



Wednesday, 20 February 1957,  
at 10.15 a.m.

New York

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**Chairman: Mr. Enrique de MARCHENA**  
(Dominican Republic).

**AGENDA ITEM 34**

**Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter: reports of the Secretary-General and of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/3105 to A/3109, A/3110 and Corr.1, A/3111 and Add.1 and 2, A/3112 and Add.1 and 2, A/3113 and Corr.1, A/3114 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/3115, A/3127) (*concluded*):**

**c) General questions relating to the transmission and examination of information (A/3531, A/C.4/331 and Add.1, A/C.4/346) (*concluded*)**

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Argentina had agreed to become a member of the *ad hoc* committee proposed in draft resolution VI of document A/3531 and that that country should be added to the six whose names he had given at the 643rd meeting. He had not yet been able to obtain representation of a Western European country. He accordingly proposed that the Fourth Committee should indicate in its report the names of the seven countries and leave the General Assembly to appoint an eighth if it adopted draft resolution VI.

*It was so decided.*

2. The CHAIRMAN asked the delegations which had submitted amendments (A/L.222) to draft resolution VI if they wished to have the appropriate additions made to the text of those amendments.

3. Mr. DE SILVA (Ceylon), on behalf of the sponsors of the amendments, replied in the affirmative.

**AGENDA ITEM 37**

**Question of South West Africa: report of the Committee on South West Africa (A/3151 and Corr.1, A/3541, A/C.4/338) (*continued*)**

**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SOUTH WEST AFRICA**

4. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the draft resolution adopted by the Committee at its 633rd meeting, concerning the composition of the Committee on South West Africa (A/3541, draft resolution VIII), announced that several delegations had nominated Ethiopia and Finland to complete the membership of the Committee.

5. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) thought that Iran wished to become a member of the Committee.

6. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that geographical distribution must be taken into account. Iran could ask to be considered as a candidate, and an election could be held.

7. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) proposed that consideration of the item should be deferred until the following day.

*It was so decided.*

**AGENDA ITEM 40**

**Question of the frontier between the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian administration and Ethiopia: reports of the Governments of Ethiopia and of Italy (A/3463, A/3502 and Corr.1, A/C.4/L.481) (*continued*)**

8. ATO DERESSA (Ethiopia) agreed with the representative of Italy that neither the Italian delegation nor the Ethiopian delegation had authority to impose a boundary and that the United Nations was not competent to do so either: the question called for an agreement between the two adjacent countries. Like the representative of Italy, he doubted the relevancy of arguing in detail in the Fourth Committee the substance of the problem discussed at Addis Ababa and of continuing in the Committee the negotiations relating to the frontier.

9. He would dispute the statement made by the Italian representative at the previous meeting to the effect that the negotiators had lost several months because Ethiopia had been reluctant to allow representatives of the Somali people to act as members of the Italian delegation. In fact, at the end of June 1955, Italy and Ethiopia had reached an agreement on the membership of the Commission which was to conduct the negotiations. A month later, with no warning, the Italian Government had proposed the inclusion of Somali representatives in its delegation, but had not indicated in what capacity they would be acting. The Ethiopian Government had requested an explanation on that point and had had to wait until the end of September for a

reply. Only a very short time had then been required to agree finally on the composition of the Commission. It would therefore be difficult to blame the Ethiopian Government for the delay.

10. He would also dispute the claim that negotiations must be presumed to have failed. Six years had passed since the General Assembly had adopted its first resolution on the subject (392 (V)). Twenty months had elapsed since the step taken by the Ethiopian Government in June 1955, and the negotiations had only been in progress for three and a half months in all. He had already explained why the Ethiopian Government refused to assume any responsibility in that connexion.

11. The representative of Italy had said rightly that the negotiations should take place between the parties concerned, i.e., Ethiopia and Somaliland. Unfortunately that would mean waiting until 1960 and none of the parties wished to do that. The representative of Italy had added that the presence of Somali representatives on the Italian delegation empowered to negotiate the delimitation of the frontier did not mean that Italy had transferred to Somaliland a sovereignty which still remained vested in Italy itself, as Administering Authority for the Territory.

12. He then referred to the reservations made at the 642nd meeting by Mr. Osman, Chairman of the Legislative Assembly, who had emphasized that the problem was how to avoid splitting certain Somali populations in two. That was not an unusual problem. Throughout the world there were frontiers dividing groups of the same ethnic origin. The problem had been in existence since 1908. The forthcoming elections did not provide an adequate argument, particularly since elections had been held the previous year in Somaliland, even though no final frontier had been drawn. The presence in the Fourth Committee of the Chairman of the Legislative Assembly was evidence of the fact. Finally, Mr. Osman had expressed the opinion that there was no point in continuing negotiations because they had proved useless in respect of the southern sector and were likely to be equally useless in respect of the northern sector. His delegation did not share that view, and so could not accept Mr. Osman's conclusion that a mediator should be appointed. It hoped that, when the negotiations were resumed, the parties would be able to achieve tangible results.

13. Mr. GRILLO (Italy) explained that he had only said that the Fourth Committee was not meeting to enter into negotiations—for neither the Italian delegation nor, in all probability, the Ethiopian delegation was empowered to do that—and that the current debate was not being held to determine which argument was right, or to establish a frontier between Somaliland and Ethiopia. Furthermore, since it was apparent in the light of the Ethiopian representative's statement that both parties sincerely wished to find an equitable solution to the problem, there seemed little point in wasting time trying to fix responsibility for the late date at which the negotiations had begun.

14. Mr. DE HOLTE CASTELLO (United Nations Advisory Council for the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration) said that all the

members of the Advisory Council were agreed that the frontier between Somaliland and Ethiopia was one of the most serious problems in Somaliland. As he had said at the 628th meeting, the General Assembly had an important role to play and it should propose a new procedure along the lines of the mediation proposals embodied in some of its resolutions. He therefore supported the suggestion made by the representative of the Philippines at the previous meeting to the effect that the negotiations should continue for a certain time, but that if no result had been achieved by a specific date other measures should then be resorted to. He thought that the Ethiopian delegation would have no objection to a continuation of direct negotiations but he stressed that the future constituent assembly, which would be responsible for drafting the constitution, could not also be asked to settle on its own a problem as serious as that of the frontier.

15. ATO DERESSA (Ethiopia) said that there were several possible steps which might lead to a speedy solution of the problem, which both parties obviously wished to solve as soon as possible. The quickest procedure would be to continue negotiations with regard to the sector of the frontier which had not yet been discussed.

16. Mr. SELAND (Norway) noted from the report (T/1143 and Corr.1) of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1954, that some tribes would inevitably be cut in two, whatever solution was adopted. He wondered whether Italy and Ethiopia could not agree to allow nomadic tribes to move freely across the frontier, as Finland, Norway and Sweden had done in the case of the Lapps.

17. Mr. GRILLO (Italy) replied that the 1897 frontier line had been fixed at a time when little was known of the geography of the area and little account had been taken of important human factors. The Somalis had no territorial ambitions; their only wish was that the demarcation line should separate those tribes which had been under the authority of the Emperor of Ethiopia before 1935 and the advent of Fascism from those which had always looked towards Somaliland. In their opinion there should be no difficulty in effecting such a separation. They felt that the wells and grazing lands were such a matter of dispute that it would be better to decide which tribes should henceforth be considered as part of former Italian Somaliland. It should be clearly understood that what he had just said was by way of explanation rather than a statement which could serve as a basis for negotiations.

18. ATO DERESSA (Ethiopia) said that in his Government's opinion the only possible frontier was that specified in the 1908 Convention.

19. In reply to the point raised by the Norwegian representative, he said that Ethiopia was ready to discuss that question with the Somalis once the frontier had been fixed. His country had no intention of making difficulties for its neighbours.

20. Mr. GRILLO (Italy) reserved his delegation's right to speak again at a later meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.