



# Statements and Speeches

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## DECOLONIZATION

Statement in the Plenary Meeting of the Thirtieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, by Mr. Marc Baudouin, Ambassador and Representative of Canada, November 26, 1975.

The renewed impetus given to the process of decolonization in Africa, in April 1974, by the new policies of the Government of Portugal has continued to be felt throughout the present year. The United Nations has welcomed to its membership at the present session three former Portuguese territories in Africa: Mozambique, Cape Verde, and Saõ Tome and Principe. It has similarly admitted Comoros to our membership. From other parts of the world we are drawing additional new members and strength. We have recently welcomed to our midst Papua New Guinea; and, in a week or two, we expect to welcome a new nation of the western hemisphere -- Surinam.

The United Nations is experiencing a growth in membership of a magnitude seldom equalled in recent years. A good measure of the credit for this expansion can be attributed to United Nations efforts to promote the implementation of Resolution 1514. The United Nations has assisted in the creation of an international atmosphere that demands that serious efforts be made to deal with situations that have so far inhibited peoples in various parts of the world from exercising their right to self-determination and proceeding to independence if that is their clearly-expressed will.

The areas that remain under colonial administration are few indeed. In most cases -- with the notable exceptions of Rhodesia and Namibia --, they are small territories, often isolated and lightly populated. Nonetheless these small territories warrant our attention and our assistance to ensure that the rights of their populations to determine their own future are accorded them. The Canadian delegation has been careful to point out, however, that self-determination does not always mean independence. Certain small territories may consider that their limited human and material resources make independent status impractical or unattractive. It is for the people of these territories to determine precisely what form of self-determination is most appropriate to their individual circumstances. The relation with New Zealand chosen by the people of Niue is an excellent example of one alternative.

We have maintained over the years our support for the right of peoples under colonial rule to self-determination and independence.

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We have, at the same time, underlined our belief that the objective of the decolonization process is not simply to bring about the departure of a colonial power but to encourage the emergence of stable and united nations (large or small) that are equipped to face the challenges of independence, of social and economic development, and of being able to live in peace and security with their neighbours. In this light, we view with great sadness the situation prevailing in Angola. On November 11, the Canadian Government made the following statement: "Canada has consistently supported the right of colonized peoples to self-determination and independence, and we have accordingly taken note and welcome Angola's independence from Portugal, which took place November 11. However, the political and security situations there are extremely confused, and we are not at present in a position to recognize or enter into relations with any group that may claim to govern the country. It is established Canadian policy to recognize governments that are in control of their country and that are able to answer to their international obligations. When the situation in Angola is clarified sufficiently in this direction, we shall be in a position to pronounce further on our relations with it."

We recognize with appreciation the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to end the conflict in Angola. At the same time, we greatly regret and condemn the foreign intervention that has fomented further the divisions between the political movements; that has served to intensify the armed confrontations by the supply of material, equipment and personnel; and that has thereby encouraged the recourse to military rather than peaceful methods of achieving political objectives. We urge all those able to do so to demonstrate their real concern for the people of Angola by using their influence to bring together the peoples and parties through negotiation and conciliation. The alternative would be a continuation of this fratricidal civil war, leading possibly to the disintegration of the territorial integrity of the country. This would be tragic, not only for Angola but also for the rest of Africa, because it would distract attention and concern away from the remaining serious problems of decolonization and racism in Southern Africa.

The lack of significant progress towards resolving the situation in Zimbabwe and towards independence in Namibia is a matter of disappointment and of concern. As we said in our intervention on this subject: "With or without Ian Smith, majority rule in Rhodesia is inevitable. How Rhodesia and Rhodesians resolve their problems, how the countries of Africa and the world deal with the issues involved, and how this body, the United Nations, copes with these pressures, are matters of major importance for the future of man-

kind. Whether or not the grave racial and political problems of Rhodesia can be settled by peaceful methods will have a great influence on whether the remaining racial and political problems of Southern Africa can be resolved in peace -- or by violence." As for Namibia, the Government of South Africa can continue only at great risk its opposition to the will of the entire international community in maintaining its illegal occupation of Namibia. It must realize that no settlement worked out in the so-called South West Africa constitutional discussions, which it has set in progress, can be acceptable to the international community in the absence of the participation of the authentic representatives of the Namibian people, chosen in open elections under international supervision.

The major objective of the work of the United Nations and of member states with regard to the situation in Southern Africa is to exert all possible moral and political influence to bring about early and peaceful change. An important secondary aspect of our joint efforts is to provide material and moral support to individuals in Southern Africa. It has been and remains my Government's policy to assist in a substantial measure the humanitarian efforts of the international community to these ends. For this reason, we have long been a major contributor to the United Nations Educational and Training Program for Southern Africa, the International University Exchange Fund, the Commonwealth Scholarship Program for Rhodesia and the Trust Fund for South Africa. In addition, we have this year announced a contribution of \$100,000 to assist in the establishment of the United Nations Institute for Namibia. We believe these programs are important in providing a tangible evidence of the United Nations concern regarding the oppressive situation of individuals in Southern Africa. It is a matter of satisfaction, we believe, that the United Nations should be assisting in the training and education of Southern Africans who will eventually play a key role in the development of their societies as their countries achieve independence or majority rule.

The process of decolonization is a dynamic one. Progress is steady, and is evident in territories around the world. We note, for example, that the Seychelles will be independent next year, and the Solomon Islands very shortly thereafter.

The Fourth Committee has been the scene of debate this year on some of the thorniest questions remaining in relation to certain non-self-governing territories. With regard to the territory of the Afars and the Issas, we have heard statements of petitioners and representatives of liberation movements that indicate a new interest in independence. We have heard a statement from the administering power, France, to the effect that it would be prepared to reply

favourably to aspirations for independence expressed by the population of that territory. At the same time, it is clear that the achievement of independence will be meaningful only if its territorial integrity is completely respected by neighbouring countries.

The question of Western Sahara is an extremely sensitive one, as was demonstrated by the recent Security Council discussion on that subject. We do not believe it appropriate to comment here on the matters that were discussed by the Security Council or on the results of the negotiations between the parties concerned with regard to Article 33 of the Charter. We need only state that, with regard to the decolonization aspects, it is clear that the United Nations General Assembly must maintain its position to the effect that the peoples of every non-self-governing territory have the right to self-determination in accordance with Resolution 1514; the paramount factor in decolonization must remain, as defined by Article 73 of the Charter, the interests of the inhabitants of the territory.

With regard to the question of Belize, the Canadian delegation is pleased similarly to support the right of the people of Belize to self-determination and to stress the need for the early conclusion of negotiations between the Governments of the United Kingdom and Guatemala in order that the people of Belize may enjoy independence in a climate of security and friendship with their neighbours.

Decolonization is a noble cause because it leads to a yet nobler one, which is that of freedom and human dignity.

To have favoured and aided this process, and to have contributed in preparing for the future, will undoubtedly be one of this institution's chief claims to honour. We are drawing close to the goal. This should be a further reason for us to renew our efforts, so that, in one more field of international relations, the cause of justice and human dignity may triumph.