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Chairman: Miss Angie BROOKS (Liberia).

AGENDA ITEM 49

Question of the future of Ruanda-Urundi: report of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi (A/4856, A/4865 and Corr.1, A/4970, A/4994 and Add.1 and Corr.1, A/C.4/516) (continued)*

1. The CHAIRMAN invited Mr. Max H. Dorsinville, Mr. Majid Rahnema and Mr. Ernest Gassou to participate in the Committee's discussions on Ruanda-Urundi in their capacity as members of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR RUANDA-URUNDI

2. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Chairman, United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi) submitted the report of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi (A/4994 and Add.1 and Corr.1) and recalled that it had been adopted unanimously by the Commission. He wished first to thank his two colleagues, Mr. Ernest Gassou and Mr. Majid Rahnema, for the untiring devotion and enlightened intelligence they had displayed throughout the mission. He also paid tributes to the zeal and conscientiousness of the Secretariat and to the perseverance of the observers.

3. By the terms of General Assembly resolutions 1579 (XV), 1580 (XV) and 1605 (XV), the Commission had been requested: to follow the progress of events in the Territory of Ruanda-Urundi and to lend its assistance to the local authorities and the inhabitants of the Territory with a view to the implementation of the resolutions; to supervise all the preparatory measures for the popular consultations to be held on the basis of direct, universal adult suffrage; and to supervise the elections themselves and the referendum in Rwanda.

4. Chapter I of the report dealt with the organization of the mission. At the time of the Commission's arrival, the administrative and political structure of the Territory—which consisted of two States, Rwanda and Burundi—had had the following characteristics. The Administering Authority had chosen Usumbura

as the capital of the Territory, and the Resident-General had his headquarters there, together with the joint administrative services of the two States. The Administering Authority had a Resident for Rwanda at Kigali and one for Burundi at Kitega. Rwanda was divided into ten Districts and Burundi into nine. An observer of the Commission had been stationed in each District. The indigenous Government of Rwanda had its headquarters at Kigali and at the time when the Commission had been in the Territory the Government of Burundi had had its headquarters at Kitega. In the light of those circumstances, the Commission had divided into three groups. Mr. Gassou, who had been chiefly in charge of Burundi, had stayed at Kitega; Mr. Rahnema, who had been in charge of Rwanda, had stayed at Kigali; and Mr. Dorsinville himself had stayed at Usumbura, together with the principal services of the Commission. That necessary centralization had obliged the Commissioners at Kigali and Kitega to make a number of journeys, but it had also enabled them to escape for a few hours from local pressures. Moreover, the observers stationed in Rwanda had held a weekly meeting at Kigali, and those in Burundi at Kitega. When he had been able to spare the time, he himself had seized the opportunity to keep in contact with the observers. There had also been joint meetings of District Administrators and observers, which had been valuable from the point of view both of personal relations and of the work itself. In addition, the observers had made weekly reports and after the conclusion of the popular consultations each of them had submitted a detailed report.

5. Chapter II gave a brief description of the Territory and its inhabitants, of the political parties and of the political and administrative organization. Previous visiting missions to the Territory had already dealt with those questions. The Commission had therefore considered it sufficient to refer only to certain facts which were essential to an understanding of the situation prevailing at the time of the popular consultations.

6. Chapter III dealt with measures preliminary to the popular consultations. The period since 20 December 1960, the date of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1579 (XV), had been characterized by a number of events. The most important had been the establishment in Rwanda and Burundi of governmental bodies set up by force in January 1961, just at the time when the Commission had arrived in the Territory. Resolution 1605 (XV) had expressed regret at the setting up and the recognition by the Administering Authority of those bodies and had enumerated various steps which it considered should be taken before the legislative elections, which had originally been planned by the Administering Authority and approved by the United Nations. Chapter III therefore dealt more particularly with the establishment of broad-based caretaker governments, the question of the amnesty, the rescission of Legislative Order No.221/296 of 25

*Resumed from the 1177th meeting.

October 1960—which was referred to in resolution 1605 (XV) as likely to interfere with the exercise of public freedom—the question of the return of the Mwami of Rwanda and the question of the refugees. It also described the practical conditions affecting the conduct of the popular consultations and the atmosphere which had preceded the holding of those consultations.

7. Chapter IV covered the electoral operations themselves, while Chapter V merely brought the report up to date by giving the most recent information. Lastly, the report contained conclusions.

8. Before commenting on the conclusions, he wished to say a few words on the situation of the Rwanda refugees, which was really tragic. A vigorous and continuous effort would be needed for some time to come to reintegrate the victims; there must be an effort of justice and persuasion and a financial effort on the part of the Government of Rwanda. The resources of the country were very limited: even in an atmosphere of peace and calm they would be insufficient to repair all the damage. International assistance was urgently required in order entirely to "depoliticize" a situation which was fraught with danger. Such international assistance would supplement the efforts already being made by the Trusteeship authorities, the Government of Rwanda and charitable associations. In particular, the devotion of the Catholic and Protestant missions was well known, but their means were limited. Moreover, the problem of the Rwanda refugees was linked with that of the refugees from neighbouring African countries. No doubt the Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees would have to be reviewed and its terms of reference extended, so as to enable it to attack an evil which was spreading and threatening the equilibrium both of the countries of origin and of the receiving countries.

9. Concerning the conclusions of the report he stated that although the members of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi had described the elections in Burundi as a "resounding success", the conclusions with regard to the popular consultations in Rwanda expressed two slightly different points of view. The Commission was, of course, unanimous in leaving it to the General Assembly to reach a final decision on the substance of the question. He had felt it his duty, however, as a Commissioner and as Chairman of the Commission, to go somewhat further and to say that a positive attitude to the popular consultations of 18 and 25 September would undoubtedly bring Burundi and Rwanda an element of stability which would be of direct benefit to the people. No one would attempt to deny that the conditions preliminary to the popular consultations had not been perfect, but nothing could be more inaccurate than to say that, in the existing circumstances, things could have been done better. The percentage of voters had been high (95.2 per cent in Rwanda and 73 per cent in Burundi), public interest had been manifest and exemplary calm had reigned. In order to understand the conditions in which the elections had taken place in Rwanda—and in Burundi to a certain extent—the matter could be approached from two different angles.

10. First, the situation could be considered from the historical angle, in the light of all the factors which had contributed to bring the Territory to the point at which it had been on polling day. Belgian colonial policy bore a heavy responsibility for the occurrences

which had plunged the Territory into mourning during the past two years and which cast a shadow over its future prospects.

11. Secondly, there was the realistic point of view of an observer who, in January 1962, wondered what the United Nations should think of the elections of September 1961 as a contribution to the future. From that point of view, the elections and the circumstances in which they had been held took on a very different aspect. At the time of the adoption of resolution 1605 (XV), on 21 April 1961, it had been clear that relations between the Administering Authority and the United Nations had reached an impasse. The experience of January-February 1961 had revealed the non-co-operative attitude of the Administering Authority. What had happened since then could almost be called a miracle. The new Belgian Government had decided to co-operate with the United Nations; a number of measures had been adopted by common agreement between the Administering Authority and the United Nations Commission, and it had been possible for the elections to take place in comparative calm, and even in absolute calm where polling day was concerned. Certainly the political atmosphere from July to September had been troubled, but, in the light of the situation that had prevailed in April 1961, it could hardly have been hoped that the necessary conditions for the proper conduct of the elections could have been better. Presumably, therefore, in the view of the General Assembly, it had not been a question of achieving theoretically ideal conditions, but of doing what was humanly possible within the limits of the political realities and possibilities. That had been done, and indeed it had far surpassed the hopes which had been justified by the situation early in 1961. Contrary to all expectations, it had been possible to hold the elections in conditions which were generally acceptable. New Governments and institutions had come into existence as a result of the elections. Thus the Territory had emerged from an illegal situation, from an impasse and from its provisional status. Of course vigilance must be maintained, for disturbances might still occur. Yet the real problem which confronted the Fourth Committee was no longer whether the elections of September 1961 might have been held in more favourable circumstances, but what arrangements the United Nations and the Administering Authority must make to bring about an early termination of the trusteeship in the best possible conditions and to assist the new Governments to surmount the obstacles facing them, what guarantees should be envisaged to ensure the protection of minorities in general and of the refugees in particular and how to ensure that the opposition in Rwanda could freely play a constructive part in building the nation. Whatever political tensions there might be, only the legitimacy of the institutions could provide a fundamental element of stability without which no genuine solution could be found for any problem.

12. He quoted a passage from the report on Ruanda-Urundi of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1957, ^{1/} which said that in time, and perhaps in the very near future, the new generation of Batutsi and Bahutu would have more in common than would the young generation of Batutsi with the old. He was profoundly convinced that the Committee must resolutely look to the future and

^{1/} Official Records of the Trusteeship Council, Twenty-first Session, Supplement No. 3, para. 44.

urge all those concerned to practise moderation and tolerance.

13. Mr. ACHKAR (Guinea) thanked the Chairman of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi and congratulated him on his statement.

14. Noting that paragraph 463 of document A/4994 and Corr.1, as also the statement by the Chairman of the Commission for Ruanda-Urundi, indicated certain differences of opinion among the Commission on one specific point, he asked whether it was the intention of the other Commissioners to explain their points of view in detail. The Guinean delegation would like to be in possession of all the necessary information in order to be able to assess the situation in full knowledge of the facts.

15. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Chairman, United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi) said that, having consulted his colleagues, he could say that they were ready to state their own points of view at any time.

16. Mr. HAMDANI (Pakistan) proposed that the statement by the Chairman of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi should be reproduced in full and circulated as a Committee document.

It was so decided. 2/

17. Mr. YOMEKPE (Ghana) congratulated the Chairman of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi on his eloquent statement and thanked the members of that Commission for their outstanding work. He agreed with the Guinean representative that it was important for the Committee to know the points

of view of the other Commissioners, particularly since each of them had been to a different area.

18. In his statement, the Chairman of the Commission for Ruanda-Urundi had referred to "two countries" on one occasion and to "two States" on another. In resolution 1579 (XV) the General Assembly had expressed the wish that Ruanda-Urundi would accede to independence as "a single, united and composite State". He asked whether there was any hope that that would be the case.

19. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Chairman, United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi) said that that was one of the hardest questions to answer. In his opinion, the Commission for Ruanda-Urundi could not express any views on that point. It was aware of the General Assembly resolution to which the Ghanaian representative had referred, but it had had to operate in the context of Rwanda and of Burundi and the implementation of the provision in question had not really been its concern. The people of the two States undoubtedly had their own views on the matter. They had representatives on the Belgian delegation who would be called upon to speak. It would be for those representatives to furnish a reply on that point.

20. Mr. YOMEKPE (Ghana) said that he would like to place on record the fact that his delegation had not altered its position and that it still considered, as it had done the previous year, that the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi constituted a single Territory under Belgian administration.

21. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the fact that the Trusteeship Council, at its 1178th meeting, had decided to refer all petitions concerning the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi to the Committee for examination. The petitions in question were listed in document A/C.4/516.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.

^{2/} The complete text of the statement made by the Chairman of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi was subsequently circulated as document A/C.4/518.