressed to us objectively to analyze these economic investments and military bases is also relevant. Examples abound of how those military bases contribute to economic development; however, at the same time, they stand in the way of local activities. Indeed, examples also abound of military bases in the Non-Self-Governing Territories closing down and social chaos ensuing there.

Mr. Chtcherbak (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): I think that our Committee is nearing a very important stage of its work, because the debate we have been having, which was initiated by the delegation of India, has demonstrated that a serious turning point is approach. There is a desire now to arrive at an objective analysis and appraisal of the situation in this most difficult area.

None the less, I believe that our Committee is tending to stagger from one difficulty to another and from one side to another, with an attitude of general condemnation of foreign military and economic activities. We should not call upon the administering Powers to close down the military bases but to preserve them, as they are one of the principal sources of development for the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

As has rightly been pointed out here, a sound and carefully worded approach to these matters is needed. It must be based first and foremost — and this is clearly the most important point in our present discussion — on the need to develop contacts and all possible cooperation between the administering Powers and the Governments of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In my delegation's view, it is precisely in the framework of that dialogue, and not in our Committee, that the important and delicate matters involving foreign investment, military presence and so on need to be addressed, because they are closely linked with economic and social development plans in the Territories, as well as with plans for tackling problems of unemployment and the environment, among others.

My delegation therefore notes with great satisfaction that we have now begun to approach these problems with greater understanding, and we would like to assure all the members of the Committee that it is in this constructive spirit that my delegation is prepared to cooperate in the Committee's elaboration of decisions that are in line with the real situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and with the interests of their development and their peoples, while at the same time, as I have already emphasized, taking account of the real state of affairs.

Mr. Al-Attar (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In the light of what has been said on these two very important subjects, it would seem to us that there is a tendency to want the Committee to change its current course and working methods. But we cannot do this suddenly, without any preparation.

If our Committee is to recognize the importance of military activities and foreign economic interests in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, then it should consider what its role really is. Our Committee's decisions would be devoid of legality or scope if we were to take a step backwards and now say that foreign economic interests and military activities must be taken into account. We cannot go too far or too fast in deciding to make changes. We must remain objective and maintain constant contact within the Committee itself and with the countries involved, with the aim of emphasizing our Committee's role, which is to defend the rights and interests of Non-Self-Governing Territories. That is why we must go slowly.

We must take into account and protect the interests of the peoples to which we are responsible, in order to enable them to manage their affairs better. Haste would make waste. We must establish intensive, constant contacts in order to preserve the very principles governing our Committee's action and maintain good understanding between ourselves and our partners.

The Chairman: I hope and trust that if there is any change at all in the present course and working methods of this Committee, it will be in the interest of doing the Committee's job more effectively and efficiently.

As there are no further statements, the Committee will continue consideration of these two items at its next meeting.

Incidentally, I understand that the members of the Bureau are consulting with their respective regional groups with regard to the disposition of these items.

Caribbean Regional Seminar

The Chairman: As members are aware, the Special Committee held a Regional Seminar on the Mid-term Review of the Plan of Action of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 3 to 5 July 1995. On 5 July the Seminar adopted conclusions and recommendations by consensus. The report of the Seminar will be presented for the Special Committee's consideration during the current session.

Organization of work

The Chairman: As can be seen from our programme of work, the Committee is trying to conclude its work in one week so as to enable the Rapporteur to prepare the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

As can also be seen from the programme of work, the Economic and Social Council will be considering the item relating to specialized agencies between 24 and 26 July in Geneva. The usual practice is that the Chairman represents the Committee at those meetings. But here I should say that the Bureau addressed this issue and came up with a recommendation that the Committee may wish to consider. The Committee will reconvene to consider this item towards the end of August or in early September.

I should also like to point out that the Committee will consider the question of Gibraltar at its meeting tomorrow morning, so as to facilitate the Chief Minister's participation. Thereafter, the Committee will take up the question of East Timor. On Wednesday the Committee will consider the question of Western Sahara, and then the question of New Caledonia. I hope this meets with members' approval. A revised programme of work has been circulated to all members.

Special Committee decision of 15 August 1991 concerning Puerto Rico

The Chairman: At this stage I should like to call members' attention to *aide-mémoire* 10/95, with respect to the review of the method of work of the Committee, with particular reference to Special Committee decision of 15 August 1991 concerning Puerto Rico. It states,

"the Expanded Bureau notes that there has been an annual discussion in the Special Committee on the question of Puerto Rico, including a hearing with the

organizations interested in the question, and the adoption of a resolution after the hearing. Regarding the postponement in 1992 of the discussion and decision on the item, it is recommended that this postponement be extended until 1996, pending the outcome of other consultations and subsequent steps that are continuing to be taken at various levels by the interested parties. The Expanded Bureau also suggests that the Special Committee give due consideration to

requests for hearing on the basis of its usual practice.”

May I take it that the Committee is in agreement with this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: In accordance with our programme of work, the Committee will begin consideration of the requests for hearing on Special Committee decision of 15 August 1991 concerning Puerto Rico on Thursday, 13 July.

Draft report to the General Assembly

The Chairman: In order to facilitate the submission in good time of the Committee's report to the General Assembly, I would suggest that, in keeping with the practice adopted by the Committee at previous sessions, the Rapporteur be requested to prepare and submit directly to the Assembly the various chapters of the report covering the items on which the Committee has concluded consideration. If the Committee has no objection to following this time-honoured practice, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.