



**Chairman:** Mr. Vernon Johnson MWAANGA  
(Zambia).

*In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Sadry (Iran),  
Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

### AGENDA ITEM 23

**Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of  
Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Terri-  
tories not covered under other agenda items) (con-  
tinued)\* (A/7989, A/8023/Add.4 (part I), A/8023/Add.4  
(part II) and Corr.1, A/8023/Add.6, A/8023/Add.7 (parts  
I to IV), A/C.4/733)**

#### HEARING OF PETITIONERS

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at the preceding meeting the Committee had decided to grant the request for a hearing (A/C.4/733) concerning French Somaliland submitted by Mr. Adan Roble, General Secretary of the Front de libération de la Côte des Somalis. If there was no objection, he would invite the petitioner, who was present and ready to make his statement, to take a place at the Committee table.

*At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Roble, General Secretary of the Front de la libération de la Côte des Somalis, took a place at the Committee table.*

2. Mr. ROBLE (Front de libération de la Côte des Somalis) said that Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations was not respected by the great Powers which, on the one hand, supported the régimes in power in southern Africa and, on the other hand, refused to recognize the right to self-determination of the Territories directly under their administration. France, for example, was opposing the independence of the Territory of the Somali Coast in every possible way. It was a mistake to believe that France, having granted independence to almost all its colonies, would surely take the same action in the case of the Somali Coast, since each passing day brought fresh evidence of France's nostalgia for its great colonial empire. Furthermore, its presence in the Territory was due not to the wishes of the people, as the French Government maintained, but to violence and deceit.

3. After recalling statements made by senior officials of the French Government, who had stressed France's military strength in the Territory, he pointed out that, in fact, France maintained in the Somali Coast an expeditionary

force of some 20,000 men which had proceeded to isolate and control the water supply in the interior of the Territory and to cut off the city of Djibouti from the rest of the country by means of barbed wire entanglements and mines. Its considerable military strength enabled the colonial Administration to curb and suppress the legitimate aspirations of the Territory's 125,000 inhabitants.

4. Since 1958, for the same reasons, the French Government had applied a discriminatory social policy and legal system designed to provoke tribal warfare and to divide the people of the Somali Coast into antagonistic groups. Work, education and personal safety depended on the tribe to which a person belonged. The change in the Territory's name had been the culminating point of that discriminatory policy. The name "French Territory of the Afars and the Issas" was totally unjustified since the Afars and Issas belonged to the same ethnic group from the point of view of language, history and religion. The purpose of changing the name had been to foster dissension between the two main tribes of the Somali Coast and, by dropping the name "French Somaliland", to conceal the colonial presence in the Territory.

5. Furthermore, the French colonialists maintained that the Somali Coast, and especially Djibouti, was a cosmopolitan country with no racial homogeneity or national unity. To ensure that that would be the case, they were carrying out a systematic campaign of "desomalization", deporting the vast majority of the indigenous population and repopulating the Territory with foreign groups—Europeans, Israelis and others. That policy, which had been put into effect after the so-called referendum of 19 March 1967, had separated more than 10,000 people from their homes and their native land. The French colonial authorities also alleged that there was disagreement between Ethiopia and the Somali Democratic Republic regarding the future of the Territory; however, the French Government itself was deliberately creating that disagreement in order to justify its colonial presence which, it maintained, was safeguarding peace in east Africa. The truth was that they intended to make the Territory an integral part of France, like Guadeloupe, New Caledonia or Martinique. There was no doubt that France was deriving economic, cultural and strategic advantages from the Somali Coast.

6. The French Government also said that the Territory had internal self-government, but the indigenous political institutions such as the Chamber of Deputies and the Council of Ministers were simply groups of notables in disguise. To become a member of the Chamber of Deputies, it was necessary to be a candidate favoured by the colonial Administration, and the ministers chosen from the Chamber were obliged, in the performance of their duties, to accept

\* Resumed from the 1909th meeting.

the assistance of French technical advisers. The sphere of competence of the so-called deputies or ministers was extremely limited since all power was in the hands of the High Commissioner, who was a representative of the French Government.

7. On the subject of educational conditions, he said that the only secondary school in the Territory had been established in 1965 and only a minority of its pupils were indigenous. As for higher education, ten local people had the degree of *bachelier*, one had a degree in teaching and four had the degree of *licencié* in law or economics. There were no high-ranking officials in the Territory apart from two assistant directors in the administration. The indigenous inhabitants had access only to the lowest posts. There was only a very small proportion of indigenous workers in the private sector, except for stevedores. Nor were people of the Territory guaranteed any job security. For them to speak of trade unionism was tantamount to suicide as could be seen from the case of one trade union leader who had been expelled from the Territory and of another who had been murdered in prison and whose body had been mutilated and displayed for a whole day in the corridor of a Djibouti hospital.

8. In the Somali Coast, the judiciary was not separate from the administration, and the colonial policy of tribal discrimination was reflected in the decisions of the courts. The heaviest penalties were imposed on the section of the Somali community which the French called the Issas. He cited another case which showed that the family or tribe of the accused could be subjected to moral or physical persecution. Furthermore, the law enforcement authorities were allowed to resort to such measures as torture, arbitrary investigations and pre-trial detention for unlimited periods. Of the four main prisons in the Territory, the two in the interior looked like concentration camps. The prisoners were subjected to forced labour, had to endure extreme heat during the day-time and were very poorly fed.

9. The vital statistics and citizenship service was run by a French official with the title of "Circuit Commander". It was very difficult for an indigenous inhabitant to obtain French registry documents while the reverse was true in the case of European, Israeli and other immigrants. The handful of indigenous inhabitants who obtained such records were successful because the colonial authorities believed that they supported the French presence.

10. The electoral system was dependent on the vital statistics service. The negligible number of voters in the city of Djibouti accurately reflected the pattern followed by the civil registry. More than half the Territory's population lived in that city and it accounted for 96 per cent of the national economy, but it had no more than 9,000 voters, of whom 2,000 were Europeans. The reason was that the city of Djibouti had always vehemently rejected French colonialism. The right to be registered as a voter was restricted by the courts. In fact, the repressive judges in the Somali Coast usually imposed additional penalties depriving people of their civil rights. For example, Mr. Idriss, a former deputy of the French National Assembly, former territorial adviser and one of the current leaders of the opposition and a major protagonist in the events of 1966-1967, had been temporarily deprived of his civil rights by a court decision

and thus been prevented from voting or standing for election. Manipulation of the boundaries between electoral districts and the type of vote—majority vote on the first ballot—revealed the same discrimination at the ethnic, regional or racial level.

11. The Parti du mouvement populaire, which had organized the nationalist demonstrations of 1966-1967, had been banned by a decree of the High Commissioner of the Republic for having "endangered law and order". The leaders of the current opposition party, the Union populaire africaine were unable to hold demonstrations or public meetings because, since the so-called referendum of 1967, that type of freedom had been forbidden. On the pretext of safeguarding law and order, the High Commissioner of the Republic gave his policemen and legionaries the power to evict genuine citizens from their homes and their native lands. The number of persons deported between 1966 and 1970 had amounted to 10,000. Was that a Territory with internal self-government or was it a classic case of colonialism?

12. It was not necessary to discuss all the aspects of the long struggle of the people of the Somali Coast against colonialism. It was clear that the present situation was not compatible with human rights or with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.

13. He wished to suggest some ways of remedying that tragic situation: firstly, the United Nations should not recognize the designation "French Territory of the Afars and the Issas", which had been imposed by the French Government; secondly, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples should send a visiting mission to the Territory to investigate the political, social and economic situation; thirdly, a referendum should be held after a census of the indigenous population had been taken, under United Nations supervision to avoid participation by French or European elements. The United Nations would have to supervise the referendum.

14. Mr. ELMU (Somalia) said that, since the administering Power did not transmit information on the Territory in defiance of Article 73 of the Charter, it was particularly important that the United Nations should supplement the Secretariat's report (see A/8023/Add.4 (part II), chap. XI, annex) with the views of the parties directly involved. The petitioner had referred to the position of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the question of French Somaliland; it was important that the United Nations should take account of that position and of OAU's position on other Non-Self-Governing Territories in Africa.

15. The views of the Government of Somalia on the question had been clearly expressed in the statement by the President of the Somali Supreme Revolutionary Council (*ibid.*, para. 25) and had subsequently been elaborated on by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the statement which he had made in the General Assembly (1850th plenary meeting) on 25 September 1970. Those views were as follows: firstly, the people of the Territory must be given an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination in a free and democratic manner without

any pressure or interference from outside. Secondly, the political framework of the Territory should be adjusted so as to ensure that the inhabitants were able to participate freely and equally in the political life of the Territory. At the present stage, which was crucial to the future of the Territory, both the administering Power and the United Nations had a very special role to play: France should create a climate in which the inhabitants could peacefully tackle the problems arising before and after independence; the United Nations should give attention to the special problems of the Territory and should grant it all possible economic and technical assistance. At the political level, the United Nations should endeavour to arrange with the administering Power for a special mission to make periodic visits to the Territory during the period prior to independence in order to obtain full and objective information on the situation. In view of unfortunate experiences in the past, a United Nations mission would have to be present when the final elections were held before independence.

16. The Somali Government's approach was not prompted by any hostility towards the administering Power, but represented a constructive effort to ensure that the wishes of the people were fulfilled and that the purposes and principles of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) were applied. Those who were administering the Territory had made mistakes in the past, but his delegation was pleased to note that some had been rectified. If the current situation was compared with the tension which had prevailed in 1967, it could be said that there had been an improvement in relations between the inhabitants of the Territory and the administering Power.

17. With regard to the name of the Territory, his Government considered it unfortunate that the administering Power, at the current late stage of the Territory's political development, should impose on it, in place of its traditional name, one that emphasized tribal differences. His delegation was pleased that both the General Assembly and OAU had continued to use the name "French Somaliland (Djibouti)". A change of name was a matter which should be decided by the inhabitants of the Territory once they had achieved independence and national sovereignty. His delegation reserved the right to discuss that point when the Special Committee took up the question of French Somaliland in 1971. He suggested that the question should again be referred to the Special Committee and that that Committee should be requested to consider it in 1971.

18. Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia) said that the policy of the Government of Ethiopia on decolonization was unequivocally and strongly to support the right of self-determination and to provide moral and material assistance to those who were fighting for freedom and independence. Ethiopia, which had common frontiers with Djibouti, had always followed developments in the Territory with keen interest, and, in accordance with its principles, had consistently supported the United Nations and OAU in their efforts to defend the right of the people of the Territory to decide their future in accordance with their wishes and interests.

19. In 1958 and 1967 France had recognized the right of the indigenous inhabitants to self-determination and had given them an opportunity to determine their political

future. It was to be hoped that it would continue to give them similar opportunities.

20. The Government of Ethiopia was fully convinced that only the inhabitants of a Territory were qualified to decide where their interests lay and that a decision of that type must be scrupulously respected. He accordingly reaffirmed his Government's support for the people of Djibouti and reserved the right to revert to the question when the need arose.

*Mr. Adan Roble withdrew.*

## AGENDA ITEM 69

### United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa (*continued*)\* (A/8151, A/C.4/L.974)

#### CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/C.4/L.974)

21. Mrs. AASEN (Norway) said that the situation in southern Africa was a source of constant concern to the international community and one of the major political problems of the present time. Although there was still a feeling of frustration and impatience, the United Nations had already taken many decisive steps in the matter and could take further action to ensure that the people of the area were able to exercise their right to self-determination. In that respect, the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa represented an important contribution and, consequently, she was pleased to introduce draft resolution A/C.4/L.974 on behalf of all the sponsors.

22. The draft resolution was intended to assist the Secretariat in carrying out the Programme and to secure greater contributions from Member States and other sources. Essentially, it was no different from earlier resolutions, since, as was clear from the report of the Secretary-General (A/8151), the Programme had developed satisfactorily during the preceding year within the limitations of available financial resources. The reference, in the fourth preambular paragraph, to the decision to establish a comprehensive United Nations Fund for Namibia stressed the need for the Secretary-General, in preparing a study on the subject, to bear in mind the consolidated educational and training programme for southern Africa, in order to avoid duplication of effort and to make possible a beneficial exchange of ideas between the Programme and the new Fund. According to paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would note with approval that co-operation between the Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had been further strengthened and that it was the intention of the Secretary-General to undertake consultations with OAU, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Labour Organization with a view to further strengthening co-operation with them.

23. Paragraph 4 of the draft embodied a decision to appropriate \$100,000 for the Programme as a further

\* Resumed from the 1909th meeting.

transitional measure, and the sponsors considered it an indispensable element of the text. Total contributions during the preceding three years had amounted to less than half the target of \$3 million set by the General Assembly for that period in resolution 2349 (XXII) of 19 December 1967, in which the various programmes relating to southern Africa had been consolidated. Although contributions had been increasing steadily, they were still not sufficient for the execution of a programme which corresponded to the intentions of the General Assembly; for example, it had not yet been possible to make grants to those African educational institutions which provided academic opportunities for students from territories covered by the Programme. The Government of Norway proposed to increase its own

contribution for the next fiscal year by some 25 per cent, but it would be unrealistic to rely exclusively on over-all increases of that nature. In the circumstances, without the appropriation of a sum corresponding to that approved for the regular budgets of the preceding three years, the activities of the Programme would have to be curtailed. The difficult financial situation of the Programme was the best justification for paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/C.4/L.974, in which a strong appeal was made to all States, organizations and individuals to make generous contributions to the Programme.

*The meeting rose at 12 noon.*