COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Forty-fourth session
SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9TH MEETING
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Monday, 8 February 1988, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SENE (Senegal)

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The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND ITS APPLICATION TO PEOPLES UNDER COLONIAL OR ALIEN DOMINATION OR FOREIGN OCCUPATION (agenda item 9) (continued) (E/CN.4/1988/13, 14 and 41; E/CN.4/1988/NGO/10, 17 and 19; A/42/616-S/19174; A/43/66-S/19381)

1. Mr. LOMEIKO (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that human society had increasingly recognized its interrelationship and interdependence in all fields of activity. The decolonization process had liberated not only the former colonies but also the former metropolitan nations. Democratization and the humanizing of international relations called in turn for further efforts to ensure the right of all nations to self-determination, freedom and equality. Without the right to self-determination, no social, economic and spiritual progress was possible; on it the development potential of all civilization depended.

2. The basic significance of that right had been recognized throughout the international community as well as in the Charter, the International Covenants on Human Rights, the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and other relevant instruments. It embraced not simply political independence but the right to choose freely whatever path of socio-economic development a nation preferred. As Mikhail Gorbachev had recently said, any attempts, direct or indirect, to influence such choice, or outside attempts to destabilize any Government, were inadmissible. One inalienable human right was the right of a nation to economic independence and sovereignty over its own natural resources. That right presupposed the establishment of equitable international economic relations, to the exclusion of neo-colonial efforts, overt and covert, to undermine the progress of independent States. Only genuine self-determination could guarantee the right to development, as proclaimed in the Declaration on the Right to Development (A/RES/41/128).

3. The right to self-determination was not yet exercised everywhere. The most striking example of its denial was in southern Africa. The policy of apartheid was depriving millions of indigenous citizens of that right; cosmetic measures such as "Bantustanization" deceived no one. Nevertheless, the southern African peoples' struggle to assert their rights was growing stronger than ever, despite all repression and terror. Pretoria's defiance of Security Council resolutions relating to Namibia was a direct affront to the entire world; the Soviet Union supported the Namibian people's struggle, under SWAPO, its sole legitimate representative, for independence and self-determination. The threat to peace and security posed by the Pretoria racists' persistent practices, including economic blackmail, terrorist activities, the use of mercenaries and outright aggression clearly showed that the problem could not be solved by measures such as the so-called "constructive engagement" policy, but only through mandatory sanctions in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter, a measure supported by most of the world community.

4. The tragic plight of the Palestinian people had already been raised during the current session; the utterly fruitless policy of repression pursued by the occupying Power had led to further killings. The true solution, as most members of the Commission had acknowledged, was to convene
an international conference with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). As the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs had stated in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General, immediate practical steps should be taken to convene such a conference.

5. Newly independent nations had a right to choose their own future free from outside interference. It was disquieting, however, that, whenever the possibility arose of settling a conflict on the basis of national reconciliation, obstacles were suddenly raised under the influence of selfish outside interests. Some positive developments had occurred in Central America as a result of political measures taken by the countries of the region themselves; non-interference was essential to constructive progress in that regard.

6. The Soviet Union supported the efforts of the south-east Asian States to normalize the situation in that region; it welcomed the national reconciliation steps being taken by the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. In Afghanistan too, progress towards reconciliation had been made. The measures included the adoption of a new Constitution, a process in which over 2 million citizens had taken part, the election of a national President and legislation for freedom to establish political parties - all of which showed that Afghans were free to decide their own destiny.

7. The Soviet Union supported such measures and the establishment of a coalition Government on the broadest possible basis; but both sides must show readiness to resolve the situation and there must be no outside influence. The Soviet Union had taken a political decision to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, and would do so as soon as agreement had been reached in the course of the discussions held at Geneva. The Commission could likewise promote progress in that regard.

8. The use of mercenaries had become a real threat to the right of peoples to self-determination. Details provided by the Secretariat showed that, since the Second World War, mercenaries had been employed in no less than 200 armed conflicts, including those in southern Africa, Central America and Afghanistan. The Commission should not only condemn the practice but take measures aimed at putting an end to it. At its previous session it had taken a timely decision in appointing a Special Rapporteur on the subject. Despite the short time at his disposal, his report had provided a sound beginning. His mandate should be renewed for a further year in order to continue the research required into the practice and its grave consequences; the Soviet Union stood ready to collaborate closely with him for that purpose.

9. The modern world was an intricate web of many independent States' national interests and rights. In that world, as Mikhail Gorbachev had said, the policy of denying the interests or exploiting the resources of others was an anachronism as well as a threat to civilization; that was why a new political way of thinking was required, calling for coolness, clear appraisal and, most of all, the realization that possession of power, however great, could not confer domination. The future of mankind depended to a great extent on how nations learned to respect the independence of others; promoting such respect was one of the Commission's tasks.
10. Mr. RASHID (Bangladesh) said that exercise of the right to self-determination had nurtured the birth of the vast majority of free, independent nations. The last vestiges of colonialism had not, however, been everywhere removed. That was why the United Nations, and the Commission in particular, still had before it the question of the right of peoples to self-determination.

11. In Palestine, the people's suffering as a result of the denial of that right remained the biggest contemporary tragedy. All recognized the determined struggle to exercise that inalienable right, the denial of which remained at the core of the Middle East conflict. That problem could not be solved without the active involvement of the Palestinian people's acknowledged leadership, the PLO, preferably at an international conference under United Nations auspices.

12. Since the Commission's previous session, the peoples of South Africa and Namibia had suffered further violence as a result of the Pretoria Government's intransigence and oppression. Against the backdrop of mounting protest and violence, world public opinion had called repeatedly for comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa. His Government endorsed that call and would continue unreservedly to support the legitimate struggle of the peoples of southern Africa.

13. The United Nations plan for Namibian independence must be unconditionally implemented, in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978), the Secretary-General being given every support in his efforts to initiate measures to secure that independence.

14. His Government viewed with serious concern the continued occupation of Afghanistan and Kampuchea by foreign forces. There was no alternative to comprehensive political settlements to solve those problems, including the withdrawal of all foreign forces so as to enable the peoples concerned to determine their own forms of government, free from outside interference or intervention, and to enable the refugees that had fled those countries to return home in dignity and safety. Any settlement must be based on the principles and purposes of the Charter and reached through genuine negotiation and mutual accommodation. His Government supported the relevant United Nations resolutions, and the ASEAN countries' endeavour to find a satisfactory solution in Kampuchea.

15. Mr. HACENE (Algeria) said that, on the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it seemed paradoxical that the Commission should still have before it situations of flagrant and systematic violations of such rights. The efforts to obtain for all the rights that had been universally recognized focused, as the Commission recognized, on action to give effect to the right to self-determination.

16. Algeria, as a former colony and a part of both the Arab and African worlds, was inevitably concerned about the persistent denial of that right to the peoples of South Africa, Namibia, Palestine and Western Sahara. In southern Africa, Namibia continued to be illegally occupied by South Africa, although the mandate to do so had been revoked in 1966 and its presence declared illegal by the International Court of Justice. South Africa should acknowledge that the struggle waged by SWAPO was bound to succeed and that
nothing it could do would prevent the eventual emancipation of the Namibian people. The Commission was duty-bound to reaffirm its unswerving support for the steps towards self-determination and independence and to reiterate its firm support for the Namibian people's right to territorial integrity.

17. That support was bound up with the Commission's recognition of the struggle waged by the people of South Africa against the humiliating system of apartheid, which, in systematizing the violation of fundamental human rights, posed an unprecedented challenge to the world's conscience and had regularly absorbed a great deal of the Commission's efforts. All findings confirmed that the system of apartheid was utterly incompatible with peace, freedom and justice; while the growing national resistance and unanimous condemnation by world public opinion were signs that it had no future. Until it was finally eradicated, however, the Commission, and its individual members, should strive to step up international pressure with a view to applying global mandatory sanctions.

18. In the Middle East, Israel pursued a policy comparable to that applied in South Africa, denying the Palestinian people its right to self-determination and the actions taken to that end were a constant menace to the peace and security of the world. The recent uprisings in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem, and the criminal repression by the Israeli occupation forces, had aroused the indignation of the world. Only by giving effect to the Palestinian people's legitimate rights could a just and lasting solution to the Middle East crisis be achieved, and an international conference should be held, under United Nations auspices, with the essential participation of the PLO, the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative.

19. In Western Sahara, the fratricidal struggle stemming from denial of the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination remained the chief obstacle to the process of establishing an Arabic Greater Maghreb. The Organization of African Unity's peace plan had been endorsed by the United Nations, and the Commission too had associated itself with the international consensus. Morocco and the POLISARIO Front had been called upon, in all those forums, to enter into direct negotiations for the establishment of a cease-fire and a referendum free from administrative or military constraint. The Commission should take the opportunity at its current session to encourage the efforts being made jointly by the Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations which had recently resulted in the sending of a technical mission to Western Sahara charged with gathering information to be used in organizing a credible referendum under the auspices of OAU and the United Nations.

20. Mrs. KIMATA (Japan) said that the inalienable right to self-determination was still being violated in many parts of the world and particularly in Palestine, Kampuchea, Afghanistan and Namibia. Her Government was deeply concerned at the recurrent violence in the occupied Arab territories and thought it deplorable that Israel should continue to insist, in utter disregard of recent Security Council resolutions, that the Fourth Geneva Convention did not apply to the situation in the occupied territories and refused to change its position on the deportation of Palestinians. In January, her Government had strongly requested the Israeli Government to observe the Fourth Geneva Convention and exert the utmost self-restraint, and had reiterated that request on 5 February since the situation had shown no sign of improvement.
21. Her Government, which had taken every opportunity to state that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East was urgently required, supported the peace initiative proposed by President Mubarak and reaffirmed its support for the convening of an international peace conference. The Israeli leaders should show flexibility and prepare to withdraw their troops from the occupied territories.

22. Her Government also intended to co-operate with the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to improve the economic and social conditions of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and would contribute $1 million to the UNDP programme of assistance to the Palestinian people.

23. In Kampuchea, the core of the problem lay in the fact that the Kampuchean people had been denied the right to self-determination as a result of Viet Nam's military intervention. The overwhelming majority of the international community had called upon Viet Nam to enter into negotiations for a peaceful and comprehensive political settlement based on the total withdrawal of its forces. Her Government supported the peace efforts of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and was determined to continue a dialogue with Viet Nam and the other countries concerned. It also welcomed the recent initiatives taken by Prince Sihanouk as a step towards political settlement, in which connection it reiterated its full support for resolution 1987/6 of the Commission on Human Rights.

24. With regard to the Afghanistan problem, although it had been alleged that foreign interference was prolonging the fighting, it was the Afghan people themselves who were fiercely opposing the military and political occupation by foreign troops. It was of great urgency that steps should be taken to enable the refugees, who amounted to almost a quarter of the total population of Afghanistan, to return to their homeland. Foreign troops must be withdrawn immediately, for only then could the Afghan people resolve their problems on the basis of the principles of non-interference and respect for the right to self-determination.

25. Japan would watch closely any development in the situation that might occur subsequent to the recent, second, visit of the Commission's Special Rapporteur. There had also been some promising diplomatic steps towards a political settlement, due in large part to the efforts of the Secretary-General and his personal representative. Her Government called upon the parties concerned to co-operate with those efforts.

26. Japan's position on the question of the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa was that Namibia's independence must be achieved in accordance with the wishes of its inhabitants, as expressed through free elections to be held under the supervision and control of the United Nations.

27. In a modest effort to ease the enormous suffering of people who had been forced from their native lands, her Government had extended them financial and other forms of assistance. It had co-operated with international agencies and organizations in improving the lot of the refugees and displaced persons from Kampuchea and Afghanistan and had contributed to humanitarian and educational funds for Namibia. However, the only real solution to the problem of refugees was for the right to self-determination to be restored to all peoples.
28. Mr. RICHTER (German Democratic Republic) said that the forty-second session of the General Assembly had furnished yet another proof that implementation of the people's right to self-determination was a fundamental prerequisite for the enjoyment of all other human rights. Attempts to redefine that right, which was a principle of international law, were entirely out of place. Instead, there was a need for constructive measures to ensure that the right to self-determination was implemented universally.

29. His delegation viewed mercenarism as a specific form of mass violation of human rights, and as a blatant disregard for the right to self-determination. The appointment of a Special Rapporteur on the question of mercenaries and the presentation of his first report (E/CN.4/1988/14) were significant steps in an effort to extirpate mercenarism. The Commission should devote utmost attention to the results of the Special Rapporteur's preliminary study.

30. It was unanimously agreed that apartheid entailed mass violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. State terrorism against the South African people and sovereign States in the region posed a serious threat to world peace and security. Calls by the world-wide anti-apartheid movement for the Security Council to adopt mandatory and binding sanctions against Pretoria had become increasingly powerful. His Government opposed all attempts to prop up the South African racist regime, and reiterated its demand that Namibia should be granted independence without delay.

31. In the occupied Arab territories, the current situation more imperatively than ever required a comprehensive and just settlement in the framework of an international conference, with the participation of all those directly concerned.

32. With regard to Afghanistan, a similar, constructive approach aimed at bringing about a political settlement must be expected of all the parties concerned. His delegation vigorously rejected all attempts to abuse discussion of the current item for purposes of confrontation and interference in the Afghan people's internal affairs. Everything possible should be done to support the proximity talks shortly to be conducted by Mr. Diego Cordovez.

33. The German Democratic Republic joined millions of people on all continents in supporting the quest of the Nicaraguan and other Central American peoples for peace, reconciliation, development and justice without external interference. The Guatemala peace plan was a constructive platform for defusing the crisis in the subregion.

34. At the current session of the Commission, a qualitatively new approach was required if the goal of ensuring respect for human rights and the universal implementation of the right to self-determination was to be achieved. That approach would be reflected in the pursuit of dialogue, mutually beneficial co-operation and peaceful competition.

35. In conclusion, he noted that the remark made by a representative on 5 February 1988 was absolutely inconsistent with realities in Europe, one such reality being the existence of two independent and sovereign German States, and another that the people of the German Democratic Republic had chosen their socialist order, in free exercise of their right to self-determination. Desire for understanding and realism should be the guideline for constructive co-operation between the two German States.
36. Mr. da COSTA LOBO (Portugal) said that, for long periods of history, the fate of peoples had been largely determined by an interplay of forces and interests in which the will and aspirations of those peoples had had very little weight. The recognition of the principle of self-determination represented a very significant victory for mankind. The importance of that principle for the enjoyment of other human rights had been all too well demonstrated by situations in which the right to self-determination was not respected. Although interpretations of the exact nature of the right to self-determination differed, the only real difficulty lay in the lack of political will to respect that right.

37. In 1974, Portugal had accepted General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), because it considered that all its colonies, including East Timor, were non-self-governing territories in the meaning of Article 73 of the Charter. Moreover, the borders of those territories had been well-defined, and there had been no mass displacements of populations that would have made it difficult to determine the subjects of the right to self-determination.

38. On 7 December 1975, however, Indonesia had invaded East Timor. In an endeavour to legitimize its actions, the occupying Power had, in May 1976, organized consultations with an allegedly representative assembly, which had, apparently, approved a petition calling for the integration of East Timor into Indonesia. The members of the assembly had been appointed, not elected, without any supervision by international bodies, and its decision could not be accepted as a legitimate act of self-determination. The validity of any act of consultation was a matter for the international community to decide, and the refusal of any United Nations body to attend the so-called act of self-determination had been the only possible response to a situation which threatened the destiny of an entire people and jeopardized a fundamental principle of international law.

39. In April 1987, so-called "administrative" elections in Indonesia had also been held in East Timor. However, those elections had not given the people the opportunity to make any choice about their political status and could not, therefore, be considered as an opportunity to exercise the right to self-determination. The United Nations had not sent observers to the elections or endorsed them in any way. The situation in East Timor had persisted for several years, but the passage of time did not make it any more acceptable.

40. His Government had spared no effort to reach a settlement of the problem of East Timor, and consultations with Indonesia were currently under way in New York under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He wished to express his Government's appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-General, various United Nations bodies and the International Committee of the Red Cross in the search for a solution.

41. As for the situations in Kampuchea and Afghanistan, the presence of foreign troops made it impossible for the inhabitants to determine their own destiny. The withdrawal of foreign troops was an essential precondition for the restoration of the right to self-determination of both those peoples, although the effects of the foreign presence would be slow to disappear.
42. Mr. KHERAD (Observer for Afghanistan) said that the right of peoples to self-determination was one of the fundamental tenets of contemporary international law and an essential pre-condition for the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the strengthening of international peace and security. It was a principle enshrined in many international instruments, including the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Charter of the United Nations itself.

43. Nevertheless, despite the efforts of the United Nations and of individual States, many peoples were still being refused the right to self-determination, while the sovereignty and integrity of many independent States were still being threatened by destabilization, external pressure and the political, economic, military and strategic interests of other States. As the Commission's current debate showed, the United Nations had not yet been able to justify all the hopes placed in it, although two out of every three of its Member States had once been colonies or dependent territories.

44. The odious apartheid régime continued to show its contempt for the international community by its illegal exploitation of the South African and Namibian peoples. It had employed many different manoeuvres to delay the implementation of United Nations decisions. His delegation called for the realization of the right to self-determination of the Namibian people, with a complete transfer of power to SWAPO, its sole and authentic representative.

45. The denial of the Palestine people's rights and the continuing occupation of Arab territories by Israel had created an explosive situation in the region, which could be resolved only by the acknowledgement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and an independent State, the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces and the guarantee of the right of all States in the region to a secure and independent existence.

46. There were other situations, such as those in western Sahara and Cyprus, where the right to self-determination was still being violated. In some areas, reprisals, threats, attempts at destabilization, sabotage, bombing and attacks by mercenaries were used to prevent the exercise of the right to self-determination.

47. The Afghan people which had suffered more than nine years of fratricidal war now longed for peace. His Government had proclaimed a policy of national reconciliation and a unilateral ceasefire, and had declared itself ready to go as far as the establishment of a coalition Government, a Government of national unity, which would reflect the real political situation in Afghanistan. The policy of national reconciliation gave Afghanistan's neighbours the chance to contribute to the peace process, which would put an end to the fratricidal war once and for all.

48. The separate negotiations currently going on at Geneva had the same objective: to ensure peace within the country and a political settlement of the situation throughout the region. With good will, a constructive attitude and political realism, there were good prospects for resolving the current differences, including the timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops during 1988, in the next round of negotiations.
49. A necessary corollary of the right to self-determination was the need for other States to respect the people's choice. No State had the right to determine another's political system or impose its own values on another people. In the interests of civilization, collective and constructive efforts would be necessary.

50. Mr. LE DINH CAN (Observer for Viet Nam) said that fundamental rights were threatened by the forces of aggression and exploitation in many parts of the world, notably southern Africa and the occupied Arab territories. In Asia, an undeclared war was being waged against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, while the People's Republic of Kampuchea was being threatened by foreign-backed rebels who wished to reinstate the genocidal Khmer Rouge régime. In the Mediterranean region, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity were constantly under threat. In Latin America, Nicaragua was subjected to foreign aggression through the activities of the Contra mercenaries, Cuba was the victim of a foreign propaganda campaign to discredit its human-rights record and the Chilean people was being subjected to increasing human-rights violations.

51. The international community must redouble its efforts to increase international peace and security and support those who were fighting for their fundamental rights. His delegation welcomed the tireless efforts of the Soviet Union to bring about the eradication of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. The signature by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty had established a sound basis for the elimination of nuclear weapons, social development and the realization of all fundamental rights.

52. The Vietnamese people had good reason to value peace, sovereignty and fundamental rights. His delegation fully supported the struggle of the Palestinian people, the efforts of the Contadora group to find a political solution to the problems of Central America, the campaign by the African National Congress and the Organization of African Unity to put an end to apartheid and the policy of national reconciliation proclaimed by the Government of Afghanistan.

53. The events of the last nine years in South-East Asia had vindicated the position of the three countries of Indochina, who had worked for peaceful coexistence between the States of the region and their neighbours, and had shown the absurdity of the position of certain other States which persisted in supporting the genocidal Pol Pot clique. In two recent meetings, Premier Hun Sen and Prince Sihanouk had agreed on principles which would pave the way for a political solution of the Kampuchean problem. That achievement was a triumph for the right to self-determination and the years of struggle of the Kampuchean people, led by the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea with the vigorous support of Viet Nam, Laos, the USSR and other socialist countries.

54. Under the agreement between his country and the People's Republic of Kampuchea, Vietnamese forces were to withdraw from that country by 1990. If the parties to the conflict settled their differences before then, a new timetable would be drawn up for the withdrawal of the Vietnamese volunteers. While his Government hoped that the Kampuchean people would find its own
solution to the country's problems, it was willing to participate in an international conference on the issue, and trusted that all peace-loving States would contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in South-East Asia.

55. Mr. NGO HAC TEAM (Observer for Democratic Kampuchea) expressed his Government's unshakeable solidarity with the struggling peoples of Laos, Afghanistan, Palestine, South Africa and Namibia, and recalled that the overwhelming support of the General Assembly for the Kampuchean people was of great importance in its efforts to attain self-determination and to resist Hanoi's annexationist designs.

56. Viet Nam continued its military occupation of Kampuchea, disregarding the relevant United Nations resolutions on the problem. It had stepped up its settlement policy, in gross violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It had employed chemical weapons and resorted to summary executions, torture, the widespread use of forced labour, the bombardment of refugee camps, the poisoning of the water supply in certain regions and other atrocities, the goal being to crush the Kampuchean people.

57. Viet Nam spoke of a partial withdrawal of its troops, which was nothing but a propaganda trick. It attempted, unsuccessfully, to deceive the international community by references to "negotiations", "total withdrawal by 1990", "national reconciliation" and other ploys. Its goal was to transform the problem of the Vietnamese occupation into a civil war by imposing de facto recognition of its puppet régime in Phnom Penh, dismantling the coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and invalidating all the relevant United Nations resolutions on the subject.

58. In so doing, Viet Nam stubbornly sought to elude the crux of the problem: its refusal to withdraw its troops. The Kampuchean people could not exercise its right to self-determination in the presence of 140,000 Vietnamese soldiers. His Government was convinced, however, that the international community would not allow Viet Nam to swallow up Kampuchea, for not only was the physical survival of the Kampuchean people at stake, but also the balance of power in South-East Asia and the Asian Pacific, as could be seen by the repeated violations over the past years of the territorial integrity of Thailand by the forces of Vietnamese expansionism.

59. The best way to guarantee peace and stability in South-East Asia and the Asian Pacific was to support the eight-point proposal of the coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and to step up efforts to persuade Viet Nam to negotiate an agreement with it. The eight-point peace proposal contained the following important concession: once a comprehensive agreement was reached between Viet Nam and the coalition of Democratic Kampuchea, the latter would not object if the group of collaborators installed by Viet Nam participated on an equal footing in a quadripartite Kampuchea coalition to organize free and general elections under United Nations supervision.

60. It was unfortunate that the Soviet Union, instead of attempting to persuade Viet Nam to withdraw its troops, had assisted that country through considerable military support in consolidating its occupation of Kampuchea.
61. His delegation wished, once again to express the profound gratitude of
the Kampuchean people, the coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, and
Prince Sihanouk, the President of Democratic Kampuchea, for the broad support
given by the international community to the Kampuchean people's struggle for
survival, and thanked in particular the countries of the Association of
South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for their ceaseless efforts to reach a
peaceful, just and durable settlement of the Kampuchean problem.

62. Mr. POSAYANOND (Observer for Thailand) said that the occupation of
Kampuchea by Vietnamese troops, which his Government condemned as a denial of
the right to self-determination, had caused a number of problems for his
country. Approximately 3,000 to 4,000 Kampucheans fled into Thailand every
month, and the total number of displaced persons along the Thai-Kampuchean
border could rise from 260,000 in 1987 to 300,000 by the middle of 1988.

63. The humanitarian burden of looking after those civilians was enormous,
and the refugees had been subject to numerous attacks by Vietnamese forces
which had violated Thailand's territorial integrity no fewer than 700 times
and had caused numerous casualties. Such attacks illustrated that there had
been no change in the Vietnamese policy towards the Kampuchean problem and
its neighbouring countries. The decision, in October 1987, of the Executive
Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees (UNHCR) unequivocally to condemn such attacks had thus been most
timely.

64. His Government was deeply concerned at the new wave of illegal departures
of boat people from Viet Nam. UNHCR's figures had shown that, in 1987,
11,500 new Vietnamese boat people had arrived in Thailand, a threefold
increase over 1986. His Government had already asked the High Commissioner
for Refugees to urge the Vietnamese authorities to allow their people to leave
through the proper UNHCR-sponsored channel, the Orderly Departure Programme.

65. The leaders of ASEAN had recently made it clear that the problem of
Kampuchea and related issues must be resolved at all costs. That was in line
with the numerous calls by an increasing number of countries and by the
United Nations for a comprehensive settlement of the Kampuchean problem and a
total withdrawal of troops from that country, which would allow the refugees
to return to their homelands and Kampuchea to exercise its right to
self-determination.

66. Mr. MTANGO (Observer for the United Republic of Tanzania), reviewing the
efforts made in the past to ensure Namibia's peaceful transition to
independence under the auspices of the United Nations, noted that Namibia's
right to self-determination continued to be trod underfoot by the oppressive
South African régime, which persisted in its policy of persecution at home and
aggression and occupation abroad, occupying part of the territory of Angola
and attacking other neighbours with impunity.

67. Although verbal condemnation of the apartheid system was universal, it
had not been possible to use the machinery available in the United Nations
Charter to bring about its end. The South African régime had many
similarities with nazism, yet for a number of countries that were the latter's
former victims, it was still business as usual with Pretoria. While
criticizing South Africa, such countries continued to support and even
strengthen the apartheid régime in South Africa and Pretoria's presence in Namibia through their actions. Some of them had constantly opposed the Commission's condemnation of the South African occupation of Namibia on the pretext that dialogue with Pretoria on the question would be jeopardized. In fact, such dialogue had ceased when a major Power introduced extraneous issues into the negotiations, thereby blocking all avenues to an agreement.

68. In order to help the forces resisting apartheid, it was necessary to impose a military and economic embargo; the movement against conscription in Namibia and South Africa should be given all moral and material support; all States should prohibit the recruitment, training and transit of mercenaries through their territories to Namibia and South Africa; and nothing should be done which would lend international respectability to apartheid, its institutions and its advocates.

69. His Government recognized that the right to self-determination applied equally to the peoples of Palestine, Western Sahara, Kampuchea and all other peoples still unable to enjoy that right and expressed its solidarity with them.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.