

GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

SIXTH SESSION

Official Records



FOURTH COMMITTEE 230th

MEETING

Thursday, 18 December 1951, at 3 p.m.

Palais de Chaillot, Paris

CONTENTS

Page

Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/1856) (continued) 189

Chairman : Mr. MAX HENRÍQUEZ UREÑA (Dominican Republic).

**Report of the Trusteeship Council
(A/1856) (continued)**

[Item 12] *

THE EWE PROBLEM (A/C.4/195 and Add.1, A/C.4/198)
(continued)

1. Mr. ALEKSANDER (Secretariat) read a cable dated 18th December received from Lomé in connexion with the Ewe question, in which the *Parti togolais du Progrès* asked for a hearing in the Committee. He said that a letter had also been received from the *Association des étudiants togolais* and Togoland students resident in Paris with a similar request.

2. Mr. MANTILLA (Ecuador) supported the suggestion made by the French representative at the previous meeting that members of the parties in Togoland opposed to unification should also be heard by the Committee.

3. After a brief discussion, in which the representatives of INDONESIA, the NETHERLANDS, NEW ZEALAND, ECUADOR and the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA took part, the CHAIRMAN noted that the Committee was unanimous in wishing to hear the representatives of the *Parti togolais du progrès*. He suggested that the letter from the *Association des étudiants togolais* and Togoland students resident in Paris should be circulated for examination before any decision was taken in the matter.

It was so decided.

4. Mr. MACAPAGAL (Philippines) said that the Ewe problem was the most critical that had yet emerged from the operation of the International Trusteeship System. The finding of an adequate solution must be regarded as a test of the Trusteeship System itself.

5. The question was at once local and world wide. It was a test of local administrative policies and also a test of the whole concept of colonialism. It raised the validity of the concepts of the British Commonwealth of Nations and of the French Union. It brought in

question the United Nations itself, and the principle enshrined in the Charter whereby the interests of all dependent peoples were to be the paramount factor in deciding their destiny.

6. The Ewe problem had its roots in nineteenth century colonialism and the arbitrary division of the map of Africa into European spheres of influence. The Ewe peoples had been the victims of such a division and were now asserting their right to be treated as human beings. The suffering which the division had caused them was real, and it was with apprehension that he had heard the French representative dismiss Ewe unification as a mere dream. The United Nations should do all in its power to promote the unification rather than perpetuate the division of the Ewe people.

7. The spokesmen for the Ewes had described their long and fruitless struggle and the steady development of their cause into a deep-rooted national aspiration. It was hard to doubt the genuine nature of their grievances, the weight of public opinion behind them and the justice of their cause. Yet attempts had been made to throw doubt on its validity. It had been said in defence of the *status quo* that it was only necessary to relax immigration formalities, ease customs restrictions and liberalize the transfer of currency to make the unification problem disappear. That argument denied all the facts of West African political life for the past ten years. Customs, currency and immigration restrictions had been eased, but the unification problem remained. The frontier difficulties were only incidental aspects of the real problem, as had been stated in 1949 by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa. The Mission had said in its report that the unification movement had assumed the character of a popular nationalistic movement and that a solution should be sought with urgency in the interest of peace and stability in West Africa.¹

8. That urgently needed solution had not been reached. Instead, there was tension and conflict between the people and their Governments. The Committee had

* Indicates the item number on the General Assembly agenda.

¹ See *Official Records of the Trusteeship Council, Seventh Session, Supplement No. 2, Special report on the Ewe problem, chapter V.*

been shocked to hear of the recent suppression of political liberties, the persecution of the leaders of the unification movement and the stifling of the will of the people. Equally violent accusations had been made by the Administering Authorities against the unification movement, but it was from that unification movement that the cry rose for an impartial, independent commission of investigation. It seemed to have nothing to hide.

9. Particularly serious allegations had been made against the Administering Authority of Togoland under French administration. It had been accused of using every conceivable means to break the unification movement. Responsible leaders of the people claimed to have been treated as traitors for daring to press for their legitimate right to evolve towards the objectives of self-government or independence prescribed in the Charter. Yet if it was assumed that the demand for the unification of the Ewe people and of the two Togolands was a deep-rooted political aspiration, it was inevitable that their thoughts should turn towards the goal of self-government as something which, once achieved, would make possible their desire to be unified.

10. It was hard to imagine either of the two small Togolands achieving independence alone. That would be true even if it were the policy of each of the Administering Authorities actively to lead its own part of Togoland towards self-government or independence. However, that was not their policy. On one side of the frontier, Togoland under British administration was being administered ever more closely as an integral part of the Gold Coast Colony; on the other, Togoland under French administration, without the consultation or consent of the people, had been drawn into the French Union. If it followed the course along which it was at present being led by the United Kingdom, Togoland under British administration would become part of what would presumably be in a relatively short time the self-governing Dominion of the Gold Coast. If the demand for unification could be ignored, that might in itself be an admirable solution for the Territory. But the demand could not be ignored, and the people of Togoland under British administration felt that, against their will, they were being turned towards the Gold Coast and away from their brothers in Togoland under French administration. In Togoland under French administration, on the other hand, the population lived under a system of colonialism designed to maintain the Territory as a subsidiary of metropolitan France. After absorbing French culture, they were supposed to be ready to accept voluntarily the idea of being governed in Paris by a kind of imperial parliament in which they would have one or two representatives. The peoples of both Togolands complained that those two entirely different political concepts were pulling them apart rather than giving them the chance to unite and go forward to independence as one people. That was the basic fact of the problem of unification.

11. The history of the handling of the problem by both the Trusteeship Council and the Administering

Authorities had not been a happy one. The Administering Authorities had repeatedly failed to consult the people concerned before setting up their consultative commissions and councils. They had failed to devise a method of constituting the Anglo-French Standing Consultative Commission for Togoland Affairs which would be acceptable to the people it had been intended to serve. The results and nature of the investigation of the complaints of undemocratic procedures and arbitrary arrests connected with the setting up of that Commission had been unsatisfactory. The latest formula had again been devised without consultation of the people. In its resolution 345 (IX) the Trusteeship Council had approved the latest decision of the Administering Authorities. In doing so, however, the Council had expected that the proposed joint Council would be something rather different from that described in the memorandum submitted by the Administering Authorities (A/C.4/198). Its proposed terms of reference put a very different emphasis on the order of importance of its activities from that recommended in the Council's resolution 345 (IX). The impression was that the Administering Authorities still clung to the idea that the problem could be solved simply by removing material difficulties at the frontier. There was no indication of any willingness on their part to surrender or to pool any of their sovereignty or their political theories so that the groundwork could be laid for the eventual unification of the peoples concerned.

12. The Philippine delegation did not believe that the real problem could be solved by discussion in the Fourth Committee or in the Trusteeship Council. The situation demanded the most thorough and impartial investigation on the spot. The United Nations should therefore send a special mission to the two Territories as early as possible in 1952. That mission should study the whole political situation in both Territories, investigate the causes of the serious events which had taken place and make definite proposals for a solution. Such a body would give the peoples of Togoland concrete evidence of the serious concern of the United Nations over their problem. Its task should be completed in time for it to report to the eleventh session of the Trusteeship Council, so that the Council could in turn report to the seventh session of the General Assembly. The Philippine delegation intended to associate itself with a proposal along those lines which would be submitted either as a separate draft resolution or as amendments to the draft resolution submitted by the French and United Kingdom representatives (A/C.4/L.163).

13. The fate of the entire International Trusteeship System was in the balance. One administering Power had already left the Fourth Committee in order to prevent the United Nations from acting in the case of South West Africa. The Trusteeship Council was being reduced to a state of impotence; if the process was continued, it would be asked to approve the work of the Administering Authorities in prolonging colonization. The true aim of the International Trusteeship System was eventual self-government or independence, and that fact should never be lost sight of.

GENERAL DEBATE (*continued*)

14. Mr. EL PHARAONY (Egypt) was glad to see that the arrangement of the Trusteeship Council's report (A/1856) had been improved in accordance with the General Assembly's recommendations (resolution 433 (V)). He was particularly interested to note the inclusion of the observations of members of the Council on a number of detailed points. Those observations, together with those of members of the Fourth Committee, would serve as a valuable indication of the views of Members of the United Nations on the manner in which the aims of the International Trusteeship System should be carried fully into effect.

15. It appeared from a general survey of the report that encouraging progress had been made in some Trust Territories in a variety of fields, though, judged on the basis of concrete achievements, that progress had not been spectacular. But progress could not be fairly gauged by action taken over a short period; it would therefore be useful for the Trusteeship Council's following report to contain a concise comparative analysis of the progress made in different fields in the course of the past five years, from which the real advance could be seen at a glance.

16. He was disturbed to see that the Council appeared to have lost some of the vigour which had marked its initiation of the International Trusteeship System and some of the clarity with which it had once regarded the fundamental problems of the Trust Territories. While in 1948 the Council had not hesitated to attack shortcomings in the administration of some Trust Territories, in 1949 it had shown a respectful, almost deferential attitude towards the views of the Administering Authorities and had withdrawn from the strong position it had taken earlier on a number of important issues. That impression was heightened by the repeated commendations made in the Council's report of the action taken by the Administering Authorities. While in some instances the commendation was no doubt well-deserved, the Council's recommendations seemed to have deteriorated into standardized expressions of satisfaction and of hope for the future. In its endeavour to maintain good relations with the Administering Authorities, it might lose its quality of forthrightness, essential to the exercise of its functions, and might give a totally misleading picture of conditions in the Trust Territories. It was of course free to determine its own attitude, but his delegation would like to see more evidence of its realization that the Trust Territories contained not only administrators, but ordinary people whose interests were, according to the Charter, of paramount importance.

17. With regard to specific questions affecting the Trust Territories, his delegation attached great importance to education as a major factor in promoting political maturity, which was the ultimate objective for all the peoples of the Trust Territories. It therefore regretted that provision for education, and particularly for advanced education, was still inadequate in almost all Territories. The Trust Territories should not be left to rely on the system of missionary schools, however

valuable that system might have been in the past. While urging the need for greater efforts to increase educational facilities, his delegation fully appreciated the difficulties involved, such as problems of finance, building materials, the shortage of trained teachers, and teaching in the vernacular. In endeavouring to overcome those difficulties, the Administering Authorities should take advantage of the experience of other nations and should continue to seek the co-operation and advice of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. He fully agreed with the view expressed by the United States representative at the 220th meeting that education in the Trust Territories should be primarily directed towards training the indigenous population for participation in the international community, and should not be purely academic in character.

18. Turning to the question of the economic development of the Trust Territories, he said that his delegation would have some comments to submit when the question of rural economic development was under discussion. In general, it considered that economic development should be based on the principle of providing a sound foundation for the economies of the Territories and that any long-term development plans or investments should bear the welfare of the indigenous population in mind and should promote its increased participation in economic life. Economic development must also allow for the size of the population, which was likely to grow at an increasingly rapid rate as a result of the improvement in public health services combined with the naturally high birth-rate. According to some estimates, the population of a number of Trust Territories would double in the course of the following twenty or thirty years. Both intensive and extensive agricultural development would be insufficient to provide for such an increase. The solution lay in the development of secondary local industries for the production of consumer goods and in long-term investments in other industrial enterprises, despite the fact that such investments would require a high outlay of capital with little prospect of immediate returns.

19. His delegation considered that the problem of petitions had still not been satisfactorily solved. The right of petition was one of the corner-stones of the International Trusteeship System and was a concrete demonstration of the reality of international supervision. The number of petitions received was a clear indication of the importance the peoples of the Trust Territories attached to that right. But the effectiveness of that part of the International Trusteeship System and hence the confidence with which the peoples of the Trust Territories regarded the United Nations depended on the manner in which the Trusteeship Council handled petitions. A study of the Council's work in that field, however, gave cause for concern. That concern had been felt by the General Assembly at its fifth session, when it had examined the procedure for dealing with petitions and had made a number of recommendations for its improvement in resolution 435 (V). While the Council had given effect to some of those recommendations, it appeared to have ignored the most important

recommendation, namely, that the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Petitions should be established as a standing committee to meet, if necessary, between sessions of the Council.

20. It was clear from the resolutions adopted by the Council and from the summary records of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Petitions that petitions were not receiving the treatment they deserved. It was not a question of any lack of goodwill on the part of members of the Committee, but of the physical impossibility of giving a thorough examination to so many petitions in the short time available during sessions of the Council. In consequence the Council's resolutions on petitions had become somewhat standardized. Such resolutions were detrimental not only to the prestige of the United Nations but also to the moral development of the indigenous inhabitants, who looked to the United Nations for an impartial opinion and for assistance.

21. The only possible method of ensuring a more detailed examination of the questions raised in petitions was to increase the time available for the purpose. It therefore seemed essential that the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Petitions should become a standing committee which would meet also between sessions of the Council, whenever necessary, to undertake a preparatory examination of petitions. The Administering Authorities had objected to that procedure on the ground that their special representatives could not be present, but there seemed to be no reason why the standing committee could not carry out its work on the basis of written observations by the Administering Authorities: it would also be entitled to request supplementary written observations. The special representatives of the Administering Authorities would have full opportunity to shed further light on the facts during the discussion of the committee's provisional recommendations by the Trusteeship Council.

22. With regard to the political development of the Trust Territories, he fully agreed with a number of previous speakers that the ultimate independence of the peoples of the Trust Territories could not and should not be a matter for discussion. The Charter left no room for doubt on that point. The only point at issue was the rate of progress towards that objective, the complete attainment of which was the task of the International Trusteeship System. A tribute must be paid to those Administering Authorities that were encouraging the development of organs of self-government and were thus paving the way for the establishment of independent states. In that connexion some Administering Authorities had alleged that the tribal systems were acting as a brake on political development. His delegation felt, however, that the gradual elimination of obsolete tribal practices might not cause so great an upheaval as some Administering Authorities had alleged and that their continued existence should not be tolerated at the cost of sound democratic development.

23. Mr. DEMCHENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation did not consider that the report of the Trusteeship Council gave a true picture of the manner in which the Administering Authorities

were carrying out their responsibilities for the Trust Territories. An analysis of the information submitted by the Administering Authorities and of the report showed that the provisions of Chapter XII of the Charter were not being carried out.

24. In the Trust Territories there were no legislative, executive or judicial organs in which the indigenous inhabitants participated. The Administering Authorities did everything to preserve the tribal system, which was inconsistent with the development of the inhabitants towards self-government or independence. As was shown in the report on Tanganyika, no steps were being taken to provide for a transition to a system of democratic self-government. Moreover, in the Trust Territory of Nauru, which had been under Australian administration for about fifty years, the indigenous inhabitants took no part in government. In Western Samoa according to the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in the Pacific (T/792) the higher officials of the administration were Europeans, the majority of them recruited in New Zealand.

25. The Administering Authorities carried out a policy of racial discrimination. The report on Nauru submitted by the Visiting Mission (T/790) stated that the three races living on the island were completely segregated, and that an ordinance prohibited the free movement of the indigenous inhabitants and the Chinese population. During the year ending 30 June 1949 twenty-two Chinese and sixty-one Nauruans had been tried and condemned for violating that ordinance. The indigenous inhabitants of New Guinea, under Australian administration, were subjected to a curfew between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. The towns in Ruanda-Urundi were divided into European, Asian and African zones.

26. There was racial discrimination also in the fields of wages, medical services and education. The Visiting Mission to Nauru had reported that indigenous workers there received miserable wages, much lower than those paid to Europeans doing the same work. The wages of an agricultural worker in Ruanda-Urundi were from seven to ten francs a day—the price of a box of matches. The standard of living of the inhabitants was extremely low. The whole economy of the Territory was based on a low wage-rate.

27. With regard to health services, in Ruanda-Urundi the Administering Authority maintained seven hospitals, four of which were for the indigenous inhabitants, who numbered 3,800,000, and three for the Europeans, who numbered 3,407. There was not a single indigenous doctor. In Togoland under British administration there were only three hospitals and four doctors for 384,000 indigenous inhabitants. The so-called ten-year development plan did not provide for the construction of a single hospital. As a consequence of the inadequate medical services and wretched living conditions, contagious diseases were rife and the death rate very high, especially the infant mortality rate. A medical survey in the Cameroons under British administration in 1949 had shown that 7 per cent of the population suffered from malaria and 37.5 per cent from other diseases.

The expenditure in that Territory for courts, prisons and the police force in 1949-1950 had amounted to 21.6 per cent of the total budget, while the expenditure for the health services had amounted to only 10.5 per cent. The expenditure for the social welfare services in Tanganyika in 1949 had amounted to £16,975, while the expenditure for the police had amounted to £328,400.

28. The Administering Authorities had made no attempt to raise the educational level of the indigenous inhabitants of the Trust Territories. In 1950, only 11.7 per cent of the children of school age in the Cameroons under British administration had attended school; in the northern area the figure was only 1.3 per cent. There were still only two secondary schools in the whole Territory. The proportion of illiterates over the whole Territory was about 95 per cent.

29. Racial discrimination was practised also in education. In Nauru, for example, the expenditure for each Nauruan student was one-quarter of that for each European student. In Tanganyika twenty-one times as much was spent on each European as on each indigenous student. European teachers were paid ten times as much as indigenous teachers.

30. Economic policy in the Trust Territories followed similar lines. The entire economic life of the Trust Territories was completely subordinated to the interests of monopolistic companies which rapaciously exploited their natural resources. The Administering Authorities carried out a policy of alienating the land from the indigenous inhabitants to the profit of those companies. In Tanganyika, in 1949 alone, 389 square miles of land had been alienated from the indigenous inhabitants by the Administering Authority, while the overall area of alienated land in 1950 amounted to 3,121 square miles, or one-third of all the cultivated land in the Territory. The Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa had noted in its report on the Cameroons under British administration² that the alienation of large tracts of land now being used by the Cameroons Development Corporation, as well as by some smaller companies, had given rise to a serious economic and social problem for the tribes who lived near the plantations. The indigenous inhabitants had been deprived of their land and were forced to work, for a mere pittance, for the companies which had taken their land and were waxing fat on the exploitation of the Territory. The Gold Coast Cocoa Marketing Board paid £85 a ton for cocoa in Togoland under British administration and sold it for £178 a ton.

31. The facts he had quoted showed that the Administering Authorities were carrying out an anti-democratic policy in the Trust Territories, violating the rights and interests of the indigenous inhabitants and practising racial discrimination. The Ukrainian delegation considered that the General Assembly should call upon them to carry out their obligations under the Charter.

32. Mr. ATTAR (Syria) considered it encouraging that the President of the Trusteeship Council had said that the International Trusteeship System was on the

way to attaining the objectives prescribed by the Charter. Some of the members of the Committee were not, however, greatly impressed by the speed of development and progress in the Trust Territories.

33. He was glad to say that the form of the Council's report had been much improved.

34. He felt impelled to comment on the Trusteeship Council's attitude with regard to the General Assembly's recommendations (resolution 435 (V)) concerning the methods to be adopted in considering petitions. True, some petitions were of little interest or were of a personal nature, but no petition should ever be neglected. The prestige of the Council in the Trust Territories largely depended on the manner in which it dealt with petitions. Unfortunately, they were often considered in a superficial manner as a matter of routine. Hence, many members of the Fourth Committee felt that the establishment of a standing committee on petitions would be the only way in which the work could be done satisfactorily. The *Ad Hoc* Committee on Petitions was not able to deal thoroughly with the matter in the time at its disposal. The difficulties in the way of setting up a permanent committee could be overcome, but the Council could not continue to ignore the General Assembly's recommendations.

35. Improvement was also called for in the treatment of petitions submitted to visiting missions. Usually the missions merely received petitions and sent them to Headquarters for submission to the Trusteeship Council, thus overloading the agenda of the Council and the *Ad Hoc* Committee on Petitions, which already had a large number of petitions that had been addressed directly to them. The Fourth Committee might recommend that the Trusteeship Council should instruct the visiting missions to give more thorough consideration to the petitions addressed to them during their stay in the Trust Territories. At its fifth session the General Assembly had made recommendations (resolution 434 (V)) to the Council covering the duration of the visiting missions' stay in the Territories, their terms of reference and the flexibility of their time-tables. The Trusteeship Council had not carried out those recommendations. If the visiting missions could stay longer in each Territory and concentrate on specific problems instead of general considerations, their contribution to the work of the Trusteeship Council would be more valuable.

36. He had drawn attention the previous year to the importance of improving the organization and functions of the visiting missions, but 1951 had brought no progress. If necessary, he would submit a formal resolution on the subject.

37. In consequence of General Assembly resolution 438 (V) on rural economic development, the Council had set up the Committee on Rural Economic Development of the Trust Territories to study present policy and laws bearing on land utilization and alienation. That Committee had published a number of documents on land tenure in the Trust Territories. He agreed with a number of other representatives that the specialized agencies, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as other technicians, should be

² *Ibid.*, Report on the Cameroons under British administration.

called upon to study agrarian structure. Syria and other delegations had submitted a draft resolution (A/C.4/L.167) on that subject.

38. It had already been pointed out that during recent years the recommendations of the Trusteeship Council had become progressively weaker. The General Assembly should express its dissatisfaction at the slackening of the Council's control over the International Trusteeship System. Attention had been drawn to the new spirit of harmony and co-operation between the Administering Authorities and those Members of the United Nations which did not administer Trust Territories, but if that new spirit was due to the fact that the Council had become less vigilant in fulfilling its task, the price was too high.

39. He congratulated the Trusteeship Council on its resolution 311 (VIII) of 7 February 1951 concerning the part to be played by visiting missions in ensuring the dissemination of information about the United Nations in the Trust Territories. It was to be hoped that the report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1951, would contain a detailed chapter on the implementation of the recommendations on that subject.

40. Although some of the chapters of the Trusteeship Council's report which dealt with conditions in the Trust Territories contained separate paragraphs dealing with the question of information concerning the United Nations, others did not. In future reports there should be a special paragraph on the subject in each chapter. Moreover the Administering Authorities should be urged to furnish full information on the action taken in that field, and to take more energetic steps to implement Trusteeship Council resolution 36 (III) requesting them to furnish suggestions as to appropriate

channels through which information about the aims and activities of the United Nations might be communicated to the general public. It would be interesting for the Committee to have detailed information in that respect, and also with regard to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 137 (II).

41. The organization of information for the general public was very important; different standards of education called for different types of information. In support of the action already undertaken by the Council, he submitted the draft resolution contained in document A/C.4/L.170.

42. A number of delegations had spoken of the colonial system as sick, dying or even dead; others considered it to be still full of life. Even though it might appear to be dead, it could subsist under new forms. The Fourth Committee had a serious responsibility, for the discharge of which it depended greatly on the Trusteeship Council. The Charter had given rise to great hopes and aspirations and there could be no lasting peace in the world unless the peoples of the Trust Territories had faith that their hopes would be fulfilled.

43. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic), speaking on a point of order, said that, as Chairman of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1951, he felt it his duty to comment on the Syrian representative's references to the Mission's handling of petitions. Since the Mission's report had not yet been published, criticism of its action in regard to petitions seemed to him to be premature. While the report would be circulated in the near future, it would not be discussed by the General Assembly until its following session.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.