

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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## CONTENTS

	Page
Tribute to the memory of Mr. Luciano Joubland Rivas	737
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) . . . . .	737
Consideration of draft resolutions (continued) . . .	737

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

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

### Tribute to the memory of Mr. Luciano Joubland Rivas

1. The CHAIRMAN announced the death of Mr. Joubland Rivas, who had been Chairman of the Fourth Committee at the tenth session of the General Assembly. He expressed his sympathy to the Mexican delegation and proposed that the Committee should observe one minute's silence.

The Committee observed one minute's silence.

2. Mr. ESPINOSA Y PRIETO (Mexico) thanked the Chairman and the Committee for the tribute paid to the memory of his fellow-countryman.

### 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/Rev.1, A/C.4/L.585, A/C.4/L.586, T/SR.953-963) (continued)

3. The CHAIRMAN stated that Mrs. Marthe Ouandié, representative of the Union démocratique des femmes camerounaises, had asked to be given another hearing by the Committee. The request could not be granted since it had not been received before the expiration of the time-limit decided upon at the 875th meeting of the Committee.

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

4. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) observed that the sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580 had incorporated various amendments which had been submitted into the revised text of the draft resolution (A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1). She asked whether they would

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

be prepared to accept also the second amendment in document A/C.4/L.584/Rev.1. The votes of a number of delegations would depend on the reply to that question.

5. Mr. VITELLI (Italy) defined the position of the Italian delegation and the other sponsors of the draft resolution concerning the Cameroons under British administration (A/C.4/L.582/Rev.1) with regard to the Liberian amendment in document A/C.4/L.587. While appreciating the sentiments of the Liberian representative on the subject, they were regretfully unable to accept the amendment in question in view of the very cogent arguments advanced by the United Kingdom representative and by Malam Abdullahi, the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs, at the 874th meeting, against the participation of women in the plebiscite to be held in the Northern Cameroons.

6. Mr. TOURE (Guinea) recalled that at the 866th meeting his delegation had stated that the Cameroons under French administration should obtain independence on 1 January 1960 and that its admission to the United Nations should take place simultaneously with the proclamation of independence and the termination of the trusteeship. It had also drawn the Committee's attention to the new form of colonialism, more dangerous than the old form, which was now appearing in Africa, and which it was the duty of all the African States vigorously to resist. Hence the United Nations should not merely register the attainment of independence by the Cameroons but should examine the real nature and extent of that independence.

7. Some delegations had maintained that it was for the Cameroonian people alone to solve the problems which faced their country. That argument disregarded the fact that today more than ever Africa needed assistance from all the free nations of the world. The fact that it was the African States which were the most directly concerned with the problem of the maintenance of peace in Africa did not mean that international solidarity was not needed to solve the problem. The attitude adopted by Guinea in the Committee was also that of the Union générale des travailleurs de l'Afrique noire, the All-African People's Conference and all African youth movements. It could be summed up by saying that the Cameroonian problem could not be treated in isolation from the general African problem, which was that of the struggle of a whole continent for independence.

8. The delegation of Guinea and the other sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.581 had requested that a total and unconditional amnesty should be proclaimed in the Cameroons under French administration and that the amnesty should not be limited to individuals. How could men who had organized politically to fight for an idea be asked to renounce that idea at the very moment when it was about to become a reality? The fact was that the Union des populations

du Cameroun (UPC) had dominated the debate in the Committee. That party had been criticized for having resorted to violence, and undoubtedly there had been incidents in the Cameroons, but could a party which was struggling for the independence of its country be asked to renounce it in the name of non-violence? He felt sure that the Cameroonian Government had not really approved the regulations enacted by the French Government to dissolve the UPC and the affiliated organizations and he appealed to it to repeal them.

9. The sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.581 had also asked that there should be a popular consultation in the Territory under United Nations supervision before the attainment of independence. The point at issue was not the representative nature of the Cameroonian Assembly and Government. The African States wanted the United Nations to enable the Cameroonian people to express their views freely so that a true reconciliation could finally put an end to the crisis through which the Cameroons had been passing for the past three years. Only elections under United Nations supervision would lead to the re-establishment of a normal political situation in the Cameroons before the attainment of independence. The delegation of Guinea would therefore abstain from voting on the amendments in document A/C.4/L.583, which were a mere statement of good intentions. Furthermore, it considered that to express an opinion with regard to elections after 1 January 1960 would constitute an interference in the affairs of the new sovereign State of the Cameroons.

10. With regard to the Cameroons under British administration, he was surprised that there was no intention to ask the people of the Territory the most obvious question, namely whether they desired the reunification of the Cameroons. The Committee had been informed that the people of the Northern Cameroons unanimously wished their region to be united with Nigeria. If that was so he could not see why they should not be asked to choose between integration in Nigeria and unification with an independent Cameroons. He was convinced that despite the efforts that had been made during the past forty years to keep the Cameroons divided, the desire for unification would finally win the day. The General Assembly should adopt a resolution recommending that the people of the Cameroons under British administration should be called to choose democratically between the reunification of the Cameroons and integration with Nigeria.

11. In conclusion, he emphasized that in Guinea the Assembly which had had the support of the French authorities had been completely swept away in the elections of April 1957 and that the former Opposition now held all the seats in the new Assembly. After the elections all the country's institutions had been renewed and although in the referendum in September 1958 the people had demonstrated its confidence in the Government of Mr. Sékou Touré by an overwhelming majority, it had been decided that new elections for the presidency of the Republic should be held within six months. The delegation of Guinea wished the Cameroonians also to be able freely to express their wishes and felt certain that the Cameroonian Government and Assembly would be strengthened by a fresh election.

12. The resolutions before the Committee were of two kinds: the first category took account of the desires of the peoples concerned and were designed to

enable the United Nations to play its true role; the second was intended to induce the United Nations to endorse a certain policy. If United Nations prestige in Africa was to grow, the real aspirations of the Africans should be taken into account and the Cameroonian people should be helped to attain independence in the best possible conditions.

13. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) pointed out that the representative of Guinea had just confirmed that the present Assembly of Guinea had been elected in accordance with the *loi-cadre* by universal adult suffrage, as had been the case in all the French Overseas Territories. He recalled that there were several Frenchmen in that Assembly, one of whom was a Minister in the Government.

14. Mr. TOURE (Guinea) explained that the Frenchman who was a member of the Government of Guinea would have to choose between Guinean nationality and French nationality.

15. Mr. ALEMAYEHOU (Ethiopia) outlined his delegation's position with regard to the Cameroons under French administration.

16. As far as that Territory was concerned there was a division of opinion in the Committee on three main points. The first was whether in principle general elections should be regarded as a necessary prerequisite for the independence of a Trust Territory. True, Article 76 of the Charter laid down that the wishes of the people concerned must be taken into account, but that was intended to refer to cases where the people had not yet chosen between self-government and independence. Once the people concerned had opted for independence they alone were competent to settle the economic, social and political questions which affected them and to choose the form of government they would have.

17. The second question was whether general elections should be held in the Territory in question before 1 January 1960. There would have had to be elections if the people had still to choose between self-government and independence, but they had already made their choice. The question of which party should be in power when the Territory became independent was a matter within the exclusive competence of the Cameroons and not of the United Nations.

18. The third question was whether the General Assembly should recommend to the Cameroonian Government to repeal the decree prohibiting certain parties and organizations. The Ethiopian delegation thought not. As had been pointed out by the French delegation, the measures in question had been intended to suppress violence and not political ideas or peaceful organizations. To repeal them would be tantamount to sanctioning violence, a step which the United Nations could not approve.

19. The Ethiopian delegation would consequently vote in favour of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1.

20. Turning to the Cameroons under British administration, he said that the results of the recent elections in the Southern Cameroons did not give a clear picture of the wishes of the people. The only conclusion to be drawn from the elections was that the parties which were against secession and in favour of unification had lost ground. He wondered what would

happen if the results of a plebiscite were as inconclusive as the recent elections. With regard to the Northern Cameroons, the people should be asked to state in the plebiscite whether they wished to be separated from the Cameroons and to unite with the Federation of Nigeria. The draft resolution (A/C.4/L.582/Rev.1) reversed the question and seemed to weight the balance against unification. The Ethiopian delegation would therefore abstain in the vote on the text as a whole.

21. Mr. MENEMENCIOLU (Turkey) paid a tribute to the elected representatives of the Cameroonian people, among them Mr. Ahidjo, Mr. Foncha, Mr. Endeley and Malam Abdullahi, by whose patriotism, political maturity, moderation and sense of responsibility he had been much impressed.

22. In casting its votes his delegation would be guided by the following principles. It was in favour of taking due note of the aspirations of the Cameroonian people expressed by their freely elected representatives and confirmed by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958, as well as by the almost unanimous vote of the Trusteeship Council. Nothing should be done which might create obstacles to rapid progress in the final stage of the political evolution of the Cameroons or to the establishment of harmonious relations among the citizens of the newly independent nation. His delegation felt that there were no immutable rules applying uniformly to all Trust Territories when they reached the threshold of independence, and it proposed to treat each case on its merits.

23. As far as the Cameroons under British administration was concerned, the documentation available to his delegation had convinced it that the people of the Northern Cameroons wished to form part of the Northern Region of an independent Federation of Nigeria. It would not itself have advocated a plebiscite but as no one seemed to be opposed to such a measure, it would vote for the relevant provision in the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.582/Rev.1.

24. In the case of the Southern Cameroons it was in favour of a plebiscite organized in the manner and circumstances envisaged in the same draft resolution. His delegation understood that if the results of the plebiscite showed that the population did not wish to be integrated with the Federation of Nigeria, Mr. Foncha, the Premier of the Southern Cameroons, would prefer that the two Territories of the Cameroons should be united through friendly negotiations. When the General Assembly studied at its fourteenth session the alternatives to be put to the Southern Cameroons, his delegation would take into account the views expressed by the elected representatives of the Southern Cameroons Government and of the Opposition. In the light of those considerations, it would vote for the draft resolution.

25. With respect to the Cameroons under French administration, his delegation was happy to observe that Mr. Ahidjo's Government was leading the country towards the independence which the entire population of the Territory desired. It hailed the advent of a new African nation and noted with satisfaction the preparatory measures adopted by the Legislative Assembly and the Government, including the generous amnesty law. It was ready to welcome the free and inde-

pendent Cameroons to membership in the United Nations, and would accordingly vote for the joint draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1.

26. His delegation had carefully studied the arguments put forward for and against the holding of fresh general elections before independence. It had no doubt that in submitting a draft resolution providing for such elections (A/C.4/L.581) the eight African countries had been inspired by good intentions and the desire to help the Cameroonian people. Yet none of the arguments adduced had given his delegation any reason to question the wisdom of the recommendations made by the Visiting Mission in its report on the Territory (T/1427 and T/1434<sup>1/</sup>) and approved almost unanimously by the Trusteeship Council in its resolution 1925 (XXIII). The explanations given by the elected Cameroonian representatives had convinced his delegation that to request the responsible authorities, nine months before the attainment of independence, to suspend the organization of the transition to independence in order to carry on an electoral campaign throughout the country would be contrary to the interests of the Cameroonian people; to do so would also prejudice efforts to effect a reconciliation. Furthermore, as his delegation was convinced that the Cameroonian people had attained sufficient political maturity to decide their own destiny it considered that they and their elected representatives should be able to find solutions appropriate to their own domestic problems. It did not think that further United Nations intervention was desirable or could produce useful results. It would therefore vote against any proposal which might be interpreted as reflecting lack of confidence in the Cameroonian people and their elected representatives. It would also vote against any proposal which sought to make the independence of the Cameroons subject to conditions, or to limit that independence once it had been attained.

27. His delegation considered it an honour to have witnessed the birth of a new African State and the recognition of the right of self-determination of the people of the northern and southern parts of the Cameroons under British administration.

28. Mr. LOUTFI (United Arab Republic) commented first on the draft resolution concerning the Cameroons under British administration (A/C.4/L.582/Rev.1). He noted with satisfaction that the sponsors of that draft had recognized the need to organize a plebiscite in the northern part of the Territory contrary to the conclusion of the Visiting Mission as set forth in its report on the Territory (T/1426 and Add.1<sup>2/</sup>); that was particularly important since there was a tendency to regard the Mission as infallible.

29. His delegation felt, however, that there were certain omissions in the draft resolution which its sponsors should remedy. Firstly, the General Assembly should note the Administering Authority's statement that registration for the Nigerian federal elections had been postponed in the southern part of the Territory, and should request that that measure, which was likely to contribute to the maintenance of the status quo, should be extended to the northern sector.

<sup>1/</sup> Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4092).

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

30. Secondly, it was not enough simply to ask the Northern Cameroons if it wished to remain part of the Northern Region of an independent Federation of Nigeria. The Indian representative had also expressed that view at the 870th meeting, but the formula which he had suggested, namely, that the population should make a choice between a brilliant prospect, that of integration with an independent Nigeria, and the Trusteeship System, was not satisfactory either. His delegation held that the inhabitants of the Northern Cameroons should be given the opportunity to indicate whether they wished to join an independent Cameroons and it would submit an amendment to that effect. The correct procedure would be to ascertain the opinion of the majority in the northern part of the Territory rather than to act on the basis of the preconceived idea that it was already a part of the Federation of Nigeria.

31. Paragraph 5 of the original draft resolution (A/C.4/L.582) seemed to assign to the Administering Authority a role which should be assumed by the General Assembly, for the "alternatives to be put in the plebiscite and the qualifications for voting in it" were the most important aspects of the consultation. The amendment submitted by the Indian and other delegations (A/C.4/L.588, para. 2) and incorporated into the revised draft resolution (A/C.4/L.582/Rev.1) had improved the text of the paragraph and his delegation would vote for it on the understanding that it was the General Assembly which would ultimately have the responsibility of deciding the alternatives to be put to the population.

32. He did not think that the electoral registers which were at present being compiled for the elections to the Nigerian Federal House of Representatives were a satisfactory basis for the plebiscite. United Nations supervision should extend, as it had done in other Territories, to all the operations, including the compilation of special electoral registers for the plebiscite.

33. With regard to the Cameroons under French administration, his delegation, jointly with other African delegations, had submitted a draft resolution (A/C.4/L.581) as well as certain amendments (A/C.4/L.584/Rev.1) to the revised draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1. Its desire was to ensure a reconciliation between the Government, the political parties and the Opposition before the attainment of independence. As had been stated by Mr. Bebey-Eyidi, one of the petitioners, elections held prior to independence and under United Nations supervision would be calculated to ensure reconciliation and to safeguard the prestige of the Government and the Legislative Assembly. That was all the more important because the country would be faced with important problems, such as those of the new constitution and of unification, to say nothing of economic problems.

34. Turning to the economic and financial situation of the Territory, which the Committee had not examined, he expressed the opinion that since specific provisions must be made to assist the Cameroons once it had attained its independence and since in addition certain political measures recommended by the General Assembly were to be applied before 1 January 1960, the Administering Authority should submit to the Assembly at its fourteenth session a supplementary report covering the period preceding that session.

The preparation of such a report would give the Administering Authority an opportunity to indicate the economic measures to be taken, and the report would inform the Assembly how the political measures in question had been applied. That procedure would be quite in order, since the Trusteeship Agreement would remain in force until 1 January 1960 and the Administering Authorities had previously been invited to submit similar reports when exceptional events or situations had necessitated them. His delegation would not submit a formal proposal to that effect for it was sure that the Administering Authority would appreciate the value of the suggestion and comply with it of its own accord.

35. With regard to the financial implications (A/C.4/L.585) of the draft resolution on the Cameroons under British administration (A/C.4/L.582/Rev.1), he noted from paragraph 4 of that document that seven observers would be needed in the northern part of the Territory and fifteen in the southern part. He wondered if the Secretariat would explain the reason for that difference.

36. Mr. YANG (China) noted that the draft resolution concerning the Cameroons under French administration (A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1) reflected the position taken by his delegation and the majority of the members of the Committee. He would therefore vote in favour of it.

37. With regard to the other draft resolution (A/C.4/L.581) concerning the same Territory, his delegation was strongly opposed to operative paragraphs 2 and 3 which recommended, respectively, the abrogation of the Decree of 13 July 1955 dissolving certain political parties and the holding of new elections before independence. The adoption by the General Assembly of the first of those provisions would be equivalent to encouraging and rewarding political parties and organizations which had been outlawed and which had consistently advocated and followed a policy of violence. That would not be conducive to creating the political stability and peace which the Cameroons needed nor would it be in conformity with the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter. The holding of new elections before independence would have the serious consequence, among others, of casting doubt on the representative character of the present Legislative Assembly, which, together with the Government, had won France's commitment to grant independence to the Cameroons. His delegation would therefore vote against the draft resolution (A/C.4/L.581) in its entirety.

38. Paragraph 7 of that draft resolution, which concerned the admission of the Cameroons under French administration to the United Nations and which also appeared in the original text of the sub-amendments submitted by its sponsors (A/C.4/L.584) to the amendments in document A/C.4/L.583, would not seem to be controversial. Nevertheless, Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Charter, to which paragraph 7 referred, stipulated that the admission to membership in the United Nations of any State fulfilling the required conditions should be effected by a decision of the General Assembly "upon the recommendation of the Security Council". In paragraph 7 of the draft resolution, however, it was the General Assembly which was recommending that the Cameroons under French administration should be admitted to the United Nations. Thus, from the procedural point of view and in the

light of the respective functions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, the terms of the paragraph were not very clear. Furthermore, his delegation agreed with the New Zealand delegation that the idea of admitting the Cameroons to the United Nations was already implicit in the preamble to the five-Power draft resolution (A/C.4/L.580).

39. The amendments which were contained in document A/C.4/L.583 and which had now been incorporated in the revised draft resolution (A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1) were acceptable to his delegation, particularly as Mr. Ahidjo, the Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration, in a spirit of compromise, had not objected to the reference to elections after independence.

40. As the amendments in document A/C.4/L.584/Rev.1 merely reiterated the substance of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.581; they would also receive his delegation's negative vote.

41. His delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution concerning the Cameroons under British administration (A/C.4/L.582/Rev.1), which reflected the consensus of the Committee.

42. Mr. ESPINOSA Y PRIETO (Mexico) explained his delegation's position on the draft resolutions concerning the Cameroons under French administration.

43. As far as that Territory was concerned, the principal point at issue was whether elections under the supervision of the United Nations should be held before the attainment of independence. The representatives of Iraq and Liberia had referred to a statement by his delegation on 20 November 1958, at the Committee's 809th meeting, recommending general elections in just those circumstances. He had at that time explained his delegation's stand in the matter, and he reminded the Committee of the points he had made then. In November 1958, in the light of the successful experience in Togoland under French administration and of the fact that France was at that time contemplating a popular consultation in the Cameroons under United Nations supervision, there had been general agreement that there should be no thought of asking the people whether or not they wanted independence since there could be no possible doubt that they wanted to be independent and since the main problem was manifestly reconciliation. His delegation had at that time suggested elections under United Nations supervision, adding that, if convincing arguments to the contrary were advanced, it would not insist on such elections being held. The authorities which had now come out against such elections were in fact the administering Authority, the Cameroonian Government and the Trusteeship Council, as also the Visiting Mission, which had included a representative of India—a most influential country in the Afro-Asian group.

44. He had already drawn attention to the important electoral advances thus far made or announced and had expressed the hope that the African States and the Administering Authority would reach agreement. Unfortunately, that had not happened. His delegation would therefore abstain from voting on the draft resolution submitted by the eight African States (A/C.4/L.581) and also on the amendments submitted by those same States (A/C.4/L.584/Rev.1) to the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1. It would vote in favour of the latter draft resolution (A/C.4/L.580/

Rev.1), which provided for a solution based not on the Visiting Mission's conclusions but rather on the programme of national reconciliation, outlined by Mr. Ahidjo, to whom his delegation paid a tribute and extended its best wishes for the prosperity of the Cameroons. At the same time his delegation did not see what purpose was served by the reference in the ninth preambular paragraph to the "readiness" of the people of the Cameroons for independence. It went without saying that if the Cameroons was not ready for independence, the General Assembly would not decide to grant it independence.

45. With regard to the Cameroons under British administration, his delegation had been of the opinion that the people in the Northern Cameroons should be offered the choice of union with the Federation of Nigeria or with an independent Cameroons, but the arguments invoked by the United Kingdom representative in favour of another procedure had seemed to have merit. If the French delegation and the Cameroonian representatives themselves did not raise any objection, his delegation would not oppose that procedure. He nevertheless felt that the draft resolution could still be improved, in particular by incorporating the Liberian amendment (A/C.4/L.587), and he suggested informal discussions to that end.

46. Mrs. SKOTTSBERG-AHMAN (Sweden) considered that the revised draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1 fully met the requirements of the situation as far as the Cameroons under French administration was concerned. The preamble contained all the elements that would justify a decision by the General Assembly to end the trusteeship over that Trust Territory on the day when it attained independence. Measures had already been taken to promote Cameroonian national reconciliation, and there was no doubt, in view of the statements by the Administering Authority and by the Prime Minister of the Government of the Cameroons, that the Cameroons would be completely independent. Her delegation would therefore have no reservations about voting in favour of the draft resolution.

47. It was, however, opposed to the holding of general elections before the Territory attained independence, for the arguments advanced in favour of such elections were not convincing. There was admittedly an Opposition in the present Legislative Assembly, but that was a normal situation in any democratic country. She had asked the petitioners certain questions designed to ascertain what their platforms would be if general elections were held, but she had not received any clear reply. The petitioners had simply repeated that such elections were necessary because the Government was not, in their view, truly representative. It was not for the United Nations to take sides in personal disputes, and the question of independence as such raised no real problem. Other petitioners had said that general elections would further a national reconciliation, but whether or not such elections would help to restore calm was open to question. There was, on the contrary, every likelihood that they would only complicate the task of the existing Government. The amendments incorporated in the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1 as operative paragraph 2 went as far as the United Nations could go.

48. Her delegation was not, moreover, prepared to recommend the abrogation of the 1955 decree dissolv-

ing certain political parties. The amnesty law of 14 February 1959,<sup>3/</sup> especially in view of Mr. Ahidjo's statements about it, seemed to be sufficient. There was no obstacle to the formation of political parties, provided that their activities remained within the law. Mr. Ahidjo had also confirmed the fact that all Cameroonians in exile were free to return to their country and take part in its political life.

49. Her delegation was ready to welcome the Cameroons as a Member of the United Nations. It wished to congratulate France on its achievements as the Administering Authority.

50. Mr. PACHACHI (Iraq) said that in his delegation's view the people of the Northern Cameroons under British administration should be given an opportunity of voting in favour of unification with the Cameroons under French administration. His delegation would have preferred a plebiscite held simultaneously in the Northern and the Southern Cameroons on the basis of questions to be selected by the General Assembly at its next session. It was ready to vote in favour of any amendment which would give the people of the Northern Cameroons the choice between integration in the Federation of Nigeria and unification with the independent eastern Cameroons.

51. He was not clear about question (b) of the amendments in document A/C.4/L.588: "Are you in favour of deciding the future of the Northern Cameroons at a later date?" The future of the Northern Cameroons should be decided at the same time as that of the Southern Cameroons and in any case before Nigeria attained independence, for once Nigeria was independent, it would be impossible to continue to administer the Northern Cameroons as a Trust Territory.

52. The Liberian delegation's amendment (A/C.4/L.587) was apparently designed to give women in the Northern Cameroons an opportunity to take part in the elections. In its present form it would probably not achieve the desired result. Instead of merely deleting the phrase in question, it would be better to recommend that the plebiscite should be organized on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

53. With regard to the Cameroons under French administration, various arguments had been advanced against the holding of general elections under United Nations supervision before the Territory attained its independence. The first argument was that there was no justification for making such elections a prerequisite for independence; but that argument was invalid, for no one had ever opposed the attainment of independence by the Cameroons on 1 January 1960. In the second place, reference had been made to the conclusions set forth in the Visiting Mission's report. However, the far more definite conclusions of the Mission relating to the holding of a plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons had failed to win approval. In the third place, it had been claimed that general elections would cause dissension and disorder. The Iraqi delegation considered, on the contrary, that such elections would merely provide a guarantee of national reconciliation. It had also been asserted that those elections would favour certain parties, but it seemed obvious that, if the UPC had no influence, there was no reason to fear that it stood to gain from the elections. If, on the other hand, it still had some influence, elections would re-

veal the strength of its real following among the people.

54. With regard to the objection that the United Nations had no right to intervene in the domestic affairs of the Cameroons, he was bound to say that the General Assembly—which, in the last analysis, was responsible for the smooth functioning of the Trusteeship System—was fully entitled, so long as a Territory remained under that System, to make recommendations to ensure the fulfilment of the sacred trust which the Assembly had assumed. Furthermore, operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1 was much more open to criticism from that point of view, for it referred to elections to be held after the attainment of independence.

55. With regard to the extent to which the existing Cameroons Legislative Assembly could be regarded as representative, he recalled that at the twenty-first session of the Trusteeship Council (863rd meeting) Mr. Deniau, the special representative of the Administering Authority, had stated in reply to a question from the United Kingdom representative that the thirty deputies in the Groupe de l'Union camerounaise in the Cameroons Assembly had advocated a peaceful evolution of the Cameroons within the framework of an association with France. The Iraqi delegation had been pleased to note that those deputies, a few months later, had changed their position completely and declared themselves in favour of total independence. The fact that they had been elected on a platform of protection for customary law explained the anxiety of certain delegations as to whether they were now representative. Those anxieties had been dispelled by Mr. Ahidjo's welcome statement in favour of independence.

56. In Mr. Pachachi's opinion, article 2 of the 1957 Statute approved by the Legislative Assembly (T/1314) meant that the acquisition of any new statute must be preceded by a popular consultation. The French representative had pointed out that the scope of article 2 was limited by article 59 of the Statute, but Mr. Ahidjo had not invoked that argument at the previous meeting and had merely said that article 2 provided for the final status of the Cameroons, namely, its final status while it remained under trusteeship. Hence a popular consultation should have been held before the adoption of the 1959 Statute (T/1427, annex II), which marked the last stage in the Territory's evolution under the Trusteeship System. Instead of following that procedure as a matter of course, the French Government had confronted the United Nations with a fait accompli.

57. Whatever the General Assembly ultimately decided, it would certainly have been preferable from the point of view of the present Cameroonian Government and of all the interested parties that its decision should be unanimous. It was a pity that the desirable unanimity should be made unattainable by the obstinate refusal of certain delegations to consent to general elections before the termination of the trusteeship. Everyone recognized that such elections would have to be held shortly. He asked why, in that case, they should not be held under United Nations supervision. That would dispel all misgivings and thereby serve the interests of the Cameroonian people.

58. Mr. BISBE (Cuba) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the draft resolution in document A/

<sup>3/</sup> See A/C.4/395.

C.4/L.581 and the amendments contained in document A/C.4/L.584/Rev.1 for both the draft resolution and the amendments adequately met three basic requirements, namely, the attainment of independence by the Cameroons on 1 January 1960; the need to recommend to the Administering Authority and the Cameroonian Government the abrogation of the decree dissolving the UPC and other political organizations; and the need to hold general elections as soon as possible, and before 1 January 1960, under the supervision of the United Nations. The new Assembly resulting from those elections would determine the form of the permanent institutions of the future independent Cameroons. It was important that the views of all segments of the Cameroonian population should be taken into account, and particular importance should be attached to the wishes of the African countries directly interested in the settlement of the Cameroonian question as they were better qualified than anyone else to understand the situation in the Territory.

59. The main problem to be solved was that of national reconciliation, and there was no better way to ensure its solution than through general elections and an unconditional amnesty. The assertion had been made that the holding of such elections before independence would create disturbances in the country. It was understood, however, that partial elections would take place in the Sanaga-Maritime Region in the very near future. That being so, he saw no ground for anxiety over the holding of general elections.

60. The Cuban delegation could not vote in favour of operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1. Like the Iraqi representative, it regarded that paragraph as an interference in Cameroonian domestic affairs. It was paradoxical that the supporters of that draft resolution should oppose any resolution recommending the holding of general elections before the Territory attained independence on the ground that that would constitute intervention by the United Nations in the domestic affairs of the Cameroons.

61. The Cuban delegation was prepared to vote in favour of the draft resolution concerning the Cameroons under British administration (A/C.4/L.582) for it accepted the idea of holding a plebiscite in both the Southern and the Northern Cameroons. However, it reserved its position regarding the wording of the questions to be put to the inhabitants of the Northern Cameroons. It was inadmissible that they should be offered only one choice. Thought was now being given to a second alternative (A/C.4/L.588, para. 1), but in language which was much too vague. The second alternative should be: "Do you wish to unite with an independent Cameroons?" Some means should also be found to enable the women of the Northern Cameroons to take part in the plebiscite. The Cuban delegation agreed with the Mexican delegation that the draft resolution concerning the Cameroons under British administration could be further improved so as to ensure its unanimous adoption.

62. Mr. SOBOLEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation was in favour of independence for the Cameroons not later than 1 January 1960 and would like appropriate steps to be taken to ensure that that objective of the Trusteeship System was achieved under United Nations supervision. Those steps were an unconditional amnesty, abrogation of the

decree dissolving certain political parties, and the holding of democratic elections prior to 1 January 1960 under the supervision of the United Nations. As the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.581 met those requirements perfectly, it would be supported by his delegation.

63. In contrast, the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1, which was based on the Visiting Mission's report and the prejudiced recommendations of the Trusteeship Council, completely disregarded the views expressed by the petitioners and the African delegations. Some delegations had claimed that only the Visiting Mission could express an authoritative opinion because it had been able to ascertain conditions in the Territory on the spot. Such an assertion was groundless, for the Committee had heard many petitioners and had been able to form an idea of the conditions prevailing in the Territory. Furthermore, the Visiting Mission's report had been shown to be biased and lacking in objectivity, and the members of the Mission had been unable to ascertain the true feelings of the Cameroonian people owing to the entire absence of freedom of expression in the Territory. The circumstances in which the Trusteeship Council had adopted its resolution 1925 (XXIII) were likewise known. The Council had not had time to study the Visiting Mission's report in detail; it had merely approved the Mission's conclusions without checking them in any way and without hearing any petitioners. It was not surprising, therefore, that at the current session the African countries were far from satisfied.

64. The draft resolution (A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1), which had been submitted by the delegation of the United States of America and other delegations, was open to criticism on the same grounds as the Trusteeship Council resolution. It completely disregarded the information supplied by petitioners concerning the conditions for true independence. It ignored the fact that the amnesty law was inadequate and that the three largest political parties were still under a ban. It feigned ignorance of the fact that most political parties in the Cameroons, including the members of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly itself, and all the African delegations, were calling for general elections under United Nations supervision prior to 1 January 1960. In operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution the need for elections was acknowledged. For various reasons, however, supervision of the elections by the United Nations was refused, and an effort was being made to keep the United Nations out of the matter. Lastly, no one doubted that the existing Legislative Assembly was unrepresentative. It was clear, therefore, that the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.580/Rev.1 did not lay down the essential conditions for the attainment of independence by the Cameroons under French administration. That draft resolution was unacceptable, and its adoption, in preventing the United Nations from discharging its duty at a decisive stage in the life of a Trust Territory, would set a dangerous precedent. The delegation of the Soviet Union would therefore vote against it. On the other hand, it would support the amendments set forth in document A/C.4/L.584/Rev.1, which took into account the true interests of the Cameroonian people.

65. With regard to the Cameroons under British administration, it was essential that a plebiscite should be held simultaneously in the northern and southern

parts of the Territory. Furthermore, the desire of the Cameroonian people for unification was not adequately reflected in the draft resolution in document A/C.4/L.582. The steps to be taken for holding a plebiscite and the questions that it was proposed to put to the people excluded the possibility of reunification and steered the people towards choosing integration with Nigeria without offering them any alternative. The United Nations could not approve such a course. The fact that the plebiscite was to be held on different dates in the Northern and in the Southern Cameroons

was also bound to have an adverse effect on the voting and left the way open for every kind of malpractice. In addition, the electoral lists which were to be used would not enable the women of the Northern Cameroons to take part in the plebiscite. That was a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which no one could condone. The delegation of the Soviet Union was therefore unable to support the draft resolution (A/C.4/L.582).

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.