



General Assembly

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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 Thursday, 19 February 2015, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chair: Mr. Toyberg-Frandzen (Assistant Secretary-General a.i. for Political Affairs)

Chair: Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Opening of the session by the Assistant Secretary-General

1. **The Temporary Chair**, reading out a message from the Secretary-General, said that 2015 marked the fifty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as well as the midpoint of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

2. The success of the efforts of the United Nations continued to depend on the political will of all involved. Throughout 2014, the Committee had undertaken important steps to pursue its work on decolonization. In March, it had dispatched a visiting mission to one of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, namely New Caledonia, the first such mission since 2007. The rounds of dialogues initiated in 2013 between the Bureau of the Committee and each of the four administering Powers, as well as other stakeholders, had been successfully repeated in 2014. Productive cooperation among all concerned, particularly the Committee, the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories, was on the rise. He urged the Committee to seize that momentum and move the decolonization agenda forward. Seventeen Non-Self-Governing Territories across the globe remained under the Committee's purview, and he called on the international community to address the issue of self-government and find innovative and practical ways to implement the decolonization process.

3. That endeavour should be guided by the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The seventieth anniversary of the United Nations in 2015 also marked 70 years in advancing the Organization's historic decolonization mandate, yet that process was still not complete. The Secretariat would continue to assist the Committee in its important work.

Adoption of the agenda

4. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of officers

5. *Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) was elected Chair; Mr. Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba), Mr. Minah (Sierra Leone) and Mr. Percaya (Indonesia) were elected Vice-Chairs;*

and Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) was elected Rapporteur, by acclamation.

6. *Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) took the Chair.*

7. **The Chair** said that the delegations of Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala, Kenya, Lebanon, South Africa, Spain and the Holy See had indicated their wish to participate in the work of the Committee as observers.

8. In November and December 2014, the Committee had held another round of informal consultations with three of the administering Powers of Non-Self-Governing Territories, as well as other stakeholders, with a view to building bridges and furthering dialogue. The planned meeting with representatives of the United States of America had been postponed for scheduling reasons, but would take place in the near future. Various aspects of the socioeconomic development of Tokelau had been discussed with the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations, as had the joint decision to defer consideration of any future act of self-determination and to focus on enhancing the quality of life in the Territory. The Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom had reaffirmed his Government's position on its relationship with the Territories under its administration, as well as its position on the role of the Committee, and the Chair had recalled the General Assembly's resolutions on decolonization and the Committee's clear mandate in that regard.

9. The Deputy Permanent Representative of France had assured the Committee that his Government had established various mechanisms for addressing the problems with the special electoral roll in New Caledonia. The lack of progress in that regard and the institutional crisis in the Territory were a source of concern, however. Continued dialogue; monitoring of the implementation of the final phase of the Nouméa Accord; the establishment of a just, fair and transparent electoral roll; and the development of an education programme to inform the people of New Caledonia about the nature of self-determination were key, as noted in General Assembly resolution 69/102, adopted on 5 December 2014. Decolonization processes must comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions, be pursued on a case-by-case basis and be guided by the factors and principles defined by the General Assembly. Furthermore, the United Nations must be informed of any change in the constitutional status of

any Non-Self-Governing Territory and must pay special attention to the manner in which the right of self-determination had been attained and freely exercised. The United Nations had always sought to ensure that, in each Territory, that process reflected the free and informed view of the population, expressed through democratic means.

10. Preparations were under way for the Bureau's annual meeting with the Secretary-General to explore innovative ways of using his good offices to help to advance the decolonization agenda on a case-by-case basis, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/107. With regard to the 2015 Caribbean regional seminar, which was to be held in Nicaragua, he hoped that the levels of attendance by representatives of the Territories, members of the Committee, other Member States and the administering Powers would be high.

Organization of work (A/AC.109/2015/L.1 and A/AC.109/2015/L.2)

11. **The Chair** drew attention to a note by the Secretary-General (A/AC.109/2015/L.1) indicating the resolutions and decisions relevant to the work of the Committee for the current year. The Committee also had before it a note by the Chair (A/AC.109/2015/L.2) containing suggestions concerning the Committee's organization of work, programme of work and timetable. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposed organization of work for the current year, with the understanding that the meeting schedule might be subsequently revised if required.

12. *It was so decided.*

Organization of the 2015 Caribbean regional seminar (A/AC.109/2015/17)

13. **The Chair** recalled that the Committee had unanimously agreed, by means of the no-objection procedure, to accept the generous offer of Nicaragua to host the 2015 Caribbean regional seminar. As in previous years, the Committee would schedule the seminar to coincide with the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, which would begin on 25 May. He suggested that the seminar should be held from 19 to 21 May 2015.

14. *It was so decided.*

15. **Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) said that Nicaragua was proud to be the first Central American

country to host one of the Committee's regional seminars. Since 1979 it had championed the rights of Non-Self-Governing Territories and peoples under military occupation and colonial rule. The United Nations had an obligation to complete the eradication of colonialism. The seminar would provide an opportunity for stakeholders to have their voices heard and their situations examined on a case-by-case basis.

16. **The Chair** said he took it that the Committee wished to approve the guidelines, rules of procedure and agenda for the seminar (A/AC.109/2015/17).

17. *It was so decided.*

18. **The Chair** recalled that the Committee delegation to the seminar was to include four members representing each of the regional groups within the Committee (African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States and Latin American and Caribbean States). He asked the respective regional groups to submit their nominations for those members as soon as possible. In addition, he took it that the Committee authorized the Chair to finalize the list of experts and representatives of non-governmental organizations to be invited to the seminar.

19. *It was so decided.*

Other matters

20. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) said that engaging with the administering Powers of Non-Self-Governing Territories was crucial for taking the decolonization process forward, and he commended the Chair for his promotion of dialogue and consultations. The representation of the administering Powers at the meetings of the Special Committee had increased as a result.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.