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CONTENTS

Agenda item 9:

General debate (continued)

Speech by Mr. Karefa-Smart (Sierra Leone)	1
Speech by Mr. N'Goua (Gabon)	2
Statement by the representative of Indonesia	4

President: Mr. Carlos SOSA RODRIGUEZ
(Venezuela).

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate (continued)*

1. Mr. KAREFA-SMART (Sierra Leone): Mr. President, please accept on your own behalf, and also on behalf of the Vice-Presidents, the congratulations of the delegation of Sierra Leone for having been elected to preside over the eighteenth session of the General Assembly.

2. Our able Secretary-General has presented a report on the work of the United Nations for the past year [A/5501], for which we congratulate him and his staff. We are proud that we belong to an Organization which, despite the many problems which confront it, has nevertheless not deviated from the noble purpose for which it was founded, namely, the maintenance of lasting peace everywhere. The year has seen a significant easing of the tensions between East and West, particularly following the agreement to cease from nuclear tests on land, sea and in the atmosphere. By signing this agreement^{1/} in the three capitals where it is open for signature, the Government of Sierra Leone has publicly expressed its gratification at this sign that the nuclear Powers have not turned a deaf ear to the pleas of mankind that the great advances of science may be used for peace and human development rather than for the destruction of humanity. We also regard this step towards an eventual complete banning of nuclear arms as a real achievement for the United Nations.

3. My delegation believes that no useful purpose is served by a lengthy discussion of problems which will be more adequately dealt with at the appropriate time in relation to the agenda and in Committee. In keeping with the pledge made by the Prime Minister of Sierra Leone, the Right Honourable Sir Milton Margai, when he spoke from this rostrum on the occasion of our admission two years ago [1018th meeting], we will play our part in the work of the General Assembly with only one purpose, namely, that every decision reached will contribute to lasting peace, justice and a full realization of human dignity in all parts of the world.

*Resumed from the 1228th meeting.

^{1/} Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water, signed at Moscow on 5 August 1963.

4. There are before us, however, a few hard-core problems to which no early or easy solution is yet evident. To mention them here is to express the sincere hope that the door to frank and open discussion and patient negotiation will be kept open. I refer to the relations between Cuba and its neighbours on the American continent; the question of Berlin and of a peace treaty with Germany; the heart-rending problem of Arab refugees which is both cause and result of the dispute between Israel and its Arab neighbours; the ceaseless struggles in the Indo-China region; the question of liquidating the remaining colonial holdings. There is not a single one of these problems that is insoluble and that should needlessly continue to tie up physical and human resources which are so badly needed for more constructive purposes.

5. There are three questions on the agenda on which my delegation, and every African delegation, must speak out clearly.

6. The first is the question of the apartheid policies of the Government of South Africa. I do not intend to go into the substance of the problem which is one of the most thoroughly documented ones before the Assembly. My delegation feels strongly, however, that this Assembly must not permit the Government of South Africa to confirm to the white minority in South Africa that, in the final analysis, in spite of the repeated protests of the African countries, the United Nations is powerless to act against South Africa as long as the great Powers, whose financial resources are heavily invested in South Africa, continue to pour money into South African commerce and industry, thus proving that there is nothing wrong with apartheid if the country in which it is practised is such a safe place for investments.

7. The Government of South Africa must be made to see that world public opinion demands, and is prepared to back this demand with suitable measures of economic and diplomatic isolation, that South Africans of all races must enjoy equal rights and assume equal responsibilities in the economic, social and political life of their country. Perhaps the time has also come to pray for the leaders of the Government of South Africa, that the scales may fall from their eyes so that they will see the bright and happy future of their country, which they are needlessly endangering by a stubborn refusal to let the majority play their full part on terms of equality and full co-operation as first-class citizens of their great land. All that the African countries ask of the United Nations is to deal firmly and decisively with South Africa within the framework of the Charter as long as it continues to act in defiance of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

8. The second question is the refusal of Portugal to accept historical reality and to step into line with world public opinion with respect to its colonies. This Assembly must, in this case also, find a way to make the Portuguese Government see that it is its clear duty,

in conformity with the obligations of Portugal under the Charter, to accept once and for all the principle that the residents of the Portuguese colonies have a right to decide for themselves by popular democratic vote how they shall be governed and to create their own political institutions.

9. Thirdly, this Assembly must find a just and reasonable solution to the question of a fair geographic representation of Africa in the Security Council and in the other organs of the United Nations. My delegation does not share in the reluctance to amend the Charter, if necessary, to achieve such a fair representation for Africa, and we are equally unwilling to wait until the Charter is amended before this injustice is corrected. We sincerely hope that our insistence on what we regard as our right will not be interpreted as hostility towards any group or region which might be called upon to accept reduced representation in order that Africa will be fairly and adequately represented.

10. In another two years we shall have occasion to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations. Is it too much to hope that, as a result of our determination to take a fresh look this year, and next, at the questions on our agenda, we shall find solutions which will help us to celebrate the twentieth session of the General Assembly as the session at which we take a fresh, bold step into the future with full satisfaction in what we have done in our first twenty years?

11. Mr. N'GOUA (Gabon) (translated from French): It is my pleasant duty to offer you, Mr. President, on behalf of the Gabon delegation and on my own behalf, our warm congratulations on your illustrious election to the office of President of the eighteenth session of the United Nations General Assembly. The choice is not only a unanimous tribute to the noble country which you represent but a testimony of the high regard in which you personally are held by all your colleagues here. I am convinced that our work will proceed in the best possible manner thanks to your personal qualities, your talents and your ability, as also to the valuable experience you have of the affairs of our Organization.

12. I should like also to express to your predecessor, Mr. Zafrulla Khan, the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, our keen appreciation of the wise and efficient way in which he conducted the work of our last session.

13. The various speakers who have preceded me at this rostrum have not failed to draw attention to the encouraging atmosphere in which the present session of the General Assembly of the United Nations has opened. Only recently, an anguished world was again wondering whether the eighteenth session would not be the occasion of a fatal confrontation between large rival blocs and whether the unleashing of passions and the rigidity of positions was not going to ring the knell of the United Nations. But the lowering clouds which darkened the sky and cast over the earth the black shadow of a nuclear apocalypse have little by little dispersed, giving man new reason to believe in the readiness of the great nations to do everything possible to attain, by negotiation, the peaceful settlement of international disputes. The recent conclusion of a treaty on nuclear testing bears witness to this.

14. The work of the United Nations to restore the situation in the Congo (Leopoldville) is another source of satisfaction to us. The country has been reunited, the Central Government has strengthened its authority over the whole of the territory, and its armed forces

are taking over more and more responsibility for the maintenance of law and order. In order to consolidate its success and complete its task, the United Nations should give favourable consideration to the request of the Congolese Minister that it should keep its troops in the Congo for the time being.

15. My Government, for one, does not oppose this request by a fraternal country which has known so much suffering. It is confident, however, that the Congolese Government, aware of its duties, will be able to shoulder its national responsibilities and that the maintenance of United Nations troops in the Congo will not be continued beyond the limit fixed by that Government itself, thus putting an end to the heavy financial burden which many Member States have had to assume.

16. Released from its mission in the Congo, the United Nations will be able to devote itself increasingly to the search for solutions calculated to eliminate once and for all the causes of tension that still exist in other parts of the world. I am thinking in particular of Berlin, where a whole nation is kept divided and where families are separated. I should like to reiterate, today as yesterday, that my country remains committed to the right of peoples to self-determination. The problem of Berlin and, more generally, the problem of Germany, cannot be settled by an imposed solution. Only a free consultation of all the German people will make it possible to find the basis for an agreement that will end the partition, reunify the country and reconcile the two sections of the population. We are convinced that negotiation is the only valid way of settling conflicts. And in that case, as in the Israel-Arab conflict, the problem of the Palestine refugees, the United Nations should make every effort and use every possible means to induce the parties to undertake negotiations which will lead to general relaxation and reconciliation. The Gabon Republic, a member of the great family of nations, has chosen negotiation, arbitration and conciliation as the ways and means of arriving at the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts. Attached as it is to these principles of international morality, it cannot understand how countries which have entered into the same commitments can show intolerance, reject peaceful coexistence with equality of rights and duties for all and choose force in order to impose their will. We categorically reject and condemn violence. We do not believe in the inevitability of wars.

17. A great Chinese thinker has said that an intelligent man can always find sufficient words in his vocabulary to settle any dispute without its being necessary to come to blows. We should remember this wise precept and make it our golden rule, for it reflects the ideal of peace which is the very foundation on which our Organization rests. Man thirsts for peace and has need of brotherhood. Rising above ideologies, philosophies and differences of race, let us stretch out our hands to each other so that understanding may reign among peoples and so that mankind, rid of fear and hatred, may finally reach that happiness to which it legitimately aspires.

18. The great Powers, which possess the means of offering us this happiness or depriving us of it, have just taken a big step towards a relaxation of international tension and towards peaceful coexistence. The conclusion between the Soviet Union, the United States and the United Kingdom of a Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water is a development of considerable significance which has given mankind fresh reason for hope.

Conscious of the importance of this historic act, almost all nations immediately associated themselves with the Moscow Treaty, not only to give it their personal adherence but also to endorse its universality. The Gabon Republic was one of the first countries to sign the Treaty. In so doing, it wished to show how firmly its people are attached to peace and how strongly they urge and encourage all initiatives that may lead to its achievement. Of course, the Moscow Treaty is far from being entirely satisfactory, since it entails only the partial banning of certain tests. Unfortunately, it does not cover underground experiments, and this gap leaves the way open to attempts of that kind. We must nevertheless rejoice at its conclusion, for we think it is a first step which should mark the start of a process which we hope will be irreversible and will lead to the final objective—general and controlled disarmament.

19. The first stage would be the destruction of all atomic and thermo-nuclear bombs and similar devices, the destruction of launching pads and means of delivery, and the dismantling of bases. The next stage would be a gradual reduction of so-called conventional weapons so as to bring us ultimately to the goal of total and controlled disarmament. Finally, international inspection missions would be set up to make certain that the hatchet is well buried everywhere. The great Powers which have given us the Moscow Treaty should not stop after such an excellent beginning. All mankind looks to them to continue their efforts towards the relaxation of tension and peaceful coexistence. We realize that for the time being such a plan for general and controlled disarmament can be no more than a mere hope but there is nothing to prevent us from calling upon the great Powers to persevere in the search, first for a relaxation of tension, and then for peace. If everyone works towards this goal in all frankness and with a sincere desire to succeed, constructive solutions can easily be found. Sacrifices and concessions will undoubtedly be required on all sides, but what is at stake is so important that nothing should stand in its way. For it is not merely a question of our present happiness; it is for future generations that we must labour, it is they whom we mean to save from the curse of the great atomic terror. The genius of man has been able to create the bombs of terror; his conscience must forbid him to use them.

20. I have said that the causes of tension which I have just mentioned seem to me to be less alarming, whereas other sources of conflict remain as acute and as dangerous as ever. The problem of territories under foreign domination is one of these. Portugal, lost in a dream of the "conquistador", a prisoner of the past, is trying to preserve a colonial empire in Africa. Against the wishes of the indigenous peoples, it is trying to impose its will by force, terror and murder. I shall never tire of repeating that the Gabon Republic attaches great value to the principle of settlement of conflicts by negotiation and conciliation. It is likewise deeply attached to the principle of self-determination, that is, the right of peoples to decide their own destiny. That is why it does not understand the attitude of Portugal, which stubbornly withholds the right to freedom and independence from millions of individuals. The theory that the overseas possessions of Portugal are Portuguese provinces can deceive no one. It is a fallacy and in any case is unacceptable to us Africans, who are witnessing, with horror and disgust, the unleashing of violence in Angola and in Guinea (Bissau). In these countries Portugal, with cold determination, is methodically and ruthlessly pursuing a policy of genocide.

Cruel, blind repression is imposed indiscriminately on men, women, old people and children. Terror reigns, and the unfortunate peoples on whom the authorities are trying to impose a political system they do not want no longer have any alternative but to answer violence with violence. Thousands of men have thus been compelled to take up arms to defend their rights, their dignity and their lives. They already have underground forces, and as their fighting capacity increases the battles will become more violent and more deadly, until the last Portuguese colonialists have departed.

21. On 25 May last, at Addis Ababa, the African Heads of State, meeting at a historic conference,^{2/} categorically condemned the aggression Portugal is committing on African soil. They unanimously resolved to co-ordinate and intensify their efforts "to accelerate the unconditional attainment of national independence by all African territories still under foreign domination" and they reaffirmed that "it is the duty of all African independent States to support dependent peoples in Africa in their struggle for freedom and independence". This resolution clearly shows how determined the African States are to bar the way to Portuguese imperialism. So long as that country insists on marching against the current of history, there will be no peace in Africa and no peace in the world. Portugal has proved unable to adapt itself to the realities of our times, as though it were afflicted with the senility typical of old age and of the decadence of nations living in the past.

22. We have all appealed to the conscience of Portugal, knowing the desire of all peoples to live a decent life. We are positively dumbfounded by the following words, uttered at the highest level of the Portuguese State: "Others have left Africa; we are there and we shall remain there."

23. The delegation of Gabon takes the opportunity to make an appeal to the conscience of the Western world, since the conscience of Portugal has so far been unmoved by our pleas. We ask the countries of the West whether they do not consider that Portugal's stubbornness is an ever-present threat to peace and shows complete contempt for the wind of liberalism which has been blowing in Africa since the last World War, for Portugal seems to be trying to extend its own guilt to those countries which have left Africa with a good grace and have offered their co-operation and their friendship to the peoples who were previously dependent upon them. Would not Portugal's attitude be completely different if it did not feel that it had the support of a number of countries, and not the least important ones? Is it not a fact that Portugal is able to retain a foothold in Africa only through the support given to it by its friends in the military pacts or economic alliances of which it is a member? We, the people of Gabon, think that if Portugal were deprived of such support it would no longer dare to persist in its senseless venture. That is why the delegation of Gabon formally invites Portugal to take its example from the realistic policy pursued by its neighbour Spain and to begin talks with the people of its African colonies.

24. As an African State, and as a neighbour which has common frontiers with Rio Muni, the Republic of Gabon notes with satisfaction and optimism the statement made by Mr. Castiella, the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, concerning the political measures envisaged in Equatorial Guinea. The process of decolo-

^{2/} Summit Conference of Independent African States, held from 22 to 25 May 1963.

nization which is thus to be set afoot should lead Rio Muni and Fernando Poo as quickly as possible towards complete freedom, without discord, without hatred and without bloodshed. We call on the Spanish Government to bring to a successful conclusion the good work which it has undertaken and which should culminate in self-determination for the peoples of Rio Muni and Fernando Poo.

25. The vital work of liberating Africa will not be completed and the elimination of colonialism will not be achieved as long as any type of oppression of Africans continues to exist anywhere on our continent. Scorning fundamental human rights, the Pretoria Government holds in slavery millions of human beings to whom it denies any human status. Mr. Verwoerd's iniquitous policy of apartheid is designed to eliminate the indigenous population from the national life. The infamous practice of racism has been raised in South Africa to the level of a political doctrine and dogma; the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa, simply because they are black, have no right to take part in the life of their country and are being held in slavery by force and terror by a handful of settlers who are dragging them down to the level of beasts. The Pretoria Government, deaf to the warnings and appeals made to it from all sides, continues to defy world opinion and is, we fear, encouraged in this policy by certain Powers which give it help and support, particularly in military and diplomatic fields. The United Nations must redouble its efforts and call on any of its Members which are helping South Africa to refrain from doing so and to comply with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly with a view to the abolition of the Pretoria Government's policies of apartheid. Those countries which are not yet conscious of the fact must realize that the policy of the South African Government is an extremely dangerous cause of tension. The day that violence breaks out in South Africa—and we hope with all our hearts that that day will never come—Verwoerd's accomplices, the hypocrites and the die-hards, will realize that world peace is in danger.

26. The objectives of the United Nations are primarily the preservation and maintenance of peace and the promotion of economic and social advancement in order to enable all the peoples of the world to escape from poverty and under-nourishment—in short, to enjoy a better life. As long as hotbeds of conflict continue to exist in various parts of the world, however, the United Nations will have the greatest difficulty in devoting itself to this aspect of its mission.

27. The nations which have already reached an advanced stage of development and could co-operate with the United Nations in this field are much more concerned with security problems. Large sums are spent every day on the manufacture and stockpiling of the most murderous weapons, on research for military purposes and on the maintenance of military bases or huge armies.

28. The money spent by the United Nations on the upkeep of the security forces which it has stationed in certain troubled areas would be better employed in the study and financing of economic and social projects designed to benefit the developing countries.

29. Therefore, while awaiting the coming of a better world which will enable the United Nations to devote itself primarily to its peaceful mission, we should like to stress the urgent need for the re-organization of the structure of the United Nations so as to enable it to cope with its future tasks. We are referring to the present membership of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council. Although it has thirty-two independent States, Africa is practically excluded from these vital organs, the dominant role of which requires no further proof. Here, too, Africa must be able to make its voice heard more clearly. A more equitable distribution of the seats on these Councils is essential. All possible steps must be taken to bring about the revision of those parts of the Charter which refer to these organs. We are sure, in advance, that the other members of the General Assembly will understand this just claim which Africa is putting forward, that they will help us to obtain satisfaction in this matter, and that all our friends will do their best to help us without any ulterior motives, without hesitation and without reservations.

30. Before concluding, I should like to say once more that Gabon is inspired by a desire for peace, a sincere desire to work for the well-being of its own people and of the whole of mankind, and faith in the noble mission of the United Nations. It was in that spirit that His Excellency Léon M'Ba, President of the Republic of Gabon, asked me in a recent message to convey to the Heads of State present at the eighteenth session and to you yourself, Mr. President, his regret at being unable to come personally to the United Nations Headquarters, and to assure you of his unfailing devotion to the principles of the United Nations Charter and the resolutions adopted at Addis Ababa and of his hope for a lasting peace and for the development of universal co-operation.

31. The PRESIDENT: I call upon the representative of Indonesia to exercise his right of reply.

32. Mr. PALAR (Indonesia) My intention in asking to speak was to reply to the long statement made today [1228th meeting] by my friend from Malaysia, Ambassador Dato' Ong. Indeed I have been trying for about an hour to formulate a reply. However, I now realize that I cannot reply without knowing precisely what my friend has said, I think that I owe it to him to study his statement carefully before replying. That is why, with the permission of the President, I shall ask for an opportunity at the next plenary meeting, on Monday, to exercise my right of reply.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.