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

In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Eilan (Israel), Rapporteur, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 13

The future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration: special report of the Trusteeship Council* (A/4092, A/4093/Rev.1, A/4094, A/C.4/395, A/C.4/L.580, A/C.4/L.581, A/C.4/L.582, T/SR.953-963) (*continued*)

GENERAL DEBATE AND CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (*continued*)

1. Mr. KURKA (Czechoslovakia) said that during the first part of the thirteenth session of the General Assembly, his delegation had voted for General Assembly resolution 1281 (XIII) calling for a resumed session to enable the General Assembly to consider and settle the question of the future of the Cameroons. His delegation thought that the question would require very thorough examination if it was to be settled in accordance with the wishes of the Cameroonian people and in the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

2. The problem of the independence and unification of the Cameroons was all the harder to settle in that it was not isolated, but had to be considered in relation to the demands for complete independence of all colonial and dependent countries in Africa. It was accordingly not surprising that the current debate had clearly revealed that the search for a solution to that problem involved conflicts between the interests of the national liberation movement of the African peoples and those of the colonial Powers.

3. At the present time all over the African continent a powerful movement of national liberation was rising against the last strongholds of colonial domination in the world. Millions of people hitherto enslaved had joined in a battle for freedom and independence. But it was a well-known fact that the colonial Powers were resisting by all the means at their disposal the African peoples' will to attain freedom and independence. Every day newspapers reported fresh outrages com-

*In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1281 (XIII).

mitted by the police and colonial troops against the African population. Thousands of human beings were victims of the arbitrary action of the colonial Powers.

4. His delegation strongly condemned such action and such cruelty on the part of the colonizers against the African people, its political organizations and its representatives. But the history of the struggle of peoples for independence and freedom showed that no repression, even if it involved bloodshed, could prevent from carrying out their sacred mission of breaking the hateful chains of colonial servitude and achieving their independence. All attempts at repression, on the contrary, had the effect of strengthening the will to resist of the peoples involved. It was to be hoped that the colonizers and all those who were trying to drown the national liberation movement in blood and to break it by force of arms would realize that fact.

5. During the debate, the Committee had had an opportunity to hear some representatives censuring the resort to violence by certain Cameroonian patriotic organizations. It was surprising that the representatives who had made such comments had not seen fit to say a single word about the cruel acts of colonialism and the mass repression in which it was engaged in various parts of Africa, victimizing thousands of inhabitants of that continent. It was difficult to support the attitude of those who condemned violence on the part of the oppressed towards the oppressor but were quite ready to pass over in silence the use of violence by the colonizers.

6. The time when the colonial Powers could decide the fate of the peoples of the African continent entirely to suit themselves had passed. The appeal of the Accra Conference to the United Nations condemning colonialism as contrary to the United Nations Charter and demanding that the colonial Powers should abandon all the territories they had hitherto occupied should be given a hearing.

7. It was no secret to anybody that France was trying to integrate the Cameroons under French administration into what was known as the French Community. In the same way, the United Kingdom wanted to integrate the Cameroons under its administration with the colony of Nigeria, thus preserving its former colonial powers in a new form and sowing the seed of latent conflict between the future independent States of Nigeria and the Cameroons, in accordance with that familiar maxim of colonizers, "Divide and rule".

8. When France and the United Kingdom said that they were prepared to grant independence to the Cameroons, they had in view the kind of independence imagined by colonizers. There could be no other explanation for their opposition to a plebiscite or to new elections. The colonial Powers which were no longer able to use the old colonialist methods to resist the rising tide of national liberation were forced, in order

to safeguard their interests as new independent States emerged, to adapt their methods to the new situation and to apply new forms of colonial exploitation. That would explain the efforts made to reduce the role of the United Nations to that of formal approval of the termination of the trusteeship, which would help the Administering Authority and the local Administration to retain their prerogatives. There could be no denying that it was not only the right but the duty of the United Nations to concern itself with all matters relating to the future development of a Trust Territory for which it had assumed full responsibility. As the representative of Iraq had pointed out, the thirteenth session of the General Assembly had been resumed specially to examine all the problems raised by the future of the two Cameroons and to take such measures as would meet the demands and wishes not of the Administering Authorities, but of the Cameroonian people.

9. His delegation was against using the reports (T/1426 and Add.11¹; T/1427 and T/1434²) of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, as a basis for the Committee's work, because the Mission, while rightly admitting that the population of the Cameroons was now unanimously demanding independence, then took the side of the Administering Authorities.

10. With regard to the Cameroons under French administration, the Visiting Mission considered that the Legislative Assembly was truly representative and had been democratically elected, that the political situation was now more or less stable and that the United Nations could confine itself to deciding that the Territory fulfilled all the necessary requirements for becoming a free and independent State on 1 January 1960. With regard to the Cameroons under British administration, the Visiting Mission had endorsed the plans of the Administering Authority and recommended that at least the Northern Cameroons should be joined to Nigeria, which would keep that territory within the British sphere of influence.

11. The statements made before the Committee by a large number of representatives revealed that one of the principal requirements for the creation of a really independent self-governing State of the Cameroons was the return of the political situation to normal and the restoration of the political liberties which had been abolished. The Cameroonian patriotic organizations which included in their programme a demand for genuine independence and unity for the Cameroons were oppressed and their representatives were thrown into prison and terrorized. A system under which the leaders of patriotic political organizations were given no opportunity of taking part in normal political life, were forbidden to remain in the country and forced to go underground could hardly be described as favouring political freedom. Although the Visiting Mission and certain representatives of the Cameroonian Government had tried to discredit those patriotic organizations, their influence on the Cameroonian population was steadily increasing. That was confirmed not only by the statements of the petitioners who were members of the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC), but also by those of persons who had nothing

to do with that organization. There was additional evidence of that fact in the thousands of petitions addressed to the Secretary-General, the writers of which had requested repeal of the Decree of 13 July 1955 dissolving certain political organizations. Only prejudiced observers could deny the increasing influence and the effective existence of the UPC and other Cameroonian patriotic organizations. That was why his delegation thought that the General Assembly ought to recommend that the competent authorities should repeal the Decree of 13 July 1955, so that the UPC, with the other organizations which had been dissolved, might resume its normal political activity.

12. The amnesty law passed by the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons under French administration on 14 February 1959³ did nothing to meet the wishes and claims of the Cameroonian people but made the amnesty dependent on such conditions that the political organizations concerned were obliged to give up their original programmes in order to benefit from it. People who for many years had been struggling in the underground movement and had lived under difficult circumstances as exiles, inspired by the ideals of their political movement, could not be expected thus to renounce what they believed in. The amnesty should be full, complete and unconditional and should be extended to members of all political organizations, to political prisoners and to exiles, if it was to be the prelude to a genuine reconciliation.

13. In contrast to the statement in paragraph 139 of the Visiting Mission's report on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427 and T/1434) that the opposition to the present Legislative Assembly consisted of a few politically active groups which, in the Mission's opinion, represented so far only a minority of the inhabitants, the Czechoslovak delegation would refer to the statement made at the 859th meeting by Mr. Ngom, the representative of the Union générale des travailleurs camerunais which the majority of the workers had joined. The Committee had also heard the spokesmen for several similar organizations representing large sections of the population, who had contradicted the Visiting Mission's assertion.

14. The Czechoslovak delegation also challenged the Visiting Mission's statement concerning the representative character of the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons under French administration. He recalled the conditions in which the 1956 elections for the Territorial Assembly had been held, and how that Assembly had transformed itself into a Legislative Assembly by an administrative decision, and stated that his delegation could not allow such an important function as the preparation for independence to be entrusted to a body which had been elected in an abnormal situation and whose terms of reference were very limited. Besides, the Cameroonian Government intended to hold by-elections in two districts. As the opposition of a group of nine petitioners, led by Mr. Mbida, showed, the Cameroonian population was dissatisfied with the present political situation and was calling for new general elections under the supervision of the United Nations, which could not turn a deaf ear to that request. The Czechoslovak delegation therefore thought that the General Assembly should recommend that new general elections should be held in 1959 under United Nations supervision for an entirely new Legislative Assembly.

³/ See A/C.4/395.

¹/ Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4093/Rev.1).

²/ Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4092).

15. The United Nations should also make amends for the flagrant injustice which had been inflicted upon the Cameroons after the First World War when Africa had been divided up between the imperialist Powers. The Czechoslovak delegation would like the United Nations to take steps for the consultation of the population of both parts of the Cameroons under British administration by means of a plebiscite, so that the people could express their wishes on the future of their country and so that nothing could prevent them from uniting with the population of the Territory which was at present under French administration. The Committee could not, therefore, endorse the conclusions of the Visiting Mission which, after holding conversations with the governmental representatives of the Northern part of the Cameroons under British administration, but without consulting the population of the Territory, had gone beyond its terms of reference and had stated in its report that the population in question wished to join Nigeria and was not asking for a plebiscite. It could not be denied that there had been no intention to authorize the Visiting Mission to draw any such conclusions and to take upon itself to decide the fate of 800,000 Africans, thereby supporting the colonial policies of the United Kingdom, which aimed at the unification of the Northern part of the Cameroons with Nigeria.

16. In conclusion, the representative of Czechoslovakia said that his delegation supported the draft resolution (A/C.4/L.581) submitted by the delegations of the African States, which were better acquainted with the present conditions of the Cameroons and with African affairs in general than such delegations as that of the United States. He thanked the petitioners for coming to New York to enlighten the Assembly on the real situation of the Cameroons.

17. Mr. KELLY (Australia) recalled that in the Trust Territory of the Cameroons which was still technically under French administration, there existed a democratically elected Cameroonian Legislative Assembly and a responsible and representative Cameroonian Government clearly capable of directing the affairs of an independent Cameroonian State, and that France had intimated that as from 1 January 1960 the Cameroonian State, at present autonomous, would become completely independent.

18. For the reasons adduced by the representatives of India, Burma, Ceylon and the Federation of Malaya, the Australian delegation was convinced that the General Assembly should refrain from taking any action to impede the progress of the State of the Cameroons towards full independence.

19. With equal determination, the General Assembly should refrain from encouraging or endorsing the activities of those who, by resorting to acts of violence against their fellow Africans and against an African Government and Legislative Assembly, had rendered so tragic a disservice to Africa, the world community and the United Nations.

20. In the circumstances the General Assembly should assent unconditionally to the termination of the relevant Trusteeship Agreement on the attainment of independence by the Cameroonian State on 1 January 1960. Any other decision could only result in weakening the prestige of the United Nations. With one voice, the French and the Cameroonian peoples invited the United

Nations to agree to the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement and thus bring international forms and formalities into line with vital political realities: the *de facto* national independence of the Cameroons and the *de facto* international equality of the Cameroons and of France.

21. Mr. GOEDHART (Netherlands) said that the Committee had to decide whether the Trusteeship Agreement for the Cameroons under French administration should be terminated on 1 January 1960. Before taking that decision, the Committee should make certain that the Territory was ready for independence, that the people wanted independence and that fundamental freedoms and human rights were respected in the Territory.

22. In view of the report of the Visiting Mission, the recommendations in Trusteeship Council resolution 1925 (XXIII), the statements by the representatives of France and the Cameroonian Government and the views expressed by the petitioners, the Netherlands delegation considered that the basic objectives of Article 76 had been attained in the Cameroons under French administration. General elections did not seem to be necessary before independence since the Cameroonians had to endeavour, above all, to prepare for the weighty tasks which independence would impose upon them. The excitement of an electoral campaign would surely do more harm than good. Nobody disputed the fact that the time had come for the Cameroons to be independent, and it would be improper for the Committee to make the attainment of independence more difficult for a Trust Territory than for a Non-Self-Governing Territory.

23. His delegation took note with pleasure of the statement by Mr. Ahidjo, the Prime Minister of the Cameroons, that elections would be held soon after independence and that the amnesty law would be applied in the most liberal manner.

24. Accordingly, his delegation would vote for the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580. It reserved the right to state its views later on the amendments to that draft (A/C.4/L.583).

25. In the Southern Cameroons under British administration, the Government party and the Opposition agreed that the future of the territory should be determined by a plebiscite. It would be appropriate for the questions to be put to the people and the voting qualifications to be determined by the General Assembly at its fourteenth session. With regard to the Northern Cameroons, the Netherlands delegation agreed with the Visiting Mission that it could be united with the Federation of Nigeria, without a consultation of the people, whose wishes were already known. However, his delegation would not oppose a plebiscite if the majority of the Committee considered that such a procedure would be more in accordance with Article 76 of the Charter.

26. The Netherlands delegation would support the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.582.

27. Mr. HAKIM (Lebanon), referring first to the question of the Cameroons under British administration, said that the people of that Territory had a choice between three possible solutions: union with Nigeria, union with the Cameroons under French administration, or independence. Since it was already apparent

that independence was not being envisaged, no decision should be taken concerning the other two possibilities until the people had clearly and unequivocally stated their wishes. In the case of the Northern Cameroons, the Visiting Mission had stated in paragraph 181 of its report on the British Trust Territory (T/1426 and Add.1) that, since the population was manifestly in favour of union with Nigeria, no further consultation need be held. If it had been a question of independence for the Northern Cameroons, the Lebanese delegation would have had no hesitation in agreeing that no consultation should be held, but since it was a matter of union with another country, it felt that the General Assembly should decide on a plebiscite, to be held under United Nations supervision, whereby the population could speak out for or against union with Nigeria. In the case of the Southern Cameroons, a plebiscite was obviously required to determine whether the people wanted union with Nigeria or with the Cameroons under French administration.

28. With regard to the Cameroons under French administration, the only question on which the Committee was divided was whether general elections should be held there before 1 January 1960. The Lebanese delegation was in favour of such elections for the following reasons: firstly, the General Assembly should ensure that the transition from trusteeship to independence took place in a democratic manner, so that the new State was not torn by civil strife and that the aims of the Trusteeship System, which were not confined to independence, were fulfilled; secondly, the task of preparing and adopting the constitution of a country about to achieve independence should be entrusted to a specially elected constituent assembly composed of representatives of all sectors of the population; thirdly, elections held under United Nations supervision, which meant before independence, would strengthen the authority and prestige of the Government of an independent Cameroons; fourthly, the overwhelming majority of African States Members of the United Nations, which were in the best position to judge, considered that elections should be held before 1 January 1960; and lastly, the Lebanese delegation considered that such elections would contribute to national reconciliation in the newly independent Cameroons.

29. Mr. RITCHIE (Canada) pointed out that the cases of the two Trust Territories of the Cameroons were somewhat different. Where the Cameroons under French administration was concerned, nobody had suggested that the Territory should not attain independence on 1 January 1960, or that trusteeship should not be terminated on that date. After studying the Visiting Mission's report and hearing the representatives of the Cameroonian Government and of the Administering Authority, and also the petitioners, the Canadian delegation could not but agree with the Trusteeship Council's recommendations. It would therefore vote for the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.4/L.580). The Administering Authority deserved credit for its prompt response to the request for independence put forward by the Cameroonian Government and Legislative Assembly.

30. While there was general agreement that the time had come to terminate the trusteeship over the Cameroons under British administration, the issues were not as clear-cut as in the case of the Cameroons under

French administration. The Committee would have to devise a procedure enabling the people of the Territory freely to express their wishes. The draft resolution submitted by Canada and six other Powers (A/C.4/L.582) allowed the final decision concerning the abrogation of the Trusteeship Agreement to be taken by the General Assembly at its fourteenth session, and that would give the people and its representatives time to settle the purely internal issues which were still open. The draft resolution called for plebiscites in both the Northern and the Southern Cameroons. Only the results of the first plebiscite could be considered at the fourteenth session, but there was good reason to hope that, by then, Mr. Foncha, the Premier of the Southern Cameroons, and Mr. Endeley, the leader of the Opposition, would have reached an agreement on the problems connected with a plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons. In some quarters it was felt that the question which, under the draft resolution, would be put to the people of the Northern Cameroons was too restricted. But, in the first place, there was no reason to believe that the population did not wish the region to continue within the framework of Nigeria, in the second place, no other solution had ever been put forward clearly; and finally, as the representatives of the Northern Cameroons had pointed out, a choice between three possible solutions would tend to confuse the electorate.

31. In conclusion, he hoped that the draft resolution submitted jointly by the Canadian delegation and six other delegations (A/C.4/L.582) would be adopted unanimously.

32. Mr. MALILE (Albania) said that the question of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under British administration was particularly important at a time when those Territories were about to attain independence. Their future depended on the objectivity with which the United Nations approached the problem. If the United Nations failed to adopt an equitable solution, it would lose the confidence of the peoples which were struggling to free themselves from the colonial yoke. Its primary concern should be to safeguard the national interests of the Cameroonian people.

33. The Cameroonian people were on the point of achieving independence after a hard struggle against colonial domination. The Albanian people had always supported the dependent peoples in their struggle for freedom. It was opposed to any schemes which would continue colonialism in another form.

34. The policy of the Administering Authorities had produced a tense and explosive situation in the Cameroons, one which the United Nations should take steps to remedy. As was well known, the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under British administration had been one territory under German domination. The United Kingdom and France had divided it up and the League of Nations had sanctioned that unlawful partition. The Mandates System had subsequently been replaced by the Trusteeship System and the two Powers concerned had accepted the responsibility of preparing the Cameroons for independence. Now that they were on the threshold of independence, the two Cameroons should be reunited, however much certain delegations might try to perpetuate a division which would later be a source of difficulties. There was absolutely no justification for the union of the

Cameroons under British administration with Nigeria. In any case, the question must be settled by the Cameroonian people themselves; consequently, the people of both the Northern Cameroons and the Southern Cameroons must have an opportunity of freely expressing their wishes through a plebiscite under United Nations supervision. There could be neither peace nor progress for the Cameroons without reunification and complete independence.

35. The Cameroons under French administration was being subjected to a reign of terror at a time when it was ready for independence. Thousands of innocent persons had been arrested and progressive parties were banned.

36. In his delegation's view, the Visiting Mission's report did not give an objective account of the situation in the Cameroons. The Chairman of the Visiting Mission had, of course, been the United States representative, which explained why the Mission's conclusions endorsed the position of the Administering Authorities. For instance, according to the Mission's report, the UPC had lost all influence, whereas the statements made by the representatives of the movement and the facts themselves proved the contrary. The Administering Authority had tried to destroy the UPC because, from the outset, it had called for the reunification and independence of the Cameroons. At all events, the space given to the UPC in the Visiting Mission's report proved the party's popularity and the rôle it was continuing to play in the country's struggle.

37. The Administering Authority was attempting to solve the most serious problem which now faced the Cameroonian people without taking into account the views of the most important political party. There were grounds for feeling dubious about France's real aims, for if its intentions were honourable, why was it obstinately opposing measures which were obviously essential if peace was to be re-established in the Cameroons? As Mr. Mbida had explained at the 855th meeting, the French colonialists were trying to consolidate their position in the Cameroons by means of the Conventions annexed to the Statute. That was why Mr. Mbida, who had been opposed to the Cameroons' becoming part of the French Community, had been excluded from the Government. Mr. Mbida had referred to statements regarding the independence of the Cameroons made in September 1958 by Mr. Jaquet, former Minister of Overseas France, which had shown that the Cameroons would be given only a fictitious independence, one which would make it possible to terminate the trusteeship and enable France to bring the Cameroons into the French Community.

38. That was why many delegations had well-founded fears about the future of the Cameroons. Those fears would be dispelled if the French Government agreed to organize free elections under United Nations supervision in the Cameroons before 1 January 1960. The French Government was absolutely against such elections, its pretext being that the present Assembly had

been elected in December 1956. But everyone knew that the elections had been held under quite impossible conditions. Furthermore, the Assembly which had been elected in 1956 had been given very restricted functions. The Assembly of an independent Cameroons must be able to take over responsibility for the future of the new State and it must be composed only of Cameroonians, which was not now the case. That was why it was imperative for elections to be held under normal conditions and to be preceded by an unconditional amnesty and the repeal of the decree dissolving the UPC and other progressive parties, thus ensuring national reconciliation and the participation of the whole population in the elections. Actually, France was afraid that the balance of power in the Assembly might change if new elections were held, but those who were really concerned about the fate of the Cameroons knew that that was the only way to ensure the Territory's independence, its domestic peace and its progress.

39. The Cameroonian people looked to the United Nations for help. The States Members of the United Nations must take account of the views of the African States, which were unanimously in favour of elections in the Cameroons and were in the best position to judge. The Albanian delegation hoped that the Cameroons would soon occupy its rightful seat in the United Nations.

40. Mr. GOMES PEREIRA (Brazil) emphasized that the Committee was faced with a twofold task: it had both to take a decision regarding the termination of the trusteeship over the Cameroons under French administration and to take measures to prepare the Cameroons under British administration for self-government and possibly for independence. He recalled the Visiting Mission's conclusions regarding the Cameroons under French administration: firstly, as the request for independence had been approved by a large majority of the Legislative Assembly and of the population, it was not necessary to consult the population anew; secondly, as the Legislative Assembly was representative in character, there were no grounds for holding new general elections before independence. Furthermore, the Cameroons under French administration had been entirely self-governing since 1 January 1959. For those reasons, he felt that nothing could justify United Nations interference in the domestic affairs of the Cameroons and that the arguments of the petitioners who had called for new elections were not convincing. Furthermore, the amnesty measures taken by the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly were sufficient to restore order in the Territory. His delegation would therefore vote for the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.4/L.580).

41. With regard to the Cameroons under British administration, his delegation considered that plebiscites must be organized in both parts of the Territory, so as to enable the people of both parts to express their wishes regarding their future and a possible union with Nigeria or the Cameroons under French administration.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.