



# General Assembly

Distr.: General

Original: English

---

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

### Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 21 February 2001, at 10.30 a.m.

*Temporary Chairman:* The Secretary General

*Chairman:* Mr. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

### Contents

- Opening of the session
- Adoption of the agenda
- Election of officers
- Organization of work
- Other matters

---

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the record of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.



*The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.*

### Opening of the session

1. **The Secretary-General** declared open the 2001 substantive session of the Special Committee and noted that it coincided with the start of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The Decade provided a framework for the continued decolonization activities of the Special Committee and of the United Nations as a whole.

2. The activities of the Committee ensured that the issue of decolonization remained on the agenda of the Organization. The objectives of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had yet to be fully implemented, but thanks to the efforts of the Special Committee, progress had been achieved. The Committee had taken initiatives to reinvigorate its working methods, and to renew the dialogue with the administering Powers on the preparation of individual work programmes for specific Territories. It had been agreed that such programmes would be prepared for American Samoa and Pitcairn and that the administering Powers would ensure the participation of representatives of the Territories concerned at every stage of the discussion.

3. With the goodwill of all concerned, it would be possible to advance the implementation of the Declaration and all other relevant resolutions on decolonization.

### Adoption of the agenda

4. *The agenda was adopted.*

### Election of officers

5. *Mr. Hunte (St. Lucia) was elected Chairman; Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué (Côte d'Ivoire) and Mr. Rodríguez Parilla (Cuba) were elected Vice-Chairmen, and Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) was elected Rapporteur.*

6. *Mr. Hunte (St. Lucia) took the Chair.*

### Organization of work (A/AC.109/2001/L.1 and L.2)

7. **The Chairman** said that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples had served as a guiding principle in the ongoing self-determination process. Historically, the General Assembly had taken

a proactive approach, and more than 80 former territories had exercised their right to self-determination since World War II. Only 17 Territories — many of them small islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific — remained, but they, too, required consistent attention.

8. The mission of decolonization remained unfinished, and efforts must be intensified to find solutions to the democratic deficits that characterized the often complex political dependency arrangements in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Those arrangements did not comply with the minimum standards of full and absolute political equality as mandated by the international community.

9. The General Assembly had proclaimed the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in order to complete the work which was to have been undertaken in the plan of action for the first Decade. Comprehensive research on the constitutional, political and economic development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to assist in assessing prevailing conditions on the ground had not been started, for instance.

10. He intended to place considerable emphasis on the implementation of the General Assembly resolutions on decolonization and on the recommendations set forth in the reports of the regional seminars which had been held since 1990. He also intended to accelerate the ongoing informal dialogue with administering Powers with a view to a resumption of formal cooperation with the Special Committee. The Committee had taken various steps to reform its methods of work; the resumption of the tripartite dialogue with the administering Powers and representatives of the Territories, along with more active involvement of the specialized agencies and other programmes of the United Nations system, would contribute further to its success.

11. Turning to the programme of work contained in document A/AC.109/2001/L.2, he said that it was his intention to conclude the work of the Committee on schedule, in order to allow sufficient time for all reports of the Committee to be available to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, in accordance with the six-week rule for the simultaneous distribution of documents.

12. **Mr. Mackay** (New Zealand) said that, as the administering Power for Tokelau, New Zealand

remained fully committed to abiding by the freely expressed wishes of the people of Tokelau, and would work closely with the Special Committee. His delegation hoped that the programmes of work could be finalized in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/147.

13. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) said that his delegation was heartened that both the Chairman and the Secretary-General were committed to the cause of decolonization. He took particular note of the need for cooperation with the administering Powers.

14. **Mr. Zaemskiy** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation welcomed the improvements in the work of the Special Committee and was prepared to cooperate constructively with it. He called attention, however, to a regrettable departure from the principle of consultation with regional groups. His delegation — the only member of the Group of Eastern European States currently on the Committee — had not been consulted regarding the composition of the new Bureau. He hoped that, in future, the principle of consultation with regional groups would be strictly observed.

15. **Mr. Stanislaus** (Grenada) said that the Organization's success in bringing so many former Non-Self-Governing Territories to independence was possibly its greatest achievement. For colonization to be fully eradicated by the end of the Second International Decade, it was essential to have the full cooperation of the administering Powers.

16. **Ms. Seth** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that the process of decolonization was as yet incomplete and that remedies were required in order to protect the inalienable rights of the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The small-island Territories required special consideration by virtue of their shared vulnerabilities. Her Government maintained a special interest in the self-determination of those islands, which it viewed as an integral part of the region's economic, political and social fabric.

17. **Mr. Dausá Céspedes** (Cuba), said that, regrettably, the objectives of the International Decade for the Eradication of Decolonization had not been fully achieved. While recognizing the positive role played by some administering Powers, his delegation wished to join with the representative of Grenada in urging all other Powers to cooperate honestly and constructively with the Committee. Finally, he

reiterated his Government's offer to host the regional seminar on decolonization in Havana.

18. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire) expressed the hope that the Committee's programme of work would be based on the case-by-case study already initiated. The administering Powers must be persuaded to cooperate formally with the Committee with a view to assisting remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories to find a definitive solution to the issue of self-determination. The new Bureau could count on the support of his delegation to that end.

19. **Mr. Cao Qing** (China), **Mr. Mollahosseini** (Islamic Republic of Iran) and **Mr. Getahoun** (Ethiopia) reiterated their delegation's support for the work of the Committee.

20. **Mr. Naidu** (Fiji) said that the outgoing Chairman had laid an important foundation for future work by approaching issues on a case-by-case basis. As many former Territories had discovered, decolonization was a highly sensitive issue requiring the greatest skill and diplomacy. In that connection, he stressed the importance of continuous and meaningful dialogue.

21. **Mr. Fallouh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the declaration of a Second International Decade for the Eradication of Decolonization would encourage the Committee to further advance its mandated objective, in particular by enhancing cooperation with the administering Powers.

22. **Mr. Thayeb** (Indonesia) said that the Committee's programme of work must take proper account of the unique problems and characteristics of each Territory with a view to ensuring that their populations were made fully aware of their political options. The Committee could count on his delegation's full cooperation to that end.

23. **Mr. Blanco** (Venezuela) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Grenada. The Committee had helped to advance one of the most important objectives of the United Nations, which was to "free the peoples of the world". The Committee could count on his delegation's close cooperation in its efforts to translate that objective into reality.

24. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should approve the proposed organization of work contained in documents A/AC.109/2001/L.1 and L.2.

25. *It was so decided.*

**Other matters**

26. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should continue to apply the decision of the General Assembly concerning the observance of quorum as it had in the past. Accordingly, meetings would be convened in the absence of the quorum normally required under rules 67 and 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. For action on any decision, the presence of a majority of members would, however, continue to be necessary.

27. *It was so decided.*

28. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee accept Cuba's invitation to host the Committee's 2001 regional seminar in Havana and authorize him to hold informal consultations with the Committee to discuss preparations.

29. *It was so decided.*

30. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should authorize him to hold consultations with other members of the Bureau concerning preparation for the seminar; they, in turn, would consult with their respective regional groups. The latter would nominate their own representatives to participate in the seminar, taking into account the principle of rotation. He also proposed to hold consultations with those members of the Committee lacking regional representation in the Bureau.

31. *It was so decided.*

32. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should establish a Working Group under the Chairmanship of Mr. Donigi (Papua New Guinea) to continue consultations with the administering Powers with a view to the earliest finalization of a constructive programme of work for the Non-Self-Governing Territories which would facilitate the implementation of the Committee's mandate on a case-by-case basis. The Committee would be duly informed of the composition of the Working Group.

33. *It was so agreed.*

34. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should authorize Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba), Chairman of the Coordinating Committee, to continue to review all issues pertaining to the holding of joint

meetings of the Special Committee and the Economic and Social Council during the current year.

35. *It was so decided.*

*The meeting rose at noon.*