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THE FUTURE OF TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

Statement made by Mr. Sylvanus Olympio, Prime Minister of the
Republic of Togoland, speaking as a member of the French
delegation, at the 782nd meeting of the Fourth Committee on
3 November 1958

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with the decision taken
by the Fourth Committee at its 783rd meeting, the text of the following
statement is circulated to members of the Committee for their information.

Mr. Chairman,

Those amongst the distinguished representatives present who took part in the discussions of the Fourth Committee on the "question of the future of Togoland under French administration" at the last session of the General Assembly of the United Nations will doubtless recall that it was universally agreed that the parliamentary elections in Togoland would play a decisive role by enabling the Togolese people to express in a free and democratic manner their wishes concerning their political future.

As you are aware, these elections took place on 27 April 1958, and you now have before you the report of the United Nations Commissioner who supervised them. I am confident that everyone will agree that this document demonstrates authentically and clearly how completely these elections have attained their objective.

I must hasten to say unreservedly that all the honour and credit for this achievement are due to the United Nations, whose authority and prestige elicited the confidence and co-operation of the entire Togolese people, to Ambassador Dorsinville, whose good offices and distinguished services as United

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Nations Commissioner helped to overcome so many difficulties, to his able advisers and colleagues, and to the United Nations Observers whose impartiality, acumen and discretion enabled them to cope with the extensive and delicate operations inherent in this kind of activity.

I should like to say here how much the Togolese people, whom I have the honour to represent on this occasion, thank them and are grateful to them for all that they did.

The Togolese elections, Mr. Chairman, have now gone down into history as an event of capital importance but now past in the political advancement of Togoland. Before leaving this subject, however, it will not be out of order to stress here how well-founded were the criticisms - vehement but not always successful - which over the years were made here by us regarding the situation that has just come happily to an end in Togoland, and how right we were in regarding United Nations supervision as an indispensable condition for the elections.

Although, apart from the lessons we may learn from them, the Togolese elections of 27 April 1958 now have no more than historical interest, the same cannot be said of the new political situation to which they have given rise. The fact that the Togolese people have now finally and unequivocally chosen complete independence, can no longer be ignored or disputed. Taking the present statute providing for internal self-government as a starting point, we now ask how best we can exercise our option. This is the new political situation now facing us, and we must deal with it without delay.

We realize and understand the great impatience felt by many persons, and the many reasons there are for it, but we are equally aware of the complex and delicate nature of the very many problems which arise in any transitional period. The Government over which I have the honour to preside has therefore chosen to introduce with all speed the reforms that are imperative while being careful to avoid any undue haste which might jeopardize their success.

Last year, after recommending a number of reforms that would make it easier to carry out fully and in a spirit of loyalty the terms of the new statute offered us by France and providing for complete internal self-government, I concluded my statement with the following words:

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"We consider, Mr. Chairman, as I said last January, that constructive measures of this kind can inspire Togoland with new strength and a new sense of liberty and responsibility while earning for France a new and deep respect on the part of the African peoples. We are convinced that these measures must be taken within the framework of the Trusteeship System so that we may continue to enjoy those guarantees which all countries, including France, have given us through the United Nations Charter."

Today as yesterday, or I should say even more than yesterday, these conclusions continue to be equally valid since most of the reforms that I recommended have remained in abeyance whereas the independence we have so much sought after is now just around the corner.

This spirit and a desire to meet this situation induced the Togolese Government to begin negotiations with the Government of the French Republic. It is a pleasure for me to acknowledge here the atmosphere of cordial frankness and great understanding which marked these discussions, the results of which, I can truly say, have been entirely satisfactory to us.

In the course of these negotiations, as you are no doubt aware, France, after approving the Togolese people's decision to become independent and giving legal sanction to that decision, reached agreement with us on the following points:

1. Retention of the year 1960 for the proclamation of independence in order to give the Togolese Government time in which to initiate the new reforms;
2. Amendment of the present statute so that it might become a supple and practical instrument for the achievement of independence;
3. Maintenance of the Trusteeship System until the proclamation of independence.

Now that arrangements as regards time and means have been made, we should like, Mr. Chairman, to confirm the wishes which have been expressed by the Togolese Chamber of Deputies in conformity with article 7 of resolution 1182 (XII) of 29 November 1957 and which have just been communicated to you by the Administering Authority.

The aim of these wishes is to associate you closely with the final and decisive stage of our emancipation by seeking your help in the study and

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solution of the difficult problems which face every new State and more especially those which are inherent in any change in form of government.

The entire Togolese people trust that your interest, your wise counsel and your benevolent encouragement will not be lacking.

Now that the Togolese people knew for sure that they will soon attain full sovereignty and can justifiably be confident that their democratically-elected National Assembly will fulfil their aspirations there will be no need for us to be apprehensive concerning the future termination of the Trusteeship Agreements. There must, however, be the one condition that such termination will coincide with the proclamation of independence.

Mr. Chairman, when I accepted the invitation of the French delegation to come to this session of the General Assembly, I did do so not only because of the honour which has always been shown me by this Committee and because of the opportunity of confirming the wishes of our National Assembly with regard to the future of Togoland, but also because I especially wanted to thank all the members of this Committee who for a number of years have listened with patience and understanding - and I might even say with benevolence and friendliness - to our oral petitions and whose encouragement and suggestions have been a powerful stimulus to our cause.

I should like to express my very sincere gratitude to the General Assembly of the United Nations for the appropriate and well-timed action which it has so often had the foresight to adopt and which has on each occasion helped us to approach more closely to our goal.

I must certainly not fail on this occasion to mention France, our Administering Authority, which, despite our political differences in the past, has, I am pleased to say, contributed generously to the advancement of our country in every field.

To all, I say thank you and extend the invitation to join with me in the hope that an independent Togoland will be equal to the expectations of us all.
