

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

Official Records


 Tuesday, 25 November 1958,  
at 3.20 p.m.

**NEW YORK**
**CONTENTS**

	Page
Agenda item 13:	
Report of the Trusteeship Council (continued)	
The future of the Cameroons under British administration and the Cameroons under French administration (continued) . . . . .	381

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

**AGENDA ITEM 13**

**Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3822, A/C.4/387, A/C.4/388, A/C.4/L.557 and Add.1, A/C.4/L.558 and Add.1) (continued)**

**THE FUTURE OF THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AND THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION (continued)**

1. Mr. COHEN (Chile) said that his delegation, like several others, had not taken part in the general debate on the Cameroons as it had been waiting to make its observations during the Committee's consideration of any draft resolutions that might be submitted. At the previous meeting his delegation had voted in favour of the United States motion for the adjournment of the debate because the two draft resolutions before the Committee (A/C.4/L.557 and Add.1, A/C.4/558 and Add.1) raised fundamental questions on which delegations would have to consult their Governments, and because the adjournment of the debate would have given the sponsors of the two drafts a further opportunity to arrive at an agreed text.

2. Mr. CARPIO (Philippines) regretted that he had been obliged to vote against the United States motion. Delegations should of course have time to obtain instructions from their Governments on matters of such importance as the independence of two Trust Territories and the convening of a special session of the General Assembly, but it was several days since the latter question had been raised and there had been time enough to allow delegations to consult their Governments. He would have voted in favour of the United States motion if it had been merely a question of adjourning the debate for two or three days, but he could not agree to the indefinite adjournment which seemed to be envisaged and which would have delayed the Committee's work unduly.

3. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) said he had voted in favour of the motion to adjourn for the reasons which he had stated before the vote. He did not understand how delegations could have thought that the proposed adjournment was indefinite since there had never been any question of adjourning for more than a few days. The observations made at the previous meeting by the representative of Iraq showed that there was some misunderstanding of the position of the United

Kingdom and France. He wished, therefore, to make the United Kingdom's position plain, so that no one could accuse the representatives of the Administering Authorities of misleading anyone. As he had said at the 810th meeting, the United Kingdom delegation had made it clear, during the unofficial conversations on the convening of a special session of the General Assembly, that it saw no need for a special session, but that since a number of delegations desired one, it was prepared to discuss the conditions for holding such a session in order to see whether a basis could be established for a further examination of the matter. The United Kingdom delegation yielded to none in its desire to expedite the Committee's work; it was not responsible for the delay in drafting the resolution in document A/C.4/L.558 and Add.1, and it had explained that it could not vote on the draft resolution before it had consulted its Government.

4. Mr. KELLY (Australia) said that as the representative of a country which was very remote from United Nations Headquarters, he was grateful to the United States delegation for having proposed the adjournment of the debate until delegations could receive instructions from their Governments which would enable them to vote on the two draft resolutions.

5. Mr. KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET (France) said that now that the debate on the Cameroons under French administration was drawing to a close he would like to sum up the position of the French Government. He had not intended to speak of the petitioners, but the representative of Jordan, in a most fantastic and odious statement, had referred to the "silence" of the French delegation with regard to them. Mr. Ngounga and Mr. Dookingue were students; they were proud of their culture, but French culture did not consist merely of a certain amount of knowledge, but even more of intellectual integrity and the courage to face facts. He did not blame them for being Communists but he did blame them for being ashamed of their Communism. Despite their efforts to conceal it, their political affiliation was obvious and there could be no mistaking the para-Communist character of the organization to which they belonged, namely, the Union nationale des étudiants camerounais, which, like the Union démocratique des femmes camerounaises, was nothing but a branch of the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC). How dared they complain of being persecuted, when the Cameroonian Government had awarded them a scholarship, which they had used to bring them to New York, and when they were completely free to leave France and to go back there? All he could wish them was that they would complete their studies as soon as possible and go back to the Cameroons to place their knowledge at the service of their country. As for Mr. Moumié, he had adopted a more subdued tone at the present session but he was still condescendingly dictating his conditions. The fact that he had not wished to take advantage of the amnesty and

to go back to the Cameroons to seek democratic election there showed that he could not conceive of an independent Cameroons in which he would not be in power, and with him the UPC, whose first action would be to stifle all opposition and to suppress all freedom. Since efforts to foment violence in the Cameroons were no longer succeeding, the petitioners were now trying to turn the General Assembly session to account by releasing a flood of slanderous statements and shouting about repression when the Administration took proceedings against murderers. In the hope of making a triumphal return to the Cameroons, with the support of the United Nations, they were citing, with a complete lack of logic, the so-called precedent of Togoland and endeavouring to discredit the lawful Government of the Cameroons and to cast doubt on the Assembly recently elected by universal suffrage. Unfortunately for them, this over-simple plan was being thwarted by the clear-sighted and liberal policy of the Cameroonian Government and by the national consciousness of the Cameroonian people.

6. What the Committee was discussing, however, was the report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3822). After a long and detailed examination of the general situation in the Territory, the Council had commended the Administering Authority and the Cameroonian Government for the development of political, economic and social institutions and for the progress achieved in all fields during the year under review (A/3822, vol. II, p. 93). Yet there was no trace of those findings in the draft resolution (A/C.4/L.558 and Add.1) before the Committee. Moreover, a new factor had supervened: the French Government's announcement, in full agreement with the Cameroonian Government and in accordance with the wishes of the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly, of 1 January 1960 as the date for Cameroonian independence and the simultaneous termination of the trusteeship. It should be noted that no one had so far called in question the date fixed for Cameroonian independence and the French delegation would therefore oppose any attempt whatsoever to delay the attainment of full sovereignty by the Cameroonian people. On the same date the Trusteeship Agreement would lapse, for the obvious reason that the termination of trusteeship was inherent in independence.

7. The situation had seemed so clear that, as he had told the Committee at the 774th meeting, the French Government had proposed that at its present session the Assembly should adopt the principle of a consultation of the Cameroonian population under United Nations supervision and that the Trusteeship Council should be asked to determine the manner in which the principle should be applied, in the light of the conclusions of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958. The view had been expressed that the findings of the Visiting Mission should not be prejudged and the French delegation had therefore deferred to the general opinion. Some had added that there was no point in holding a referendum, an opinion that was shared by the French delegation. On the other hand, his delegation did not understand the clamour for elections to be held in the Cameroons. Such elections would be even less warranted than a referendum to ascertain the opinion of the Cameroonians on independence or on reunification. The precedent of Togoland could not be invoked in that connexion, because, as the representative of

Haiti had shown at the 809th meeting, the situation there had been entirely different. The fact was that an attempt was being made to cast doubt on the legality of the Cameroonian Government and on the representative nature of the Cameroonian Assembly elected by universal direct and secret ballot. It was a case of improper interference in Cameroonian internal affairs, since the organization of elections came within the exclusive competence of the Cameroonian authorities.

8. As far as reunification was concerned, that was not and could not be a Franco-British problem; as Mr. Ahidjo, the Prime Minister, had emphasized, it was a problem for the Cameroonians themselves to settle. Certain factors in the problem were still unknown and, important though the question of the timetable might be, it was still more essential that when the time came the Cameroonians should be able to express themselves freely and in full knowledge of the facts.

9. After pointing out that, whatever happened, with or without a special session of the General Assembly, with or without a resolution, the Cameroons under French administration would become independent on 1 January 1960, he defined the attitude of his delegation towards the two draft resolutions before the Committee. In its view, draft resolution A/C.4/L.558 and Add.1 was unacceptable. If it was held that nothing could be decided before the Visiting Mission had submitted its report, then no aspect of the question should be prejudged and the Committee should content itself with accurately recording the facts. Operative paragraph 3 was inadmissible since it entrusted to the Assembly responsibilities which did not devolve upon it and since the Administering Authority had already taken the necessary steps to fulfil the objectives of the Trusteeship System. Again, he had asked that mention should be made of the statement by the Cameroonian Prime Minister (794th meeting) and of the wishes expressed by the Cameroonian Assembly in its resolution of 24 October 1958, which were the essence of the matter in that they were the basis of the recognition by France of the Cameroons' choice of independence. The hedging occasioned by that request had made it clear to him that once again the idea behind those tactics was to discredit the Cameroonian democratic institutions. It was strange indeed that, although the petitioners were mentioned in the draft resolution, the sponsors declined to mention also the regular Government of the Cameroons and the elected Assembly of the Territory. As it stood, the draft resolution was a provocation. Not only would his delegation vote against it but it would regard it in every way as null and void and would expressly ask all its friends to reject the draft resolution. His delegation would ask for a roll-call vote, for it wanted to be able to tell the Cameroonian people, the French people and international public opinion who were those who had favoured independence and freedom in the Cameroons.

10. Turning to the other draft resolution (A/C.4/L.557 and Add.1), he said that he had no objection to it so far as the Cameroons was concerned; he would point out, however, that it prejudged the reports of the Visiting Mission and the Trusteeship Council, which had a perfect right to consider that the convening of a special session in 1959 was not essential. Moreover, since the convening of a special session

had general political implications, many delegations would wish to have time to receive instructions from their Governments. In deference to their wishes, his delegation would abstain from voting on that draft resolution in the Fourth Committee, while reserving the position it would adopt in the plenary meeting of the Assembly.

11. Mr. MUFTI (United Arab Republic) regretted the French delegation had not shown greater moderation in its remarks. In view of the many important matters raised by the statement, he asked that it should be reproduced in full and circulated to the members of the Committee.

It was so decided.<sup>1/</sup>

12. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) thanked the French representative for the frankness with which he had spoken, particularly regarding the petitioners, although he considered that the comments on the latter's political views were uncalled for in the present debate. France had always been in the vanguard of civilization but it was sometimes disconcerting to note that certain actions of its Governments did not conform to that glorious tradition. His criticism of the views expressed by the French representative would be directed, not against France, but against the actions of its Government.

13. The French representative had said that his Government was opposed to any attempt to delay the accession of the Cameroons under French administration to independence. The Iraqi delegation shared that view and that was why it was asking for a special session of the General Assembly to be convened. It also agreed with the French Government that the trusteeship should be terminated either before the Cameroons acceded to independence or at the time of accession, and for that reason, too, it requested the convening of a special session which would make it possible to terminate the trusteeship in accordance with the provisions of Article 76 b of the Charter. It did not consider that the Trusteeship Council should decide on the method of consultation to be used; the Council was a subordinate body of the General Assembly and it was the latter which should take a decision on the matter, as it had done in the case of Togoland under British administration and Togoland under French administration. A further reason why his delegation had proposed the convening of a special session of the General Assembly was that it considered, as did the French Government, that the Assembly could not take any decision before knowing the conclusions of the Visiting Mission, that the question whether a referendum or elections should be held would have to be settled in the light of the reports of the Visiting Mission and the Trusteeship Council and, finally, that the question of unification was not an issue in the Cameroons under French administration but should be the subject of a referendum in the Cameroons under British administration. The French representative had said that the population of the latter Territory should be consulted at the proper time; as no one denied that that consultation should take place in 1959, that was a further reason for convening a special session of the Assembly.

14. The Sponsors of the the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.557 and Add.1 had submitted a brief text in order to avoid all controversial matters and not to lay the draft resolution open to the objections which the French representative had raised during the meeting. He welcomed the French representative's statement that he would not oppose the draft resolution but was surprised that he had requested postponement of the debate to enable delegations to receive instructions from their Governments. Delegations had had ample time to do so since the question of convening a special session of the Assembly had first been raised.

15. Mr. RODZINSKI (Poland) said that the Cameroonian question was not as complex as some delegations appeared to believe. It had been complicated by considerations which were foreign to the issue. It was chiefly a matter of determining the means by which the United Nations should assist the population of the Cameroons to express their wishes regarding their future.

16. The future of the Cameroons was a problem of sufficient importance to justify the convening of a special session of the General Assembly, as called for in the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.557 and Add.1. In that connexion, his delegation fully endorsed the statement made by the representative of Ceylon at the previous meeting. All the members of the Committee were aware of the reasons why that special session should be held not later than February 1959. Should the United Nations act otherwise, it would be abdicating its rights and shirking its obligations.

17. The draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.558 and Add.1 was not entirely satisfactory; by adopting it the Committee would be agreeing to delay for three months the decisions which it had to take on the question of the Cameroons. Furthermore, the draft resolution made no reference to the political situation in the two Territories. Nevertheless his delegation was prepared to vote in favour of it, since its sponsors included a number of countries which had attained independence in the post-war period and were therefore in a better position than others to know the situation in countries under the colonial system.

18. Although he had no desire to argue with the representative of France, he wished to assure him that no delegation wanted to delay the accession of the Cameroons to independence. The French delegation appeared to think that the Fourth Committee or the General Assembly should simply express satisfaction at the work France had accomplished in the Cameroons. His delegation agreed with what the representative of Iraq had said about France's great traditions, with which no country was more familiar than Poland. He would point out, however, that all countries had various and sometimes conflicting traditions: the important thing was to know what tradition was being followed in any given instance.

19. He hoped that the draft resolutions would be put to the vote as soon as possible. If the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.557 and Add.1 was not adopted, his delegation would feel free to submit another draft resolution or to give its support to any other draft resolution or amendment which might be submitted.

20. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) said that her delegation had taken a compromise position, for it felt that at a

<sup>1/</sup> The complete text of the statement made by the representative of France was circulated as document A/C.4/391.

time when two Trust Territories were about to achieve independence it was undesirable to recall the bitter past.

21. The people of Africa had been taught that independence was an ideal for all mankind. It was therefore unjust to brand as Communists petitioners who were striving to achieve that independence.

22. The Administering Authorities had stated that the two Territories of the Cameroons were ready for independence. They had indicated the dates by which the Territories would achieve independence. In the circumstances, it only remained to enable the people of the two Territories to make known, through a free consultation, whether they wished to remain divided and whether they considered that their present rulers had the support of the majority.

23. Her delegation considered that independence should not be delayed and it therefore supported the two draft resolutions before the Committee. It was sure that the French delegation would agree that the Visiting Mission's report should be studied before the General Assembly took a decision on the accession of the Cameroons under French administration to independence in 1960 and on the question of consulting the unification of the two Territories.

24. Mr. EL-RIFAI (Jordan) regretted that the French delegation had made personal attacks on the petitioners and had seen fit to describe the statements of the Jordanian delegation as fantastic. The whole world was aware of France's activities in the Cameroons and the members of the Committee were perfectly well able to judge the veracity of the various statements which had been made. His delegation reserved the right to reply in greater detail to the comments of the French delegation after studying the text of its statement.

25. Mr. NAJJAR (Lebanon) said that the criticisms which had been voiced were not directed at the French nation as a whole. He thought that the terms the French representative had used with regard to the petitioners were immoderate; he observed that it was a common practice to accuse those it was desired to discredit of Communism. He hoped that the French representative would modify his statement in accordance with the traditions of tolerance and liberalism for which France had always been honoured.

26. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia) pointed out that it was not the business of the Fourth Committee to concern itself with the value of any particular ideology, but only with the Charter, the Trusteeship Agreements and the fate of the peoples of the Trust Territories.

27. The French representative had accused certain delegations of wishing to delay the accession of the Cameroons to independence and had threatened to request a roll-call vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.558 and Add.1 in order that the Cameroonians might know which States had been in favour of the independence and freedom of the Cameroons. The discussion of the Cameroonian question was, however, of long standing and the Cameroonians who had had to suffer colonial rule were already aware of the views of the various delegations. The French representative had also said that the draft resolution tended to discredit the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons. The truth was that in omitting any reference to that Assembly and to the Prime Minister of the Cameroons, the sponsors of the draft resolution

had wished to avoid reopening a discussion on whether the present leaders of the Territory were truly representative.

28. Mr. TURKSON (Ghana) considered that the terms the French representative had used in speaking of the petitioners raised questions which the Fourth Committee was not called upon to examine. For the moment, the Committee's sole concern was the future of the people of the Cameroons. Its task was to examine the procedure to be followed to enable the General Assembly to recommend measures which would ensure the stability of an independent Cameroons in conformity with the United Nations Charter. There was nothing abnormal about that.

29. The attacks made on the petitioners were not particularly surprising. At the present time anyone who strove for the independence of his country was described as a Communist. Moreover, throughout history, those who had expounded new ideas had brought upon themselves the anger of the established authorities.

30. The delegation of Ghana moved the closure of the debate on the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.557 and Add.1.

31. Mr. LOIZIDES (Greece) moved the closure of the whole debate under rule 118 of the rules of procedure.

32. Mr. GOMES PEREIRA (Brazil) and Mr. COHEN (Chile) opposed the motion for closure of the debate: the debate could not be closed when the draft resolutions had not yet been examined and when many delegations had not had time to receive instructions from their Governments.

33. Mr. TURKSON (Ghana) withdrew his motion and moved that the list of speakers who wished to take the floor on the subject of the draft resolutions should be closed.

34. Mr. BOZOVIC (Yugoslavia), supported by Mr. RASGOTRA (India), asked the Chairman not to put the closure of the list of speakers to the vote until the representatives who wished to speak in the discussion had given in their names.

35. Mr. LOIZIDES (Greece) withdrew his motion but reserved the right to submit it again later if he thought it necessary.

36. Sir Andrew COHEN (United Kingdom) recalled that at the preceding meeting the Committee had voted against adjourning the debate. The same delegations which had then voted against adjournment now wished to close the list of speakers. There was no justification for such a procedure. He agreed on the necessity to close the debate as soon as possible but he thought that the members of the Committee should be given the opportunity to speak.

37. Mr. RASGOTRA (India) explained that the motion which had been put to the vote at the preceding meeting had been to adjourn the debate, whereas the purpose of the present motion was to accelerate it so that the Committee could move on to the other items of the agenda.

38. Mr. MUFTI (United Arab Republic) supported the Yugoslav proposal. He feared that the discussion was moving away from the subject and he therefore moved that the list of speakers should be closed.

39. Mr. CARPIO (Philippines) objected to the motion for closure of the list of speakers, which was an arbitrary measure designed to push through the adoption of the draft resolutions before delegations had had an opportunity to express their views. He hoped that the sponsors of the motion would change their minds and he reserved the right to speak later.

40. In reply to questions from Mr. CAMPO POSADA (Colombia) and Mr. SULEIMAN (Sudan), the CHAIRMAN explained that the closing of the list of speakers would not prevent delegations from submitting draft resolutions or making comments on them and on any amendments which might be proposed.

41. He put to the vote the motion of the representative of Ghana to the effect that the list of speakers on the draft resolutions concerning the Cameroons should be closed.

That motion was adopted by 27 votes to 13, with 28 abstentions.

42. Mr. RAHNEMA (Iran) considered that, despite the difficulties to which it might give rise, the convening of a special session of the General Assembly was the most realistic and practical way of dealing with the problem of Cameroonian independence. His delegation regretted that the unofficial discussions which had taken place had not brought about a compromise. The wording of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.557 and Add.1, which dealt solely with the question of convening a special session of the General Assembly and in no way prejudged the conclusions of the Visiting Mission, seemed, however, to be quite close to the text which the Administering Authorities had proposed at the beginning of the unofficial discussions. The Iranian delegation would vote in favour of that draft resolution. It hoped that a special session of the Assembly devoted exclusively to the question of the future of the Cameroons would rapidly draw up a constructive programme which would help all the parties concerned to attain the objectives of the Trusteeship System.

43. As it wished the General Assembly to have complete freedom of action at its next session, the Iranian delegation would abstain from the vote on the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.558 and Add.1.

44. Mr. COHEN (Chile) found the text of both draft resolutions unsatisfactory and thought that some amendment of both form and substance was needed.

45. The heading of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.557 and Add.1 should be completed by the addition of the words "to call a special session of the General Assembly". It was also essential to relate

the draft resolution to other General Assembly resolutions by adding, for example, the following preambulatory paragraph: "Having in mind General Assembly resolution... (XIII)". Furthermore, he would like the words "Requests the Secretary-General to convene" to be replaced by "Authorizes the Secretary-General to convene", the date of 20 February 1959 to be deleted and the words "upon receipt of the appropriate reports from the Trusteeship Council" to be added at the end of the operative paragraph.

46. With regard to the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.558 and Add.1, he proposed that the words "on the future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons" should be added to the heading. He also proposed the addition of the following new paragraph between the second and third preambulatory paragraphs:

"Having heard the statements of the representative of France and Prime Minister of the Cameroons on the political developments in that Territory".

The following preambulatory paragraph would then begin with the words "Having heard also the petitioners".

47. In order to remove any semblance of criticism from the draft resolution, he proposed that operative paragraph 1 should begin with the words "Notes with satisfaction" and operative paragraph 2 with the words "Welcomes".

48. Lastly, he proposed that the end of operative paragraph 3, following the words "recommendations to", should be replaced by the following: "a special session of the General Assembly to be called for the purpose of enabling it, in agreement with the Administering Authorities, to take any steps which may be required in order that arrangements may be made upon the full attainment of the objectives of the Trusteeship System, for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreements of the two Territories".

49. With those amendments, the two draft resolutions would be more in conformity with the facts, for the two Territories whose future was at stake were the responsibility of different Administering Authorities but might perhaps wish to establish new ties with one another.

50. He also considered that the two draft resolutions should contain provisions recommending that the Trusteeship Council should co-ordinate the stages in the progress of the two Territories towards independence, in order to facilitate their reunification should the inhabitants desire it.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.