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**Chairman: Mr. Luciano JOUBLANC RIVAS
(Mexico).**

AGENDA ITEM 35

**The Togoland unification problem and the future
of the Trust Territory of Togoland under
British administration: report of the Trustee-
ship Council (A/3046, T/1206 and Add.1,
T/1214, T/1215) (continued)**

1. Miss BROOKS (Liberia) suggested that the petitioners should remain at the Committee table until the end of the debate.
2. She asked the United Kingdom representative whether she should regard Mr. Gbedemah's statement at the previous meeting as a reply to the question she had asked at the 534th meeting, or whether she could expect an answer later.
3. The CHAIRMAN said that while, of course, it was for the Committee to decide, his own view was that it was not desirable for the petitioners to remain at the Committee table, since they had already given the Committee all the information they could. At the ninth session the petitioners had even taken part in the general debate after the end of the questioning period, which they were not entitled to do since they were not representatives of Member States, and at one point there had been an altercation between a representative and a petitioner. He did not think such incidents should be allowed to recur.
4. Miss BROOKS withdrew her suggestion in view of the Chairman's statement.
5. Mr. HOPKINSON (United Kingdom) felt he had made it clear that Mr. Gbedemah, although a member of the United Kingdom delegation, was speaking for the Gold Coast Government. Mr. Hopkinson himself would speak later in the debate and would then deal with the points raised by the representative of Liberia.
6. Mr. RIFAI (Syria) asked that the petitioners should be permitted to comment on any draft resolution that might be presented to the Committee if they wished to do so at the conclusion of the general debate.
7. The CHAIRMAN confirmed that that would be done.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

8. Mr. RIVAS (Venezuela), referring to the statement by the Belgian representative at the previous meeting, disagreed with that representative's view that the United Nations was not obliged, under Article 76 b of the Charter, to take decisions in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned. In his opinion, a decision taken by the United Nations which was contrary to the freely expressed wishes of the peoples would not be valid in the light of the Charter.

9. Furthermore, he did not agree with the Belgian representative that the results of the plebiscites in the various regions should govern the fate of minorities; in other words if three out of the four regions voted for integration with the Gold Coast and one voted against it, the decision of the three regions should not in his view decide the fate of the fourth.

10. He did agree with the Belgian representative in another respect. At the previous meeting the United States representative had told the Committee that the United Kingdom Government might continue to administer Togoland under British administration as part of the Gold Coast, in agreement with the Government of the Gold Coast. It was difficult to see how one sovereign State could govern a territory as part of another sovereign State. He realized that the British Commonwealth of Nations was *sui generis*, but he did not see how the United Nations could accept such an arrangement.

11. If a part of Togoland under British administration were to vote against integration with the Gold Coast, and if the United Kingdom delegation were to declare its inability to continue to administer that part, a difficult situation would arise. As the United Nations could not impose the obligation to administer a Territory on a sovereign State, the problem would revert to the United Nations, which was responsible for the people under trusteeship. Hence it would be better to place several alternatives before the voters in the plebiscite, as the Mexican representative had urged.

12. During the question and answer period the petitioners had informed the Committee that the natural division of the Territory was that between the North and the South and that the division between East and West was an artificial one. The petitioners from the northern part of the Territory had informed the Committee that they had never lost contact with the people in the northern part of the Gold Coast, but had said nothing of relationships with the people of Togoland under French administration. At the previous session Mr. Fousseni and other representatives of the northern area had stated that there were no real links between the northern part of Togoland under French administration and the North of Togoland under British administration. In the southern region opinion was more divided because the peoples of the South had been in closer contact with the outer world and

had a wider outlook than those of the isolated northern regions. He did not consider that the United Nations would be taking an objective attitude if it allowed opinion in the South to be overwhelmed by the greater numbers in the northern region.

13. His delegation had consistently supported the unification of the two Togolands, but the long effort in that direction had failed and the Fourth Committee was now virtually faced with a *fait accompli*. If the people of Togoland under British administration wished to join with the Gold Coast, his delegation would not oppose their desire, but the General Assembly must ensure that that desire was real.

14. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) said that those who considered that there was a Togoland people must recognize that the view of the majority should prevail; if, on the other hand, as many delegations, including his own, believed, there was no such thing as a Togoland people but only a number of different tribes, some of whom favoured integration with the Gold Coast while others, and especially the Ewes, opposed it, it would be a mistake to compel the latter to accept the merger and thus create an irredentist movement which would be a source of great difficulty to the young independent State of the Gold Coast. He was therefore largely in agreement with the representative of Venezuela.

15. Mr. BARGUES (France) said that, at the request of the French delegation, the Secretariat had circulated his statement to the Trusteeship Council on the problem of the unification of Togoland and the future of the Trust Territory of Togoland under British administration (T/1215). It gave a clear account of the position of the French Government on that question. The discussions which had recently taken place in the Fourth Committee were not likely to change that position, but in view of the observations of a number of delegations, and the statements of the petitioners as well as their replies to the many questions put to them, he had a number of additional points to make.

16. The question had been asked why the solution envisaged for Togoland under British administration had been dissociated from that envisaged for Togoland under French administration. The reason was that there were two different problems, which affected each Territory separately. One of the petitioners had noted very rightly that the frontiers of Togoland, like those of most African territories, were purely artificial. If there had once been a united Togoland, it was merely because Germany, in accord with other European Powers, had marked out its frontiers, less on the basis of local considerations than on considerations of European or even world policy. The same was true of the division of the former German Togoland into two Trust Territories, one administered by the United Kingdom and the other by France. The frontiers of those two Territories were artificial, but so were the frontiers of German Togoland. However, since those two Territories had been administered separately, a sort of national awareness had arisen separately in both. It was true that certain ethnic groups were divided by the frontier and were subjected to different political and administrative systems despite their common origin. However, the ethnic aspect was only one aspect of the problem, and to use it as grounds for reuniting the groups now divided would be to neglect all the other factors. There were economic and social aspects too, and also and above all, the political or

historical aspect. The clock could not be put back. For more than forty years there had been one Togoland administered by the United Kingdom and one administered by France. That fact alone sufficed to make the problem of their future status different in each Trust Territory.

17. There was one important circumstance which affected Togoland under British administration only, namely the imminent accession of the Gold Coast to independence. Since Togoland under British administration had been administered as an integral part of the Gold Coast for forty years, the change in the Gold Coast's political status made it essential for the United Kingdom or the General Assembly to decide on the future political status of the Territory which had hitherto been linked with it. There was no such urgency in the case of Togoland under French administration.

18. The United Nations Visiting Mission to the Trust Territories of Togoland under British Administration and Togoland under French Administration, 1955, had suggested in its report (T/1206 and Add.1) that the people of Togoland under British administration should be consulted on the solution to be adopted in regard to their future political status, and had proposed that a plebiscite should be organized for that purpose. The French delegation had agreed unreservedly to that procedure. However, it had formulated certain reservations regarding the division of the Territory into four separate territorial units with a separate calculation of the results in each unit. If that solution was adopted as being advisable in the circumstances, and if the Administering Authority did not find itself obliged to protest, the French delegation, while maintaining its reservations, would not oppose the decision. However, it wished to point out that such a procedure could be justified only by purely local considerations and could not be regarded as deriving from a general rule which should automatically apply to all Trust Territories in which popular consultations might subsequently be organized.

19. The French delegation considered that the choice to be placed before the inhabitants should be as clear and simple as possible. The Visiting Mission had proposed (T/1206, para. 105) that the people should be given two alternatives; first, integration with an independent Gold Coast, and secondly, continuation of the Trusteeship System pending the ultimate determination of the Territory's political future. It might be felt that the problem would be stated even more simply if the inhabitants of Togoland were asked only one question, namely whether they wanted integration with the Gold Coast, since voting against integration would amount to the same thing as voting for the alternative question proposed by the Visiting Mission. The French delegation would therefore have no objection to a single question, if that should be agreed upon.

20. As he had noted in his statement to the Trusteeship Council, the French delegation would leave it to the Administering Authority to determine the various arrangements for the plebiscite. The plebiscite itself should, of course, be conducted under United Nations supervision, through a high commissioner chosen either from among the delegations or from the Secretariat. In that connexion, he pointed out that since the General Assembly would not be meeting before the end of 1956, it would be advisable to give the task of following future developments, and in particular the conditions under which the plebiscite would take place, to a more permanent organ of the United Nations. The

Trusteeship Council, in virtue of its composition, its working conditions and the ease with which it could be convened, would appear to be the obvious body to assume that responsibility.

21. In essence the question now before the Fourth Committee was one which concerned Togoland under British administration, as the wording of the agenda item made it clear. The question of the unification of Togoland appeared only as a vestige of the former Ewe question, the factitious nature of which had since been recognized on various grounds. It could therefore be considered that, as the item was worded on the agenda, Togoland under French administration was concerned only hypothetically, in the event that the status adopted by Togoland under British administration might influence the status which would be adopted by Togoland under French administration. He recognized, however, that it was difficult to dissociate the problem of the future of Togoland under British administration. That was why the Visiting Mission had studied the problem of Togoland under French administration and why so many references had been made to it during the current discussion. A member of the French Government had informed the members of the Visiting Mission, during their visit to Paris, of the fact that the French Government proposed in due course to consult the people of Togoland under French administration with a view to determining their wishes in

regard to the future of that Territory. The Visiting Mission, after paying a tribute to the achievements of the Administering Authority in the political, economic, social and cultural fields, had expressed the opinion that, in view of those developments, and in view of the French Government's intention to install new and markedly democratic political institutions in Togoland, the people of the Territory would very shortly be in a position to make their wishes in regard to their political future known. Of course, as he had noted, the problem was much less urgent in the case of Togoland under French administration. The reforms which the French Government intended to put into effect, including the establishment of a Territorial Assembly with wider powers and of a Cabinet, and the development of municipal and district government, together with the institution of universal adult suffrage, would result in placing the people of the Territory in a position in which they would be capable of deciding their own future.

22. He trusted that his remarks, which confirmed the position of the French Government, would effectively supplement his delegation's previous statement.

23. He would give his delegation's views on the Indian draft resolution (A/C.4/L.428) and any other resolutions which might be submitted, at a later date.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.