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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/5126 and Corr.1 and Add.1; A/C.4/516 and Add.1-5, A/C.4/550, A/C.4/551) (continued)

1. Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Ireland) proposed that the statement made by the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs at the 1321st meeting should be circulated as an official document of the Committee.

It was so decided.^{1/}

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

2. Mr. AKHUND (Pakistan) said that no useful purpose would be served by deferring the granting of independence to Rwanda and Burundi beyond 1 July 1962, the date envisaged by the General Assembly. The only reason why an earlier date had not been set was that his delegation and many others had thought that an effort should be made to convince the two Governments of the advantages of unity, but unfortunately the Commission for Ruanda-Urundi had been unable to do so. The many difficulties, particularly with regard to the maintenance of law and order, which the Commission had noted in its report (A/5126 and Corr.1 and Add.1) could not be corrected by delaying independence but only by the determination of the peoples concerned, and outside assistance could be effective only if the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi gave their full co-operation.

3. The Commission had come to the conclusion that the existing military and police forces in the two countries were inadequate and had expressed doubts about their ability to maintain internal order or to defend their countries' borders. The two Governments disagreed, and the Government of Burundi had demanded that Belgian troops should leave when the country became independent. Although the Government of Rwanda had been less categorical, it had not asked for Belgian or any other foreign troops to be stationed on its territory. The Committee could not impose any solution on those Governments, for that would violate their sovereignty, and there was no reason to doubt

the Belgian Government's repeated assurances that its troops would be withdrawn if that was the wish of the Governments concerned. The withdrawal should be completed in as short a time as possible, in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

4. One promising sign was the Agreement on Economic Union concluded at Addis Ababa on 19 April 1962 (A/5126/Add.1 annex XVI). Such an agreement was a sensible step for two small under-developed countries to take and a foundation for closer co-operation, which would have obvious advantages for both countries. It was important that the Agreement should be put into effect without delay and that no extraneous considerations should be allowed to interfere with it.

5. Although Ruanda-Urundi would cease to be a ward of the United Nations in a few days, he hoped that the United Nations would take a greater interest than ever in its future development. It was good that the Secretary-General was to send a special representative to the Territory and that various forms of assistance to it were being examined. He was sure that the United Nations would give sympathetic consideration to any request from the two Governments for assistance.

6. Mr. SALIFOU (Niger) observed that, although the date of 1 July 1962 had been chosen as the birthday of two new African States, the achievement of independence by Rwanda and Burundi confronted the General Assembly with a number of problems whose solutions would depend above all on the goodwill and the co-operative spirit shown by all the parties concerned.

7. The advantages of political unity, which had been stressed by a number of speakers both in the Fourth Committee and at the Addis Ababa Conference, had unfortunately not been sufficient to overcome the objections of the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi, which, although they disagreed in many respects, were entirely agreed on that point. Thus it must be admitted that the Addis Ababa Conference had been only partly successful.

8. The Commission's report, the statements made by the representatives of the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi, by the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs and by the representatives of the opposition in both countries, had done much to clarify the situation.

9. In the light of the debate that had taken place it was now possible to envisage the probable terms of the draft resolution to be submitted, which he hoped would be generally acceptable.

10. The formation of a national coalition Government in Rwanda and the undertaking given at the 1317th meeting by the General Secretary of the Union nationale rwandaise (UNAR) that his party would co-operate in building the Rwandese nation had been welcomed as a tangible sign of the "new spirit" manifested by the Government. That development would affect the problem of the refugees; there was now nothing to prevent

^{1/} The complete text of the statement made by the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs was subsequently circulated as document A/C.4/552.

their return, which should be brought about speedily with the help of the facilities offered by the specialized agencies. After their repatriation the refugees should be cared for until they had been finally settled and their fundamental freedoms should be guaranteed. Thus the action begun in February in New York at the governmental level would be completed.

11. The question of the maintenance of law and order did not appear to present any particular difficulties in Burundi. The Commission's report made it clear that the presence of Belgian troops after independence would not be essential for the internal security of the country and that local troops, once they had competent officers, would be able to ensure order. His delegation considered, however, that since Belgium would be responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the Territory until the moment of the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, it could not withdraw its troops before 1 July 1962. Similarly, after that date it would be Belgium's duty automatically to begin the withdrawal, and the complete and effective liberation of the country should not take more than a few weeks. The details could be decided by a body of experts appointed by the United Nations, taking account of the proposals made by Belgium and of any particular measures which circumstances might dictate.

12. In Rwanda, too, it was unthinkable that Belgian troops should remain after the achievement of independence. Nevertheless, Mr. Habamenshi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of that country, had stated at the 1313th meeting that it would be the Rwandese Government which, after the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, would decide whether or not Belgian troops should remain on its soil. If the sovereign independent Rwandese Government felt obliged to ask for Belgian help in that respect, it would be exercising one of the prerogatives of an independent State and the General Assembly was not entitled, and certainly would not wish, to oppose the exercise of that right. He hoped that, by agreement, the military equipment would be handed over by the Belgian Government to the authorities of Rwanda and Burundi.

13. The essential problem, however, was that of the Territory's economic welfare. Fortunately the two countries had realized in time that their viability would largely depend on their maintaining good economic, financial and customs relations and had therefore decided to sign the Addis Ababa Agreement. Yet the task confronting the two young States was enormous. It could be tackled only by means of a large-scale programme of economic assistance covering every sphere of commercial and financial activity in Rwanda and Burundi. In addition to economic assistance, technical assistance was essential. There could be no doubt that the humanitarian work done by Belgium in that field would be continued after independence, in accordance with the promises made by the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs. In addition, the United Nations might consider the establishment of a technical and economic assistance programme. The Commission had suggested that 400 technicians, including military instructors, would be needed to maintain essential services in the two countries. No doubt the United Nations could provide some of those technicians, to supplement the assistance given by Belgium. It should be made absolutely clear that the form of assistance to be rendered both by the United Nations and by Belgium should not be such as to lend itself to

any suggestion that it was merely a distorted recrudescence of the trusteeship.

14. His delegation wished success to the Governments and peoples of Rwanda and Burundi and hoped that they would shortly take their place in the United Nations among the other countries which had formerly been under colonial domination.

15. He expressed the hope that the two peoples and their Governments would appreciate the weight of their responsibilities towards future generations in their respective countries and, setting aside their differences, would prove their political maturity by respecting the Agreement reached at Addis Ababa and working for the maintenance of peace and national solidarity. He also hoped that they would realize that stability was a necessary prerequisite of foreign aid and that the best way of demonstrating that all Africa should be freed from the colonialist yoke would be to show that those nations which had achieved independence were capable of bearing the responsibilities it entailed.

16. Mr. MALHOTRA (Nepal) recalled that in resolution 1743 (XVI) the General Assembly had expressed a desire to ensure that Ruanda-Urundi would accede to independence in the most favourable conditions as soon as possible, and in operative paragraphs 3 to 6 of that resolution it had set forth certain measures which almost all delegations agreed were in the best interests of the Territory. In spite of its devoted work, the Commission for Ruanda-Urundi had been only partly successful in putting those measures into effect. In particular, the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi had not agreed to the political union of their countries, but he hoped that the Agreement on Economic Union signed at Addis Ababa would be implemented in good faith and that the results would convince both parties of the advantages of closer co-operation.

17. In Rwanda the problems of law and order, the refugees and the Mwami had not yet been solved, but it was encouraging that national reconciliation, which was a condition of their solution, had begun with the admission of two members of UNAR, the opposition party to the Government, in accordance with the New York Agreement of 8 February 1962 (A/C.4/532 and Corr.1). He hoped that the other provisions of the Agreement would be put into effect without delay and he agreed with the Commission that peace and order in Rwanda depended on national union and ethnic reconciliation rather than on military arrangements.

18. At the 1311th meeting the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs had said that his country's continued technical assistance to Rwanda and Burundi did not depend on the presence of Belgian troops in those countries and that Belgian troops would not be stationed there against the wishes of the local Governments. Nevertheless, at the 1312th meeting, he had expressed the view that the withdrawal of Belgian troops in less than two or three months would have an undesirable psychological effect on the Belgian technicians in the two countries. The Nepalese delegation did not doubt the sincerity of that statement but it hoped the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs would understand the apprehensions felt by the two Governments, which would be responsible for internal order after independence. Belgium had failed to comply with the wishes expressed in General Assembly resolution 1743 (XVI), on the purely legal grounds that

it was entirely responsible for law and order until midnight, 30 June 1962 and could not withdraw its troops before then. Yet both that resolution and the Brussels Protocols of 21 December 1961 (A/C.4/517 and Corr.1) made it clear that the maintenance of law and order was to be the joint responsibility of the Belgian Government and the local Governments. His delegation thought that Belgium should have allowed the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi gradually to take over the responsibility for law and order and should have planned to withdraw the Belgian troops a few days before independence. He hoped the Belgian Government would not continue to stand on legal arguments but would try to carry out the undertakings given by the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs without delay and in a spirit of goodwill.

19. Rwanda and Burundi were poor countries, although they might have potential wealth, and they would need economic and technical assistance. He suggested that a United Nations mission should be sent to survey their resources and to give technical assistance in their development. In particular, the question of technical assistance in public administration under the OPEX programme should be examined.

20. In conclusion, he hoped that the two countries would become independent on 1 July 1962, the date envisaged by the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 6.5 p.m.