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Thirteenth session
Agenda item 13THE FUTURE OF THE TRUST TERRITORIES OF THE CAMEROONS
UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION AND THE CAMEROONS UNDER
UNITED KINGDOM ADMINISTRATIONSpecial report of the Trusteeship CouncilIntroduction

1. In resolution 1282 (XIII) of 5 December 1958, the General Assembly noted the declaration of the Government of France^{1/} (A/C.4/388) that the Cameroons under French administration was to achieve independence on 1 January 1960, thus fulfilling the objectives of the Trusteeship System, and further noted the statement made by the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland^{1/} that the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration was expected to achieve in 1960 the objectives set forth in Article 76 b of the Charter of the United Nations. In the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Trusteeship Council to examine, as early as possible during its twenty-third session, the reports of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, and to transmit the same, with its observations and recommendations, to the General Assembly not later than 20 February 1959, to enable the Assembly, in consultation with the Administering Authorities, to take the necessary measures in connexion with the full attainment of the objectives of the Trusteeship System in the two Territories.
2. The United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, submitted two reports to the Council, one on the Cameroons under British

1/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirteenth Session, Fourth Committee, 803rd meeting.

administration (T/1426 and Add.1), the other on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427 and T/1434). These reports were examined by the Council at its twenty-third session together with the above resolution.

3. At its 953rd meeting, after the Chairman of the Visiting Mission had introduced the two reports of the Mission, the Council agreed to examine first the report on the Cameroons under French administration and then the report on the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration. A brief account of the Council's examination of these two questions is set forth below.

The future of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under French administration

4. The examination of the future of the Cameroons under French administration was begun at the 953rd meeting, when an opening statement was made by the representative of France. The text of the statement appears in annex III to the present report. During the 954th and 955th meetings, the special representative for the Territory, as well as the Chairman of the Visiting Mission, replied to questions put to them by members of the Council. At the latter meeting, the Council began a general debate, which was concluded at the 958th meeting.

5. In the course of the general debate, Haiti, Italy, New Zealand, Paraguay and the United States of America submitted a draft resolution (T/L.895) which was considered by the Council at its 958th and 960th meetings.

6. At the latter meeting, the Council adopted the draft resolution by a roll-call vote of 12 to 1, with 1 abstention. The text of the resolution, as adopted, appear in annex I to the present report.

7. After the voting, the representative of France made a statement concerning the adoption by the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons of an amnesty law, the text of which would be communicated to Members of the General Assembly.

The future of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration

8. The examination of the future of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration was begun at the 959th meeting, when an opening statement was made by the representative of the United Kingdom. The text of the statement appears in annex IV to the present report.

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9. At the 962nd meeting, Burma, Haiti, Italy, New Zealand, Paraguay and the United States of America submitted a draft resolution (T/L.896) which was considered by the Council at the same meeting.

10. At that meeting, the Council adopted the draft resolution, with minor changes, by 13 votes to none, with 1 abstention. The text of the resolution, as adopted, appears in annex II to the present report.

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ANNEX I

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1925 (XXIII) OF 17 FEBRUARY 1959

The future of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons
under French administration

The Trusteeship Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1907 (XXII) of 28 July 1958 and 1924 (S-IX) of 7 November 1958 by which the Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa was requested, inter alia, to set forth its views on the procedure for organizing the consultation which would enable the people of the Cameroons under French administration to express at the appropriate time their wishes concerning their future and concerning the termination of trusteeship upon attainment of full national independence in 1960,

Having been requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 1282 (XIII) of 5 December 1958 to examine at the earliest possible time during the twenty-third session the reports of the Visiting Mission on the Cameroons under British administration and the Cameroons under French administration and to transmit them, with its observations and recommendations, to the General Assembly not later than 20 February 1959 to enable the Assembly to take, in consultation with the Administering Authorities, the necessary measures in connexion with the full attainment of the objectives of the Trusteeship System,

Having examined the report of the Visiting Mission on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427 and T/1434) and considered the observations of the Administering Authority on it,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Visiting Mission for its report;
2. Notes the conclusions and recommendations of the Visiting Mission;
3. Considers that the Territory of the Cameroons under French administration is ready for independence in accordance with the declaration of the Administering Authority, and the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons under French administration, without the need for any further consultation with the people of the Territory;

4. Welcomes with satisfaction the assurances given by the Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration to the Visiting Mission, and which have been reiterated on behalf of the Administering Authority before the Council, that the necessary measures are being discussed in the Legislative Assembly for the granting of broader measures of political amnesty and strongly urges that such amnesty should be granted on the widest possible basis and with the least possible delay;

5. Welcomes further assurances given in the Trusteeship Council by the representative of the Administering Authority and by the special representative that there exist in the Territory freedom of the press, of assembly, of political association, and other fundamental freedoms;

6. Notes that the Cameroons Government has stated that it welcomes the return of all Cameroonians who in recent years have left the country and invites them to re-enter normal life without fear of reprisal;

7. Notes further that it is the intention of the Cameroons Government to hold elections to fill the four seats in the Legislative Assembly allocated to the Sanaga Maritime area as early as possible;

8. Transmits to the General Assembly the report of the Visiting Mission, the observations of the Administering Authority and the records of the Council's discussions;

9. Recommends that the General Assembly, at its resumed session, after considering the report of the Trusteeship Council and any further views that may be expressed before it, take a decision to terminate the Trusteeship Agreement upon the attainment of full national independence with effect from 1 January 1960 in accordance with Article 76 b of the United Nations Charter.

ANNEX II

TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1926 (XXIII) OF 18 FEBRUARY 1959

The future of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons
under United Kingdom administration

The Trusteeship Council,

Recalling its resolution 1907 (XXII) of 28 July 1958 by which the Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa was requested to include in its report on the Cameroons under United Kingdom ~~administration its~~ views on the method of consultation which should be adopted when the time came for the people of the Territory to express their wishes concerning their future,

Having been requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 1282 (XIII) of 5 December 1958 to examine the reports of the Visiting Mission on the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration and the Cameroons under French administration and to transmit them with its observations and recommendations to the General Assembly not later than 20 February 1959 to enable the Assembly, in consultation with the Administering Authority, to take the necessary measures in connexion with the full attainment of the objectives of the Trusteeship System,

Having examined the Report of the Visiting Mission on the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration (T/1426 and T/1426/Add.1) and considered the statement of the Administering Authority on it,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Visiting Mission for its report;
2. Takes note of the observations and conclusions of the Visiting Mission in its report;
3. Considers that these conclusions will require further examination by the General Assembly;
4. Transmits to the General Assembly the report of the Visiting Mission, the observations of the Administering Authority and the records of the Council's discussion in order that, after due examination in the light of these documents and of any further views that may be expressed before it, the General Assembly may take such action as it deems appropriate, in accordance with Article 76 b of the United Nations Charter.

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ANNEX III

Statement made by the representative of France at the
953rd meeting of the Trusteeship Council

Two items on the agenda of the Trusteeship Council's present session deal essentially with the Cameroons under French administration: item 4 concerning the examination of the Administering Authority's report for 1957, and item 17 concerning the future of the Trust State.

On all points raised in the course of the discussion on these two items, about which members of the Council may wish to have further information, I shall have the assistance of two Special Representatives whom I should now like to introduce to the Council: Mr. Pinon and Mr. Bétayéné. I believe this is not really an introduction, as Mr. Gerig has already performed that duty.

Mr. Pinon is a licencié en droit of the Overseas College of France (Ecole de la France d'Outre-Mer); he has had more than twelve years of administrative experience in Africa, and for the past year and a half has been a member of the Cabinet of the French High Commissioner for the Cameroons as Director of Foreign Relations.

Mr. Jean Bétayéné was born in the Cameroons. He was one of our most brilliant university students. He too has a law degree and graduated from the Overseas College of France. He has dealt with Cameroonian affairs since 1954, and belongs to Cameroonian élite which will now administer the new Cameroonian nation and hold the country's future in their hands. He is a member of Mr. Ahidjo's cabinet in the capacity of technical adviser on foreign relations.

Both these gentlemen will do their utmost to give the Council valuable assistance in its work.

There is no need for me to stress that one of these two items on the agenda is much more important than the other. The French delegation will of course, gladly participate in the discussion of the report on the administration of the Cameroons for 1957, in accordance with the normal procedure and practice, if the Council considers it necessary, but everyone must be aware that events have moved swiftly since 1957 and it is the future of the Trust State which will invest this

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ordinary session of the Council with exceptional significance and command the close attention of all delegations. Moreover the General Assembly has given us specific terms of reference, in resolution 1282 (XIII), to examine and appraise as soon as possible the report submitted to us by the Visiting Mission to the Cameroons, to enable the General Assembly to reach a decision on the termination of Trusteeship at its forthcoming session.

We therefore have to prepare the ground for the General Assembly's work and decisions, which we can now do in full knowledge of the facts, both in the light of the many important events which took place in the development of the Cameroons during 1958, and also of the conclusions of the Visiting Mission.

The Visiting Mission's report gives a full and detailed account of the Territory's evolution since 1956 in the political, economic and social fields, which has enabled the Cameroonians to govern themselves. There is no need to review this history for the benefit of the members of the Council, who have for years been in constant touch with these problems.

I need only draw attention to the principal events of the decisive year 1958 - a year when the Cameroons blossomed and when the imminence of its independence was irrevocably confirmed.

You will recall that during the first two months of that year, the Cameroons experienced the first ministerial crisis in its short parliamentary history. The Cameroonian Government led by Mr. André-Marie M'Bida was defeated in the Legislative Assembly. As the outcome of that crisis, the course of which revealed both the vitality of the new institutions and the political maturity of the Cameroonian leaders, Mr. Ahmadou Ahidjo was asked to form a new Government, and on 8 February he presented a programme bearing chiefly on the following points:

- Full domestic autonomy;
- A schedule for Cameroonian independence;
- Reunification of the two Cameroons;
- National conciliation;
- Co-operation with France on the basis of freedom and mutual trust;
- More rapid preparation of the Cameroons for independence in the political financial, economic and social fields.

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It was on this programme that Mr. Ahidjo won a motion of confidence by 49 votes, with 15 abstentions. Himself a northerner, but aware of the need for national unity, he has grouped around him representatives of the people of both north and south and formed a broadly-based coalition Government.

The former opposition, consisting mainly of the Action Nationale parliamentary group, known as the "Group of Eight", whose President, Mr. Charles Assalé, together with Mr. Suppo Priso, was known to the United Nations as the author of petitions, has now become the majority party and several of its members have accepted ministerial posts. On the other hand, Mr. A.M. M'Bida and his Démocrates camerounais, with their President, Mr. Claude Akono, and prominent members like Mr. Tsalla and Mr. Djoumessi, are now the opposition.

In accordance with its announced programme and the provisions of the Statute of 16 April 1957, which permits the Legislative Assembly to request a change in institutions by resolution, the Government introduced a Bill in the Assembly which can be summarized as follows: the Legislative Assembly instructs the Government to enter into negotiations with the French Government for the recognition of the option of the Cameroons to become independent on the termination of trusteeship, and for the earliest possible transfer to the State of the Cameroons of all powers relating to the management of internal affairs.

The text of this resolution was adopted on 12 June 1958 by all deputies of the Cameroonian Assembly with the exception of the Démocrates camerounais who refused to vote.

Negotiations were conducted between the French and Cameroonian Governments during the summer. They took place in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust, and culminated in complete agreement, both on the transfer of all internal powers to the State of the Cameroons from 1 January 1959, and on the adoption of the time-table for Cameroonian independence - full independence, for those who like adjectives - to become effective on 1 January 1960.

Thus an agreement had been concluded on a statute of self-government.

The transfer of all internal powers was given effect by the adoption of a new statute, which, in the words of the Cameroonian Prime Minister, Mr. Ahidjo, "marked the accession of the Cameroons to complete internal self-government which carries with it full legislative and regulatory powers". The new statute was

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submitted to the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly at the opening of its session on 14 October 1958, approved on 20 November 1958, promulgated on 30 December by an ordinance of the Government of General de Gaulle and came into effect on 1 January 1959.

Henceforth all legislative, administrative and juridical powers are vested in the Cameroonian authorities. In addition to its powers under the previous statute, the Cameroonian Government assumes full responsibility for public order and the proper dispensation of justice. It therefore exercises full authority over public services as a whole, particularly the heads of administrative circonscriptions and police, security and gendarmerie forces.

Justice is dispensed in the name of the Cameroonian people and the judiciary are independent of the administrative and legislative authorities.

In the matter of external affairs, Cameroonian citizenship has been recognized and France shares with the Cameroonian authorities the responsibilities incumbent on it by virtue of the Trusteeship System.

Those are the broad outlines of the Statute which is given in full in annex II of the Visiting Mission's report, to which the Franco-Cameroonian Conventions are also annexed.

I feel I need not go into greater detail, but since we are dealing with provisional texts, we are quite prepared to give any explanations which may be desired. The Statute will govern the Cameroons during 1959. It is the last stage in the evolution of Cameroonian institutions before independence and the termination of trusteeship, as stated in the preamble. For, on 1 January 1960 autonomy will be replaced by independence, and the remaining powers, relating to external affairs, will pass into the hands of the Cameroonian authorities. The Statute itself is therefore only a means of preparing the most favourable conditions for independence, whose time-table was worked out in complete agreement by the French and Cameroonian Government. It is a pre-independence Statute.

During the negotiations, France agreed to recognize the option of the Cameroons for independence on the termination of trusteeship. The Cameroonian Government and all the people wanted a date to be fixed forthwith in accordance

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with the wishes they had expressed. Moreover, the Administering Authority, having acknowledged the need to transfer all internal powers to the Cameroonian authorities, could no longer assume the responsibilities of trusteeship for an indefinite period. It was in those circumstances that the Legislative Assembly was consulted on the subject of a time-table for the attainment of the objectives of the Trusteeship System in the Cameroons.

In its resolution of 24 October, the Assembly proclaimed the wish of the people that the State of the Cameroons should attain full national independence on 1 January 1960, and requested the Cameroonian Government to ask France to propose, in the General Assembly of the United Nations, the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement on attainment of independence.

On 28 October I had the honour, on behalf of the French Government, formally to submit the agreements concluded to the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly. A special session of the Trusteeship Council, as you will recall, enabled it to supplement the terms of reference of the Visiting Mission. Lastly, a memorandum, submitted to the General Assembly on 12 November, stated that the time had come to invite the people of the Cameroons to complete the final phase of the Trusteeship, and that immediate provision must be made for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement on the attainment of independence, on 1 January 1960.

This standpoint was reaffirmed in the course of the General Assembly's debates, both by the representative of France and the Cameroonian Prime Minister, Mr. Ahidjo.

Those debates are too recent to warrant extensive reference to them at this time. The passage of time will enable us to view them in their true perspective, without, however, indulging in subtle interpretations of the text or psychoanalysing the Fourth Committee's collective soul.

The first point I should like to make is that the Assembly received with satisfaction the announcement of independence for the Cameroons under French administration on 1 January 1960. There was unanimity on that score. No one has questioned our time-table. We emphasized this in our statement of 25 November 1958, indicating that, whatever procedure was adopted, the Cameroons

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would be independent on 1 January 1960, and that, in accordance with the wishes of the Cameroonian Assembly, we would oppose any efforts, regardless of their nature, which might be made to delay the accession of the Cameroonian people to their full sovereignty.

In its unanimously adopted resolution 1282 (XIII), the General Assembly "notes the declaration of the Government of France that the Cameroons under French administration is to achieve independence on 1 January 1960, thus fulfilling the objectives of the Trusteeship System."

My second point is that the Assembly, although fully aware of the urgent need for a decision, in view of the proximity of the date of 1 January 1960, hesitated to take it immediately. The reason for its hesitation was that some delegations still had doubts regarding the situation in the Cameroons, the most appropriate procedure for terminating the Trusteeship, the genuineness of the Cameroonian Government's powers, the problem of reunification, and so on.

For our part, although things were perfectly clear to us and our position had been defined with a frankness which even our adversaries had recognized, we had absolutely no desire, seeing that our time-table had not been questioned, to force a decision on the General Assembly, to exert pressure on the United Nations. Quite the contrary. Since we had nothing to hide and our case was crystal-clear, we hoped to obtain the broadest possible approval from the United Nations. Some persons were still doubtful or hesitant? Never mind. There was a United Nations Mission in the Cameroons - why not await its report? But since a decision could not be postponed until the fourteenth session of the General Assembly, the obvious solution was for the Assembly to meet again as soon as the Trusteeship Council was in a position to forward to it the Visiting Mission's report, together with its own observations.

It is the representative of Haiti who deserves the credit for having first presented this solution, which we supported and which was unanimously adopted. I believe the President is well acquainted with this representative, whose experience, both in the United Nations and with trusteeship problems, has once more been extremely useful to us.

On the President's initiative, the General Assembly expressed its confidence that the Visiting Mission and the Trusteeship Council could propose to it a clear solution to the Cameroons problem by 20 February.

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Let us consider, then, the conclusions of the Visiting Mission.

First of all, on behalf of the Administering Authority and the Cameroonian Government, let me pay a tribute to Mr. Gerig, Mr. Jaipal, Mr. Salomon and Mr. Thorp, and also to the Secretariat team which helped them, for the conscientious and competent way in which they carried out their delicate task. For the reasons given above, and in order that there should be no doubts on the matter and that the truth should be plain to all, we hoped that they would be able to gather all the information possible from the most reliable sources and with the greatest guarantees of objectivity. The High Commissioner's Office and the Cameroonian Government wanted the Mission to be perfectly free to meet everybody who wished to meet it, to receive all petitions which might be addressed to it, and to establish contact with all representatives of Cameroonian opinion, including the opposition.

It was absolutely necessary that the representatives of the United States, Haiti, India and New Zealand should be able to make an exhaustive inquiry into all the problems with which the General Assembly was concerned. In order to see and hear a great deal, they were not sparing of their time. We thank them for their strenuous work. We are gratified to note that the conclusions in their report were adopted by unanimous agreement.

What questions were left in abeyance, or more exactly, what were the questions concerning which some delegations awaited - and still await - clarification from the Visiting Mission before taking a final decision on the termination of Trusteeship?

First question: Ab Jove principium. What about independence? What is the wish of the people of the Cameroons?

The reply is to be found in paragraphs 135 and 136 of the Visiting Mission's report: "... the overwhelming majority of the population desires independence", and the date of "... 1 January 1960, which was approved in the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons by a large majority, is also supported by the great majority of the population" (T/1427, page 65).

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Second question: Is a referendum necessary?

The reply is to be found in paragraph 136: "... it is not necessary to consult the population on this subject before the termination of trusteeship" (Ibid.).

Third question: Are new general elections necessary before the attainment of independence?

The reply is to be found in paragraph 141: "There are certainly insufficient grounds ... for the holding of new general elections under United Nations supervision before the termination of trusteeship. Furthermore, it [the Mission] sees no reason why fresh elections to the Legislative Assembly should be a precondition of the attainment of independence. It must be remembered that it was the present Legislative Assembly and Government which demanded and obtained from France the commitment to grant independence on 1 January 1960. It would be ironic if their representative character were to be called in question." (Ibid., page 67).

Fourth question: Precisely to what extent is the present Assembly representative?

The reply is to be found in paragraphs 138, 139, et seq.: "An examination of the conditions in which the elections of 23 December 1956 took place and of their results does not ... give justification for any claim that the composition of the Legislative Assembly does not reflect popular opinion, except possibly in the Sanaga-Maritime. ... The Mission is of the opinion that on the whole the present Legislative Assembly is representative in character." (Ibid., pages 66 and 67).

Fifth question: Has the final objective of the International Trusteeship System been reached?

The reply is to be found in paragraph 134: "The terms of the new statute and the clarifying provisions in its preamble afford no grounds for doubt that the independence which the Cameroons will enjoy on the termination of Trusteeship will be full and complete. Moreover, the manner in which the Legislative Assembly and the Government have exercised the powers transferred to them, and the economic and social development of the Territory, encourage the Mission to believe, with the Administering Authority, that the Cameroonians have the capacity to assume the responsibilities of independence." (Ibid., page 65).

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Sixth question: What about the disturbances in the Sanaga-Maritime?

The reply is to be found in paragraphs 102, 157 and others: The rebellion has virtually ended. The number of rebels who have surrounded clearly shows the rapid decline of the movement in the Sanaga-Maritime. (Ibid., page 72).

Seventh question: What do the Cameroonians under French administration think of reunification?

The reply is to be found in paragraphs 165 and 166: It is not necessary to consult the people on the matter. The general position was that they were waiting for the Cameroons under British administration to indicate in some formal manner, and preferably before 1 January 1960, its desire for unification, but this unification should not in any circumstances lead to a delay in the Territory's becoming independent. (Ibid., page 76).

These are the Visiting Mission's conclusions on the most important points. They are clear-cut, logical, supported by facts and should convince even those who are most hesitant to accept the evidence.

I would be guilty of omission, however, if I failed to mention two important suggestions made by the Visiting Mission, one concerning by-elections and the other national reconciliation.

The Mission feels (paragraph 142) that it would be desirable to rectify the situation in the Sanaga-Maritime as soon as possible by holding by-elections. (Ibid., page 68).

I am pleased to inform the Council that the Government of Mr. Ahidjo intends to hold by-elections very soon to fill vacancies caused by the assassination of two candidates in December 1956 and the disqualification of the two surviving candidates who were elected. These elections are to be held within the next few months.

The Mission, moreover, expressed its conviction (paragraph 158) that "a new amnesty measure, as broad as possible ... would be an act of great wisdom" (Ibid., page 73).

As the Prime Minister had assured the Mission, an amnesty bill has been submitted to the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons and is now under discussion. It will be voted upon and put into effect before the by-elections.

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For our part, we cannot fail to be pleased at seeing the final reconciliation of the Cameroonians being achieved by the Cameroonians themselves, since, as of 1 January, the power of declaring amnesties has been transferred to the Cameroonians by the Statute.

What conclusion shall we draw from these conclusions? In the main, that the conditions for reaching a decision with respect to the Cameroons under French administration have now been met.

Of course, there is still one more question to settle, that of reunification. If care and understanding are brought to bear on this problem by the Cameroonian Government and popular opinion, it is, as a matter of fact, already solved for them. The Cameroonians under French administration are ready to welcome their brothers under British administration, if the latter so desire. It is now for the people of the British Cameroons to have their say. We will have to study the question of the date and substance of a possible consultation when we come to consider the future of this Territory and my delegation reserves the right to present its views at that time. Besides, the solution of this problem is not a prerequisite to independence and to the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. The Visiting Mission noted that that was the feeling of Cameroonian public opinion, which would not tolerate any such pretexts for further delays.

France is proud - and I am sure that the Trusteeship Council will share this pride - that it is able to state, with the Visiting Mission, that the purposes of the Trusteeship System have been achieved in the Territory which it has been administering on behalf of the international community for forty years.

The State of Cameroons, a free and democratic State whose institutions are based on the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and on respect for the United Nations Charter, is now ready to take its place in the great family of nations.

The birth of a new nation is a moving, portentous and solemn event, which should reduce to silence all controversy and partisan arguments. We trust that the United Nations, which for many years has followed and encouraged the progress of the Cameroonian people, will be unanimous in confirming their accession to international life.

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We therefore urge the Council to adopt unanimously the last conclusion in the Visiting Mission's report, which was itself unanimously agreed upon, and to recommend that the General Assembly, at its resumed session, should adopt a resolution providing for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement relating to the Cameroons under French administration on the day of its independence, 1 January 1960.

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ANNEX IV

STATEMENT MADE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND AT THE 959TH MEETING OF THE
TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

When I spoke to the Trusteeship Council the other day, I asked for its indulgence in allowing me not to make a full statement at that time about the future of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration. I said that I thought I should wait until the results of last week's meeting of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly were known. We received a report during the weekend of the results of that meeting. I am therefore now in a position to proceed with my statement.

I shall deal first with the Southern Cameroons and then with the Northern part of the Trust Territory.

I should like to start off what I have to say about the Southern Cameroons by quoting part of paragraph 196 of the Visiting Mission's report:

"In the light of the conditions suggested by the two parties under which they would accept the election results as deciding the future of the Territory, the Mission considered that the most probable consequence which might follow from the elections on 24 January was a further consultation of the people through a plebiscite on their future. In these circumstances the Mission decided that after the receipt of the results of the elections and of other relevant information concerning them it might be necessary for it to formulate further observations concerning a possible plebiscite."

(T/1426, paragraph 196)

As all members of the Trusteeship Council know, the elections were duly held on 24 January. The Kamerun National Democratic Party won fourteen of the twenty-six seats; the Kamerun National Congress and the Kamerun People's Party - a coalition which fought the elections as a coalition and which had formed the Government before the elections - won twelve seats. I think that I should now quote what the Visiting Mission has to say about the result of the elections in the supplementary report which it has submitted.

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"The Mission was informed further that the average poll was 70 per cent of the registered electors. It is difficult to indicate with accuracy the percentage of votes cast for candidates supporting the two main political trends, since the Kumba North-West seat was won without opposition and the positions of the independent candidates are not known." - that is, on the future of the Territory. For an approximate indication, however, the Kumba seat might be calculated as being worth to the KNC/KPP 70 per cent of the 9,550 registered electors there - i.e. as 6,685 votes. On this basis a total of 58,069 votes, or 40.4 per cent, might be said to have been cast in favour of candidates pledged to support association with the Federation of Nigeria, and 75,326 votes, or 52.3 per cent, in favour of candidates supporting 'secession' from Nigeria. The remaining 7.3 per cent of the votes were cast for independent candidates." (T/1426/Add.1, para. 212)

The Mission goes on to say later:

"It should also be said - and the Mission's own observations in the Territory bore this out - that personal likes and dislikes towards candidates and issues of a purely local character, undoubtedly had a bearing on the polling." (Ibid.)

As the members of the Council well know, Mr. Foncha was appointed Premier of the Southern Cameroons and has formed a Government. He is the leader of the KNDP. Furthermore, last week, a meeting of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly was held. It began on 11 February. Two motions were introduced into the House by the Government Party, and I should like to read out to the Council the terms of these motions. The first reads as follows:

"That this honourable House prays Her Majesty's Government to take immediate steps to fulfil the will of the people of the Southern Cameroons as indicated by the results of the last general elections in which the KNDP, the secessionist party, polled more than half the total number of votes cast, and thus implement the policy of this Government which strongly advocates secession of the Southern Cameroons from the ~~Federation~~ of Nigeria before she attains independence in 1960 and to continue under a modified form of the Trusteeship Agreement for some time during which the possibilities of reunification with any section of the British and French sectors can be explored."

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The second motion introduced by the Government Party reads as follows:

"That in view of the fact that a plebiscite is likely to be the means of determining whether or not the Southern Cameroons should secede from the Federation of Nigeria, this honourable House humbly prays His Excellency the **Governor General** to postpone the registration of voters in the Southern Cameroons for the forthcoming general elections to the House of Representatives until it becomes clear whether or not the Southern Cameroons will continue to send representatives to that House."

I should like also to read out to the Council the terms of an amendment to the first of these resolutions which was moved by the opposition parties which previously formed the Government of the Southern Cameroons. This amendment was the kind of amendment which substitutes something completely different for the motion as it originally stood. The whole motion, if it had been amended, would have read as follows:

"That this honourable House mandates the Premier and Leader of the Opposition in this House to represent to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organization the opinion of this House that there can be no better future for the Southern Cameroons than in its continued association with Nigeria and to request the United Nations to explore other and more effective means of ascertaining the wishes of the people of the Southern Cameroons about their future relationship with the Federation of Nigeria in view of the fact that the last general elections cannot be accepted as a decisive indication of the wishes of the people."

The result of the debate which has been reported to me by telegram is that the two Government motions were carried by 14 votes to 12.

At this stage I think I should refer the Council to the conclusion reached by the Visiting Mission in its supplementary report. I am going to read from paragraph 218 of the supplementary report:

"In the light of the foregoing, the Mission has come to the conclusion that the results of the elections cannot be regarded as decisive as far as the future of the Southern Cameroons is concerned. If general agreement should develop in the newly-elected House of Assembly concerning the future of the Southern Cameroons a formal popular consultation may prove

to be unnecessary; but if no such agreement emerges, it may only be through a consultation at some appropriate future date, probably a plebiscite, that it will be possible to resolve the basic issues. In that event, the Mission considers that the conditions for such a consultation, including its timing and the question or questions to be put to the people, will have to be determined by the General Assembly and the Administering Authority in consultation and as far as possible in agreement with the political parties in the Southern Cameroons."

(T/1426/Add.1)

I have given the Council the result of the debate in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly last week, and I have also referred to the recommendation of the Visiting Mission.

I should now like to make some observations on behalf of the United Kingdom delegation. First of all, I think from the voting in the House of Assembly - 14 for and 12 against, which reflects the party composition of the House of Assembly - that it can clearly be concluded that no "general agreement" has developed in this House of Assembly, to use the words from the Visiting Mission's report.

I have received only a telegraphic report of the proceedings, but I understand that both parties have made it clear that they accept that a plebiscite is required in order to determine their future. The Administering Authority, on whose behalf I speak, also takes this view and agrees with the Visiting Mission that the results of the recent elections cannot be regarded as decisive as far as the future of the Southern Cameroons is concerned. We also agree with the Visiting Mission that the conditions for such consultation, including its timing and the questions to be put, should be determined by the General Assembly and the Administering Authority. In doing so, the General Assembly and the Administering Authority will no doubt wish to take into account the views of the political parties represented in the Southern Cameroons legislature.

I believe that the Trusteeship Council will agree, as we do, with the view that the recent elections cannot, in the light of their results, be regarded as decisive, and also that, since no general agreement as to the future has emerged in the newly elected legislature, a plebiscite will be necessary. I think also that the Council will agree that the General Assembly should be asked to authorize such a plebiscite in agreement with the Administering Authority. The

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conditions under which the plebiscite should be held, including the questions to be put and the timing of such a plebiscite, should be settled by the General Assembly in consultation with the Administering Authority, after the views of the leaders of the political parties represented in the Southern Cameroons legislature have been heard.

Obviously the most difficult questions confronting the United Nations are the questions of timing and the choices to be put to the people. I do not think that the Council would wish me, in respect of these particular matters, to anticipate the views which will be expressed to the Fourth Committee by the political leaders from the Southern Cameroons, I believe that both Mr. Foncha, the Premier, and Dr. Endeley, the leader of the Opposition, will be coming here and they will express their views to the General Assembly and those of the parties they represent. I think it is right and proper that it should be they rather than I who should put forward these views. I do not propose, therefore, on this occasion to go into these particular matters.

I have made it clear that we believe that a consultation by plebiscite will be necessary and that this view is accepted by the political parties. I do not think that on this occasion it would be proper or appropriate for me to go into the questions of timing and choices. I wish to emphasize this point particularly: this is not an issue between an Administering Authority and a local legislature or political party; it is a question between the two sections of political opinion in the Territory. The concern of the United Kingdom as Administering Authority is that the people should have a full and fair opportunity in the Southern Cameroons of expressing their views. We are concerned with that. It is for them to say what their views are.

I should like to turn now to an essentially different problem, that of the Northern Cameroons, which is also dealt with in great detail in the report of the Visiting Mission. I shall begin by recalling the statement which I made in the Fourth Committee about the future of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration. I spoke at considerable length on this subject on 15 November last. I said, among other things, that how the consultation of the people of the British Cameroons about their future should be organized was a matter in the first instance for the Visiting Mission to advise on and for the Trusteeship Council to

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consider. I said at the time that, subject to the views which the Visiting Mission might express and the Trusteeship Council might form in the light of the Mission's report, it was the belief of the United Kingdom Government that the consultation should take the form of a plebiscite under United Nations supervision.

I made it clear that, as far as the United Kingdom Government was concerned, we were quite ready to agree that there should be a plebiscite in the Northern part of the Territory. I am sure that the same view was held by the Government of Nigeria, who are obviously closely concerned in this matter.

We envisaged that this plebiscite would take place, subject to the views which the Visiting Mission might express, in both parts of the Territory, the Northern and the Southern parts, and I expressed the view that the best and fairest arrangement would be for the votes in the two parts of the Territory to be counted separately, although here again I was most careful to point out that this also was a matter for the Visiting Mission to advise on in the first instance and for the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly to consider subsequently. In fact, I made it perfectly clear at the time that the views which I provisionally expressed then regarding the method of consultation were entirely subject to the findings of the Visiting Mission. If members of the Council will look at paragraph 173 of the report of the Visiting Mission, they will see that the Mission itself made the same point.

The Mission deals in paragraphs 166 to 169 of its report with the question of the relationship of the Northern and Southern parts of the Trust Territory in regard to the consultation to take place, and it comes to the very definite conclusion that the wishes of the Northern and Southern peoples of the Territory should be determined separately. It points out in paragraph 168 that the distinction to be drawn between the Northern and Southern parts of the Territory and their people is a fact which cannot be eliminated without doing violence to the wishes of all known opinion in the North. It seems to my delegation that this view cannot fail to be accepted.

Given, therefore, this conclusion that the north and south must be dealt with separately, the Mission then had to consider what form the consultation should take in each of the two sections of the Territory. The Mission considered this question

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in the knowledge that the Administering Authority would be prepared to agree to a plebiscite in each section if, in the opinion of the Mission, this was necessary and if the General Assembly decided thereafter to authorize one. The Mission was not, of course, in any way bound by its terms of reference to recommend any particular form of consultation, nor necessarily to recommend the same form of consultation for each section of the Territory. Here I should like to refer the Council to paragraphs 171 to 173 of the report. The Mission remarked in paragraph 171:

"There appeared to be a wide-spread notion among the regional Governments, the political parties and apparently the public at large that a plebiscite was to be a United Nations requirement." (T/1426, page 79)

Perhaps, reading between the lines, I detect - I hope I am not being unjust - a slight feeling on the part of the Mission that the Administering Authority may conceivably have erred in lending currency to the idea that the United Nations itself would insist on a plebiscite. But what has the Visiting Mission to say on this point? Here I should like to quote paragraph 172:

"The Mission was not wholly prepared for this, because there was nothing in its terms of reference, nor in the memorandum of the Administering Authority, which had committed either the United Nations or the Administering Authority to the idea that a plebiscite or other special kind of consultation had already been judged necessary or appropriate to the circumstances of the Trust Territory. The Mission therefore approached its task in the Trust Territory with the understanding that the necessity or otherwise for a plebiscite was an entirely open question, to which it was one of its principal functions to suggest an answer." (Ibid.)

The Mission goes on to refer to the debates which took place in the Fourth Committee at that time and to the statement which I made on 15 November - to which I have already referred. It talks about:

"the announcement made on 15 November by the representative of the Administering Authority that subject to the views of the Mission and the Trusteeship Council it intended to ask the General Assembly at its next session to agree to a consultation in the form of a plebiscite."

(T/1426, page 79)

Can there be some suggestion there that perhaps the representative of the Administering Authority was being a little premature in making this remark, even if it was made subject to the views of the Mission itself? I do not know, but I certainly entirely agree with the view expressed by the Mission in this part of its report that it was entirely open to it to suggest what form a consultation should take and not only that but whether it was necessary for a consultation to be held at all.

Now I feel that, even at the risk of being a little tedious, I must refer to some of the opinions of substance which the Mission expressed in this part of its report. I should like to preface this by making it very clear that we, as the Administering Authority, are impartial in this matter. We are not concerned to press one solution or another but we are concerned to do the right thing in the interests of the people.

On the subject of the views of the people of the northern section of the Cameroons under British administration as to their future, the Mission has a good deal to say, and I should like to refer the Council to some of these passages. The first one to which I want to refer is paragraph 150, in which the Mission refers to the views expressed in the past by "the Emirs and their traditional advisers". In paragraph 151 - and I think this is important - the Mission goes on to say:

"The Mission found the Emirs saying the same thing today, but now they speak with the support of many other voices. They themselves are surrounded by councils widely representative of groups within the community. There are elected councils in the districts; there are elected Cameroonians sitting in the regional and federal legislatures; there are political parties, for and against the Government, with active organizers and spokesmen; and there is an immeasurably larger number than ten years ago of men who are ready to express an opinion. Almost without exception.... all who spoke to the Mission conceived of no other future for the Northern Cameroons than as a part of the Northern Region and thus, in 1960, as part of the independent Federation of Nigeria." (T/1426, page 72)

In paragraph 152 it states:

"There is only one body which can be said to be in any sense representative of the Northern Cameroons as a whole. This is the Consultative Committee

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whose composition and functions, as described earlier, entitle it in the Mission's opinion to speak the minds of the people with all the authority that can be expected in the present circumstances of public opinion and expression." (Ibid.)

The composition of this body is shown in paragraph 178 of the report. It consists of:

"the elected Minister for the Northern Cameroons as chairman, the Lamido of Adamawa, the Emir of Dikwa, all the other elected members of the Northern Cameroons in the regional and federal legislatures, and six special members chosen by their local councils to represent the more remote southern areas." (Ibid., page 81)

The Mission says in paragraph 152:

"At Mubi, in the Mission's presence, the Consultative Committee debated and adopted unanimously a resolution in which, considering that the Northern Cameroons had a common culture, tradition, language and administration with the Northern Region of Nigeria, it reaffirmed that the wish of the people under trusteeship was to remain with the Northern Region when Nigeria received its independence in 1960." (Ibid., page 72)

In paragraph 153 the Mission goes on to say:

"In discussing the subject further with the Mission, members of the Committee from the Adamawa parts of the Trust Territory, from the Gwoza District in the Dikwa Emirate, from the Benue portion of the Trust Territory and from the Bambilla plateau, all supported that position. Nor did any of the representatives consider that the Northern Cameroons should be united with the Southern Cameroons." (Ibid.)

Then in paragraph 154 the Mission says that five of the elected members of the Committee, in a separate memorandum, expressed various views, including this:

"They made it clear that neither they, nor in their opinion the people who had elected them, desired or expected any change in the relationship with Nigeria." (T/1426, page 73)

Again, going to paragraph 157, it states:

"Among all of the District and Village heads and the members of the District Council whom the Mission met - and it believes that every district in the Northern Cameroons was represented before it in this way - the feeling was

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the same. They were all of the opinion that the inhabitants of the Northern Trust Territory would oppose any proposal of separation from Nigeria and that the areas concerned belonged properly, in fact, to the Provinces with which they were administered and should therefore remain a part of the Northern Region of Nigeria." (Ibid.)

But let us refer also to the opposition parties. These are dealt with in paragraph 149, where, after referring to various views about internal questions which were expressed to the Mission by opposition parties, the Mission writes as follows:

"For the Mission's purpose, moreover, the most important aspect of the dissenting views, expressed either through the opposition political parties or through local groups and individuals unconnected with the parties, is that they relate to matters of internal policy and administrative method, and do not call into question the continued association of the Northern Cameroons with the Northern Region of Nigeria." (T/1426, page 71)

There are other passages in the same sense. If I may turn to the Mission's comments on the determination of the future of the Trust Territory, starting from page 77 of the English text of the report, I should like to quote first from paragraph 175:

"The Visiting Mission found the great majority of the northern governmental and traditional leaders, political party spokesmen, representatives of District Councils and other persons with views on the matter in a state of mind which could better be described as resignation to the virtual imposition of a plebiscite than as a positive acceptance of it. This was not because they had any fear about the result; on the contrary they had no doubt of a practically unanimous vote in favour of the Northern Cameroons becoming part of Nigeria." (Ibid., page 80)

The Council will remember the passage I quoted earlier to the effect that the Mission had found the people in a state of mind that the United Nations itself was likely to require a plebiscite. This passage from paragraph 175 should be read in connexion with the statement which I have just mentioned.

Again, let us look at what is said in paragraph 178 of the report, where it refers to the Consultative Committee, which I have described earlier, having:

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"unanimously adopted a resolution reaffirming the desire of the people of the Northern Cameroons to belong to the Northern Region of Nigeria when the latter attained independence in 1960, its members with equal unanimity informed the Mission that they would accept a plebiscite if it should be considered necessary - but that they did not so consider it." (Ibid., page 81)

It is stated in paragraph 179:

"These representatives expressed the opinion, which was echoed many times before the Mission by people of the Northern Cameroons everywhere it went between Yola and Bama, that the future of the Northern Cameroons as an integral part of Northern Nigeria was in no sense an issue on which opinion was divided. They emphasized that the wishes of the people had been made known on innumerable occasions through their elected as well as their traditional representatives, and that a plebiscite could have no result except to confirm those wishes once more." (Ibid., page 82)

I should like to quote the conclusion which the Mission itself recorded in paragraph 181:

"The Mission has come to the conclusion, on the basis of the facts and opinions known to it - which include the consideration of historical and political development which it has set forth in the first part of this report - that there is no difference of opinion on the principal question of the future of the northern Cameroons which would require or justify the holding of a formal consultation on the subject. It believes it to be manifestly the opinion of the northern population as a whole, as far as it can be expressed at present and in the foreseeable future, that they should become permanently a part of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria when the latter attains independence. The Mission accordingly recommends that, if the General Assembly accepts such a union as the basis for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, no further consultation need be held."

(Ibid., page 83)

I must apologize for quoting so extensively from the Mission's report, but it seemed to me to be necessary to draw the attention of the Council to these particular passages.

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Now, I should like to make a very few observations as the representative of the Administering Authority. We, of course, have carefully considered the report of the Visiting Mission on this point, and the conclusion which it has reached.

I am bound to say that we cannot fail to find the arguments of the Mission very convincing. I believe, myself, that this will be the general view of the Council, and in fact, that the Council would not find it easy to contest the view that there is no difference of opinion among the people of the Northern Cameroons about their future, and that there is a general wish that it should remain with the Northern Region of Nigeria as part of an independent federation. I think, therefore, that the Council will wish to go along with the Mission's views and to recommend them to the General Assembly for appropriate action.

But before I finish I want again to make the position of the United Kingdom absolutely clear in this matter so that there is no possibility of misunderstanding. We should have been perfectly ready to see a plebiscite held in the North had this been shown to be necessary. But we cannot ignore the views expressed by the Visiting Mission. Since the Mission says that a plebiscite is neither necessary nor justified, and has produced what seemed to us convincing arguments in support of this, and since the Mission has in fact satisfied itself as to the manifest opinion of the population as a whole concerning their future, I hardly think that the Council will wish to see the people of the Northern Cameroons burdened gratuitously with all the paraphernalia of a more formal consultation.

The Minister for Northern Cameroonian Affairs in the Government of the Northern Region of Nigeria is coming to the United Nations, and will no doubt make a statement to the Fourth Committee on this subject. The Minister in question is Mallam Abdullahi Dan Buram Jada. The General Assembly will be able to hear from him the views of his people on this question and on the extent to which, for them, the objectives of the Trusteeship System will be achieved by obtaining independence as part of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria.

I wish to say for the Northern section of the Trust Territory, just as I did for the Southern section, this is not an issue in which the Administering Authority is concerned one way or the other. It is an issue on which the views of the people must be considered as most important. We have an experienced and impartial Visiting Mission which has gone to the Trust Territory and has reported that there is no difference of opinion among the people as to their future. I am sure that this Council will wish, in its recommendations to the General Assembly, to give full weight to the views which the Mission has expressed.

ANNEX V

RECORDS OF THE TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING
THE FUTURE OF THE TRUST TERRITORIES OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER
FRENCH ADMINISTRATION AND THE CAMEROONS UNDER UNITED KINGDOM
ADMINISTRATION

[See T/SR.953 to T/SR.963]
