

DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

The question of a declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples was initially proposed for inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly by Nikita S. Khrushchev, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), during his address to the Assembly on 23 September 1960. This proposal was formalized in a letter to the President of the General Assembly of the same day (A/4501, 23 September 1960), which was submitted together with a draft Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples (A/4502, 23 September 1960). On 28 September 1960, the General Committee recommended that the item proposed by the USSR be included in the General Assembly's agenda at its fifteenth session of the same year and that it be allocated to the First (Political and Security) Committee. On 10 October, the General Assembly decided to place the item on its agenda and, on 13 October, a proposal by the USSR to discuss the item in plenary meetings was unanimously adopted.

The topic was discussed in the General Assembly from 28 November to 7 December 1960 and from 13 December to 14 December 1960 (A/PV.925-939 and A/PV.944-947). The General Assembly had before it, in addition to the draft Declaration submitted by the USSR (A/4502), another draft submitted, on 28 November, by Cambodia on behalf of 26 Asian and African countries, which was eventually sponsored by 43 delegations (A/L.323 and Adds. 1 to 6). The latter draft was adopted without change by the General Assembly, by a vote of 89 to 0, with 9 abstentions, in resolution 1514 (XV) entitled "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples".

The following year, upon the request of the USSR, the General Committee recommended to the General Assembly that an item entitled "The situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples" be included on the agenda of its sixteenth session, in 1961. The General Assembly decided to include this item in its agenda on 25 September 1961. On 27 November 1961, the General Assembly adopted resolution 1654 (XVI), by which it decided to establish a Special Committee of seventeen members with a mandate to make suggestions and recommendations on the progress and extent of the implementation of the Declaration, and to report to the General Assembly. On 23 January 1962, the President of the General Assembly appointed, in accordance with the resolution, the seventeen members of the Special Committee. The same year, in resolution 1810 (XVII) of 17 December 1962, the membership of the Special Committee was enlarged by seven members, resulting in a total of twenty-four members. The Special Committee was further invited to propose specific measures of implementation for the complete application of the Declaration, and to report to the General Assembly no later than at its eighteenth session. At that session, in 1963, the General Assembly considered the report by the Special Committee (A/5446/Rev.1) and requested the Special Committee to continue to seek the best ways and means for the immediate and total application of the Declaration, and report to the General Assembly no later than at its nineteenth session, in 1964. The Committee was further invited to apprise the Security Council of any developments in any territories which may threaten international peace and security (resolution 1956 (XVIII) of 12 December 1963). In addition, the functions of the Special Committee were expanded to include the work of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories, which was dissolved, in resolution 1970 (XVIII) of 16 December 1963. The Special Committee continues to exist and meets annually to consider problems connected with colonial territories, as well as topics of a more general nature assigned to it by the General Assembly.

