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Chairman: Mr. Rodolfo MUNOZ (Argentina).

Requests for oral hearings (*continued*)

REQUEST FROM THE SOMALI YOUTH LEAGUE (A/C.4/210) (*continued*)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Guidotti (Italy) too a seat at the Committee table.

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to continue its consideration of the request for an oral hearing from the Somali Youth League (A/C.4/210).

2. Mr. GUIDOTTI (Italy) said that although the Somali Youth League's request was vague and did not specify the subjects on which the League wished to be heard, his delegation would not raise any objection to its being granted a hearing. In its two years as Administering Authority in Somaliland, Italy had given ample proof of its constant efforts to give every political party freedom to express its views.

3. If the Committee decided to grant the hearing, the Somali Youth League should not construe that as an encouragement to indulge in unconstructive and sterile criticism. When, in eight years' time, Somaliland became independent, the Somali Youth League would have to share the responsibilities of self-government in very difficult circumstances. It should prepare itself for that task by an objective study of the problems now confronting the Administering Authority but soon to confront the Somali people themselves; and it should co-operate in solving those problems. That was what the Trusteeship Council had had in mind at its eleventh session in endorsing the hope expressed by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1951, that the leaders of political parties would emphasize increasingly the constructive aspect of their role (A/2150, p. 113).

4. Mr. FORSYTH (Australia) announced that he would vote against the granting of a hearing to the Somali Youth League but emphasized that his negative vote was not in any sense a vote against the right of petition, which was absolutely accepted by the Australian delegation. Document A/C.4/210, however, was

not a petition: it stated no grievance, sought no redress and contained no information on which its merits could be judged. It was in fact an application to be heard by the Committee and could not properly be considered before the question of the participation of the indigenous inhabitants in the work of the Committee had been discussed. It should therefore be rejected, although the Somali Youth League could always raise the matter again after the question of participation had been decided. In any event the question of a hearing could more properly be discussed under item 6 of the Committee's agenda, since it referred to that item.

5. The inconclusive discussion at the 263rd meeting exemplified the confusion that resulted from side-stepping established machinery, i.e., the Trusteeship Council and its bodies. The Somali Youth League should be informed that the Trusteeship Council would be meeting shortly and that it should apply to it in the first instance.

6. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) said that there seemed to be a tendency in the Fourth Committee to usurp the functions of the Trusteeship Council in the matter of oral hearings. His delegation was not against hearing the spokesman of any Trust Territory and had always supported the right of petition. Nevertheless, as a general rule, the Trusteeship Council was the proper channel for such hearings.

7. Somaliland, however, was a special case; the Trusteeship Agreement for that Territory differed substantially from the other trusteeship agreements, since it specified that Somaliland should attain independence in ten years. Consequently, his delegation would not oppose the Somali Youth League's request for a hearing, but he suggested that before any final decision was taken the Chairman of the Committee should apply by cable to the President of the Somali Youth League for information about the matters which it wished to raise. The Committee should avoid dealing with any matter which had arisen after the Trusteeship Council had considered the Administering Au-

thority's second annual report¹ and the report on Somaliland of the 1951 Visiting Mission (T/947 and Corr.1).

8. Mr. INGLES (Philippines) pointed out that the Committee had already decided to grant several oral hearings and he did not see why the Somali Youth League's request should be treated differently; it would be illogical not to grant the request and would lay the Committee open to the charge of discrimination.

9. Certain speakers had mentioned the shortness of the period within which Somaliland would become independent; that consideration alone should prompt the Committee to give preferential treatment to any problem connected with Somaliland. In considering such problems the Committee must take into account the views of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory. The Somali Youth League was the most important political party in Somaliland, and represented the majority of the population. Even if the principle of selectivity were adopted, its request should receive priority.

10. There was no question of by-passing the Trusteeship Council; the Somali Youth League's numerous petitions showed its desire to co-operate in the efficient functioning of the Trusteeship System. If it wished to comment on the Trusteeship Council's handling of petitions, it was entitled to do so and it was the Committee's duty to grant it a hearing.

11. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) emphasized that the communication in question was not a petition. It was a request to participate in the work of the Fourth Committee when the Somaliland question was discussed. The question of the participation of local government representatives or representatives of the indigenous people was before the Committee. He deprecated the practice of implicitly deciding an issue without adequate study, at a time when the question of principle was still undecided.

12. He agreed with the Philippine representative that the views of the Somali people should be heard. It was open to question, however, whether the Somali Youth League truly represented all the people. If its right to a hearing was admitted, the Committee would in all fairness have to grant the same right to any other political party that wished to be heard, and that would lead to endless debate.

13. If the representatives of the Somali Youth League wished to express their views, they could do so in their local assembly or before the United Nations Advisory Council for the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration. If they wished to submit a petition, they were entitled to do so to the Trusteeship Council, and to support that petition by an oral statement. He therefore urged the Committee to reject the request to participate in its work and to inform the Somali Youth League that the question of the participation of political organizations in the work of the Fourth Committee had not been decided in principle.

14. Mr. Shiva RAO (India) did not think that it would be proper for the Committee to defer a decision

¹ See *Rapport du Gouvernement italien à l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies sur l'administration de tutelle de la Somalie, 1951*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome, 1952.

on the Somali Youth League's request until it had received further information. The Italian representative had no objection to the Somali Youth League's being heard. The Committee should therefore take immediate and favourable action on the request for a hearing, though it might be well, in the cable informing the President of the League of that decision, to suggest that he should submit a written memorandum on the points his organization wished to raise.

15. With reference to the Belgian representative's remarks, Mr. Shiva Rao pointed out that the right of direct hearing was a time-honoured and cherished right. It would be regrettable if the General Assembly restricted it in the case of the peoples of the Trust Territories.

16. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) explained that he had made his suggestion not because he had any objection to granting the Somali Youth League a hearing, but merely because he believed that the Committee should base its action on a real knowledge of the points at issue. The Somali Youth League was not the only political party that had requested a hearing, and if all requests were granted indiscriminately, considerable practical problems would arise. The Trusteeship Council's report on Somaliland (A/2150, part II, Chapter III) dealt with a number of questions—political, social and economic. It might well be that the Somali Youth League wished to raise some comparatively minor point which could quite well be dealt with by the Trusteeship Council.

17. There was a tendency for certain individuals in Africa who wished to visit New York to solicit subscriptions from political parties for that purpose. The expenses of every representative from a Trust Territory who visited New York were paid for by collections from the indigenous population. The indiscriminate granting of requests for hearings could therefore be just as harmful as their unjustified rejection. Of course the situation was rather different in the case of the Somali Youth League, which was well organized and had a party fund. Nevertheless, while it appeared to be the largest political party in Somaliland, it was only one of seventeen and could not claim to represent the entire population.

18. Mr. CARPIO (Philippines) said that from his experience as a member of the Advisory Council for Somaliland he could assure the Committee that the Somali Youth League was by far the most extensive and influential political party in the Territory, representing probably 60 or 70 per cent of the population. It had five representatives in the Territorial Council as against six from all the other political parties put together; moreover many of the other parties agreed with its policy.

19. Mr. HOPKINSON (United Kingdom) said that he would vote against granting the Somali Youth League a hearing for the reasons expressed by the Australian representative. The Committee's whole procedure in dealing with requests for oral hearings was most unsatisfactory. He would be obliged to vote against any request until the procedural issue had been cleared up.

20. Mr. PIGNON (France) associated himself with the remarks of the Australian and United Kingdom

representatives. In voting against granting the hearing, he would not be voting against hearings in principle but against the procedure followed by the Committee.

21. Mr. CARPIO (Philippines) requested a roll-call vote on the Somali Youth League's request for a hearing (A/C.4/210).

A vote was taken by roll-call.

Argentina, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan.

Against: Australia, Belgium, France, Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Canada, Dominican Republic, Netherlands, New Zealand.

The request was granted by 43 votes to 6, with 4 abstentions.

22. Mr. NAJAR (Israel) said that in view of the attitude of the Administering Authority his delegation had felt that it was right to grant the request of the Somali Youth League. He agreed that the Committee's method of dealing with petitions and requests for hearings was not satisfactory, but believed that the petitioners should not be made to suffer. It was for the Committee to devise a better procedure.

23. Mr. PEREZ CISNEROS (Cuba), Mr. LANUNUNG (Denmark) and Mr. HOPKINSON (United Kingdom) also thought that the Fourth Committee should establish suitable machinery for dealing with the petitions it received.

REQUEST FROM THE UNIONE NAZIONALE SOMALA (A/C.4/217)

24. Mr. BUNCHE (Secretary of the Committee) read a request for a hearing received from the President of the Unione Nazionale Somala (A/C.4/217).

25. Mr. GUIDOTTI (Italy) said that the Unione Nazionale Somala enjoyed the same political rights in the Trust Territory of Somaliland as other political parties. Since the Committee had agreed to invite the representatives of the Somali Youth League, it should in fairness grant the second request. As Italy was a member of the Trusteeship Council but not of the United Nations, he would not speak on the general problem of petition to the Fourth Committee, save to say that his delegation would welcome the discussion by the Committee of a proper method of handling such requests in future.

26. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) requested a roll-call vote on the request of the Unione Nazionale Somala (A/C.4/217).

A vote was taken by roll-call.

Bolivia, having been drawn by lot by the Chairman, was called upon to vote first.

In favour: Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Liberia, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Argentina.

Against: Union of South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Australia, Belgium.

Abstaining: Canada, Dominican Republic, France, New Zealand.

The request was granted by 46 votes to 4, with 4 abstentions.

27. Mr. MUCCIO (United States of America) said that he had voted against the request of the Somali Youth League on the grounds previously stated by the United States delegation (263rd meeting). However, since the Committee had decided to grant that request, he had voted in favour of granting the request of the Unione Nazionale Somala, on the ground that requests from the same Territory should receive the same treatment.

28. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium), Mr. FOURIE (Union of South Africa) and Mr. FORSYTH (Australia) said that they had voted against granting the request for the reasons for which they had voted against hearing the Somali Youth League.

29. Mr. PIGNON (France) said that he had opposed the Somali Youth League's request, but since the Committee had granted it, he had abstained from voting on the request of the Unione Nazionale Somala.

30. Mr. SPITS (Netherlands) said that he had abstained from voting on the Somali Youth League's request because he felt that the Committee should devise a better procedure. However, since the Committee had granted it, he had voted in favour of the second request on grounds of equity.

31. Mr. SCOTT (New Zealand) said that his delegation had abstained from voting on both requests, not because it was opposed to the right of petition but because it felt that the Trusteeship Council was much better equipped to deal with petitions than the Fourth Committee. The petitions the Committee received did not furnish sufficient information to allow representatives to assess their urgency and importance without previous study and investigation such as was provided for in the Trusteeship Council's Standing Committee on Petitions. He associated himself with those members of the Committee who were in favour of establishing suitable machinery.

32. Mr. INGLES (Philippines) said that he had voted in favour of granting the request of the Unione Nazionale Somala although it was a minority party,

because the right of petition might be accorded under the Charter even to a single individual.

Mr. Guidotti (Italy) withdrew.

REQUESTS FROM THE TRADITIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE, DOUALA (A/C.4/214), THE CAMEROONS SOCIALIST PARTY (A/C.4/215) AND THE MOSLEM GROUPS IN THE CAMEROONS (A/C.4/216)

33. The CHAIRMAN called upon the members of the Committee to consider the requests for oral hearings from the Traditional Assembly of the People, Douala (A/C.4/214), the Cameroons Socialist Party (A/C.4/215) and the Moslem Groups in the Cameroons (A/C.4/216). He suggested that the three requests should be considered together, although a separate vote would be taken on each.

34. Mr. PIGNON (France) suggested that the Committee should consult the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1952, which was at present in that area, on the desirability of granting the requests for hearings. The petitioners had been encouraged to send them by the fact that the request from the Union des Populations du Cameroun (A/C.4/205) had been granted, and they naturally considered that it would be only fair that they should have a hearing too. Some of them would doubtless need time to collect the money to pay for their journey to New York, and if any of them were unable to do so they would labour under a sense of injustice for which the United Nations would be blamed.

35. He suggested that a decision on all the requests from the Cameroons, including that from the Union des Populations du Cameroun, should be deferred and that the Visiting Mission should be asked to interview the petitioners and report to the Fourth Committee. That was not a formal proposal, but he thought the Committee would do well to adopt that course.

36. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) said that he would vote against all three requests and any others of the same kind that might be forthcoming.

The Committee decided by 40 votes to 5, with 8 abstentions, to grant the request for a hearing from the Traditional Assembly of the People, Douala (A/C.4/214).

The Committee decided by 40 votes to 5, with 8 abstentions, to grant the request for a hearing from the Cameroons Socialist Party (A/C.4/215).

The Committee decided by 42 votes to 5, with 6 abstentions, to grant the request for a hearing from the Moslem Groups in the Cameroons (A/C.4/216).

Question of the renewal of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/2219 and Corr.1, A/C.4/212, A/C.4/L.223) (continued)

[Item 34]*

37. Mr. YURANS (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said the USSR delegation had consistently

maintained that the Committee on Information should be made a permanent body. Chapter XI of the Charter imposed specific obligations on the Administering Members which would continue to exist as long as there were any Non-Self-Governing Territories, and to enable the United Nations to judge whether and to what extent the Administering Members were carrying out those obligations, the Charter provided that they should submit information about the conditions prevailing in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The information so supplied must be considered by an *ad hoc* body which would transmit its conclusions and recommendations to the General Assembly.

38. Since the obligation of the Administering Members to submit information under Article 73 e was a permanent one, the Committee set up to study that information should also be permanent. The USSR representative had made a proposal to that effect at the 67th meeting of the Committee on Information. The amendment submitted by twenty-one Powers (A/C.4/212) was the logical conclusion of the discussion that had taken place. The objections raised by certain delegations to the continuation of the Committee were unfounded and had been refuted by the Indonesian representative on the basis of Article 22 of the Charter. The Polish representative had endorsed his arguments on the basis of Article 7. Mr. Yurans would support the amendment of the twenty-one Powers, which was entirely in accordance with his delegation's views.

39. The amendment to that amendment proposed by the United States and Venezuela (A/C.4/L.223) reiterated the proposal made by the United States delegation in the Committee on Information. The United States representative apparently believed that in three years' time there would be no need for such a committee because the goals of Chapter XI would have been attained. The USSR delegation was unable to share that optimistic view and agreed with those delegations which thought that the Committee should be continued as long as there were Non-Self-Governing Territories.

40. Mr. KHALIDY (Iraq) suggested that the sponsors of the two amendments might hold an informal meeting and try to produce a compromise text.

41. Mr. RIVAS (Venezuela) supported that proposal.

42. Mr. ABOU KHADRA (Saudi Arabia) said that a number of statements made in the Committee had shown that there was a wide measure of agreement that the Committee on Information should be continued for an indefinite period. The fact that its life had been extended ever since 1946 showed that it was necessary. The Fourth Committee's work would have taken much more time if there had been no Committee on Information.

43. There appeared to be no difficulty, since the great majority of the members of the Committee had expressed themselves in favour of continuing the Committee on Information. The only real point at issue was the time for which it should be prolonged. In his view there was no reason why the question should have to be discussed periodically; the Committee would be needed as long as the General Assem-

* Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

bly had obligations under Chapter XI. To set up a committee for a limited period would not solve the problem, as the same situation would arise at the end of that period. The argument that in 1955 there might be a conference to review the Charter was not sufficiently convincing. The General Assembly was empowered under Article 22 to establish either *ad hoc* or permanent committees or commissions, and there was no reason why the establishment of the Com-

mittee on Information on a permanent basis should call for amendment of the Charter.

44. He appreciated the spirit of compromise that had prompted Venezuela and the United States to propose their amendment, but felt that it was too restricted in scope, and would be compelled to oppose it.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.