

## TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Eighteenth Session

Tuesday, 24 July 1956,  
at 2 p.m.

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*President: Mr. Rafik ASHA (Syria).*

*Present:*

The representatives of the following States members of the Trusteeship Council: Australia, Belgium, Burma, China, France, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Italy, New Zealand, Syria, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization.

**The future of Togoland under British administration:**

- (i) Report of the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner (T/1258 and Add.1)
- (ii) Report of the Plebiscite Administrator (T/1269 and Add.1)
- (iii) Memorandum by the Administering Authority (T/1270)
- (iv) Petitions circulated under rule 85, paragraph 2, and communications circulated under rule 24 of the rules of procedure of the Trusteeship Council (T/COM.6/L.60 to 69, T/PET.6 and 7/L.48)

[Agenda item 12 (a)]

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mead, Special Representative of the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of Togoland under British administration and Mr. Espinosa y Prieto, United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner, took places at the Council table.*

1. Sir Alan BURNS (United Kingdom) said that the valuable report of the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner (T/1258 and Add.1) and the report of the Plebiscite Administrator (T/1269 and Add.1) showed first that the plebiscite had taken place in accordance with the requirements of the General Assembly and the recommendations of the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of

Togoland under British Administration and Togoland under French Administration, 1955, which the Assembly had accepted, and second that the people of the Territory had given full and free expression of their opinion.

2. He drew the Council's attention to the memorandum (T/1270) in which his Government had made known its views on the future of Togoland under British administration.

3. The two questions which had been put to the people of the Territory in accordance with general Assembly resolution 944 (X) had now been answered. A majority had expressed the wish that the Territory should be united with the Gold Coast when that country had achieved complete self-government. The United Kingdom Government had announced its intention, subject to certain conditions, to take immediate steps for the preparation of constitutional instruments conferring upon the Gold Coast full responsibility for the conduct of its own affairs. One of those conditions, the holding of a general election within the Gold Coast, had already been satisfied and the party presided over by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah had been returned the office by a majority of 38 in a House of 104. The second condition, that the Legislative Assembly so elected should pass a motion calling for independence within the British Commonwealth, might be expected to be satisfied when the new Assembly met in August. He was personally convinced that, whatever the composition of the new Legislative Assembly, such a motion would certainly be welcomed by it. There were differences of opinion in the Gold Coast concerning the precise constitutional arrangements to be made, but there were none, so far as he was aware, on the main issue that the country was ready now for self-government and was anxious to have it.

4. Through an association of forty years with the Gold Coast, Togoland under British administration had been able to share in its progress and the United Kingdom Government was gratified to be able to state that, in accordance with its policy with regard to dependent Territories, the objectives of the Trusteeship System had been achieved and the Territory was now ready, in association with the Gold Coast, to assume full responsibility for the management of its own affairs. He therefore hoped that the Council would see fit to transmit to the General Assembly his Government's recommendation contained in paragraph 9 of the United Kingdom memorandum so that early steps could be taken for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement in accordance with the clearly expressed wishes of the majority of the Territory's inhabitants.

5. Mr. ESPINOSA Y PRIETO (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) submitted his report on the plebiscite held in the Territory of Togoland under British administration and requested the Council to transmit it to the General Assembly in due course. In the report, he had tried to provide all the information necessary for an assessment of the results of the plebiscite. It was lengthy, but not as long as many

reports made on similar plebiscites; and, incidentally, the report itself comprised only one half of the document before the Council. All the texts which were not essential had been removed, but could be produced during the debate upon request. On the other hand, for the pressing reasons given in paragraphs 506 to 509, he had decided to include in chapter VIII the actual text of complaints received. That section, he felt, could not be separated from the report. The main features of the plebiscite were summed up in the three pages comprising chapter X. Readers wishing to follow the course of the plebiscite should refer to chapters VI and VII, but chapters I to IV were important in that they summarized all the points which could facilitate an understanding of the plebiscite.

6. The group which had collaborated with him during the plebiscite deserved the utmost praise. The twenty-four persons involved, representing sixteen different nationalities, had worked in full agreement as befitted representatives of the United Nations. He wished to express his sincere appreciation to them and also to the authorities in charge of the plebiscite, who had given valuable assistance.

7. All those who had taken part in the work had been deeply concerned with the future of the Togoland upon which the Council and the General Assembly were called to take a decision. They had appreciated the importance of the first plebiscite ever held under the Trusteeship System. In studying the operation, representatives would find events similar to those which their own peoples had had to face, and they would also find new factors. The Togoland plebiscite spotlighted the history of a people seeking to offer its contribution to the world, a people with long experience of local and national struggles whose age-long traditions did not put a brake on progress. The plebiscite had confirmed the importance of certain institutions and, in particular, the great merits of the

secret ballot, which was the only method capable of eliminating undesirable pressures. Certain well-known plebiscites in the past had failed to give positive results because they had been held in unsatisfactory conditions or in a hurried and mysterious atmosphere. There had been nothing of the sort in the Togoland plebiscite. It was to be hoped that the general discussion which was about to take place and the questions to be asked by representatives would bring out the constructive and positive aspects of the operation and its role in the development of society in general.

8. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) congratulated Mr. Espinosa y Prieto on the outstanding way in which he had accomplished the task assigned to him by the General Assembly. The qualities he had shown did credit not only to his great country but also to the part of the world to which he belonged. The members of the Secretariat who had accompanied the Plebiscite Commissioner also deserved thanks.

9. Mr. LALL (India) associated himself with the representative of Guatemala in thanking the Plebiscite Commissioner and the Secretariat for the excellent work they had done.

10. With regard to the Council's programme of work, it seemed that no delegation was yet ready to speak on that agenda item. Probably all the members of the Council would like to think over the statements of the United Kingdom representative and the Plebiscite Commissioner on so important a matter. His delegation intended to submit to the Council a draft resolution which would be ready in a day or two.

11. The PRESIDENT felt that the best procedure would be for delegations to begin by putting questions to the Plebiscite Commissioner and the special representative, and then make their general statements. By that time the Indian delegation would probably have submitted its draft resolution.

The meeting rose at 2.35 p.m.