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President: Mr. Gaston THORN
(Luxembourg).

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mutuale Tshikankie (Zaire), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 22

Admission of new Members to the United Nations
(continued):

(b) Other reports of the Security Council

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): This morning we shall consider agenda item 22, entitled "Admission of new Members to the United Nations". In document A/10302, the Security Council has recommended the admission of the Comoros to membership in the United Nations. A draft resolution, which appears in document A/L.772 and Add.1, has been distributed.

2. Mr. DE GUIRINGAUD (France) (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will recall that France, having on 15 June 1973 affirmed the aspirations of the Comoros to independence, on 22 December 1974, organized a plebiscite among the population of that archipelago. The results indicated an overwhelming majority of voters in favour of independence. However, two thirds of the inhabitants of the island of Mayotte decided otherwise. France had hoped, in accordance with tradition, to sponsor the candidature of a new friendly State for accession to international life. To its great regret, it had to adopt a different position.

3. Speaking in the Security Council on 17 October last,¹ the representative of France pointed out that the request for admission submitted by the National Executive Council gave rise to a serious problem, as far as we were concerned, inasmuch as we had to reconcile our concern to facilitate the emergence of a State having all the necessary attributes of statehood with the procedure laid down by French constitutional law.

4. But, having set the new State on the road to independence, the French Government obviously did not want to oppose its admission to the United Nations. That is why, not being able to associate itself with it, but not wishing by abstaining from voting to give the impression that it could hesitate between "Yes"

and "No", the French delegation in the Security Council decided not to participate in the voting.

5. As was indicated by its Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Assembly on 26 September last [2364th meeting], the French Government still hopes that an agreement among the Comorians will make possible the establishment of a framework within which the new State will begin its future, and has endeavoured in recent months to reconcile the points of view of the parties. A bill offering the population of Mayotte the option of choosing or refusing to belong to the Comorian entity has therefore been prepared and should shortly be submitted to Parliament. Those in favour of unity, of course, can prepare a campaign, and it is not impossible that the consultation could take place in the presence of international observers.

6. Needless to say, France seeks no advantage for itself in this matter. It is always willing to grant independence to peoples that desire it, but it cannot oppose the self-determination of peoples.

7. These considerations explain why the French delegation, to its great regret, cannot participate in a consensus on the text by which the Comoros will be admitted to the Organization.

8. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that the General Assembly accepts the recommendation of the Security Council and adopts draft resolution A/L.772 and Add.1?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 3385 (XXX)).

9. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I declare the Comoros admitted to membership in the United Nations.

The delegation of the Comoros was escorted to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

10. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, it is an honour and a pleasure for me to offer sincere congratulations to the delegation of the Comoros and to welcome it warmly to the United Nations.

11. I now call on the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Mr. Salim.

12. Mr. SALIM (United Republic of Tanzania), Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples: A little more than a month ago I had the pleasure of coming to this rostrum to welcome, on behalf of the Special Committee, the admission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations. Today, in the same capacity of Chairman of that Committee, it is my honour and privilege to welcome warmly the newest Member of our Organization, the Comoros.

13. The nature and circumstances of the struggles of the peoples of the Comoros and of Papua New Guinea were different, but there are common factors which linked the two peoples' struggles, and these are the factors which were and are common to all former colonial and current colonial territories. Two of these factors merit highlighting. First, irrespective of the nature of the struggle of the subject people, be it peaceful or violent, the common denominator has always been the uncompromising determination of the people to attain its inalienable right to self-determination and independence. Secondly, whether the struggle for self-determination has been through the ballot-box or through the bullet, the United Nations, particularly in the aftermath of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, has never been found hesitant in its support of the legitimate struggle of colonial peoples. Thus it has now come to be an accepted truism that a victory for a subjugated people has simultaneously been considered a victory for this Organization.

14. Therefore, as we welcome the Comoros as the newest Member of the United Nations, we salute, first and foremost, the determination and persistence of the people of those beautiful islands in regaining their human dignity and freedom, and to its eminent representatives here—and I single out with particular satisfaction the presence of the head of State and President of the Government of the Comoros, Mr. Said Mohamed Jafar—and through them to the people of the Comoros we convey our warm and heartfelt congratulations on this auspicious occasion.

15. Even at the risk of being guilty of immodesty, I should like to say that on occasions like this the United Nations also is to be congratulated on the important supportive role that it has played in making this day possible for the people of the Comoros. The Special Committee is particularly conscious of the significance of this occasion. Having actively supported the struggle of the people of the archipelago for self-determination and independence, the Committee unequivocally welcomed the proclamation of independence by the Comoros on 6 July this year and extended its warm congratulations and support to its people on the achievement of the goals set forth in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the Charter of the United Nations. The position of the Special Committee was made public in a statement on 22 August of this year² and it is only logical that, as Chairman of the Committee, I should express the Committee's sentiments on this important day in the history of the Comoros.

16. This is a solemn occasion, a happy occasion, and in normal circumstances, following the established practice and convention, all our remarks on a day like this should be confined to compliments and congratulations. Regrettably, however, the circumstances are not entirely normal. The statement made by the representative of France before this Assembly took its decision today is indicative of that. The administering Power, whose responsibility it was to fulfil its obligations under the Charter in accordance with General Assembly decisions, has in this case maintained a position which not only leaves much to be desired but also, I must say in all honesty, causes

serious concern not simply in the Comoros, not even just in Africa, but, I submit, in our Organization itself. Thus, despite my deliberate objective of maintaining maximum restraint in my statement, I feel compelled at least to speak out in defence of certain basic principles which are dear to our Organization, as they are certainly dear to the independent and sovereign State of the Comoros. I am referring to the attempts made by France to adopt measures which could result only in violating the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros, contrary to the principles of the United Nations, in defiance of the many decisions of this Organization which France itself has not opposed, and in complete contravention of the decisions of the Organization of African Unity [OAU].

17. It is at the same time significant that this new attitude of France—and I use the word "new" advisedly—is in complete contradiction to the declared policies of the French Government on the question of the independence and territorial integrity of the Comoros. Indeed, by its current approach France has sought to negate its own commitments as an administering Power, as expressed by its representatives both within this Organization and outside it. I do not need to go into the long history of the position of France on this matter. It will suffice to make some pertinent observations.

18. The international community is not unaware of the statement made by the Government of France on 26 August 1974 to the effect that a plebiscite on the independence of the Comoros would be organized on an archipelago-wide basis, that the Comoros would retain "the frontiers that it had as a colony" and that for the French Government "a multiplicity of different statuses for the various islands of the archipelago is inconceivable".³

19. That was a serious and responsible statement, and Members of this Organization had no reason to doubt either its authenticity or its motivation, and certainly no one could have reasonably questioned its sincerity—at least the Special Committee did not. In addition to that statement there have been other reassuring, responsible and unequivocal statements made by many eminent statesmen of France.

20. When I addressed the Security Council on 17 October this year, I had occasion to refer to a statement on this matter made by the highest authority in France. In view of the significance of that statement, considering the regrettable evolution of the French position since that time, and taking into account the statement made this morning by the representative of France, I deem it necessary to refer again to the statement made by the President of France, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing; addressing a press conference on 24 October 1974 he remarked:

"The Comorian population is a homogeneous one, in which there does not exist a settlement of French origin—or at least a very limited one. Will it be reasonable to imagine one part of the archipelago becoming independent while one island, no matter what sentiments we may cherish for its inhabitants, retains a different status? I believe we have to accept the contemporary realities. The Comoros are one; they have always been one; it is only natural that they should have a common destiny, even if some of them may have wished for

another solution. We have no right, on the occasion of the independence of one Territory, to propose the breaking up of a unity that has always characterized the unique Comorian archipelago".⁴

That was the statement of the President of France.

21. Against that background, the United Nations followed with enthusiasm and anticipation the popular referendum conducted in the Comoros on 22 December 1974. I use the word "anticipation" advisedly, because we had every reason to believe that, in the light of the clear-cut position of the administering Power, there would be no further obstacles to the process of decolonization.

22. The referendum held in the Comoros showed an overwhelming majority of the people of the archipelago preferring independence; that majority was as great as 94.56 per cent, a high percentage by any standards. Out of the majority, only 8,853 people in Mayotte did not favour independence: in other words, out of a total population of 286,762 people only 8,853 opposed independence. Is it really logical or legal that the opinion of that relatively tiny minority should frustrate the wishes of the majority of the people there? Is it lawful that the result in one area should dictate the destiny of the country, regardless of the wishes of the overwhelming majority? Yet that is exactly what France, by its recent statements, policies, and measures, has been seeking to do.

23. In brief, the French Government appears to have embarked on a course of action designed to disrupt the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros under a smoke-screen of respect for the principle of self-determination. This position of France is wholly unjustified. It negates the undertakings and commitments of France, both to the people of the Comoros and to the international community. It also vainly and hopelessly attempts to give a new meaning to the principle of self-determination.

24. As I have already stated, the United Nations and the world clearly understood that the results of the referendum would be evaluated globally and not on an island-to-island basis. And indeed, if anyone was in doubt as to the meaning and significance of the global character of the referendum, such doubts were clearly put to rest by an official of no less eminence and authority than the current Minister of the so-called French Overseas Territories. In the publication *Eurafrique* of October 1974, he is reported to have commented:

"Why a global referendum and not a separate plebiscite for each island? It is because the intention of France is not to divide countries which attain independence. This is the case of the Comoros, whose inhabitants all practise the same religion, have the same language, the same economic and political interests. Far from being one of dismembering the territorial entity, our role is to help the efforts of the Comorian people themselves towards a *rapprochement*."

25. Clearly, this interpretation does not correspond with the current manoeuvres designed to ignore the overwhelming verdict of the Comorian people or to the recourse to moves which not only are unfortunate but will have dangerous consequences for the stability

and independence of the Comoros, and indeed for the stability of the region itself.

26. In an attempt to bamboozle world public opinion, reports are now being sent out from Paris that the French Government is determined to respect the self-determination of the people of Mayotte. Indeed, it is most regrettable that, even after the Security Council recommended the Comoros for membership in the Organization, the French Government did not abandon its manoeuvres, which unquestionably threaten the territorial integrity of the Comoros.

27. We are told that there is to be another referendum in Mayotte, and perhaps even two—all that in order to give a semblance of legitimacy to a completely illegitimate and unacceptable situation. It has been argued that through such a referendum the people of Mayotte will be enabled to exercise their right to self-determination. But why does France choose to ignore the referendum that it organized in the four islands in December 1974? What sort of new principle of self-determination is the Government of France wishing to invoke, in complete violation of the General Assembly resolutions and, in particular, in flagrant violation of the provisions of resolution 1514 (XV), which specifically stipulates that any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a Territory is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

28. Have words really lost their meaning? How can one possibly invoke the principle of self-determination to compartmentalize and Balkanize a territory? Are we really to believe that France, that land of liberty, equality and fraternity—the land that produced Charles de Gaulle, an eminent statesman, who, realizing that the nationalist resistance in Algeria could not be crushed, boldly proceeded to negotiate its independence and thereby built bridges and promoted relations with the Arab and African countries—are we to believe that that country is now about to emulate concepts which find respectability only in the *apartheid* régime of South Africa, as evidenced in its nonsensical claims of promoting the rights to self-determination of peoples, bantustan-style?

29. Is this a serious conception of self-determination? It is certainly not a United Nations conception. If the promotion of self-determination—as encouraged by France—is to be taken to its logical conclusion, then one can envisage a situation where that principle could be applied to a region, a province, a district or even a village. I really wonder how many countries Members of this Organization, not excluding France, would emerge unaffected if that preposterous concept were to be put into experimentation.

30. In a special session of the Special Committee on 15 October this year, I voiced our regrets at the continued moves by France threatening the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros. In my appeal to the Government of France, I had the following to say:

"It is therefore our hope that France, whose relations and interests in Africa are extensive, will pay heed to the demands of Africa and the international community and desist forthwith from any such policy. I am making use of this solemn occasion to launch an earnest appeal to the Government of France to respect the independence, unity and

territorial integrity of Comoro and to resist the dangerous temptation of promoting separatist tendencies using dubious and irrational excuses which are repugnant to our Charter and the provisions of resolution 1514 (XV)."⁵

31. That appeal was made about a month ago, but I believe that on this auspicious occasion I should make use of the opportunity to renew that appeal in all solemnity and in all seriousness. In this connexion, we would urge France to desist from proceeding with the so-called referendum in Mayotte, as such an action, apart from constituting an obvious interference in the internal affairs of the Comoros, can only be construed as a calculated policy of France to dismember the Comoros. We would urge them, rather than proceeding on this perilous path, to choose a path of co-operation, friendship and mutual respect with the new State of the Comoros.

32. We would wish them to remember that but for the case of so-called French Somaliland—Djibouti—France, with the independence of the Comoros, has decisively terminated its role as a colonial power in Africa. Its friendship and co-operation with many African States are valued and reciprocated. France's positive approach in many international issues has won world-wide acclaim. Would it really be in the long-term interest of France to continue to be haunted by its short-sighted, illogical and wholly irrational position threatening the territorial integrity of the Comoros? We urge it to follow the path of reason and of justice.

33. Allow me before concluding to say a few words on behalf of the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania. We rejoice with our brothers of the Comoros on this historic day for their country. Tanzania and the Comoros are in the same geographical area, and our two peoples share the same cultural background which has always strengthened our common bonds and cultural heritage. It was therefore only logical that Tanzania should fully support the struggle for freedom and independence of their brothers in the Comoros. For us it was not just a question of respecting the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, it was not just a question of abiding faithfully by the position and decisions of OAU: for us the struggle of the people of the Comoros was our own struggle, and thus their victories are justly being regarded by our people as their own.

34. We welcome, therefore, the proclamation of the independence of the Comoros as a logical step in their struggle for freedom and independence. In the same light we welcome the recognition of that independence by OAU, the support of the Non-Aligned Movement and the admission of the Comoros to this Organization today. It is our hope that our relations will continue to grow to the mutual benefit and in the interests of Africa as a whole.

35. Needless to emphasize, Tanzania will continue to support the people of the Comoros in their struggle to maintain their independence and their territorial integrity. As we admit the Comoros to the United Nations today, let me make it quite clear that Tanzania, like the other sponsors of the draft resolution which was before this Assembly, wishes to emphasize that the Comoros is composed of the four islands of Anjouan, Grande Comore, Mayotte and Moheli.

36. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mr. Ecua Miko, representative of Equatorial Guinea, who will speak on behalf of the group of African States.

37. Mr. ECUA MIKO (Equatorial Guinea) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The thirtieth session of the General Assembly is a landmark in the history of the United Nations in the area of decolonization. There have been very few sessions which have felt so strongly the impact of decolonization. In the course of it the great family of the United Nations has been joined by the heroic peoples of Cape Verde, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe and Papua New Guinea.

38. I should have liked to have the pleasure of mentioning the two Republics of Viet Nam also, had truth and justice triumphed within one of the most important organs of the United Nations, the Security Council, which unfortunately and repeatedly has allowed one of its permanent members, the United States, to impose its will. But in spite of this, colonialism and imperialism have not been completely victorious, for we also have the pleasure of welcoming the brave people of Cambodia, which has regained its rightful place in the United Nations.

39. And now the General Assembly is admitting to membership another victim of colonialism, the Comoros, whose heroic people, aware of their history and their responsibilities to society, unilaterally proclaimed their independence on 6 July 1975, as the first manifestation of the will of the overwhelming majority of the Comorian people as freely expressed during the referendum of 22 December 1974.

40. The Council of Ministers of OAU, meeting at Kampala from 18 to 25 July 1975, paid tribute to the valiant people of the Comoros for their sacrifice and their efforts in the arduous struggle for national liberation and, on the basis of its principles and objectives of freeing the entire African continent from colonialism and removing the last vestiges of foreign domination in all its forms and manifestations, warmly welcomed the Comoros as a full member by its resolution CM/Res.419 (XXV) [*see A/10297, annex I*].

41. Today the achievement of the Comoros has been welcomed by all countries which love peace, justice and liberty. In this context, the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries, meeting at Lima from 25 to 30 August 1975, not only welcomed the proclamation of independence by the people of the Comoros, but at the same time condemned any attempt to disrupt the national unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros, reaffirming their support in this respect [*A/10217 and Corr.1, annex, para. 41*].

42. As I have already said, today the General Assembly has just admitted the Comorian State as a Member of the United Nations. On behalf of my delegation, and on behalf of the African group in the United Nations, over which I have the honour to preside during this month of November, I wish to express our sincere gratitude to all delegations here for their support and recognition of the Comoros, and to extend to the delegation of the Comoros, presided over by the President, Mr. Said Mohamed Jafar, our sincere good wishes for the prosperity of the people and Government of their country.

43. In the light of the statement just made by the representative of France, I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to draw the attention of the Assembly to the following.

44. Historical truth cannot be concealed or ignored, whether we like it or not. The sacrosanct principle of the self-determination of peoples enshrined in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), despite the fact that some do not wish to recognize it and despite the situation still prevailing in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, is now fully accepted. By virtue of this sacred principle, the last vestiges of colonialism are beginning to disappear in various parts of the world. Consequently, we who make up the international community cannot stem this historical tide which is about to reach its final destination.

45. Therefore we reiterate at this rostrum the appeal to France, as the former administering Power, made at Kampala by the Council of Ministers of OAU in its resolution CM/Res.421 (XXV), and at Lima, by the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries, to withdraw in good faith from the island of Mayotte, because it is an integral part of the sovereign territory of the Comoros, which, as a result of the referendum held on 22 December 1974, proclaimed its independence on 6 July 1975—that is, of course, within its national boundaries, which encompass the four islands of which it is composed.

46. The United Nations should not allow the presence of France on the island of Mayotte now; it is an overt violation of the sovereignty of a country the independence of which has been recognized internationally, a country which the General Assembly has just admitted as a Member of the United Nations.

47. The French Government should abandon the old practice of consulting the population as to whether they prefer freedom or slavery. As far as my delegation is concerned, this kind of referendum, as in the case of Mayotte, not only is absurd but also questions public opinion and violates the principles of democracy. The French Government, in collaboration with the Government of the Comoros, should immediately proceed to make the necessary arrangements to recognize the independence of the group of four islands constituting the Comoros. France will thus have co-operated with the United Nations in its difficult task of restoring and maintaining international peace and security.

48. In conclusion, we appeal once more to the French Government to act as the situation requires, by taking urgent steps to put an end to the atrocities being inflicted on the people of Mayotte by the French civilian and military authorities who to this day continue illegally to occupy the island. This must be done to restore peace and order to that part of the world.

49. We are convinced that we shall be supported by the delegations of all countries devoted to peace, justice and freedom in the implementation of these aims.

50. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Mongolia, Mr. Puntsagnorov, who will speak on behalf of the group of Asian States.

51. Mr. PUNTSAGNOROV (Mongolia): Permit me, on behalf of the Asian group and in the name of my delegation as well, to congratulate warmly the repre-

sentatives of the Comoros on the admission of their country to membership in this great community of nations. Representing an Asian country, I am particularly delighted to welcome the birth of this new State in the sister continent of Africa, which is linked with Asia by bonds of common aspiration.

52. My country has always remained dedicated to the sacred principle of the right of every nation to self-determination and independence, embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The advent of the Comoros to independence constitutes yet another achievement on the rocky road to the complete elimination of the last vestiges of colonialism remaining in the world, in particular in the southern part of Africa and its vicinity. The political independence attained by the people of the Comoros marks a new era in the history of that nation and one which opens up broad perspectives for the development of that country along the road of progress. In tackling its new tasks, the people of the Comoros will certainly benefit from the co-operation and support of the forces devoted to the cause of peace, independence and the progress of nations. The admission of the Comoros to United Nations membership also represents another step towards achieving the final goal of true universality in this world body and it will further increase the contribution of that country and the contribution of Africa to the United Nations.

53. Speaking of the achievements of national liberation movements, my delegation expresses its deep satisfaction in connexion with the proclamation of the People's Republic of Angola yesterday, 11 November 1975, and looks forward to early membership for that new republic in the United Nations. At the same time, my delegation expresses its confidence that the Angolan people will surely overcome the present difficulties caused by the intrigues of the imperialist, reactionary forces, and preserve the unity and territorial integrity of their country.

54. I take this opportunity to request the representatives of the Comoros to convey to their Government and people our good wishes for every success in their endeavours for social progress and the economic prosperity of their country.

55. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Poland, Mr. Jaroszek, who will speak on behalf of the group of Eastern European States.

56. Mr. JAROSZEK (Poland): As Chairman of the group of Eastern European States for the month of November, I take pleasure in extending to the Government and the people of the Comoros our warm welcome and congratulations on their admission to membership in the United Nations.

57. We take special note of this solemn occasion, as the present admission of a new Member State is already the fifth during the current session of the General Assembly and it is taking place in the thirtieth year of the existence of the United Nations. It represents but a fitting tribute to the fifteenth anniversary of the unprecedented Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, initiated, as it was, and adopted by this Assembly

thanks to the relentless efforts of the group of States I have the honour to represent. Indeed, when we sum up today the record of accomplishment of the United Nations in the last 30 years, its contribution to the cause of the liberation of nations stands out as the most prominent feat.

58. Accession to independence and the enjoyment of the right to self-determination are events of the utmost importance in the life and history of countries and peoples liberated from colonial bondage. The proclamation of independence, to which they had to travel a long road of unremitting and sacrificial struggle, should rightly be regarded as the beginning of a new phase of life in human dignity. But the attainment of independence by the people of the Comoros is at the same time a new and important stage in the process of the complete liquidation of colonialism.

59. Within the framework of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the adoption in 1970 of the programme of action for its implementation [resolution 2621 (XXV)], the United Nations has whole-heartedly supported the struggle of peoples for independence and self-determination. Marching in the forefront of the political struggle to eliminate the colonial system, the countries of the Socialist community have always lent their full support and solidarity to colonial peoples in their struggle towards independence and self-determination. It was in this context that we welcomed the proclamation of independence of Angola yesterday. We look forward to the early admission of the new State to this Organization.

60. In admitting the Comoros, our Organization has come yet another step closer to its full universality. This happy event, however, brings to mind a highly regrettable development outside this Hall which this year has prevented the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Republic of South Viet Nam from taking their rightful places in our midst.

61. Permit me to reiterate, on behalf of the group of Eastern European States, our sincere congratulations to the people and the Government of the Comoros on its entry into the United Nations. These congratulations are accompanied by our best wishes for continued success in the political, economic and social development of their country.

62. May I also assure the representatives of the Comoros, headed by the President, Mr. Said Mohamed Jafar, of our readiness for close and friendly co-operation with a view to attaining the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

63. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of the Bahamas, Mr. Hepburn, who will speak on behalf of the group of Latin American States.

64. Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas): Representatives gathered here to welcome a new Member need no further reminder of the hard work that Latin American States have done and are still doing in an effort to promote the exercise of the right to self-determination and independence by all peoples. Such a record makes it a special honour and privilege for the Bahamas, current Chairman of the group of Member States of the Latin American region, to act as their *portavoz* in

extending a warm and sincere welcome to the Comorians as they take their rightful place in this Assembly.

65. Despite the fact that the seasoned veterans of this Organization have effective techniques for leadership, young Members of the ilk of the Comoros, who have experienced untold difficulties in their struggles for independence, also bring with them new ideas which will, besides helping to boost the credibility of the United Nations, prove invaluable to the perpetuation of human rights and the strengthening of peace and security throughout the world.

66. There is an old adage which says that variety is the spice of life. As a result of the diversity of races, languages, customs, cultures, beliefs and skills that the United Nations membership embodies, it has become an interesting and challenging Organization. By adding one more today to the family, the United Nations becomes all the more constructive and indispensable. Only when all peoples under colonial domination are free to exercise their inalienable right to sovereignty will the true value and the real purpose of this body be achieved and appreciated. With the coming of our new brother—if the Assembly will pardon the chauvinism—we can all look forward to the early demise of colonialism.

67. I cannot conclude without saying to the Comorians, "You have become a Member of the United Nations at a time when the Organization is rapidly losing its image as an exclusive club and taking on the appearance of a working body concerned with pertinent issues, many of them controversial, but nevertheless necessary for the growth and development of all concerned."

68. It is with a great sense of humility that I express to the representatives of the Comoros that today Latin America is proud to extend the right hand of fellowship and brotherhood, and looks forward to a harmonious relationship of co-operation and shared experiences.

69. The Bahamas delegation requests that best wishes for success be conveyed to the Government and people of the Comoros.

70. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Australia, Mr. Harry, who will speak on behalf of the group of Western European and other States.

71. Mr. HARRY (Australia): It is an honour and pleasure for me to be able to welcome the Comoros to membership in the United Nations on behalf of the group of Western European and other States. It would be inappropriate for me in this capacity to make any comment on the matters raised in the statement of the representative of France or on the remarks of the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. My sole role, and a welcome role, is to welcome the admission of the Comorian delegation to our ranks as a further step towards achieving the goal of universal membership in our Organization. We look forward to co-operating closely with them in our future work. The tradition in accordance with which new Members are welcomed by representatives of all regional groups is a reminder that the United Nations is not, and must not be, an organization in which coun-

tries pursue merely their own particular national or group interests, though the group system is an essential part of the United Nations procedure. The United Nations is in its essence a community, the brotherhood of the Charter, in which we seek to harmonize differences and to identify and promote the common interests of mankind.

72. With your permission, Mr. President, I should also like to add a few words on behalf of my own delegation. Australia has followed closely the evolution of the Comoro islands to independence beginning with the French and Comorian Governments' joint declaration in June 1973; the law of November 1974 concerning the organization of a referendum in the islands; and the referendum itself, which took place in December last year. Now that the Comoros is a State, a Member of the United Nations, yet another significant advance has been made in the process of peaceful decolonization. We earnestly hope that the task of the United Nations in this field will go on to completion in the not too distant future.

73. Australia is particularly glad to welcome to this Organization a new Member which has links not only with Africa but with the Indian Ocean. The Australian delegation looks forward to working with the Comoros as a regional neighbour in promoting the interests and well-being of the people of this area.

74. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Yemen, Mr. Makki, who will speak on behalf of the Arab States.

75. Mr. MAKKI (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me, on behalf of the Arab States, to extend to the delegation and people of the Comoros our warmest congratulations and sincere welcome as an expression of the historic and human ties that bind the people of the Comoros to the Arab people.

76. The membership of the Comoros in the United Nations crowns the victories and successes being achieved by the peoples of the world against every factor of oppression and blackmail.

77. Undoubtedly, the role played by the United Nations and its agencies and organs in the liquidation of colonialism and its remaining vestiges has been of vital importance in securing for the peoples the right to self-determination and national sovereignty.

78. Unfortunately, and with deep regret, we find that some States have impeded, and continue to impede, the independence of peoples still under colonialist rule and threaten the independence of newly independent States by causing dissension and civil war in order to protect their own interests, without due consideration for the human rights and moral values that prevail in international society. The events we see today in Angola are a clear indication of the fact that it is foreign interests that threaten the unity of the people of Angola and its right to self-determination.

79. We welcome the people of the Comoros to the international community and urge all States to respect the sovereignty, national integrity and unity of the Comoros, so that it may participate positively in the international community and in the fight against backwardness and under-development, in order to achieve a better future and greater economic and social development.

80. The group of Arab States has done and will continue to do everything in its power, through the fight against colonialism and its continued support of the struggle of peoples, to help the people of the Comoros to consolidate and strengthen their independence and to lead a fuller life.

81. I ask the delegation of the Comoros to take back with them the expression of the great aspirations and sincere desire of the Arab States to consolidate close co-operation with them so that a better society and a just peace may prevail in all countries for all peoples.

82. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of the host country, Mr. Sherer.

83. Mr. SHERER (United States of America): The United States was pleased to vote in the Security Council for the admission of the Comoros to the United Nations. As representative of the host country, I welcome the Comoros to the United Nations family. To the people of those islands, whose location at a crossroads of the Indian Ocean has brought them cultural diversity and richness, we extend a warm welcome and all good wishes as they assume the full duties and responsibilities of a Member State.

84. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Madagascar, Mr. Rabetafika.

85. Mr. RABETAFIKA (Madagascar) (*interpretation from French*): Undoubtedly, no other occasion could give more satisfaction to the delegation of Madagascar than that which allows it today to hail the accession of the Comoro Archipelago to international recognition and full sovereignty, and to sponsor the draft resolution confirming the admission of that country to the United Nations. The Comorian and Malagasy peoples actually share a common heritage strengthened by very old cultural, historical and political links. It is therefore natural that the support and the solidarity of our people and our Government should be fully granted to every authentic nationalist movement the main objective of which is to free territory from colonialism and neo-colonialism so as to achieve such results we are all welcoming today.

86. The Government of Madagascar also welcomes the renaissance of an independent political life in the countries of the western subregion of the Indian Ocean, of which Mozambique and the Comoros are now the most recent members. We are certain that within this framework, as within OAU and the United Nations, we shall continue to have relations of trusting and fruitful co-operation with our Comorian brothers.

87. However, the future of the Comoro Archipelago and its ability to preserve its national unity and territorial integrity are of some concern to the international community because, following on the referendum held in December 1974, in which all of the Comorian population participated, it seems that a second referendum is being contemplated to determine the political future of part of the Territory.

88. Since the Comorian Government proclaimed the independence of the Comoros on 6 July 1975 and extended the scope of this proclamation to all the islands of the archipelago, what authority could be invoked to deny the logical and legal effects of that

act of sovereignty and to proceed to another plebiscite? In order to make matters quite clear, we wish to note that, at the time of the proclamation, the administering Power had not contested the legality, the legitimacy or the representative character of the Comorian Government, which was effectively exercising authority over the whole archipelago.

89. Let us grant that account must be taken of the will of the "peoples" of the archipelago. Let us grant that, historically, Anjouan, Grande Comore, Mayotte and Moheli were administered by various sultans. Let us grant also that the whims of the colonists and the rivalries between two colonial Powers led the administering authorities to attach Mayotte now to the island of Réunion, now to Nossi-Bé of Madagascar. Nevertheless, there remain valid considerations of a permanent character which make of the four islands a natural and indivisible whole.

90. Indeed, how could one ignore the human and cultural history which these islands have shared with all the peoples of the Indian Ocean basin, a unique experience which has favoured the emergence of a diversified civilization, open and original?

91. How could one ignore either that the common destiny of these islands has been manifest for 13 centuries, or even longer, or that from the middle of the last century they suffered together from the domination and exploitation whose adverse consequences are still being felt?

92. It is undeniable that there has always been a common aspiration and struggle for the recognition of Comorian existence and Comorian identity. It is also undeniable that that aspiration was strengthened by the determination to consolidate their national unity, a determination which until recently received the approval of the administering Power.

93. The national unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros have been sanctioned by French legislation itself, starting with the law of 25 July 1912 making a colony of all these islands and ending with the law of 1974 on the referendum, including between these two dates the law of 1947 making the Territory an autonomous administrative unit, the law of 22 December 1961 relating to the political organization of the Comoro Archipelago and the law of 3 January 1968 which modified and completed the last-mentioned.

94. The problem undoubtedly goes beyond the legitimate and true interests of all the Comorians to become, as always,—let us say—a question of presence and of a military presence. The desire for such a presence can be easily understood after the changes that have occurred in the region and is perhaps the only explanation for wishing to defy the sovereign will of the Comorians and the legal and political principles recognized since 26 August 1974 by the administering Power itself, which declared, *inter alia*, that "under the rules of international law a territory retains the frontiers that it had as a colony" and that "a multiplicity of different statuses for the various islands of the archipelago is inconceivable".

95. For its part the Government of Madagascar is of the view that we cannot depart from the principles of resolution 1514 (XV), according to which any attempt aimed at partial or total destruction of the

national unity and territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations. We reaffirm the legitimacy of the struggle of authentic liberation movements, which we shall continue to support as long as their objectives have not been fully achieved.

96. Finally, we believe that, in the spirit of that same resolution, and without any restriction whatsoever, the people's will whereby in December 1974 the independence of the Comoros in unity and integrity was overwhelmingly approved must be recognized. Such an attitude cannot but contribute to strengthening peace, security and co-operation in the region.

97. We warmly congratulate and extend a fraternal welcome to the Comorian delegation, led by the President, Said Mohamed Jafar, and we are convinced that it will receive in the United Nations all the support it may need to defend and promote the interests of the Comorian people and to have its rights prevail.

98. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Uganda, Mr. Kinene, who will address the Assembly on behalf of the Organization of African Unity.

99. Mr. KINENE (Uganda): We have just witnessed a most pleasant event in the history of our Organization and in the history of every one of the Members of the Organization, namely, the admission of the Comoros as a full Member of the United Nations.

100. We in Africa take great pride and feel very much honoured whenever a new country joins this Organization after liberating itself from the colonial yoke. This, among other reasons, is because such an event is a recognition of the right of all peoples—great or small—to self-determination, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The admission of the Comoros today provides yet another new and happy occasion for us to reaffirm those sacred principles which are well enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and which constitute the very foundations upon which the Organization is based.

101. I therefore have the great honour and pleasure, on behalf of my President, Field Marshal Al Hadji Idi Amin Dada, President of the Republic of Uganda and current Chairman of OAU, to extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes to the President of the Comoros, Mr. Said Mohamed Jafar, his Government and the Comorian people on the occasion of the admission of the Comoros to the United Nations. Indeed, the Comoros, as Vice-Chairman of OAU, has already made a very great contribution to the cause of African unity and freedom. We are confident that the Comoros will play its full role in a positive manner and contribute to the achievement of the objectives of our Organization.

102. Uganda and, in fact, OAU were the first to recognize the full independence of the Comoros, and for the sake of clarity I want to state here that, as far as OAU is concerned, that State, the Comoros, is composed of the following islands: Anjouan, Grande Comore, Mayotte and Moheli. It is that Comoros, comprising those four islands, that we have admitted today to membership of the United Nations.

103. However, we note with great concern the continued illegal occupation of a part of the Comoros,

namely, the island of Mayotte, by-foreign troops from France. The latest information is that Mayotte is at present occupied by 400 *légionnaires*, 50 *gendarmes*, two warships and one aircraft carrier and three *comandos d'élite*. This is not only a flagrant violation of the territorial integrity of a Member State of the United Nations but also a threat to international peace and security in that area.

104. We call for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from the Comoros.

105. Finally, having endorsed the admission of the Comoros, we should not sit back and relax: the world community, the specialized agencies and private organizations should continue rendering economic and technical assistance to our new brothers who have just regained their independence. The world knows that countries that have a history of colonial domination have had terrible wounds inflicted on their economies. Their natural resources have been depleted for so long that if we do not extend a helping hand to them they may not be able to stand on their own feet.

106. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I call on Mr. Alarcón, the representative of Cuba.

107. Mr. ALARCÓN (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Prompted by a profound spirit of solidarity, my delegation joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/L.772 and Add.1, adopted by this Assembly. Hence we want to hail the independence of the Comoros and extend a warm welcome to that State as the newest Member of the United Nations.

108. The long struggle for freedom and independence of the people of the Comoros has been crowned with success. Their quest for liberty occupied the attention of this Assembly, and particularly that of the Special Committee on decolonization, for a number of years. Because it is a small Territory, there were some who wanted to deny its people their right to self-determination and independence. Indeed, in the not-too-distant past there was still opposition to considering that Territory among those that were subjected to colonialism. Had it not been for the tenacious resistance of its people and for the vigilant action of the anti-colonialist forces within the United Nations, the Comoro islands might have succumbed to those who wished to assimilate and absorb them.

109. The new independent State now faces the complex and difficult task of fully consolidating its political sovereignty and promoting its economic and social development. In that task it will have to receive the firm and full support of the United Nations.

110. It is of particular importance that respect for the national unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros should be unreservedly guaranteed. That is a fundamental principle of our Organization, and one of the very bases of the Charter and of international coexistence in the contemporary world. The territorial integrity of colonial and dependent countries is one of the principles solemnly proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 1514 (XV). It is for this reason and in the light of the unfortunate events that have taken place recently in the Comoro Archipelago that the sponsors included the third preambular paragraph in the draft resolution.

111. The Comoros comes into the Organization at a crucial time for the United Nations: it is joining us as the Organization is becoming more and more genuinely representative of mankind and, thanks to the new majority made up of socialist and non-aligned States, is acting in keeping with the true interests of all peoples and with the cause of peace, justice and freedom.

112. This new victory of those who struggle for the emancipation of nations is taking place at a time when the progressive States of the third world are the object of the most shameless campaign of threats, pressures and slander as a result of recent decisions of this Assembly. Judging from what the press has been saying recently, for some representatives of Western Powers parliamentary democracy was a useful tool only when a handful of them could impose their will capriciously on the Assembly. Now that this is no longer so easy, some of them seem to feel nostalgia for a colonialist past that they would do well to consider gone for ever. This may be the best lesson that the admission of a newly independent Member can teach the Organization. What is necessary now is the spiritual decolonization of those who still try to oppose the opinion of the majority with insults or senseless statements.

113. The admission of the Comoros occurs at a decisive moment for the decolonization process in Africa too. Only yesterday, with the termination of Portuguese domination, the independence of the People's Republic of Angola was proclaimed. Cuba, which extended immediate diplomatic recognition to Angola, greets that new African State, its President, Agostinho Neto, and the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, the sole representative of the Angolan people, the only vehicle of expression for that people's desire for independence over the last two decades, the only movement that consistently and heroically waged an armed struggle against Portuguese colonialism for 14 years.

114. To save Angola, resolutely to support its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, is the most urgent and inescapable task for all those who call themselves enemies of colonialism. At this decisive time for Africa, a time when we are welcoming a new Member to our Organization from that continent, it is essential to express the most resolute solidarity with the People's Republic of Angola, which is today facing the aggression of the imperialists who, with their colonialist and racist mercenaries, are trying, 15 years after the event, to put on a repeat performance of the painful events of the Congo. We must act now, without hesitation, to prevent that. Cuba appeals to all revolutionary forces, to all progressive States, to all those who oppose colonialism, to close their ranks in militant solidarity with the People's Republic of Angola.

115. In greeting the independence of the Comoros and its admission to the United Nations, we reiterate our decision to continue to struggle against colonialism in all its forms and manifestations wherever it may arise in the world, until we have turned into reality for all those peoples still subject to the colonial yoke the promises contained in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [*resolution 1514 (XV)*].

116. In reiterating our welcome to the Comoros we wish to assure its representatives of the readiness of our delegation to co-operate with them in the com-

mon effort to promote the ideals of the Organization, for which its valiant people have consistently struggled.

117. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): I now have the honour of inviting the head of State and President of the Government of the Comoros, Mr. Said Mohamed Jafar, to address the General Assembly.

118. Mr. Said Mohamed JAFAR (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, may I first, on behalf of the Comorian people, express our profound gratitude for the warm welcome extended to the young State of the Comoros. Our thanks go first to the members of the Security Council, whose favourable and unequivocal recommendation led to the virtually unanimous decision of the General Assembly.

119. We are pleased today to be able to recall proudly before this Assembly the main stages, as well as the methods, of our liberation struggle. Aware of our material insufficiency in all areas, the small size of our territory and the problems connected with its geographical location, the Comorian people has chosen to free itself from colonial domination solely by peaceful means based on persuasion and dialogue with the administering Power.

120. Although independence was already being discussed in the 1960s, the decisive stage was the vote on a resolution whereby, on 22 December 1972, the Comorian people, through its representatives, solemnly committed itself to working towards the independence, national unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros.

121. The process thus begun led to the agreements of 15 June 1973 by which France officially recognized the will of the Comoros, one and indivisible, to independence.

122. The referendum of 22 December 1974, through the overwhelmingly affirmative vote of 95 per cent of our people in favour of independence, with an electoral participation of 93 per cent, sanctioned the Comorian people's unshakable determination for freedom and emancipation. That action vis-à-vis the administering Power was facilitated by the effective support of a vast number of countries, particularly those of our African brothers, of the Islamic world and of all peoples that love peace and freedom. OAU, through its Liberation Committee, the African group in this Assembly, and the United Nations, through its Special Committee on decolonization, worked to alert international opinion to the threat hanging over the integrity of our national territory, while retaining the calm necessary to commend the efforts made at each stage of our journey towards independence by the parties concerned.

123. How could the Comorian people remain insensitive to such solidarity and such mobilization of support?

124. However, despite that support, we stand before this Assembly alone. The National Executive Council asked France to sponsor the candidature of the Comoros for membership in the United Nations, in accordance with tradition. France did not see fit to respond favourably to our appeal. Is it fate that the affairs of the Comoros should always be shrouded in mystery? Allah, the All-Knowing, alone can tell.

125. We regret the French attitude all the more because during the very short period that elapsed

between 22 December 1972 and 6 July 1975, and that included the time of the self-determination referendum of 22 December 1974, France made the independence of the Comoros conditional upon our meeting certain deadlines and fulfilling certain new demands which could only encourage the partition of our country.

126. The unilateral declaration of independence of 6 July 1975 was not an act of defiance of France, but rather the expression of our will and our determination in the face of the manoeuvres of certain circles within the French Republic which, despite the irresistible tide of history, remained desperately attached to the pleasures of colonization.

127. The independence of the Comoros and the admission of our country to this Organization apply to our entire national territory. This position stems from the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and has been reaffirmed by resolution 1514 (XV) of December 1960.

128. As far as the Comoros is concerned, General Assembly resolutions 3161 (XXVIII) and 3291 (XXIX), as well as the declarations of the French Government of 26 August and 24 October 1974, are categorical.

129. Since we declared our independence, the former administering Power has established direct administration over a part of our territory. This is outside the legitimate authority of our Government, and ignores, first, our sovereignty and, secondly, the provisions of the Statute of Internal Autonomy.

130. The talks between the French and the Comorian Governments during the first half of last October on the transfer of powers for our entire territory had to be suspended because of essential differences between the two sovereign States concerning the sacrosanct, non-negotiable nature of our territorial integrity, and on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs.

131. Since that date, we have witnessed in our country a bitter political and human tragedy. On the one hand, we see the authorities of the former administering Power attempting to disrupt our national unity through procedures called institutional, but alien and inapplicable to our young sovereign State. On the other hand, gangs of fanatics systematically raze to the ground entire villages, and organize the mass deportation of a peaceful, defenceless population, with the passive and active connivance of French police, the Foreign Legion and French *fusiliers marins*.

132. We leave it up to the Assembly to assess the gravity of this situation, while ardently hoping that together, and with all the parties concerned, we may find a just, equitable and appropriate solution.

133. The Comoros are a group of four islands located in the Indian Ocean. Situated at the mouth of the Mozambique Channel, we occupy a privileged but difficult position on the petroleum route. Whereas the Indian Ocean has remained a zone of peace, we are justly concerned by all the signs indicating that this region is becoming a zone of confrontation.

134. With 300,000 inhabitants spread over 2,235 square kilometres, the archipelago is a small territory. It is also an under-developed country. The disastrous economic and social situation is fraught with serious problems. All this makes us vulnerable, but it is precisely because we are weak that our desire for inter-

national co-operation is strong and genuine. And it is because we are a peaceful country that we always prefer, whenever it is possible, the supranational solution. Thus we support without reservation all the provisions of the Charter which provide for the peaceful settlement of disputes and the development of respect for international law.

135. As a third-world country we rely greatly on the United Nations, and within our means we shall work to give it the chance to respond to our hopes. The United Nations can and must safeguard the sovereignty of small States. The United Nations can and must create all the legal and practical conditions conducive to solidarity among States. The United Nations can and must enable us to humanize relations among the peoples of the world. And, finally, the United Nations can and must accept a new international economic order based on justice, equality and the right to well-being.

136. France has resolutely undertaken decolonization since the beginning of the 1960s. Often, it has been a defender of the third world, rejecting policies of hegemony, and questioning an unjust economic and financial order. We do not wish to forget this and we hope that France, true to its ideal of freedom and its democratic traditions, will respect the overwhelming will expressed by the Comorian people on 22 December 1974. That is the only attitude that would be worthy of France, and the only one in keeping with the desire for friendship and co-operation repeatedly expressed by our two peoples.

137. Before concluding, I should like to extend the congratulations of my country to the President of the General Assembly on his election to the presidency. I am certain that under his wise and skilled guidance the work of this Assembly will be crowned with success.

138. To mark our faith in the Organization, we have decided that today, 12 November, the date of our admission as a united and sovereign State to membership in the United Nations, will be designated our national day.

139. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the head of State and President of the Government of the Comoros for his important statement.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

NOTES

¹ *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirtieth Year, 1848th meeting, paras. 6-10.*

² A/AC.109/507.

³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 23, chap. XI, annex, para. 32.*

⁴ *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirtieth Year, 1848th meeting, para. 24.*

⁵ See A/AC.109/PV.1021, p. 22.