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NEGOTIATION AND ADOPTION OF A DRAFT TRUSTEESHIP
AGREEMENT FOR ITALIAN SOMALILAND.Letter dated 19 January 1950 from Mr. Ato Abbeba
Retta, Observer of Ethiopia

"For imperative reasons known to you I was unable to attend the closing meeting today of the sub-committee of the Trusteeship Council dealing with the question of the disposal of former Italian Somaliland. I was in consequence not in position to effect certain necessary corrections in the texts of the summary record of the sub-committee insofar as statements by me and, in particular, my statement of the 17th last, were concerned.

I must, therefore, ask your indulgence to take note of the following corrections which I request be made in the Report of the Committee for Italian Somaliland addressed to the Trusteeship Council (T/AC.18/L.9, 18 January 1950): and also to be in the minutes of the meetings of 10, 12 and 17 January.

1) Page 2, paragraph 4. Insert before penultimate sentence:-

'Since the Ethiopian Government did not accept the invitation of the Council on the basis of participation proposed, it sent observers to attend the meetings until such time as the Trusteeship Council should take a position in reply to the communication from the Ethiopian Delegation of 10th December 1949 invoking Article 79 of the Charter and the right to participate as a State directly concerned.'

- 2) New paragraph 8 as follows:- 'Ethiopia: ——— Ambassador RETTA spoke as an observer to the effect that the discussions have not changed the position of the Ethiopian Government as stated in their telegram to the Secretary General of the United Nations of December 31, 1949, regarding the boundaries of Ethiopia, also that they do not feel in a position to agree with the provisions as contained in the draft agreement and therefore he merely wanted to reiterate the position of Ethiopia, that it reserves its right in this respect. The Ambassador continued as follows:-

'My statement in regard to the treaty concerning the boundary between Ethiopia and former Italian Somaliland is to mean that Ethiopia reserves its right in regard to the decision reached by this Committee. I wish to make it clear that I have not committed and I cannot commit my government in advance. I could only express the attitude of Ethiopia in reserving its right with regard to this matter. With respect to what has been said as to the legal advice, I have not been informed by my Government whether this has been accepted or not. I am without any information or instruction to accept this or not. In substance, quite possibly, however, the matter may not be very far from the statement expressed by the Representative of the United Kingdom. The Ethiopian representatives are here without being in the capacity of delegates, not being able to take part or share in the proceedings. For the Ethiopian Government the time is not yet at hand to give a really considered view at this stage regarding the whole matter and for this reason therefore I must reiterate my Government's attitude regarding the boundary. Probably I might reiterate again one point with regard to the understanding which exists between the Administering Authority in former Italian Somaliland and my Government..... As I have already stated that is a matter between the two Governments.'

- 3) New paragraph to be inserted before old paragraph 10 on page 5:

"Mr. RETTA considered that it would prevent misunderstanding by the Somalis whose attitude was made known to the Four-Power Commission of 1947, if reference were made in the Agreement to some sort of limit to the forces which the Administering Authority might use for external defence purposes. It would also prove most reassuring for the people of former Italian Somaliland if mention were made in the Article of the need for consultation on Italy's part."

(Signed) Ato ABBERA RETTA

Observer for Ethiopia