



TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

Twenty-fourth Session

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President: Mr. Max H. DORSINVILLE (Haiti).

Present:

The representatives of the following States: Australia, Belgium, Burma, China, France, Haiti, India, Italy, New Zealand, Paraguay, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The representatives of the following specialized agencies: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization.

Examination of conditions in the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian administration (continued):

- (i) Annual report of the Administering Authority for the year 1958 (T/1454, T/1471 and Add.1, T/1475, T/1476, T/1477, T/L.921);
- (ii) Petitions and communications raising general questions (T/COM.11/L.309-331, T/PET.GEN/L.2, T/PET.GEN/L.3, T/PET.11/L.28, T/PET.11/L.29 and Add.1, T/PET.11/L.30-59);
- (iii) Report of the United Nations Advisory Council for the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration (T/1444, T/1478)

[Agenda items 3 (f), 4 and 15]

At the invitation of the President, Mr. de Holte Castello (Colombia) and Mr. Baradi (Philippines), members of the United Nations Advisory Council for the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration, and Mr. Gasbarri, special representative of the Administering Authority for the Trust Territory, took places at the Council table.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. EDMONDS (New Zealand) stressed the significance of the date of 2 December 1960, on which the Trusteeship Agreement for Somaliland would cease to be in force. He had been glad to hear from the representative of the Somali Government and from the petitioners that the differences of opinion between the various political parties were no obstacle to agreement on basic political principles or to their common loyalty

to their country. Indeed, those divergencies of opinion and the spirit of free criticism were a good augury for the future of the Territory and for the part which Somaliland was soon to play in the community of nations. It was to be hoped that the Somali Government would be inspired by a spirit of compromise and tolerance in its treatment of the people who were still imprisoned as a result of the pre-election disturbances.

2. The problems faced by Somaliland, which was in practice fully self-governing already, were extremely serious; the country had few known natural resources, 40 per cent of its area was desert and over 60 per cent of its population was nomadic or semi-nomadic. In view of those facts the progress made since 1950 had been impressive. Export crops had been expanded, production of subsistence crops had increased and secondary industries had been developed. The current development plan was well on the way to completion and the balance of payments showed steady improvement. His delegation particularly welcomed the results of the programme of boring wells and building water catchments, thanks to which it was now possible to provide water for 30 per cent of the cattle in the Territory. The provision of such water facilities was a prerequisite for the stabilization of the nomadic population—a very important thing for Somaliland.

3. There could be no doubt that every effort would be made to exploit all the resources of the Territory. Considerable outside assistance would be essential to that end. The New Zealand delegation felt that the extensive exploitation of Somaliland's internal resources which was planned should provide a more certain and less controversial basis for the future prosperity of the country than the provisions of the new Maritime Code for the registration of foreign-owned ships. The large increase in investments was an encouraging sign. He hoped the Somali Government would continue to follow policies which would encourage investment in all sectors.

4. In view of its low per capita revenue and its budgetary deficit, the Somali Government would depend on outside assistance for some time. Italy, the United States and the United Kingdom had offered financial and other aid to Somaliland when independent. The United Arab Republic was willing to continue giving technical assistance. The European Economic Community was also considering the possibility of further aid. The specialized agencies would almost certainly increase their efforts, and the Special Fund had been asked to assist in specific projects. He believed the Somali Government would wish to explore present sources of aid and to make full use of existing United Nations machinery rather than seek to have a fund specially set up for economic assistance.

5. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had made important contributions to the improvement of the health services. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had given

welcome co-operation in the educational field. Scholarships had been granted to a number of students and the Administering Authority had shown its generosity in that as in other spheres. Much undoubtedly remained to be done, chiefly because so much of the population was nomadic. For that reason his delegation had been pleased to note the considerable increase in the number of children attending primary schools and the growing interest in adult education. The public enthusiasm for education should greatly assist the Somali Government in implementing the next five-year plan. Special attention should be paid to the educational problems of Somaliland as even now less than ten per cent of the children attended school.

6. As the United Nations Advisory Council for the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration had observed, the municipal elections had shown the political maturity of the electors and the sense of discipline of the political parties. There had been a large number of women voters and one woman had been elected. The general elections held in March had, however, given rise to difficulties, chiefly because of the lack of proper electoral rolls. A census should be carried out as soon as possible and rolls prepared in time for the next election. Moreover, the citizenship law should be altered to permit permanent residents not of Somali descent to acquire citizenship.

7. The information given in the plan for the transfer of functions of government (T/1477) and the Advisory Council's observations on the subject (1021st meeting) had been of special interest. His delegation had been glad to hear that the constituent assembly would be as representative of all sections of the community as practicable. The Somali authorities certainly appreciated the reasons in favour of the participation in the work of the Political Committee of representatives of the political parties which were not represented in the Legislative Assembly. His delegation considered that the Trusteeship Council should endorse the plan of transfer in broad outline. The transfer of most of the functions that still remained vested in the Italian Government would be largely a legal formality. He noted that the Somali Government and the constituent assembly would give every consideration to the suggestion made by the representative of India that general elections might be held soon after the coming into force of the new Constitution.

8. It was regrettable that the two parties had not been able to agree on terms of reference for the tribunal which was to define the frontier between Somaliland and Ethiopia, but he welcomed the appointment of Mr. Trygve Lie to assist the two Governments in this work, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1345 (XIII).

9. Mr. JHA (India) felt that the Council could have confidence in the future of Somaliland. That fact had become clear during the discussions at the current session, in particular from the statements made by the Minister of Industry and Commerce of the Government of Somalia and by the petitioners. In recent months the Council had considered three Trust Territories which were on the brink of independence—the Cameroons, Western Samoa and Somaliland. His delegation was especially happy at the prospect of an independent Somaliland, which was the closest land in Africa to India.

10. The year 1958 had been one of steady progress, especially in the fields of primary education and public health. The problem of water supplies had been successfully tackled. The Somalization of Government services had continued at a rapid pace. The few Italian officials remaining in the technical departments would no doubt be replaced as soon as qualified Somalis were available. The Somalization of the school system was almost complete. Thus the conditions necessary for de jure and de facto transfer of power to the Somalis had been realized and the Somalis had shown remarkable aptitude for the management of their own affairs. Those facts were an eloquent tribute to the Italian Government.

11. It would be for the General Assembly to decide upon the modalities for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. The Council's main concern was to ensure that in the meantime there was no setback in the progress towards independence, that when the time came the Somalis would be capable of undertaking their responsibilities, and that democratic institutions were established which would enable the people of the country to take their destiny in their own hands and play a worthy role in the councils of the world.

12. The disturbances which had preceded the general elections showed that one of the chief tasks facing the Somali Government would be the reconciliation of the various political parties. The joint statement read out by Mr. Hussen (1027th meeting) gave promise of the realization of a harmonious political atmosphere in the Territory and an early settlement of the problem arising from the number of political prisoners.

13. The taking of a census and the preparation of an electoral register should not be an impossible task. Nomadic people did not change their residence from day to day; their movements were usually seasonal. Once an electoral register had been prepared the Government would no doubt consider the question of future elections.

14. All important elements of the Somali people should have the opportunity and the sense of participating in the framing of their Constitution. The Political Committee did not appear to be representative of all parties. It should be reconstituted on a broader basis. The Indian delegation had been glad to hear that the Administering Authority would take up the matter with the Somali Government. He noted with satisfaction that the constituent assembly would consider in what form administrative, cultural, regional, trade union and economic interests should take part in the preparation of the draft constitution. The constituent assembly should have a broader-based membership in order to be completely representative.

15. He hoped that a solution would be found to the problem of the frontier between Somaliland and Ethiopia before the Territory attained independence.

16. In the economic sphere, substantial progress had been made in agricultural production. The significant increase in the share of direct taxation in the Territory's revenue was commendable. Nevertheless, the Territory would have to face a period of financial difficulty, which the Somali Government would be able to overcome only by a full utilization of the natural resources of the country. It could not, however, be content with a static economy; every effort should be made to raise productivity and the level of living of the people. His delegation had been glad to learn that several Governments had announced their intentions of providing

assistance to Somaliland after independence. The United Nations and the specialized agencies would undoubtedly have a part to play in that matter and he hoped that the projects submitted to the Special Fund would receive the sympathetic consideration which they deserved.

17. He noted with satisfaction the efforts being made by the Somali Government to improve the living conditions of their people. That was a sphere in which the specialized agencies, and in particular UNICEF, had been able to provide useful assistance. The authorities were to be congratulated on having granted women the vote. He expressed his good wishes for the future of Somaliland and looked forward to welcoming it in the United Nations and in the other international organizations.

18. Mr. DOISE (France) expressed his delegation's gratitude to the representative of Italy and to the Somali delegation, as also to the members of the United Nations Advisory Council, whose reports and observations had made it possible year by year to distinguish the milestones which marked the new State's road to independence. Because of the geographical and political isolation in which it had existed only a few years previously, Somaliland had not seemed to be among the Territories most likely to achieve independence at a very early date. The Administering Authority could not therefore be too highly praised for having succeeded in carrying out the promise it had given on 2 December 1950 when it had undertaken to ensure that the people of the Territory attained the objectives of the United Nations Charter in the short space of ten years.

19. He recalled the main stages in the political development of the Trust Territory. The Somalization of the chief posts in the public service was now practically an accomplished fact, as was abundantly clear from the appointment of Somalis to command the police force and the Finance Guard. A lucid plan for the transfer of governmental functions had been drawn up; there were very few spheres in which authority had not yet been transferred to the Somali Government and the latter possessed full powers where internal affairs were concerned.

20. There had been references to the future Somali Constitution when the plan for the transfer of functions had been under consideration. In his delegation's view, it was not for the United Nations or the Administering Authority to prejudge the merits of that Constitution; its terms were a matter for decision by the Somalis themselves. The Constitution should not be bestowed upon them; on the contrary, it should be drafted in a democratic manner and by democratic means. The Administering Authority had expressed its views very clearly; it considered that the drafting of the Constitution was a matter to be discussed and decided exclusively by the Somali Legislative Assembly. It was, however, desirable that all shades of opinion should be taken into account.

21. His delegation had had the pleasure of being present when, at the 1027th meeting, some of those differences of opinion had been officially reconciled. The final joint declaration by the petitioners had to some extent allayed the anxiety which had still persisted as a result of the passions which until then had been a feature of political life in Somaliland under Italian administration. The United Nations Visiting Mission

to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1957, had counselled moderation and statesmanship to the Somali political leaders and it appeared that after some delay that advice had been heeded.

22. The results of the elections held in March 1959 had a direct bearing on the present and future political evolution of the Territory. The Council should congratulate the Administering Authority and the Somali Government on the introduction of direct, secret universal suffrage. He hoped that, when the drafting committee came to prepare the Council's report to the General Assembly, it would mention the introduction of those democratic measures and the participation of the women of Somaliland in the elections; out of the 333,000 people who had voted, 90,000 had been women. There were, of course, obvious difficulties in applying the electoral system to a population which was predominantly nomadic. He wondered whether the provisions of the electoral law under which no vote took place in constituencies which had presented only one list of candidates were really applicable in districts where there was no register of voters and in which the records kept of the inhabitants were still at a primitive stage. That remark did not imply any criticism of the Administering Authority; its sole object was to suggest that the new leaders of Somaliland should give thought to the matter.

23. Although the establishment of political institutions and the awakening of a national consciousness had taken place harmoniously and without any clash, there was no reason to suppose that it would be the same in the case of the development of a sound economy and the raising of the level of living. There the road would be a long and difficult one. It was urgently necessary that the balance of trade should be improved, notwithstanding the welcome increase in exports. It should not be forgotten that the main exports of the Territory were basic commodities subject to instability where prices and markets were concerned and that such instability was very dangerous for the economy of Somaliland. The recent efforts of the Administering Authority and the Somali authorities, more particularly the plans which had been made for economic development, seemed to be well directed and should be conducive to the diversification of production and to the improvement of the balance of payments. Nevertheless, in view of the desert conditions which obtained in the greater part of Somaliland, the important projects which had already been carried out could only partially solve the problem of developing an adequate national revenue. It might well be asked, therefore, what independence would amount to if outside aid on a considerable scale was not granted to the new State in the next few years. The account the special representative had given of the financial means and the technical assistance placed at the disposal of the Territory since 1950 had shown to what an extent outside help had been, and would continue to be, necessary. The Council should note with satisfaction the offers of assistance which had been received from the Governments of Italy, the United States and the United Kingdom, which had undertaken to make varying contributions, on the basis of bilateral agreements, towards meeting the budgetary deficit of Somaliland. Above all, however, the Council should commend the Italian Government for the help which it had so generously given for nine years. It was to be hoped, too, that a substantial allocation would be made to Somaliland from the United Nations Special

Fund so as to enable the country to meet some of its requirements in the way of capital expenditure.

24. It had been suggested during the general debate that there should be a special fund for Somaliland. The creation of a special fund solely for Somaliland had been the subject of a proposal made in the Fourth Committee during the thirteenth session of the General Assembly and he had the impression that the idea had not been viewed with much favour by the Somali authorities. Whatever the merits of the suggestion, his delegation did not think that it was a practical one, for the very reason that the United Nations Special Fund already existed. To dissipate outside assistance among a large number of separate funds would surely defeat the purpose of such funds. Moreover, his delegation felt that it was premature to envisage setting up such a fund, together with its management and administration, unless it was certain that the necessary credits would be granted.

25. While on the subject of economic questions, he wished to draw attention to two interesting facts. The first was the Somalization introduced in the financial and monetary sphere which had led to the establishment in 1959 of the autonomous section of the Somali Credit Institute for medium and long-term financing. The second was the transfer during 1959 of the functions and powers of the Bank of Italy to the banking section of the Monetary Circulation Fund of Somaliland, the result of which would be that, when independence came, there would only be a question of change of nationality to settle before Somaliland had its own bank of issue.

26. In social matters a solution would have to be found for the basic problem of nomadism. The first attempts to establish settlements in the Giuba region seemed to promise well, and the scale on which the project for developing the water supply of the Territory was being carried out was a good augury for the future.

27. In health matters, his delegation had gained the impression from the admirable survey made by WHO (T/1475) that the position was satisfactory on the whole. It felt, however, that the Territory would need the help of Italian doctors for a long time to come, and it had therefore been glad to learn that, of the 250 technicians which the Italian Government had promised to provide after 1960, fifty would probably be members of the medical profession.

28. In education, the Somali authorities would have to consider the provision of increased facilities; it was impossible, however, to overlook the fact that, where the spread of education was concerned, social conditions and in particular the nomadic way of life gave rise to many difficulties. In connexion with education, the Council should note with satisfaction the formulation of a new five-year plan prepared with the help of UNESCO.

29. Mr. HOOD (Australia) said that few Trust Territories had undergone a more thorough examination by the Council than Somaliland under Italian administration. The Council was now addressing itself directly to the Somali Government and people, which in itself demonstrated how much progress had been achieved. Since the proclamation of independence was close at hand, the Council had at the present session been concerned mainly with the broader and more general aspects of the Territory's development. That had been

an inevitable result of the fact that, in both the political and economic fields, most of the Administration's functions had already been transferred to the Somalis, so that it was no longer necessary for the Council to undertake the detailed examination which it was accustomed to make. Its task would consist henceforth in carefully watching the remaining stages of development towards full independence.

30. The Australian delegation felt that the documents and detailed information that had been submitted to the Council made it possible to predict that the new State would start under favourable auspices. The care with which the Administering Authority had fulfilled its duties, in spite of the many difficulties it had had to face, must certainly have impressed all the members of the Council. The Australian delegation wished to add its commendations to those of other delegations. The Council could rely on the Administering Authority to complete its task with the invaluable assistance of the United Nations Advisory Council.

31. In the main, the transfer of governmental functions from the Italian Government to the Somali Government had now been accomplished, and it would be difficult to find serious oversights in the excellent plan submitted by the Administering Authority. It was still necessary to decide upon the exact means and timing of the formal transfer of functions, which involved, *inter alia*, the designation of the Head of State and the definition of his powers. It was too early to expect clarifications on that point, but the Australian delegation, having been assured that the constituent assembly and its organs would take the necessary decisions at the right time, with the help of the United Nations Advisory Council, foresaw no difficulties in that matter.

32. The question of when the necessary legislation for the establishment of a constituent assembly would be promulgated also deserved attention. Certainly that question was very much in the minds of the Administering Authority, the Advisory Council and the Somali Government, but the Trusteeship Council had received no information on that point. It generally took a great deal of time to constitute such bodies and public opinion should be consulted as widely as possible. The Council should therefore express its interest in that question.

33. With respect to the drafting of the Constitution, the Australian delegation fully associated itself with the representatives who had recommended that the bodies entrusted with that task should have a widely representative character, and the final statements of the various petitioners who had appeared before the Council gave reason to believe that that would be the case.

34. Turning to the economic field, he noted that the situation which had been explained to the Council in great detail was such as to require close attention from the Council, in so far as it still retained powers of recommendation; nevertheless, it had to be recognized that apart from certain important matters, such as monetary policy, the economic affairs of the Territory were now the responsibility of the Somali Government. He hoped that at the proper time the Somali Government, with the advice of the Administering Authority, the United Nations Advisory Council and the Trusteeship Council, would turn to the proper channels for the assistance it would need for some years to come to maintain a stable economy. A major planning effort was the first requirement in the initial stage. It would seem

unnecessary for the Council to make a specific recommendation on that point, and still less for the Somali Administration to commit itself at that stage to a particular or even unique channel. It might be better for the Trusteeship Council to leave the Somali Government free to choose among the various forms of assistance offered, whether under the auspices of the United Nations or through bilateral agreements.

35. The Australian Government was very happy to see the Territory entering the final stage preceding the transfer of sovereignty to the Somali people, and looked forward to the day when the State of Somalia would be welcomed into the family of the United Nations.

36. Mr. JEAN-LOUIS (Haiti) said that the numerous documents submitted to the Council by the Administering Authority, and in particular the plan for the transfer of governmental functions from the Italian Government to the Somali Government, on which the last stages of the Territory's Somalization would be based, taken in conjunction with the United Nations Advisory Council's report, made it possible to form a reliable opinion on the situation prevailing in the Territory. The Italian representative and the special representative deserved thanks for their valuable contributions to the Council's debate. The Haitian delegation further welcomed the presence of the Somali Government representatives and asked the Minister of Industry and Commerce to convey to the Somali Government and people the greetings and good wishes of the Government of Haiti and people. The Haitian delegation had listened with the greatest sympathy to the statements of the Somali petitioners, who were inspired by a sincere love for their country and a patriotic desire to see it enter upon the path of true democracy. Their final statement was a reassuring demonstration of their political maturity, for they had been able to lay aside their differences and arrive at agreement on the basis of the permanent higher interests of their country.

37. Many of the Haitian delegation's misgivings had been allayed during the general debate, which had made it clear what steps had already been taken and what remained to be done before the Territory attained independence. Politically, Somaliland possessed a Government and institutions which had demonstrated their ability to administer the country. Of course, many problems were still to be settled, but the Somali leaders would be able to solve them all if they co-ordinated their efforts. That was the case, for example, in respect to the Constitution; many delegations had expressed the wish that a larger number of persons, including repre-

sentatives of opposition parties, should be invited to take part in its drafting. The Haitian delegation had no hesitation in supporting that suggestion, and was confident that it would be carried out, for the greater good of the Somali people. It also felt that the electoral law now in force should be amended, since it appeared to contain a number of provisions which were not in accordance with democratic practices: the elimination of voting in districts where only one list of candidates was submitted, the validation of elections left to the discretion of the district judges, limitation of the term of the legislature and so on. The Haitian delegation agreed with the Indian representative that fresh elections should be held immediately after 2 December 1960; that was indispensable if the country was to find its true political equilibrium. He was convinced indeed that the members of the present Somali Government were capable of solving all the above-mentioned problems, which were strictly matters of internal policy.

38. Somaliland was faced, however, with one grave external problem: its frontier with Ethiopia. The Minister of Industry and Commerce of the Government of Somalia had made an urgent appeal on that subject (1014th meeting) to the United Nations to procure a successful outcome to the arbitration proceedings now taking place. The Haitian delegation, which shared the Somali Government's apprehensions, joined with it in stressing the need to reach an agreement on that issue before the proclamation of independence.

39. Turning to economic questions, he pointed out that while position of the Territory was not yet satisfactory, owing to an adverse balance of payments and a budget deficit, it was steadily improving. The Haitian delegation was confident that by rational planning the Territory would be able to develop its resources and restore its economic equilibrium. That prospect seemed assured, despite the pessimistic prognostications of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, since certain States Members had generously promised to aid the new Somali State, which would furthermore have the assistance of the competent United Nations bodies.

40. In conclusion, his delegation was happy to have been able to participate in the present debate, which had shown that conditions in the Territory of Somaliland were such that it would have no difficulty in attaining independence on the date set, 2 December 1960.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.