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QUESTION OF THE COMORIAN ISLAND OF MAYOTTE

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1 - 2
II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND CO-OPERATION OF THE COMOROS .....	3
III. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS .....	4
IV. INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY ...	5 - 9

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 28 November 1980, the General Assembly adopted resolution 35/43 on the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte. In paragraph 4 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to follow developments concerning this question, in conjunction with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, and to report thereon to it at its thirty-sixth session.

2. On 3 April 1980, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of the Comoros and to the Permanent representative of France to the United Nations, drawing their attention to the decision of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General invited them to provide him with any additional information pertaining to negotiations for a settlement of this question for inclusion in his report to the General Assembly.

## II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND CO-OPERATION OF THE COMOROS

3. On 9 July 1981, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of the Comoros addressed a note verbale to the Secretariat of the United Nations on the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte. The full text of the note read as follows:

"The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit to him, for inclusion in his report to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session, information concerning developments that have occurred in the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte since the end of the thirty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

"In resolution CM/Res.780 (XXXV), the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, meeting in its thirty-fifth ordinary session in Freetown, Sierra Leone, from 18 to 28 June 1980, requested the Committee of Seven of the Organization of African Unity responsible for following the question, to meet in Moroni before the thirty-seventh ordinary session of the Council of Ministers so as to take stock of the situation and recommend, in collaboration with the Government of the Comoros measures likely to speed up the peaceful settlement of this question.

"Pursuant to that resolution, the Committee was to meet in Moroni from 4 to 7 May 1981. However, owing to a conflict of time-tables, the meeting did not take place.

"A report to that effect was submitted by the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity to the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, meeting in its thirty-seventh ordinary session in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15 to 21 June 1981.

"Resolution CM/Res.12 (XXXVII), which was adopted at that session again requested the Committee of Seven to make the necessary arrangements to meet in Moroni prior to the thirty-eighth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity.

"Contacts have been made between the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity and Members of the Committee of Seven in an effort to decide on a date convenient for all.

"Concerning the discussions held between France and the Comoros, the Comorian Government intends to pursue them in accordance with the recommendations of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations.

"The new elements in French policy and the recent election of President François Mitterand, whose party has constantly opposed the separation of Mayotte from the Comoros, are all positive elements which give rise to hope that a satisfactory solution may speedily be found to that problem.

"The Comorian party therefore wishes to be able to contact the new French Government as soon as possible in order to raise the issue.

"The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros takes this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of his highest consideration."

### III. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

4. On 14 September 1981, the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations addressed a note verbale to the Secretariat of the United Nations on the subject. The full text of the note reads as follows:

"The Permanent Mission of France presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to his letter of 3 April 1981 concerning the question of Mayotte.

"Since it took office last May, the new French Government has undertaken a re-examination of the Mayotte question with a view to reaching a solution that will be consistent with the interests of all.

"The consultations which have already begun with the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros will continue in the coming weeks.

"The Permanent Mission of France takes this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration."

IV. INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE ORGANIZATION OF  
AFRICAN UNITY

5. On 2 December 1981, the Executive Secretary of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations transmitted to the Secretary-General, on the instructions of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity and in pursuance of resolution 35/43, the following relevant documents of OAU:

(a) Resolution CM/Res.859 (XXXVII) on the Comorian island of Mayotte adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity during its thirty-seventh ordinary session, held at Nairobi from 15 to 26 June 1981;

(b) Document No. CTTEE 7/Mayotte (III) Rec.1-Rev.1 containing the recommendation adopted by the OAU Ad Hoc Committee of Seven on the Comorian island of Mayotte during its meeting at the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros from 9 to 11 November 1981.

(c) Document No. CTTEE 7/Mayotte (III) Decl.1-Rev.1 containing the declaration on the Comorian island of Mayotte adopted by the OAU Ad Hoc Committee of Seven on the Comorian island of Mayotte during its meeting at the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros from 9 to 11 November 1981.

6. The text of resolution CM/Res.859 (XXVII) read as follows:

"The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity meeting in its thirty-seventh ordinary session in Nairobi, Kenya, from 15 to 26 June 1981,

"Taking note of the Report of the Secretary-General on the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte contained in document CM/1120 (XXXVII) Part II/Rev.1,

"Recalling the resolutions adopted on the question at its previous meetings, particularly at its twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, twenty-ninth, thirty-first, thirty-third and thirty-fifth ordinary sessions,

"Taking note of the negotiations already held between Governments of France and the Comoros with a view to finding quickly a satisfactory solution to this problem,

"Bearing in mind the stand adopted by some French political parties which from the start opposed the separation of Mayotte from the Comoros:

1. REAFFIRMS the sovereignty of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros on the island of Mayotte;

2. ENCOURAGES the Governments of France and the Comoros to continue with the negotiations in order to accelerate the return of the island of Mayotte to the Comoros;

3. CALLS UPON the OAU Committee of Seven which could not meet before this session as requested by resolution CM/Res.780 (XXXV) to meet in Moroni before the thirty-eighth ordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers, in order to study the situation and recommend, in collaboration with the Government of the Comoros, appropriate measures likely to speed up peaceful settlement of this question;
  4. DECIDES to include the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte in the provisional agenda of the thirty-ninth ordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers;
  5. REQUESTS the OAU Secretary-General to report on the issue to the thirty-ninth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers."
7. The text of the recommendation contained in document No. CTTEE 7/Mayotte (III) Rec.1/Rev.1 read as follows:

"The Organization of African Unity Ad Hoc Committee of Seven on the Comorian island of Mayotte, consisting of Algeria, the Comoros, Gabon, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal and the United Republic of Cameroon, meeting in Moroni, Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, from 9 to 11 November 1981,

"Having heard the statement delivered by the Head of State of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, in which he reaffirmed the will of the Republic of the Comoros to continue its struggle to safeguard its unity, territorial integrity and frontiers as delimited prior to the proclamation of independence of the Archipelago;

"Having heard further the speech by the Minister of Gabon, Chairman of the Organization of African Unity Ad Hoc Committee of Seven on the Comorian island of Mayotte;

"Having considered the exhaustive report of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros concerning the development of the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte;

"Having taken cognizance of the introductory Note by the Secretary-General contained in document CTTEE 7/Mayotte (III);

"Recalling the prior resolutions adopted by the Organization of African Unity concerning the Comorian island of Mayotte and, in particular, resolution CM/Res.859 (XXXVII);

"Further recalling the Programme of Action recommended by the Organization of African Unity Ad Hoc Committee of Seven at its meeting in Moroni, the Comoros, on 5 and 6 September 1977, as contained in document CTTEE 7/Mayotte Rec.1-9 (II);

"Taking note of the contacts which His Excellency Ahmed Abdallah, President of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, had with His Excellency François Mitterand, President of the French Republic, on 5 and

15 October 1981 and on the occasion of the Conference of Heads of State of France and Africa, on 4 and 6 November 1981.

"Noting the readiness of the French Government to pursue the dialogue on the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte with a view to returning the island of Mayotte to the Comoros as soon as possible in accordance with the principles of unity, territorial integrity and sanctity of frontiers inherited from colonial times, as laid down in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity;

"Reaffirming that the Island of Mayotte belongs to the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros;

- "1. RECOMMENDS that all States members of the Organization of African Unity use their relations with France individually and collectively in order to bring the latter to return the island of Mayotte as soon as possible to the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros;
- "2. RECOMMENDS accordingly, that a mission of the Ad Hoc Committee of Seven on the Comorian island of Mayotte and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity contact the French authorities as soon as possible with a view to considering the practical measures for returning the Comorian island of Mayotte to the bosom of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros and, if possible, to set a deadline for such return;
- "3. REQUESTS the Ambassadors of the seven States members of the Committee residing in Paris to follow developments in that situation closely and to undertake joint representations vis-à-vis the competent French authorities whenever necessary;
- "4. APPEALS to the States members of the Organization of African Unity to give financial and technical assistance, collectively and individually to the Islamic Republic of the Comoros so that it can cope with its present difficult situation;
- "5. APPEALS further to the non-aligned countries, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to help the Comorian Government to overcome its difficulties;
6. INSTRUCTS the African Group in New York to set in motion any action by the United Nations in order to cause France to hasten the return of the island of Mayotte to the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros;
- "7. RECOMMENDS that this item remain on the agenda of the meetings of the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference until Mayotte is, indeed, returned to the Comoros."

8. The text of the declaration contained in document No. CTTEE/Mayotte (III) Dec.1/Rev.1 read as follows:

"The Organization of African Unity Ad Hoc Committee of Seven on the Comorian island of Mayotte, meeting in Moroni, Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, from 9 to 11 November 1981, having exhaustively considered the issue before it in the light, in particular, of the relevant resolutions adopted by the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference - all of which recommend that the unity and territorial integrity of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, including Mayotte, be respected - solemnly proclaims the following:

"1. The Committee recalls that, in June 1973, at the time of the signing of the agreements concerning the accession of the Comoros to independence, the French Government solemnly undertook to consider the results of the referendum on self-determination of 22 December 1974 as a whole instead of on an island-by-island basis.

"2. The Committee invites the French Government to continue negotiations with the Government of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros with a view to returning the island of Mayotte to the Comoros as soon as possible.

"3. The Committee reiterates its rejection of any recourse, in Mayotte, to a possible referendum or to any other form of consultation, which would be considered null and void, and urges the French Government to honour the commitments it undertook on the eve of the referendum of 22 December 1974 on self-determination for the the Comoros archipelago.

"4. The Committee decides to send a mission to the French Government in order to consider the practical measures for the return of the island of Mayotte to the bosom of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros."

9. Subsequent to the receipt of the above communications from the Organization of African Unity, the Secretary-General also received from the delegation of the Comoros to the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, for inclusion in his report, the text of the declaration of the Organization of African Unity Ad Hoc Committee of Seven on the Comorian island of Mayotte (see para. 8).

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