

aspirations of the Africans in Southern Rhodesia for rapid advancement and with their desire to exercise political responsibility in the same manner and on the same terms as the people of neighbouring countries which are independent or shortly to become so. We would hope that all groups concerned in Southern Rhodesia could agree on an orderly programme of constitutional development under which the Africans would acquire such political responsibility together with increasing economic, educational and social opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, in view of the serious nature of the problem the General Assembly has in previous resolutions urged the United Kingdom to take certain courses of action. We agree that the question facing us is difficult and complicated. It must be handled with caution, skill and patience. An added factor is that the United Kingdom is engaged in delicate negotiations in connection with the dissolution of the Federation and the advancement to independence of Northern Rhodesia and Nyassaland. In these circumstances we consider that at this stage the best prospect for progress is through informal and private methods of consultation and that the criterion which should be applied to draft resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly at this time is whether or not they facilitate this process.

As members of the Commonwealth we are concerned that the final solution should be in keeping with the principles of freedom and democracy on which the Commonwealth is based. We are confident that the influence of the United Kingdom will be directed to this end. At the same time there is a heavy responsibility, particularly on the Government but also for the people of Southern Rhodesia, both white and black to speed the process of peaceful transition to majority rule by facilitating agreement on the compromises which will certainly be necessary.

The question is difficult and our concern should be to decide what is the best way to achieve constructive results in improving the situation of all the peoples in Southern Rhodesia. We have and are approaching resolutions submitted to this Committee in the light of the considerations which I have outlined.