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 MEETING**

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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Agenda item 13:	
The future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration: special report of the Trusteeship Council (continued)	
Requests for supplementary hearings (continued)	731
Hearing of petitioners (continued)	732
Requests for supplementary hearings (concluded)	733
Hearing of petitioners (concluded)	733
Consideration of draft resolutions (continued)	734

Chairman: Mr. Frederick H. BOLAND (Ireland).

In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Eilan (Israel), Rapporteur, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 13

The future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration: special report of the Trusteeship Council* (A/4092, A/4093/Rev.1, A/4094, A/C.4/395, A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1, A/C.4/L.581, A/C.4/L.582, A/C.4/L.585, A/C.4/L.586, T/SR.953-963) (continued)

**REQUESTS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY HEARINGS
 (continued)**

1. The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Mbida, the representative of the Parti des démocrates camerounais, had requested permission to make a brief supplementary statement.
2. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) observed that never before in the history of the Committee or of the Trusteeship Council had petitioners been permitted to speak once the general debate had begun. His delegation was, however, second to none in its insistence that the right of petition should be safeguarded. He therefore suggested as a compromise that the petitioner should be asked to circulate his statement in writing.
3. Mr. SEARS (United States of America) and Mr. KENNEDY (Ireland) supported that suggestion.
4. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had always felt that it was of benefit to the Committee to hear petitioners express the views of different sectors of the population of a Trust Territory. As Mr. Mbida represented an important sector of the population of the Cameroons his views regarding the conditions which should properly prevail upon the accession of the Territory to

*In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1281 (XIII).

independence were unquestionably of great interest to the Committee. He therefore proposed that the request should be granted.

5. Mr. VITSAXIS (Greece) said that, while his delegation felt that the Committee had set a regrettable precedent by allowing petitioners to speak after the general debate had begun, it would be unfair to refuse that right to Mr. Mbida now that it had been granted to other petitioners.

6. Mr. KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET (France) said that he would refrain from participating in the vote on the request, as he had done in the case of the similar requests submitted by other petitioners. The Committee had reached an agreement that each petitioner should limit his oral statement to fifteen minutes; the request for permission to speak again after the general debate had begun, which had no precedent in the history of the Committee or of the Trusteeship Council, seemed to be simply an indirect way of evading that limitation. If certain petitioners were to be granted the right to be heard again the Committee should logically suspend the session in order to allow the petitioners who had already returned to the Cameroons to come back and make further statements.

7. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) reminded the Committee that there were a number of delegations, including his own, which had not been parties to the agreement to limit the time allowed the petitioners. His delegation could never support an agreement which thus infringed the right of petitioners to put their case before the United Nations. The agreement was, moreover, contrary to the practice followed in the past with regard to Trust Territories.

8. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) moved the closure of the debate on the request for a hearing.

9. Mr. KELLY (Australia), speaking in opposition to the motion for closure, said that its purpose seemed to be to accord the right of petitioners to be heard priority over the right of the representatives of Member States to speak on what he thought had become an abuse of the right of petition. He felt that it was important for the Committee, particularly when it was about to vote, to safeguard its dignity as a gathering of representatives of sovereign States. Mr. Mbida's request raised an issue of principle, which should be fully and freely discussed.

10. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to vote on the motion for closure.

The motion for closure was adopted by 24 votes to 7, with 38 abstentions. The Committee decided, by 35 votes to 10, with 27 abstentions, to allow Mr. Mbida to make a further statement.

11. Mr. PAZHAWAK (Afghanistan) proposed that any other petitioners who might wish to make further oral

statements should be required to submit their requests before noon of that day, that they should be ready to speak at any time that the Chair saw fit, that their additional statements should be limited to ten minutes and that they should be allowed to circulate in writing any remarks which they were unable to make within that time-limit.

12. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) said that she supported the Afghan representative's proposal as a whole but thought that, inasmuch as the petitioners who had already made supplementary statements had been allowed fifteen minutes, other petitioners who wished to be heard again should be allowed the same amount of time.

13. Mr. PAZHAWAK (Afghanistan) said that in order to avoid the need for two votes on his proposal he would accept the Liberian representative's suggestion.

14. The CHAIRMAN suggested that if there were no objections to the Afghan proposal, as amended by the Liberian representative, the Committee should adopt it.

It was so decided.

HEARING OF PETITIONERS (continued)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. André-Marie Mbida, representative of the Parti des démocrates camerounais, took a place at the Committee table.

15. Mr. MBIDA (Parti des démocrates camerounais) said that he had asked to be heard once more before the Committee came to a decision on the serious problems connected with the Cameroons in order to bring to the Committee's attention some new facts which he had just learned.

16. He and his fellow-petitioners had come to New York because the problem of the Cameroons under French administration was being discussed by the General Assembly for the last time. Final decisions would be taken and he hoped they would be taken in full knowledge of what was involved. The people of the Cameroons had great confidence in the United Nations, as could be seen from the thousands of petitions which had been received. The problem facing the Cameroons could have been settled in the Territory itself but his party had preferred to trust to the United Nations.

17. The people of the Cameroons asked for dissolution of the present Legislative Assembly and new elections before the attainment of independence on 1 January 1960. He would not repeat the arguments which he had advanced at the 855th meeting and which had not been refuted. He must, however, inform the Committee that a heated debate had taken place recently in the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly. The governmental group had tried to force a deputy belonging to the Parti des démocrates camerounais to disavow Mr. Tsalla Mekongo and Mr. Mbida and to state that the country did not wish for dissolution of the Assembly. The meeting had finally become so disorderly that it had had to be adjourned.

18. His party, which with its allied groups represented approximately one million of the Territory's total population of three million, was not trying to exert pressure upon the Fourth Committee but merely to provide it with information about the true situation in the Territory, as was its duty.

19. The Cameroons wanted not counterfeit independence but genuine independence. That was what he wished to impress upon the Fourth Committee. The party he represented wanted the United Nations to ensure that on 1 January 1960 the Cameroons would obtain full and complete independence. Until that date the United Nations had every right to watch over events in the Territory.

20. In conclusion he thanked the members of the Committee in his own name and on behalf of Mr. Tsalla Mekongo and of the people they represented.

21. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that he understood from the report on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427 and T/1434^{1/}) submitted by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958 that Mr. Mbida had taken an active part in the preparation of the Statute (T/1314) which had come into force in 1957. Mr. Mbida had been the first choice of the Administering Authority, represented by the High Commissioner of the Cameroons, to head the Government of the Cameroons when the Statute had come into force and would therefore be able to throw light on the provisions of the Statute.

22. Article 2 of that Statute stated that the special organization of the Trust State of the Cameroons "shall continue in force until the inhabitants of the Cameroons, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and the Trusteeship Agreement of 13 December 1946, in particular with the provisions of article 5 thereof, are invited to express an opinion on the definitive régime of the Cameroons".

23. As the members of the Committee were well aware, no elections or popular consultation of any kind had taken place in the Cameroons under French administration since the 1957 Statute had come into force. Yet the special organization of the Trust State of the Cameroons had lapsed as a result of the 1959 Statute (T/1427, annex II) and would definitely cease to exist following the attainment of independence on 1 January 1960. He asked Mr. Mbida whether he thought that according to the provisions of article 2 there should have been some kind of popular consultation before the change in the régime of the Cameroons had taken place. It was true that under article 59 of the 1957 Statute the Legislative Assembly could, by resolution, request the amendment of the Statute, but that was not the same as inviting the inhabitants of the Territory to express an opinion.

24. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET pointed out that the Iraqi representative's statement that the High Commissioner had "chosen" Mr. Mbida as Prime Minister was not quite accurate; the Prime Minister had been designated by the High Commissioner after the prescribed consultations and confirmed in office by a vote of the Legislative Assembly.

25. Mr. MBIDA (Parti des démocrates camerounais) said that it had not been anticipated when article 2 of the 1957 Statute was drafted that an opinion on the definitive régime of the Cameroons would be expressed by the Legislative Assembly rather than by the people as a whole.

26. When the present Cameroonian Government had submitted to the Legislative Assembly the draft resolution authorizing it to negotiate for the termination of

^{1/} Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4092).

the Trusteeship Agreement, the Parti des démocrates camerounais had opposed that draft and demanded that fresh elections should be held.

27. In the course of the debate in the Fourth Committee the representative of Ceylon had suggested that the leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly should have protested when the Government had proposed to negotiate for the termination of the trusteeship and should have asked that new elections should be held. Mr. Mbida said that his party had in fact advocated the holding of general elections before negotiations were begun for the termination of the trusteeship.

28. Article 59 of the Statute did not relate to the definitive régime of the Cameroons but to certain matters which had been left in abeyance or in the hands of the High Commissioner.

29. The question of a dissolution was not a new one; during the General Assembly's twelfth session Mr. Assalé and Mr. Soppo Priso had been granted hearings by the Fourth Committee and had asked for the dissolution of the Legislative Assembly.

30. There was a simple reason for the opposition to fresh elections; members of the Government received enormous salaries and allowances and they were afraid that they might not be re-elected.

31. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that he understood from the petitioner that article 2 of the 1957 Statute had never really been put into effect and that the 1959 Statute had come into force in violation of that article. It was clear from article 2 that the independent status of the Cameroons should have been preceded by an invitation to the inhabitants to express an opinion on their definitive régime. That was conclusive proof that those who were asking for general elections were doing so on the basis not only of common sense and logic but also of a provision of the Statute promulgated in agreement between the French Government and the Cameroonian authorities.

32. Mr. AHIDJO (France), Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration, replying to Mr. Mbida's allegation concerning the salaries of Cameroonian deputies, pointed out that those salaries had been fixed in 1957, when Mr. Mbida was Prime Minister.

33. In claiming that he and his colleagues represented a million people, Mr. Mbida had based his figure on the constituencies of a group of twenty-two deputies; Mr. Mbida's group, however, had consisted of nine deputies only, and three of those had since broken away. As the overwhelming majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly were opposed to a dissolution, Mr. Mbida as a democrat should be ready to accept their will. Mr. Mbida claimed to have received telegrams from supporters in the Cameroons; Mr. Ahidjo had also received telegrams supporting the position of his Government and opposing a dissolution before the termination of the trusteeship.

34. Mr. Mbida had asserted that the old Statute was a legal instrument because it had been freely debated in the Legislative Assembly. Logically, therefore, he must recognize the validity of the new Statute, which had also been debated in the Legislative Assembly. Article 2 of the old Statute did not form part of the new Statute and was therefore obsolete. Moreover

there was no reference in that article to elections before the attainment of independence.

35. As he had already informed the Committee, when the Cameroonian Government had submitted a draft resolution to the Legislative Assembly asking for the termination of the trusteeship on 1 January 1960, Mr. Mbida's group had presented a counter-proposal for the immediate proclamation of independence without any popular consultation whatsoever.

36. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that his point was that, under article 2 of the 1957 Statute, the 1959 Statute should not have come into force without prior popular consultation because it changed the special organization as defined in the 1957 Statute. Article 2 had been violated and that was why his delegation was pressing for elections now, with a view to rectifying that earlier mistake.

37. Mr. AHIDJO (France), Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration, replied that since the 1959 Statute did not constitute the definitive régime of the Cameroons there had been no need to consult the people before bringing it into force. It was merely a step on the road towards independence.

38. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) maintained that the 1959 Statute was the definitive régime of the Cameroons while it was under trusteeship. The United Nations could not be concerned with the régime of the Cameroons after the termination of the trusteeship.

Mr. André-Marie Mbida, representative of the Parti des démocrates camerounais, withdrew.

REQUESTS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY HEARINGS (concluded)

39. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that a request for a further hearing had been received from Mr. Bebey-Eyidi, representative of the Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes.

40. Mr. MONTERO DE VARGAS (Paraguay) proposed that the Committee should hear the petitioner immediately.

It was so decided.

HEARING OF PETITIONERS (concluded)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Marcel Bebey-Eyidi, representative of the Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes, took a place at the Committee table.

41. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI (Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes), recalling his statement at the 857th meeting that he deplored the violent methods used by the Union des populations du Cameroun, wished to make it clear that he was opposed to violence in any form and from whatever quarter. In dealing with the difficult problem before it the Committee should try to determine not who was right but what was the just solution, for it was the moral responsibility of the United Nations, in addition to appraising the recommendations of the Visiting Mission and the Trusteeship Council, to ensure that justice prevailed. The question should not be studied merely in the light of its significance for certain persons, political parties or blocs of nations; what was important above all was that the United Nations, in accordance with the principle of the Trusteeship System,

should try to restore peace in the Territory. It could not be forgotten that before the United Nations existed the League of Nations had begun to lose its prestige and authority when in 1955 it had lacked the courage to act as an arbiter in the solution of the problems confronting it. The group which he represented had asked for elections to be held before the attainment of independence on 1 January 1960 because it felt that such elections would enhance the prestige of the Legislative Assembly, the Administering Authority and the United Nations. His compatriots were impatiently awaiting the General Assembly's decision, which would have far-reaching consequences for his country.

42. Mr. KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET (France) agreed with the petitioner that a just solution of the Cameroonian problem must be sought. He likewise shared his view that the prestige of the United Nations was at stake and that its decision would have the utmost importance for the future of the Territory. He noted with satisfaction the petitioner's statement that he was opposed to violence.

43. Mr. ESPINOSA Y PRIETO (Mexico) expressed the hope that Mr. Bebey-Eyidi would be able to play a significant part in the process of national reconciliation which was now taking place in the Cameroons under French administration.

44. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) associated herself with the Mexican representative's statement. Her delegation would always take an interest in the welfare of the Cameroonian people and was confident that whatever decision the United Nations might take all Cameroonians would work together in a constructive spirit.

45. Mr. HAKIM (Lebanon) said that he attached great importance to Mr. Bebey-Eyidi's objective opinions. He asked the petitioner if he was really worried about the consequences which failure to hold elections before independence might have for the Territory.

46. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI (Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes) replied in the affirmative. Were there no elections his compatriots would lose their faith in the United Nations.

47. Mr. GOMES PEREIRA (Brazil) asked the petitioner whether in his opinion peace in the Cameroons should be the work of the United Nations or of the Cameroonians themselves.

48. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI (Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes) replied that in every country peace was the responsibility of its inhabitants. It should be remembered, however, that the Cameroons was a Territory under the Trusteeship System and that many factors which were beyond the control of the inhabitants had contributed to the present instability. Only an atmosphere of peace could make possible the restoration of normal life in the Territory when it attained independence.

49. Mr. GOMES PEREIRA (Brazil) asked the petitioner what he himself would do to promote peace and national reconciliation once independence had been attained.

50. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI (Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes) said that it was difficult to anticipate what his role would be, for it would depend upon the circumstances, but he could assure the Committee that he was ready to work for peace.

51. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) asked the petitioner if the holding of elections before independence would benefit any particular political party.

52. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI (Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes) replied that failure to hold elections would serve to increase the support for the parties that were pressing for them and added that public opinion in general was in favour of new elections.

53. Mr. TOURE (Guinea) asked if the petitioner's reason for attaching importance to the holding of elections before the attainment of independence was that he thought they would promote reconciliation.

54. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI (Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes) replied that elections would constitute the most important step towards national reconciliation. It was only through the granting of an unconditional amnesty that the population would be enabled to express itself in general elections; without that, the atmosphere would not be propitious for the establishment of independence.

55. Mr. TOURE (Guinea) asked the petitioner what would be the effect on the Cameroonian people if the United Nations decided not to recommend the holding of general elections on the grounds that it was an internal matter.

56. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI (Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes) said that the people would be profoundly disappointed. If the Cameroonians had considered the question an internal one they would not have raised the funds to enable the petitioners to come to New York.

57. Mr. BAROODY (Saudi Arabia) asked if the petitioner had discussed with Mr. Ahidjo the possibility, should it be decided not to hold elections before independence, of forming a provisional coalition Government which would hold elections after the Cameroons attained independence.

58. Mr. BEBEY-EYIDI (Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes) said that he had had no occasion to consider that possibility with the Prime Minister but was confident that the latter would be willing to seek a solution. Any initiative in such an undertaking should come, he thought, from Mr. Ahidjo.

Mr. Marcel Bebey-Eyidi, representative of the Comité pour le regroupement des forces nationalistes, withdrew.

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/C.4/L.580/REV.1, A/C.4/L.581, A/C.4/L.582) (continued)

59. Mr. JHA (India), introducing the amendments (A/C.4/L.588) sponsored by his own and other delegations to the seven-Power draft resolution regarding the future of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British administration (A/C.4/L.582), said that the formula proposed in the first amendment seemed to them to offer the best possible solution. No one had voiced opposition to the holding of a plebiscite to decide whether or not the population of the Northern Cameroons wished to join the independent Federation of Nigeria. Mr. Foncha, the Premier of the Southern Cameroons, had proposed that in that part of the Territory a plebiscite should first be held to determine whether the population was in favour of association

with Nigeria and that, if the reply was negative, new negotiations could be held with a view to unification with the Cameroons under French administration once the latter had attained independence. Mr. Endeley, the leader of the Opposition in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly, had expressed no opposition to that proposal and it was not anticipated that he would raise any objections to it. Furthermore, it was known that Malam Abdullahi, Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs in the Government of the Northern Region of Nigeria, would not oppose the formula set forth in the amendment. Consequently all that remained was to decide the problem of the unification of the Cameroons under British administration and the Cameroons under French administration. If the population did not vote in favour of association with Nigeria, i.e. if the answer to the first question was negative, a second plebiscite could be held on the question of unification.

60. With regard to the second amendment, he recalled that operative paragraph 5 of the seven-Power draft resolution expressed the hope that the Administering Authority would seek to promote agreement between the political parties before the opening of the fourteenth session of the General Assembly on the alternatives to be put to the electorate and on the qualifications for voting in it. The reason the sponsors of the amendments had proposed a change in that paragraph was that they felt it was the responsibility of all concerned to reach agreement.

61. With reference to the statements of the Liberian and Uruguayan representatives to the effect that women should take part in the plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons, he observed that in India there was absolute equality of men and women, as laid down in the Constitution of that country; fifty-seven women were members of the Indian Parliament and the Government supported the principle of complete equality of rights for both sexes. Nevertheless, he felt that in the case of the Cameroons some concession must be made to reality and to considerations of a practical order. He would have preferred a plebiscite on the basis of universal suffrage. He hoped that it would not be long before women were given the right to vote in the Northern Cameroons and in Nigeria, but that was something which would have to come about gradually. If the United Nations were to insist that women should be given the

right of vote before the plebiscite was held he feared that it might become impossible to hold a plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons for several years. He therefore appealed to the Liberian delegation not to press its amendment (A/C.4/L.587).

62. Mr. VITELLI (Italy) wished to set forth his Government's position with regard to the seven-Power draft resolution (A/C.4/L.582) and the amendments introduced by the representative of India (A/C.4/L.588).

63. It was obvious that there was a general desire in the Northern Cameroons for union with the Federation of Nigeria once the latter had attained independence. The reasons for that general desire had been eloquently stated by Malam Abdullahi and coincided with the opinion expressed by the Visiting Mission in its report on the Cameroons under British administration (T/1426 and Add.1²). He noted that the consensus of opinion in the Committee seemed to favour a plebiscite and in that connexion he recalled the Indian representative's statement that it would be advisable to confirm the general desire of the people of the Territory by means of a popular consultation.

64. With regard to the plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons, he observed that further consultations would have to take place between the parties concerned to settle the matter of the alternatives to be put to the population and the qualifications to be required of voters and that such consultations should be carried out in time to allow the General Assembly to take a decision on the matter at its fourteenth session. He hoped that a United Nations commissioner to supervise the plebiscites would be appointed as soon as possible and he shared the United Kingdom representative's opinion that the plebiscites should be carried out consecutively.

65. As far as the amendments introduced by the Indian representative were concerned, the sponsors of the draft resolution had decided to accept them and incorporate them in the text of the draft.

66. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the Committee's decision on the future of the Territory would be unanimous, for that would prove that the United Nations had not failed in its mission and was standing unequivocally by the fundamental principles of the Trusteeship System.

²/Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4093/Rev.1).

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.