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Special Committee of 24
on Implementation of Declaration
on Granting Independence

Press Release GA/COL/1257
21 January 1972

DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE HOLDS FIRST MEETING OF 1972;

HEARS SECRETARY-GENERAL, ELECTS OFFICERS

Appoints Chairman to Represent It at Security Council Meetings in Africa

The Special Committee of 24 on decolonization, meeting this morning for the first time in 1972, heard Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim express confidence that the "wide consensus" that has developed on decolonization would "give the added emphasis needed to bring about the full and complete eradication of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

Salim A. Salim (United Republic of Tanzania), elected unanimously this morning as Chairman of the Committee, reviewed the problems of African and other Territories confronting the Committee and urged closer co-operation with liberation movements, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and non-governmental organizations.

Also elected this morning were Frank O. Abdulah (Trinidad and Tobago) and Ilja Hulinsky (Czechoslovakia) as Vice-Chairmen and Mohammad H. Aryubi (Afghanistan) as Rapporteur.

At the suggestion of Syria and Iran, the Committee decided to designate its Chairman as its representative to the Security Council meetings in Addis Ababa, which are to begin on 28 January.

It agreed to meet again as soon as possible after the Council meetings in Africa to decide on its work programme for the year.

The three new members of the Committee -- China, Czechoslovakia and Indonesia -- were welcomed in statements made this morning.

Statement by Secretary-General

Secretary-General WALDHEIM, in his remarks on opening the Committee's meeting this morning, extended a welcome to the new members of the Committee.

He recalled that in 1970 the General Assembly had adopted a Programme of Action on decolonization in order to accelerate that process.

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Referring to the "extremely disquieting situation in southern Africa", he expressed the hope that the Committee would make a positive contribution to the search for just and effective solutions.

Other dependent Territories, he added, were no less deserving of the Committee's careful attention. No factors such as the size of population, availability of natural resources or economic viability should delay the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

He welcomed the "recent positive response" of the New Zealand Government to permit access to the Niue and Tokelau Islands, and the upcoming Visiting Mission of the Trusteeship Council to Papua and New Guinea.

He announced that within a day or two the Secretariat would circulate a note containing references to relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Committee bearing on the Committee's work for the year.

The Committee, he went on, had been asked to formulate concrete suggestions to assist the Security Council in considering appropriate measures that it might take.

Mr. Waldheim expressed the hope that in the light of Assembly resolution 2836 (XXVI) of 17 December 1971, the Committee would pay due regard to the need to control its documentation requirements.

In conclusion, the Secretary-General expressed confidence that the Committee's work during the year would represent a "further positive contribution towards the achievement, by the dependent peoples, of the goals set out in the Declaration". He assured the Committee of his full co-operation in its endeavours and wished it every success in the task before it.

(The text of the Secretary-General's statement is given in Press Release SG/SM/1622-GA/COL/1256.)

Address by Chairman

The Chairman, Mr. SALIM (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking after his unanimous election, paid tribute to the work of his predecessors and commended the Secretary-General on his commitment to the principles of the Declaration on decolonization.

It was a matter for satisfaction, he said, that the Special Committee had survived 11 "difficult" years "in spite of the deliberate campaigns aimed at undermining it".

Mr. Salim paid tribute to "the inspiring and dedicated services" of the previous Secretary-General, U Thant, and "his outstanding and memorable contribution" to the work of the Committee.

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He welcomed the delegations of China, Czechoslovakia and Indonesia, adding that the membership of China had a special significance as it demonstrated that country's genuine interest in the struggle for freedom and independence of all colonial peoples.

In welcoming the delegation of Czechoslovakia he acknowledged "with deep appreciation" the role played in the Committee by Poland, which resigned in December. Mr. Salim also expressed the view that few countries could equal the history of the struggle of the people of Indonesia for freedom and independence.

He went on to say that few if any of the members could be very happy at the pace of decolonization, particularly in southern Africa.

The events in the last few days in Southern Rhodesia had attracted the attention of the international community, he said. "Braving the intimidation of the fascist authorities, the African people of Zimbabwe in their thousands have taken to the streets categorically rejecting the so-called proposals for settlement agreed upon by the British Government and the racist Smith", he added.

The Chairman declared that the international community was entitled to know from Britain "by what stretch of imagination" the Commission headed by Lord Pearce could function with even the semblance of fairness, given the outrageous repressive measures including mass arrests, detentions and brutal killings currently being perpetuated by the Smith regime against the opponents of "the so-called settlement".

In the Territories under Portuguese domination, he continued, the national liberation movements had made outstanding gains in their struggle. It was clear that the liberation struggle in Africa was being waged against a multitude of formidable odds " thanks to the generous support that Portugal receives from some of her powerful allies".

He suggested that the Committee give special attention to the question of the support which Portugal was receiving from its allies and others.

Turning to Namibia, he said, the seriousness of the situation there could not be over-emphasized as reports indicate that South Africa had resorted to the application of brutal police force to suppress the people of Ovamboland who were demanding "nothing more than a just existence".

As regards the small colonial territories outside Africa, the Chairman made a "special appeal to the administering Powers to come forth and co-operate with the Committee". He commended the example set by Australia and New Zealand.

Speaking of the Committee's short-range goals in 1972, he expressed hope that it would be able to meet with leaders of liberation movements "in a regular session held away from Headquarters and preferably near the theatres of operations". He also urged intensified contacts with the OAU and with

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non-governmental organizations, including trade unions and other bodies in countries which helped the colonial authorities. The Committee should also work closely with "those few" specialized agencies which had shown "positive trends" in regard to decolonization, he added.

Expressing hope that the work of the Committee would be given the widest possible publicity, the Chairman concluded by saying that the Committee could "arouse the consciousness of the international community against the colonial authorities while at the same time it can help the colonial authorities to get into a path of sanity".

Mr. Salim was nominated for the Chairmanship by the representative of Venezuela, supported by Syria and Tunisia. (A biographical note on the new Chairman appears in Press Release BIO/903-GA/COL/1256.)

Comments of Members

AN CHIN-YUAN (China), expressing his pleasure at taking part for the first time in the work of the Committee, said the continuing existence of colonialism was in violation of the United Nations Charter. His Government and people supported the people of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea (Bissau) as well as those of Zimbabwe and Namibia.

The struggle of peoples against colonialism, he went on, had been "surging forward wave upon wave" and would surely triumph.

Imperialists and colonialists, he said, were doing their utmost to obstruct the work of the Committee. They would not succeed, however, since they were against the tide of history.

YAKOV MALIK (Soviet Union) congratulated the new officers of the Committee and welcomed the three new members. He stressed the importance of strengthening links between the Committee and the various liberation movements, of breaking all ties with colonialist and neo-colonialist forces, and of creating a climate of condemnation of all colonialism and racism.

Describing the forthcoming meetings of the Security Council in Africa as historic, he stated that the Soviet delegation would lend every effort, to make them successful.

The Committee agreed to put off consideration of these points until its next meeting.

The proposal to appoint the Chairman to represent the Committee at the Security Council meetings in Addis Ababa was made by Rafic Jouejati (Syria) and supported by Fereydoun Hoveyda (Iran). The Committee Secretary, Thomas Tanaka, informed members that the cost of the proposal would be \$1,500. The proposal was then adopted without objection.

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Background on Committee

The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples was established by the General Assembly in 1961 to study the application of the Declaration and to make suggestions and recommendations on the progress and extent of its application.

Last year the Assembly again renewed the Committee's mandate by adopting a resolution (2378 (XXVI) of 20 December 1971) in which, among other things, it requested the Committee to:

-- Continue to seek suitable means for the immediate and full implementation of General Assembly resolutions on decolonization in all Territories which have not yet attained independence and, in particular, "to formulate specific proposals for the elimination of the remaining manifestations of colonialism" and report thereon to the Assembly in 1972;

-- "Make concrete suggestions which assist the Security Council in considering appropriate measures under the Charter with regard to developments in colonial Territories which are likely to threaten international peace and security";

-- "Undertake a special study on the compliance of Member States with the Declaration and with other relevant resolutions on the question of decolonization";

-- "Intensify its consideration of the small Territories and to recommend to the General Assembly steps to be taken to enable the population of those Territories to exercise their right to self-determination and independence";

-- "take steps, in consultation with the Organization of African Unity, to enable representatives of national liberation movements in the colonial Territories in southern Africa to participate, whenever necessary, in its deliberations relating to these Territories";

-- Assist the Economic and Social Council in a study of the activities of non-governmental organizations in the field of decolonization, "bearing in mind the need to enlist the support of non-governmental organizations in the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration".

In its report to the Assembly last year (document A/8423 and Add.1-8), which the Assembly approved in its resolution of 20 December, the Committee included a programme of work envisaged for 1972. This programme would have the Committee:

--- Continue to devote close attention to the compliance by Member States with the Declaration on decolonization and other resolutions on the question and submit recommendations as to specific measures needed to achieve the objectives of the Declaration;

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- Continue its study of military activities and arrangements by colonial Powers which might be impending the implementation of the Declaration;
- Recommend a deadline for independence for each Territory whenever the Committee considers it proper and appropriate to do so;
- Dispatch a group of representatives to the liberated areas of certain colonial Territories in southern Africa;
- Send a mission to Niue and the Tokelau Islands and participate in a mission of the Trusteeship Council to Papua, New Guinea;
- Continue to seek full co-operation of the administering Powers to enable it to send visiting missions to Territories in the Caribbean, Pacific, Indian Ocean and African areas;
- Continue its review of the activities envisaged by the Office of Public Information in the field of decolonization;
- Consider holding a series of meetings away from Headquarters.

Territories which the Committee dealt with last year were: Southern Rhodesia, Namibia; Territories under Portuguese Administration; Seychelles and St. Helena; Spanish Sahara; Gibraltar; French Somaliland; Oman; New Hebrides; Niue and Tokelau Islands; Gilbert and Ellice Islands; Pitcairn and Solomon Islands; American Samoa and Guam; Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands; Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Papua, New Guinea; Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Lucia and St. Vincent; United States Virgin Islands; Bahamas, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands; Falkland Islands (Malvinas); British Honduras.

Of these, Oman last year acceded to independence and became a Member of the United Nations.

Committee Membership

The Committee, as originally established by the Assembly in 1961, had a membership of 17. In 1962 its membership was enlarged to 24, and it has been known ever since as the Special Committee of 24.

In 1969, Australia withdrew from the Committee; in 1970 Honduras, Italy and Norway withdrew, and in 1971 Poland, the United States and the United Kingdom followed. Madagascar withdrew on 7 January 1972 (document A/8655).

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China, Czechoslovakia and Indonesia joined the Committee by decision of the Assembly on 20 December 1971. In the previous year, Fiji, Sweden, and Trinidad and Tobago became members.

As a result of these changes, the membership now stands at 22. They are: Afghanistan, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Mali, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, USSR, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

The Committee's Chairman last year was German Nava Carrillo (Venezuela). When he left New York on another assignment, Rafic Jouejati (Syria) became Acting Chairman.

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