

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

Tuesday, 25 November 1958,  
at 10.55 a.m.

NEW YORK

## CONTENTS

	Page
Agenda item 13:	
Report of the Trusteeship Council ( <i>continued</i> )	
The future of the Cameroons under British admin- istration and the Cameroons under French ad- ministration ( <i>continued</i> ) . . . . .	375

**Chairman:** Mr. Frederick H. BOLAND (Ireland).

## AGENDA ITEM 13

**Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3822, A/C.4/387, A/C.4/388, A/C.4/L.557, A/C.4/L.558) (*continued*)**

**THE FUTURE OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH  
ADMINISTRATION AND THE CAMEROONS UNDER  
FRENCH ADMINISTRATION (*continued*)**

1. Mr. ESPINOSA Y PRIETO (Mexico) asked that his delegation should be included among the sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.558. As that draft resolution represented an effort to find an objective solution to the problem of the Cameroons, he hoped that it would be unanimously approved.

2. Mr. ZULOAGA (Venezuela) said that as a sponsor of the draft resolution to which the Mexican representative had referred he would like to explain the steps which had made it necessary to submit two draft resolutions (A/C.4/L.557, A/C.4/L.558) in place of the single text which had been anticipated. In the course of the discussions which had taken place outside the Committee the French representative himself had stressed the desirability of reaching an agreed solution, for otherwise it might be possible for either side, under the terms of Article 18 of the Charter requiring a two-thirds majority on important questions such as those relating to the operation of the Trusteeship System, to block a vote in the General Assembly. After lengthy negotiations in which concessions had been made by both sides, it had begun to appear that progress was being made; then the Administering Authorities had unexpectedly raised new objections, with the result that it had not been possible to agree on a single draft resolution.

3. His delegation was not entirely satisfied with the two draft resolutions but it supported them because it felt that the failure of the negotiations left it no alternative.

4. It should not be forgotten that the idea of holding a special session of the General Assembly had originally come from the United Kingdom delegation, which, in making that suggestion at the 803rd meeting, had had in mind the year 1960. The efforts of other delegations to advance the date had been prompted by the statements of the Administering Authorities themselves: namely, the French Government's memorandum of 12 November

1958 (A/C.4/388) proposing that the Trusteeship Council should be requested by the General Assembly to adopt all appropriate steps to enable the Assembly to take a decision concerning the termination of trusteeship simultaneously with the attainment of independence by the Cameroons under French administration on 1 January 1960; the reference by both the French representative (774th meeting) and by Mr. Ahidjo (794th meeting) to the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly's desire that the peoples concerned should have the opportunity to express their wishes concerning reunification before that date; Mr. Ahidjo's statement at the 800th meeting that the inhabitants of the Cameroons under British administration would have to be consulted before that date on the question of whether they intended to join the Cameroons under French administration when it attained independence; and the United Kingdom representative's statement that his Government could not postpone the date on which Nigeria would, if its parliament so requested, accede to independence.

5. The very fact that neither France nor the United Kingdom had shown any inclination to postpone the date on which the two Territories in question were to attain independence gave reason to hope that an agreement would eventually be reached. He understood that they felt they could not take a favourable decision without having more time to consider the problems which the convening of a special session would entail. His delegation saw no reason why they should not be allowed such additional time if they requested it.

6. Mr. ABIKUSNO (Indonesia) said that his delegation felt that any resolution of the General Assembly concerning the Cameroons under British administration and the Cameroons under French administration must take note of all the statements made before the Committee with regard to conditions in both Trust Territories. The sponsors of the draft resolutions before the Committee considered the most important of those statements to be the memorandum of the French Government dated 12 November 1958 (A/C.4/388), the statement made by the United Kingdom representative at the 803rd meeting and the statements of the petitioners.<sup>1/</sup> The conditions prevailing in the Cameroons and the manner in which independence was to be attained made it imperative that political developments in both Territories should be synchronized and that the Administering Authorities should co-ordinate their efforts to solve the problems confronting them. The reports to be submitted by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, would serve to clarify certain points with regard to which many delegations had expressed misgivings or lack of knowledge. Hence it was appropriate that one of the two draft resolutions (A/C.4/L.558) should request the Trusteeship Council to examine those reports and transmit them with its

<sup>1/</sup> See 775th, 776th, 779th, 780th, 792nd, 807th and 808th meetings.

observations and recommendations to the special session of the General Assembly. Far from prejudging the solution of the problem, the draft resolutions should make it easier for the Assembly to carry out its responsibilities with regard to the two Trust Territories at the present crucial stage of their development.

7. Mr. VELA (Guatemala) said that he thought the preamble to the draft resolution of which his delegation was a sponsor (A/C.4/L.558) gave an objective picture of the situation on which the operative paragraphs were based. In particular he would point out that by referring to the French Government's memorandum of 12 November 1958 the draft resolution took into account the resolution adopted by the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly on 24 October 1958 proclaiming the will of the Cameroonian people that the State of the Cameroons should attain full independence on 1 January 1960, reaffirming the Legislative Assembly's attachment to the principle of reunification, and in effect urging the need for a consultation of the people of the Cameroons under British administration with regard to that issue before 1 January 1960. Inasmuch as Nigeria was to accede to independence in the same year as the Cameroons under French administration it was imperative that the steps to be taken by France, the United Kingdom and the United Nations in the final stages of the trusteeship should be co-ordinated. A decision on the substance of the issue could not, of course, be taken until the conclusions of the Visiting Mission had been studied by the Trusteeship Council; the procedure outlined in the draft resolutions therefore seemed to him to be the only course open to the General Assembly.

8. It should be understood that, in referring to the petitioners' statements, the sponsors had had in mind not only their complaints against the Administering Authorities but also the fact that they bore witness to the existence of a desire for reunification and independence in both parts of the Cameroons.

9. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) requested that her name should be added to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.557.

10. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation had been prepared to consider the future of the Cameroons at the present session and had therefore been surprised when the French delegation had, on 30 October 1958, requested that the ninth special session of the Trusteeship Council should be held in order to amend the Visiting Mission's terms of reference, for whether or not the French delegation had so intended the result was that many delegations now felt the matter could not be settled until the Council had examined the report of the Visiting Mission. Nevertheless, his delegation had felt that if necessary a decision could be postponed provided it was taken before the fourteenth session of the General Assembly, for by that time it might well be too late for the United Nations to take any action which would be in accordance with the interests of the Cameroonian people. His delegation had considered that it did not matter whether the discussion took place in a special session of the General Assembly or in a resumption of the current session; the important thing was that the question should be decided in time to enable the United Nations to take action in 1959. For practical reasons known to the Committee, however, it had agreed to the idea of a special session and had therefore joined in sponsoring the two draft resolutions.

11. Mr. BOTHA (Union of South Africa) said that a proposal to hold a special session of the General Assembly had practical financial and administrative implications and he would repeat the request he had made at the 812th meeting for the views of the Secretary-General upon such a proposal.

12. No member of the Committee was in doubt about the importance of the question before it, but there might well be differences of opinion on whether a special session was essential for the smooth evolution of the Trust Territories concerned. Some delegations, including his own, held that the findings of the Visiting Mission should be awaited and that it was best not to prejudice the recommendations of the Trusteeship Council. His delegation could see no reason for a special session but if it should prove necessary, in the light of the recommendations of the Council, for the General Assembly to take action before the fourteenth session, machinery existed, under rule 8 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, for the convening of special sessions. He felt that at present it was not possible to say whether there would be a real need for a special session; if the Committee now came to the decision that such a session should be held, it was conceivable that there would be no urgent business to lay before it. The proposal in the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.557 was that a special session should be convened on 20 February 1959. The Trusteeship Council would meet early in February and it was important that there should be a certain lapse of time between the date when the Trusteeship Council made its recommendations and the convening of a special session, in order to allow delegations to consider those recommendations and the reports of the Visiting Mission before expressing the substantive views of their Governments.

13. Mr. OSMAN (Morocco) asked that his delegation might be included among the sponsors of draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.558.

14. Miss ANDERSON (United States of America) said that her delegation, like many others, held the view that the Committee should avoid discussing the substance of the question until it was in possession of all the facts as reported by the Visiting Mission and sifted by the Trusteeship Council. Her delegation, however, drew somewhat different conclusions from that principle: it was inclined to feel that the General Assembly should take no action until the reports of those bodies had been received. There was no reason why the usual procedure should not be followed. The Visiting Mission would report in mid-January and the Trusteeship Council would discuss the report as a matter of urgency at its session opening on 30 January. It would then be open to any representative to request the convening of a special session if he deemed that necessary. If the majority favoured such a proposal, a decision on a special session could be taken by the normal process. There was a risk that by taking a decision at the present stage, the Committee might prejudice the conclusions of the Visiting Mission and the Trusteeship Council.

15. In the view of her Government, a decision to convene a special session of the General Assembly was a most serious step, normally reserved for dealing with the gravest international matters involving peace and security. The General Assembly was in a sense the supreme international forum and its importance should

not be diminished, as it might well be if the Committee established a precedent by calling for a special session when no crisis of world-wide magnitude existed. She urged the Committee not to reach a hasty decision; time must be allowed for all delegations to consult their Governments and to consider all aspects of the question.

16. If the two draft resolutions were put to the vote forthwith, her delegation would be obliged to vote against them. She therefore moved that the debate on that item should be adjourned and that the Committee should proceed to the next item until such time as delegations were prepared to vote.

17. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) opposed the motion for the adjournment of the debate. The subject was of great importance and peace and security were in fact involved. Furthermore, at the 803rd meeting, the United Kingdom representative had already suggested the holding of a special session. It could hardly be argued that if an interested party desired a special session it was an important matter, while if other representatives desired it that was not the case.

18. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) also opposed the motion. The position was that two Trust Territories were to be independent in 1960 and the Committee was faced with the opposition of certain delegations to the matter being considered at the current session. It had even been argued that the holding of a special session to discuss the question would diminish the standing of the General Assembly.

19. His delegation was ready to proceed. If the motion for the adjournment of the debate were adopted, the sponsors would consider themselves free to withdraw their draft resolutions and to submit others.

20. Mr. WOLF (Austria) said that the future of 6 million human beings was involved and that the Committee should accordingly proceed with the utmost care and weigh all arguments. The proposal to convene a special session raised other questions of principle. He felt that delegations should be given more time and he accordingly supported the United States motion. The debate on the present item could be resumed in a matter of days.

21. In reply to requests for clarification from Mr. KANAKARATNE (Ceylon), Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) and Miss BROOKS (Liberia), Miss ANDERSON (United States of America) said that what her delegation had in mind was that the Committee should reach a vote during the current session.

22. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) supported the United States motion; it would enable delegations to consult their Governments on the principle of a special session. He had made it clear at all stages of the discussions outside the Committee that he had participated in them in order to see whether conditions could be established which would enable him to put the matter to his Government. The draft resolutions had been submitted only the previous day and he required time to take the matter up with his Government. That was only reasonable in a matter of such importance, which raised issues outside the purview of the Committee.

23. Replying to the representative of Liberia, he said that he had made it clear in his statement that his Government's programme did not envisage the convening of a special session during 1959.

24. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq), intervening on a point of order, said that the United Kingdom representative was raising matters which had nothing to do with the motion for an adjournment.

25. The CHAIRMAN put to the vote the United States motion to the effect that the debate on the Cameroons should be adjourned until such time as delegations were prepared to proceed to the vote, and that the Committee should take up the next item on its agenda.

At the request of the representative of Ceylon, a vote was taken by roll-call.

Thailand, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Thailand, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Sweden.

Against: Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ceylon, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan.

Abstaining: Uruguay, Cambodia, Colombia, Federation of Malaya, Haiti, Ireland, Israel, Pakistan, Panama.

The motion was rejected by 34 votes to 29, with 9 abstentions.

26. Mr. ESPINOSA Y PRIETO (Mexico) said that, if the United States motion had been for the postponement of the voting on the draft resolutions, his delegation would have supported it, but it could not agree to a proposal for the adjournment of the debate. He felt that the course of the debate would show that the holding of a special session was not in the interests of any single group but would serve the interests of the United Nations as a whole.

27. Mr. KANAKARATNE (Ceylon), explaining his vote, said that if the argument in favour of the adjournment had been that some delegations needed time to consult their Governments, his delegation would not have been reluctant to give them that opportunity. Although it was true that the draft resolutions had not been submitted until the previous day, the idea of a special session had in fact formed the basis of all the discussions which had been taking place since 21 November and there had surely been sufficient time for delegations to obtain instructions on the principle involved. Indeed, it was only on the previous day that some delegations had learned that there was at issue a question of principle on which other delegations needed to obtain instructions.

28. He regretted the reference by the United States representative to "downgrading" the role of the General Assembly by summoning a special session for reasons other than those connected with a crisis. That implied that the future of two peoples in Africa who were on the threshold of freedom was not a matter of vital importance justifying such a session. Was it

suggested that the United Nations existed for the limited purpose of solving crises? In the view of his delegation, the United Nations existed for the nobler and more positive purposes set forth in the Charter. The future of dependent peoples was no less important than the settlement of crises arising from the economic interests of the greater Powers.

29. Mr. EILAN (Israel) said that his delegation had originally decided to support the motion, under the impression that its purpose was to allow delegations to consult their Governments regarding the draft resolutions. As, however, the United States representative had not indicated whether the proposed adjournment was to be short or lengthy, he had had no choice but to abstain. That should not, however, be construed as an indication of the attitude of his delegation either for or against the substance of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.557.

30. Mr. ZULOAGA (Venezuela) said that he had been obliged to vote against the United States motion in view of the vagueness of its terms. Furthermore, he understood that the French representative would be ready to make a statement in the course of the meeting and he had therefore felt it would be discourteous to adjourn the debate.

31. Mr. GEBRE-EGZY (Ethiopia) said that he had supported earlier motions to adjourn the debate in order to enable members of the Committee to carry out informal negotiations and he would not have opposed a repetition of that procedure if it had been shown to be necessary. The purpose of the United States motion, however, had been to give delegations time to consult their Governments, which he felt it would be possible for them to do without interrupting the debate. He had therefore voted against the proposal.

32. Mr. HILALY (Pakistan) said that, since it had not been clear whether the motion was that the debate should be adjourned for a few days only or indefinitely, he had had no option but to abstain.

33. Mrs. ZEUTHEN (Denmark) said she had voted in favour of the motion because she wished for time to obtain instructions from her Government.

34. Mr. MUFTI (United Arab Republic) said he had voted against the motion because in his delegation's opinion it was an attempt to prevent the examination at the present session of the very important question before the Committee. The only reason for the motion had been that the delegations taking part in the unofficial negotiations had refused to accept the exorbitant conditions laid down by the Administering Authorities. He would likewise have voted against any proposal for the adjournment of a vote on the draft resolutions, in view of the fact that the proposal to convene a special session of the General Assembly was not a new one.

35. Miss ANDERSON (United States of America) emphasized that no delegation was more concerned than hers about the people whose fate was being discussed in the Committee. In submitting the motion for the adjournment of the debate she had merely been carrying out the instructions of her Government.

36. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) said he had been obliged to oppose the motion for the adjournment of the debate in view of the fact that the Committee had not much time left at its disposal. Furthermore, the idea of holding a special session in February 1959 to

consider the question of the Cameroons had been mooted over a week earlier. Delegations would have ample time between the conclusion of the item in the Fourth Committee and its consideration by the General Assembly in plenary session to obtain any additional instructions they needed from their Governments.

37. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) said it had been only after careful deliberation that his delegation had decided to vote against the United States motion for the adjournment of the debate for an unspecified period.

38. In view of the fact that 1 January 1960 had been set as the date for the attainment of independence by the Cameroons under French administration, the question of the time available before that date must be taken into consideration. Until the objectives of the Trusteeship System had been attained, the United Nations had an active role to play and it should consider what steps might have to be taken in the light of the reports of the Visiting Mission and the observations and recommendations of the Trusteeship Council. As a basic minimum there must be a popular consultation, and to organize such a consultation time would be needed. It had been argued—and his delegation acknowledged the force of that argument—that to come to any decision before the Visiting Mission's observations were available would be to prejudice the issue. Hence consideration of the question must necessarily be postponed until the Visiting Mission's report was available. There would then remain only some ten months before January 1960 and during part of that time it would be impossible to hold a popular consultation in the Territory because of climatic factors. The question of holding a consultation could not be left to be decided by the fourteenth regular session of the General Assembly, for it would then be too late. To leave a formal decision to that session would be tantamount to saying that the United Nations should abdicate its responsibilities and rights in the matter and take a decision to terminate the Trusteeship Agreements without having given detailed consideration to the complicated steps involved. His delegation therefore felt strongly that a decision must be taken at the present session. Since the Committee was not in a position to take substantive decisions on most aspects of the matter at the present time, the convening of a special session early in 1959 was imperative.

39. The argument that the question would be considered by the Trusteeship Council could not be accepted. The Trusteeship Council was, of course, one of the United Nations organs concerned in trusteeship matters, but the primary organ which was a party to the Trusteeship Agreements and was actively concerned with any steps that might lead to their termination was the General Assembly. Any further loss of time would work to the detriment not only of the arrangements the Administering Authorities had in view for the final granting of independence to the peoples of the Cameroons but of the responsibilities and obligations of the United Nations itself.

40. Moreover, any further postponement of the debate on the item would seriously encroach on the time the Committee would have to devote to the items concerning the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

41. The question of finance had been raised in connexion with the holding of a special session of the General Assembly. Naturally, expenditure would be entailed but considerations of that kind should not in-



fluence the members of the Committee to fail in their obligations under the Trusteeship Agreements.

42. The date of the proposed special session had been debated at length and the sponsors had come to the conclusion that if it were to open on 20 February 1959 that would give the delegations sufficient time to consider the implications of the reports of the Visiting Mission and the Trusteeship Council.

43. As the Yugoslav representative had pointed out, delegations would have time to obtain any fresh instructions they needed between the conclusion of the item in the Fourth Committee and its consideration by the General Assembly in plenary session.

44. He hoped that the debate would proceed and that the Committee would come to a vote on the draft resolutions as early as possible.

45. Mr. MACQUARRIE (Canada) said that his delegation had at no time been under any misapprehension with regard to the United States motion for the adjournment of the debate. In view of the breakdown of the unofficial discussions which had been taking place his delegation would not be in a position to vote on the draft resolutions at the present time. He had therefore supported the motion for adjournment. As the United States representative had pointed out, the Committee could proceed with other items on its agenda and thus no time would be wasted.

46. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) said she had voted against the motion, since she had not been clear exactly what it entailed.

47. In reply to the United Kingdom representative, she maintained that the only difference between his delegation's proposal and that of the sponsors of the draft resolution was the time at which the special session should be held. In her delegation's view a special session in 1959 would be more in the interests of the inhabitants of the two Trust Territories than one in 1960. It would also be in the interests of the Administering Authorities that when a final vote was taken in favour of the termination of the Trusteeship Agreements, justice should have been done to all parties concerned.

48. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) recalled that the proposal for a special session of the General Assembly had first been put forward by the United Kingdom representative at the 803rd meeting of the Committee, though it was true he had suggested that it should be in 1960 and not in 1959. At the 809th meeting, the representative of Haiti had referred to the possibility of a special session in 1959. At the 810th meeting, the French representative had described the idea as worthy of careful consideration and had said that his delegation was prepared to discuss the question. The United Kingdom representative had expressed a similar view. The idea of a special session in 1959 had therefore been in the minds of the French and United Kingdom representatives at least as early as 21 November and had presumably been conveyed to their Governments.

49. During the informal discussions the principle of convening a special session had not been discussed. All that had been discussed had been the various details and conditions that would be acceptable if a special session were convened. During the five days that had elapsed since 21 November all members of the Committee must have had time to consult their Govern-

ments. The draft resolutions that had been presented introduced no fundamental change.

50. His delegation's view was that a special session in 1959 was needed for the simple reason that the French delegation had presented to the Committee an official memorandum stating that 1 January 1960 had been agreed with the Cameroonian Government as the date for the attainment of independence by the Trust Territory. The French delegation had requested that consultations under United Nations supervision should take place before that date, in other words during 1959. It had been explained that the arrangements for the consultations could not be made at the present session because the report of the Visiting Mission was not available. It would be impossible to take action at the fourteenth regular session of the General Assembly if the date of 1 January 1960 were to be maintained. The only possible solution, therefore, was to convene a special session between the adjournment of the present session and the beginning of the fourteenth regular session. The date of 20 February 1959 seemed reasonable for the opening of the special session because it would give the Trusteeship Council time to study the report of the Visiting Mission.

51. The United States representative had expressed the view that special sessions of the General Assembly should be convened only in connexion with matters of grave importance for international peace and security. According to Article 20 of the Charter, however, the General Assembly could meet in such special sessions "as occasion may require". The present occasion was one that made a special session not only desirable but unavoidable.

52. The United States representative had also said that the calling of such a special session would diminish the importance of the General Assembly in the eyes of the world. In the opinion of the delegation of Iraq the operation of the Trusteeship System was one of the most important and vital tasks confronting the United Nations, and particularly the General Assembly, and the prestige of that body could not be impaired by the convening of a special session to discuss a vital problem affecting the fate of millions of people in Africa for whom the international community had accepted responsibility.

53. Perhaps the most important point raised by the United States representative had been that a decision concerning the convening of a special session could be made later in the light of the Trusteeship Council's decisions after its examination of the report of the Visiting Mission. He could not agree with that view; the need for a special session had nothing to do with the report of the Visiting Mission but arose from the statement by the French delegation that the Cameroons under French administration must be granted independence by 1 January 1960 and that a consultation under United Nations supervision must take place before that date.

54. It had been suggested that the discussions at the special session should be confined to the question of the Cameroons under French administration. His delegation felt that it would not be fair to the people of the Cameroons under British administration to delay the attainment of self-government by that Trust Territory. The difficulties mentioned by the United Kingdom representative were not in his view insuperable. It

would be possible in 1959 to prepare the Cameroons under British administration for consultations before 1 January 1960 and it was necessary to do so, since the independence of the Cameroons under French administration involved the vital problem of the unification of the two Trust Territories, which ought to be decided during 1959.

55. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France), replying to the representative of Iraq, said that on 22 November,

during the informal negotiations, his delegation had expressed reservations with regard to the principle of calling a special session of the General Assembly, though it had not thought it necessary to break off the negotiations.

56. He would reply to other points raised by the representative of Iraq at the following meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.