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**FOURTH COMMITTEE, 531st
MEETING**

**Friday, 2 December 1955,
at 10.50 a.m.**

New York

C O N T E N T S

Page

Agenda item 35:

The Togoland unification problem and the future of the Trust Territory of Togoland under British administration: report of the Trusteeship Council
(continued) 359

**Chairman: Mr. Luciano JOUBLANC RIVAS
(Mexico).**

AGENDA ITEM 35

The Togoland unification problem and the future of the Trust Territory of Togoland under British administration: report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3046, T/1206 and Add.1, T/1214, T/1215) (continued)

HEARING OF PETITIONERS (continued)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. S. G. Antor, Mr. A. K. Odame and Mr. A. A. Chamba, representatives of the Togoland Congress, Mr. J. A. Nagba, representative of the Northern People's Party, Mr. J. Mensah, Mr. F. Y. Asare, Mr. S. T. Fleku and Mr. S. K. Kumah, representatives of the Convention People's Party, Akan-Krachi Constituency, Buem Constituency, Ho District, and Kpandu District, respectively, Mr. S. Olympio, representative of the All-Ewe Conference, Mr. Mama Fousseni, representative of the Union des chefs et des populations du Nord-Togo, Mr. R. Ajavon, representative of the Parti togolais du progrès, and Mr. A. I. Santos, representative of Juvento, took places at the Committee table.

1. Mr. COHEN (Under-Secretary for Trusteeship and Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories), replying to a question asked at the previous meeting by the representative of Yugoslavia concerning the distribution of United Nations publications in Togoland under French administration, drew attention to the Secretary-General's report to the sixteenth session of the Trusteeship Council concerning the provision of information to the peoples of Trust Territories (T/1193). It had not been possible, because of the expense involved, to supply all individuals and organizations with all United Nations documents which had been asked for from Trust Territories, but whenever organizations had requested Trusteeship Council documents the practice was to refer the application to the Administering Authority for the right to place the organization on the distribution list; the Administering Authority concerned acceded to all such requests. The Secretary-General had not therefore considered it necessary to set up any further channel. He suggested that organizations whose representatives were at present in New York should make their requests known to the Secretary-General, when steps

would be taken to have the names of those who were to receive official records placed on the list.

2. Out of eighteen recipients of Secretariat publications in Togoland under French administration, fifteen were members of the services of the Administering Authority, one was a member of the Parti togolais du progrès, one was the president of the Lomé Chamber of Commerce and one was Mr. Sylvanus Olympio. No documents had been sent to Juvento; the request had apparently not been made to an official of the Trusteeship Department who had authority to deal with the matter. He suggested that the request should be submitted through the proper channels, when the usual procedure would be applied.

3. Mr. BARGUES (France) observed that in reply to the representative of Uruguay at the previous meeting he had pointed out that information concerning the dissemination of information on the United Nations and the International Trusteeship System in Togoland under French administration was to be found in the report of the Trusteeship Council (A/2933) and the recent report on the Territory (T/1211) submitted by the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British administration and Togoland under French administration, 1955.

4. The information just given by the Under-Secretary and in paragraphs 219 *et seq.* of the Visiting Mission's report showed that the Secretariat, like the Administering Authorities, was in frequent contact with the peoples of the Trust Territories. During the thirteenth session of the Trusteeship Council he had transmitted to the officials of the Secretariat data on Togoland and the Cameroons under French administration designed to facilitate the dissemination of information in those Territories. Furthermore he stressed that the problem was a more complex one than might perhaps be inferred from some of the remarks made by the petitioners, and that if the situation was not entirely satisfactory, that was due to circumstances in an African Territory where there were fewer facilities for the dissemination of information than existed in a more developed area. He would suggest that undue importance should not be attached to the issue, which he thought somewhat irrelevant to the item under discussion and which could be taken up at the next session of the Trusteeship Council and at the eleventh session of the General Assembly.

5. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) explained that he had been referring not so much to any specific case as to the general question of the interpretation of General Assembly resolution 754 (VIII). He agreed that the Secretariat should co-operate as closely as possible with the Administering Authorities, but in his view that resolution authorized the Secretariat to place applicants on the list of bodies and persons to whom documents would be supplied even without the agreement of the Administering Authority concerned.

6. Mr. HOPKINSON (United Kingdom) informed the Committee that one of the maps produced by the petitioners which had caused some interest among the members of the Committee was published by a private firm in Scotland and was in no way official. Neither the United Kingdom Government nor the Gold Coast Government was in any way responsible for it.

7. Mr. SERAPHIN (Haiti), referring to Mr. Antor's implication at the 528th meeting in connexion with the contribution made by the Gold Coast Government towards flood relief in Haiti, said he was sure that Mr. Antor, in his anxiety to show the Gold Coast Government in a bad light, had not realized the full implications of his statement. In the eyes of the people of Haiti the action of the Gold Coast Government had been a gesture of human solidarity, particularly welcome because of Haiti's historic links with Africa. He would regard Mr. Antor's remark as a mere example of exaggeration which could easily be forgiven.

8. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) hoped that the United Kingdom and French representatives would not look on any of the questions he was about to ask as a reflection on their countries' respective policies. Lebanon felt that it owed much to France and to the United Kingdom, which had been among the first countries to recognize its independence. He hoped therefore that the representatives of those countries would understand that his questions were an attempt to reach a better understanding of the problem under consideration.

9. He asked Mr. Antor whether his party was opposed to the very principle of the integration or union of Togoland under British administration with the Gold Coast or simply to integration and union under present conditions. If it was opposed to them only in the latter case, he wished to know under what conditions the party would accept union or integration.

10. Mr. ANTOR (Togoland Congress) said that his party was opposed to integration under present conditions. It felt that Togoland should have separate constitutional institutions before considering union or federation with any adjacent territory.

11. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked Mr. Antor whether he felt it would be better in the long run for the Gold Coast and the two Togolands to be separate units or an integrated or federated unit.

12. Mr. ANTOR (Togoland Congress) said it was his party's greatest hope that when the two Togolands were united and independent the democratic representative body that would come into existence would be able to express the desires of the majority of the people of Togoland. He believed that when the two Togolands were unified they would wish to have an association with a neighbouring territory which was also independent.

13. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked whether there was any specific relationship between what Mr. Antor had referred to at the 528th meeting as the constitutional crisis in the Gold Coast and the problem of the unification of the two Togolands.

14. Mr. ANTOR (Togoland Congress) confirmed that there was a relationship. If the Northern People's Party, which was the largest opposition group in the Gold Coast, and the Ashanti, which was another large section, demanded federal status, the question would arise whether Togoland would be integrated into the

colony as a whole or divided among the three units of the federation.

15. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) recalled that Mr. Odame had made critical references in his statement at the 528th meeting to British economic concerns in Togoland under British administration. He wished to know whether Mr. Antor thought the economic development of Togoland could be achieved without their assistance or whether his criticism had been directed against interference in the political affairs of the Territory.

16. Mr. ODAME (Togoland Congress) reiterated that the United Kingdom was interested in the integration of Togoland into the Gold Coast because of the Volta River project. Since the Volta River was the boundary between Togoland under British administration and the Gold Coast, the people of Togoland should share in the benefits from any such scheme. If Togoland had its own government the country would share in the profits from the project.

17. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked what were the specific suggestions of the Togoland Congress with regard to the plebiscite and the conditions under which it should take place, if decided upon.

18. Mr. ODAME (Togoland Congress) pointed out that his movement had made it clear to the Visiting Mission that the question of the plebiscite should not be rushed. The plebiscite would determine the political destiny of the country once and for all; once the choice had been made there could be no going back. Separate institutions should therefore first be established for Togoland under British administration so that a Togoland assembly could decide whether to federate or integrate with any neighbouring country. He noted that in Togoland, and particularly in the cocoa-producing area, there were a very large number of immigrants from Nigeria whom the Administering Authority had allowed to remain, contrary to the Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement, and who were trying to persuade the real inhabitants of the area to vote for integration.

19. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked Mr. Odame what was his party's view of the future relationship between a unified and independent Togoland and the United Kingdom and France.

20. Mr. ODAME (Togoland Congress) said that the people of a united and independent Togoland would never forget that the United Kingdom and France had trained them for self-government. Togoland wished to trade with the whole world, but would naturally have friendlier feelings towards those nations it knew best.

21. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked Mr. Nagba of the Northern People's Party what was the opinion of the tribes he represented on the future relationship of a possible new unit composed of Togoland under British administration and the Gold Coast with the United Kingdom.

22. Mr. NAGBA (Northern People's Party) said the future relationship with the United Kingdom would be decided by the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly, in which his countrymen would be represented.

23. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) said that the frontier between Togoland under British administration and the Gold Coast had been described as a purely artificial one. He wondered whether Mr. Nagba regarded the frontier with Togoland under French administration as a natural one.

24. Mr. NAGBA (Northern People's Party) emphasized that he was competent to convey only the views of the people of Northern Togoland under British administration and of the northern part of the Gold Coast, and not the views of Togoland under British administration as a whole. The boundary between Northern Togoland under British administration and the northern part of the Gold Coast was purely fictitious, arbitrarily imposed by the colonial Powers in the scramble for Africa. The people of those areas would not tolerate a new separation. The majority of the tribes in the northern part of Togoland under British administration had little association with the tribes in the northern part of Togoland under French administration.

25. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) noted that his question had not been fully answered, but said that he would not press for a further reply.

26. He asked Mr. Nagba whether he thought it fair to the people of Togoland to limit their choice in a plebiscite to the single question of integration with the Gold Coast. Did he not think that it would be fairer to provide the alternative of unification of the two Togolands or the integration of a unified Togoland with the Gold Coast?

27. Mr. NAGBA (Northern People's Party) reiterated the opinion expressed in his initial statement (529th meeting) that the plebiscite should be limited to the question of integration with the Gold Coast. The inclusion of any other question would to a certain extent prejudice the issue. Moreover, a single straightforward question would avoid any danger of ambiguity. When the feelings of the people on the first question were known, it would rest with the United Nations to consider other arrangements in order to satisfy the desires of any elements not in favour of integration with the Gold Coast.

28. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked Mr. Fleku of the Convention People's Party, Ho District, to comment on the nature of the frontier between the two Trust Territories.

29. Mr. FLEKU (Convention People's Party, Ho District) said that he had made it clear on repeated occasions that his party regarded the frontier separating the peoples of Togoland under British administration and Togoland under French administration as purely artificial and was therefore opposed to it.

30. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) said that he believed that Mr. Fleku had referred in his statement at the 529th meeting to an arbitrary decision which he did not want to see imposed upon his country. He wondered what was meant by an arbitrary decision and who was preparing to impose it.

31. Mr. FLEKU (Convention People's Party, Ho District) said that he had referred to the imposition of an arbitrary division and had meant the Visiting Mission's proposal that, for purposes of counting votes in the plebiscite the Trust Territory should be divided into several regions (T/1206, para. 108). When the Visiting Mission had visited his area, his party had told the Mission that it was in favour of one count for the whole Territory. The Visiting Mission's proposals would impose a further division on a Territory which had already been artificially divided. Moreover, it was possible that, when the votes were tabulated according to the normal system of wards, significant areas of opinion would appear along the eastern and western borders of the Trust Territory, instead

of the suggested demarcation lines from north to south. The arbitrary division suggested by the Visiting Mission might well prove to be erroneous.

32. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked Mr. Kumah of the Convention People's Party, Kpandu District, whether he was in favour of a universal plebiscite in Togoland under British administration, or the holding of simultaneous plebiscites in the two Trust Territories.

33. Mr. KUMAH (Convention People's Party, Kpandu District) said that he was in favour of a plebiscite by universal adult suffrage limited to Togoland under British administration, in view of the fact that the issue concerned Togoland under British administration only.

34. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) said that the problem of the unification of Togoland was also on the agenda of the United Nations, and that it would be relevant to consider the possibility of a plebiscite in Togoland under French administration.

35. He asked Mr. Ajavon of the Parti togolais du progrès whether he felt that his people had been properly consulted before their country had been made a part of the French Union.

36. Mr. AJAVON (Parti togolais du progrès) said that when the first Constituent Assembly had been held in Paris, the people of his country had not been consulted, but they had been invited to send a representative jointly with Dahomey to that Assembly. The representative accordingly appointed had accepted the Constitution on behalf of Togoland under French administration as well as Dahomey and to that extent the people of Togoland had been indirectly consulted.

37. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked Mr. Ajavon whether he, as an elected representative of the people of Togoland under French administration, regarded that indirect consultation as satisfactory.

38. Mr. AJAVON (Parti togolais du progrès) said that he would not claim that the method of indirect consultation was satisfactory. It should be remembered, however, that the form of the French Union was not fixed but constantly evolving. A further revision of Title 8 of the French Constitution, which related to the French Union, was pending. He believed that, under that revision, a federalist concept would prevail and the people of Togoland would be consulted on whether they wished to be part of the French community.

39. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked how many voters Mr. Ajavon represented in the Council of the Republic and how that number compared with the number represented by Senators from metropolitan France.

40. Mr. AJAVON (Parti togolais du progrès) said that the Senators from Overseas France were appointed by the Territorial Assemblies, and therefore the proportion between the number of voters electing metropolitan Senators and those electing Senators of the French Union was not strictly relevant. Moreover there were very few of the latter in the French Parliament. In view of the population of the Overseas Territories and the population of metropolitan France, their representation in the French Parliament should be equal. However, considering the degree of evolution reached by the Overseas Territories and metropolitan France, it was fair that the number of representatives from metropolitan France should be higher than the number from overseas. There was at the moment a bill before the National Assembly proposing to raise

the number of representatives from Overseas Territories to a proportion whereby a representative of an Overseas Territory would represent some 700,000 persons whereas a representative for metropolitan France would represent some 70,000 persons.

41. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked Mr. Ajavon whether his views on interdependence applied only to the relations of his country with France or whether they extended to Togoland under British administration, the Gold Coast and the African continent as a whole.

42. Mr. AJAVON (Parti togolais du progrès) recalled that despite the Constitution, Togoland under French administration was not yet fully an integral part of the French Union. The Trusteeship Agreement stipulated that the period of trusteeship should end with self-government for the Trust Territory and thus it would be only at the end of the period of trusteeship that the people of Togoland under French administration would decide their future definitely, whether in the form of integration in the French Union or some other form of self-government. In regard to the idea of interdependence, he stressed that for the time being Togoland under French administration must concentrate on building its own economy and its social and political structure within the framework of the French Union. Thus, for the time being it must be interdependent with the other territories in the French Union. When it had completed that stage in its evolution, it would be ready to consider the question of wider interdependence.

43. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) congratulated Mr. Olympio on his outstanding statement at the 529th meeting. He would like to know what, in Mr. Olympio's opinion, were the factors of national unity between the two Togolands and whether the obstacles to unification were solely external or whether there were also internal obstacles. How did the advocates of unification propose to deal with the internal obstacles, if any?

44. Mr. OLYMPIO (All-Ewe Conference) replied that the difficulties confronting the unificationists in the two Togolands came primarily from the Administering Authorities. The wish of the Ewe people, who inhabited the whole of the southern section of the two Togolands and the south-east corner of the Gold Coast, to be together went back sixty years. It could not be argued therefore that the southern part of Togoland was in any way opposed to unification. The sole reason why unification had not been achieved was that it ran counter to the interests, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, the prestige, of the Administering Authorities. After years of frustrating struggle with the Administering Authorities for unification, his people had decided that the only solution was to ask for independence. They were certain that if they were masters of their own destiny in their own Territories, the question of unification would be decided in a matter of hours. In the northern section, of course, the great majority of the population were not Ewes but members of other tribes. Unfortunately, the people of the North were not yet able to think entirely for themselves and so the views expressed directly or indirectly on their behalf must be treated with caution.

45. Mr. AJAVON (Parti togolais du progrès) repudiated Mr. Olympio's statement that the people of the North were unable to speak for themselves. They were as capable as the Ewes of thinking for themselves and saying what they wanted.

46. Mr. OLYMPIO (All-Ewe Conference) pointed out that Mr. Ajavon came from the South and not the North. He had certainly not intended to hurt the feelings of any of his countrymen. Almost exactly the same expression he had used occurred in the Visiting Mission's report (T/1206). Hence, he had not been inventing but only stating facts.

47. Mr. FOUSSENI (Union des chefs et des populations du Nord-Togo) also objected to Mr. Olympio's statement. Mr. Olympio might claim to represent the people of the South but the speaker was qualified to represent the North. The Visiting Mission had heard people from all over the Territory and all sections had an equal right to be heard by the Mission and by the Committee.

48. Mr. NAGBA (Northern People's Party) protested against Mr. Olympio's constant references to the North. If the northern people were not capable of thinking for themselves, as Mr. Olympio contended, and if they agreed to unification, they might well find that they were to be dominated by the Ewes in an Ewe empire. They would strongly object to that.

49. Miss BROOKS (Liberia), speaking as the representative of an independent State in Africa, appealed to the petitioners to concentrate on their main objectives and leave their differences to be settled outside the Committee.

50. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) was aware that Mr. Olympio's movement sought independence. He would be grateful if Mr. Olympio would elaborate, briefly but specifically, on some of the political reforms his movement would suggest for Togoland under French administration.

51. Mr. OLYMPIO (All-Ewe Conference) replied he believed, and he had tried to make it abundantly clear in his statement at the 529th meeting, that Togoland under French administration had almost reached the limit of the reforms that could be introduced within the present French Constitution. Admittedly, modifications were suggested in that Constitution, but, as matters stood, nothing could be done outside the Constitution, because the Trusteeship Agreement provided that Togoland under French administration should be administered as an integral part of French territory. Even the reforms suggested by the Visiting Mission would require the enactment of a law by the French Parliament. Everything was therefore being done to integrate Togoland under French administration into the French Republic so as to eliminate the need for introducing reforms. The most important reform, if it could be introduced, was the establishment of a legislative body for the Trust Territory as such. Without that, all other reforms would be on paper only and would have no effect on the life of the Territory.

52. Mr. SAAB (Lebanon) asked whether Mr. Olympio felt that there was any long-term possibility of a federation of the two Togolands and the Gold Coast.

53. Mr. OLYMPIO (All-Ewe Conference) replied that his party in Togoland under French administration had already decided that once the two Togolands were unified they should approach the Gold Coast with a view to forming some sort of federation. Such an association was all the more necessary as many of the Ewe people lived in the Gold Coast. That solution would have the further merit of solving the problem in the northern section of Togoland, where

many of the peoples, particularly Dagombas, wished to be united with their kinsmen in the Gold Coast. His movement had not lost sight of the question of some sort of association with the Gold Coast and was working on the problem.

54. Mr. GARCIA (Philippines) was not clear whether the petitioners were agreed on which should come first, the plebiscite or the establishment of political institutions. If political institutions were to be set up, first it would be interesting to know how long they felt that process would take. Secondly, he would like to know whether the petitioners were agreed that a plebiscite was the only possible solution to the problem or whether they had any other possibilities in mind. Lastly, if the petitioners were agreed on a plebiscite, he wondered whether they had in mind any countries which could conduct it in the event that the United Nations was unable to do so.

55. Mr. MENSAH (Convention People's Party, Akan-Krachi Constituency) said that the people of Togoland under British administration felt that a plebiscite would decide all matters and notably the question of integration with the Gold Coast versus a separate Togoland with separate institutions. They were satisfied with the suggestion for a plebiscite supervised by the Administering Authority and a United Nations commissioner.

56. Mr. ANTOR (Togoland Congress) said that his party believed that, in view of the effects of the administrative union between Togoland under British administration and the Gold Coast, the plebiscite would be held in an atmosphere of confusion if it were held immediately without first creating separate organs for the Trust Territory. Constitutional organs for Togoland under British administration must be set up before the plebiscite was held. Furthermore, since any decision reached in either of the two Territories would affect the other, the plebiscite must be held simultaneously in both Territories. If it was argued that eastern Togoland and western Togoland were under different administrations and that the plebiscite must therefore be conducted separately in the two Trust Territories, it might also be argued that the northern and southern sections of Togoland under British administration were separately administered. In the event that a plebiscite was held in Togoland under British administration only, it should be conducted separately in the North and in the South.

57. Mr. ASARE (Convention People's Party, Buem Constituency) said that the factor which gave the problem of Togoland under British administration its urgency was the imminent independence of the Gold Coast. For forty years Togoland under British administration had been administered as part of the Gold Coast and its future must be decided soon, when the Gold Coast obtained independence. The people of Togoland under British administration must therefore be given an immediate opportunity to express their wishes on their future; only by popular consultation could the world ascertain those wishes. There was little point in advocating the prior establishment of a separate legislative body in the Trust Territory, as it was the people themselves, and not such a body, who should be consulted. The plebiscite should therefore come first.

58. Mr. NAGBA (Northern People's Party) added that the people of the northern section of the Trust Territory would never participate in any separate

institution, such as a legislative council, for the Trust Territory alone. They wanted the plebiscite to come first.

59. Mr. ODAME (Togoland Congress) endorsed Mr. Antor's reply. Since the Gold Coast and United Kingdom Governments were keenly interested in promoting integration, they were trying to rush the plebiscite. In the conditions prevailing in the Territory, the people would be unable to express their will freely. The country's whole future was at issue, and not merely the election of more or less temporary representatives to the Legislative Assembly. The matter was far too important to be rushed. The Togoland Congress had been seeking re-unification for eight years; the United Kingdom had been pressing its claim for integration for two years only.

60. The people of the Buem area were mostly cocoa farmers and suffered considerable hardship owing to the fact that many of their farms were cut in two by the artificial boundary between the two Togolands; the same farmer was forced to sell part of his crop for French francs and the rest for sterling.

61. If Togoland under French administration was not ready for an immediate plebiscite, Togoland under British administration should be endowed with separate political institutions pending the date when both Territories were ready for a plebiscite under United Nations supervision. An immediate plebiscite would merely perpetuate the artificial division of the two Togolands.

62. Mr. CHAMBA (Togoland Congress) said that, as far as the northern section was concerned, it wanted separate institutions to be established before the plebiscite was held. Reference was always being made to the Dagombas, Mamprusis and Gonjas, but they were not the only tribes in the North. They were the best known because they were recognized by the Administering Authority. Twelve thousand Nawuris and Nanjoros for instance were dominated by 600 Gonjas; only the Gonja chiefs were paid. He protested against that situation. In the Dagomba district, over 53,000 Konkombas had no council of their own. The Chokosis and the Konkombas had no interest in the Gold Coast. All their ties were with Togoland under French administration and they would prefer to join their kinsmen there. They should therefore have an opportunity to express their wishes, and, as matters stood, they would be unable to do so freely. A separate legislative council must be set up in the Trust Territory. If the integrationists in that council outnumbered the unificationists the problem would be solved immediately and the petitioners would not need to come to the United Nations again.

63. Mr. FLEKU (Convention People's Party, Ho District) said that it appeared to be a matter of opinion whether the integration of Togoland under British administration with the Gold Coast was the design of the United Kingdom and the Gold Coast Governments or the true wish of the people. As far as his party was concerned, its reaction to the threat of the Togoland Congress to separate the people in Southern Togoland from their kinsmen in the Gold Coast was to demand integration. His people wished to stay with their kinsmen and enjoy independence together. The problem had been before the United Nations for many years. He was happy to note that all the major political parties in the Trust Territory, the Administering Authority and the Visiting Mission were in favour of

a plebiscite. It was the only way to test public opinion in the Territory and to ascertain whether the people wished to be separated from the Gold Coast or not. It would be uncalled for and unnecessary to set up separate institutions first.

64. Mr. GARCIA (Philippines) expressed the hope that the petitioners would find some way of reconciling their seemingly conflicting views.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.