

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SIXTH SESSION

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MEETING



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Chairman: Mr. Max HENRÍQUEZ UREÑA (Dominican Republic).

#### Report of the Trusteeship Council (A/1856) (continued)

[Item 12] \*

#### GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. SAYRE (United States of America) observed that the Committee, in evaluating the Trusteeship Council's report (A/1856), would keep constantly before it the basic objectives of the International Trusteeship System as defined in the Charter and more especially in Article 76. It would, moreover, wish to know how the Trusteeship Council was discharging its very concrete responsibilities.

2. The process of self-government must be learned by each people for itself, by dint of its own struggle and sacrifice. It could not be attained or held secure by mere grant from one people to another, or by military victory. He might truthfully affirm that, in all of the Trust Territories, real progress was being made towards building the necessary foundations for self-government. In some cases, the progress made was striking; in others, the rate might usefully be speeded up.

3. With respect to the building of political foundations for self-government, there was the task, first, of assisting dependent peoples to develop a sense of popular responsibility for the self-government of the local unit or municipality. Within that unit the indigenous peoples often needed to learn how to put democracy into action, how to govern themselves by popular majorities. As those conceptions were mastered and the peoples learned the art of self-government in local units, the process had to be progressively broadened so as to include district-wide and eventually territory-wide self-government.

4. A case in point was the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, where many local municipalities had been organized on democratic lines since the United States had assumed trusteeship responsibility. Approximately 30 per cent of the population of voting age had already enjoyed some form of suffrage, and district councils were in course of organization. However, the people as yet did not have sufficient territorial understanding or community feeling to make possible the setting up of a territory-wide legislative or advisory council. The United States was pressing onward to that objective as speedily as circumstances would permit.

5. Progress was being made similarly in the economic, social and educational fields in each of the Trust Territories. Without sound economic foundations there could be no genuine individual freedom. With present-day technological knowledge, the means at hand to overcome hunger and poverty were greater than ever before. So that standards of living in the Trust Territories might be raised, ways had to be found for increasing or improving local food crops and, through improved economies or industrial development, for increasing local revenues, so as to make possible the purchase of food and other necessary commodities from abroad. Peoples of the Trust Territories, in common with many others, had been learning the superiority of modern scientific agriculture over the archaic methods of tilling the fields.

6. Building economic foundations for freedom generally involved projects, such as power development, flood control and irrigation, for which outside capital was needed. That had to be provided by the Administering Authorities or obtained through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. For an under-developed people to be thrown upon its own resources before it could attract the capital needed for economic or industrial development might substantially retard its economic independence and hence its real freedom.

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

Experts for a variety of tasks and assistance in the technical field would often be required for the development of industries, and must be secured largely either from the Administering Authority or from the United Nations Technical Assistance Board. Technical experts might be needed for such tasks as the promotion of agricultural development, livestock-disease control, insect and pest control, the stimulation and building up of cottage industries, or training in agricultural economics and marketing.

8. In many areas, systems of land tenure presented seemingly insurmountable barriers to freedom. Land reform, a many-sided problem, was essential if real freedom was to be achieved. The General Assembly had the previous year attacked the problem broadside on; the Economic and Social Council was now engaged on a profound study of it and the Trusteeship Council had itself set up a Committee on Rural Economic Development of the Trust Territories.

9. In supervising the administration of the Trust Territories, the Trusteeship Council was deeply concerned with the laying of the necessary economic foundations, and such questions as practicable methods of increasing crop diversification, the creation of stabilization funds as a protection against fluctuating world market prices and the setting up of territorial marketing boards, came up for detailed discussion.

10. Difficulties abounded. Economic assistance programmes could not be forced upon unwilling recipients. Innovations might arouse the opposition of tribal chiefs or vested interests. Old-time, unexact, subsistence economies often had a greater appeal than increased revenues, and progress at the cost of the abandonment of ancestral ways of life was not always desired.

11. The laying of the necessary economic foundations clearly involved more than the mere grant of funds to undeveloped areas. Like all effective work for human progress, it required a deep understanding of the peoples concerned, tempered with infinite patience and wisdom. There was still a long way to go. Nevertheless, economic progress was being made, more rapidly and on a more extended scale than ever before in human history.

12. Adequate social foundations were equally necessary for real freedom. The Trusteeship Council was doing pioneer work in strengthening the social foundations of the peoples of the Trust Territories. A random glance at its reports would show that the whole gamut of social problems from social welfare and security to clinics and prisons had come under its consideration. In many territories the most baffling and deep-rooted problem of all was that of inter-racial co-operation. Until that problem had been faced and mastered, men and women could never be really free. Experience had shown that where colonial administration had been based upon exploitation, it had bred only difficulties, heartbreak and well-nigh insuperable problems; where it had been based upon the conception of different races sharing common problems

and fortunes, stable and reasonably satisfactory solutions had generally been reached.

13. Perhaps the most necessary foundation of all for progress lay in education; ignorance and freedom could not go hand in hand. It was not always easy to fathom the thought processes of the primitive mind. Nevertheless, there was usually to be found in Trust Territories an intense eagerness for education. Experience showed that it was easier to arouse the desire for schooling than to provide the means to satisfy it. An educational programme based upon foreign teachers was utterly impracticable. Accordingly, effective training schools for indigenous teachers constituted the keystone of any adequate programme. For that, time and substantial expenditure were needed. The preparation of textbooks in the indigenous languages and the lack of a common language in many of the Trust Territories also raised substantial difficulties. There remained the crucial question of curricula. An academic education would not benefit primitive peoples; they needed to learn how to make life more rewarding and how to improve their living conditions.

14. Those problems were not insoluble, as was shown by such programmes as that laid down in the revised ten-year-plan for African education recently issued by the Government of Tanganyika,<sup>1</sup> whereby increased educational facilities were to be provided at all levels. The revised plan did not, however, claim to meet finally all the educational needs of the Territory. Solutions could not be found overnight. The fact remained that the basic problems were being intelligently attacked and measurable progress was being made by the various Administering Authorities, with the help and advice of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

15. The United States Government fully supported the work of the Trusteeship Council over the past year and hoped that the Fourth Committee would do likewise.

16. Mr. DE MARCHENA (Dominican Republic) said that the Trusteeship Council was gaining in experience every year. The trend towards co-operation and understanding between the Administering Authorities and the non-administering members of the Council was increasing, and new progress towards the objectives laid down in Article 76 of the Charter was being achieved, to the great benefit of the peoples of the Trust Territories.

17. He was glad to note that at its eighth and ninth sessions the Trusteeship Council had been able to bring up to date its examination of the reports from the Trust Territories for 1949 and 1950. It would now be possible to discuss the reports of the Administering Authorities and those of the visiting missions in conjunction, and thus to form a clearer idea of the way in which the Trusteeship Agreements were being fulfilled.

<sup>1</sup> See *Ten-Year Plan for African Education (Scheme for Revision)*, Government Printer, Dar-es-Salaam, 1950.

18. In addition to its regular business, the Trusteeship Council had devoted study to a series of special problems brought to its attention by resolutions of the General Assembly. Those problems included the question of administrative unions, the rural economic development of the Trust Territories, the revision of the Provisional Questionnaire, the revision of its own rules of procedure, and the improvement of the machinery for dealing with petitions. He laid particular emphasis on the last as being the point on which the whole system of international supervision hinged. Such international supervision, which was the essence of the Trusteeship System, was based upon two factors—the right of petition, and regular visits to the Trust Territories by United Nations missions.

19. Turning to the report proper, he drew attention to that part of it dealing with the revision of the Provisional Questionnaire (A/1856, p. 2). He reminded the Administering Authorities that the Drafting Committee on the Questionnaire was awaiting their comments and expressed the hope that a final report of that Committee would be prepared for the tenth session of the Trusteeship Council.

20. The provision of information about the United Nations to the peoples of the Trust Territories was of great importance. The provision of such information encountered many obstacles, even with the greatest good faith on the part of the Administering Authorities. The primary difficulty was the language problem, closely followed by the question of the cultural level of the communities in the Trust Territories. Other difficulties lay in the choice of methods of dissemination and of the centres from which the information was to be supplied. It was not sufficient for the United Nations Department of Public Information and Department of Trusteeship to send the Administering Authorities pamphlets, posters and other material. That effort must be reinforced by action in the schools and social groups, and the governments of the Territories. It should concentrate on two sectors of the population: the school children and the more advanced adults. The people of the Trust Territories should receive information on the United Nations and the Charter, and on the International Trusteeship System and its objectives in particular, which would serve them as a guide and enable them to understand the work of their own guardians and administrators and to trust the United Nations to watch continually over their development and finally guarantee them full independence. The undertaking to provide such information, which was often forgotten or regarded as unimportant, was as urgent and necessary as the observance of all other terms of the Trusteeship Agreements.

21. The right of petition was probably the most delicate aspect of the International Trusteeship System. It should be strengthened and protected as one of the most significant factors in international supervision under the terms of Chapter XII of the Charter. Experience had shown that petitions could be divided into three classes: the serious, the naive and the irrelevant or malicious. Of the three, the Council could of course

deal in detail only with the first, and a certain amount of sifting was necessary. It had done good work, but there was still a long way to go. The proper exercise of the right of petition would of course be facilitated by the spread of information about the United Nations. One of the factors which tended to discourage it was the memory of the futility of the petitions under the former Mandates System of the League of Nations. The visiting missions would be able to help in the gradual improvement of the system for petitions. He drew attention to the terms of reference, under General Assembly resolution 434 (V), of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1951.

22. Of the other subjects dealt with in the report, he singled out the Ewe problem for special mention. He paid a tribute to the co-operation of the French and United Kingdom Governments, and wished that other government might follow their example. He suggested that the visiting mission which was to go to West Africa in 1952 might be of considerable assistance in dealing with that problem. The Council had also dealt with two other topics of great importance—administrative unions and the rural economic development of the Trust Territories. The first was a question which should be kept under constant review. Study of the second had shown it to be a subject of vast proportions. He congratulated the Committee appointed by the Council to study the matter on the work it had done. The most important aspect of the problem was undoubtedly the system of land tenure in the Trust Territories. Indigenous customs in regard to the land and land utilization were, of course, other important aspects.

23. In conclusion, he expressed his pleasure at the acceptance by the Administering Authorities of the use of the United Nations flag in Trust Territories. He had himself, as Chairman of the Visiting Mission to East Africa, seen the United Nations flag flying there side by side with the flags of the Administering Authorities, a symbol of their unity of purpose.

24. He did not intend to go into the separate reports on conditions in the Trust Territories given in part II of the Trusteeship Council's report. The Fourth Committee would no doubt note them in its resolution approving the report as a whole. The diversity of the Trust Territories from the geographical, social and cultural points of view must never be forgotten. Although his delegation had often had occasion to criticize the situation in the Trust Territories, he believed that the realistic and effective application of the Trusteeship System would be of great benefit to the world as a whole. The role of the General Assembly towards the Trust Territories should be to improve the system itself. On the one hand, it should encourage the Administering Authorities to a fuller recognition of their responsibilities, and, on the other, it should convince the peoples of the Trust Territories that time, tact and patience were needed to achieve independence. The international community must not act hastily or irresponsibly in matters of freedom. His delegation would give sympathetic consideration to any resolution

submitted to the Fourth Committee which would help to improve the lot of the peoples of the Trust Territories, in accordance with the requirements of Article 76 of the Charter and the wishes of the General Assembly.

25. Mr. KHALIDY (Iraq) thought there could be no doubt that the colonial concept in itself was dying, although it was not yet dead. In 1913 it would have seemed impossible that so many peoples of Asia and Africa, who had been for centuries under foreign rule, could be as vocal and independent as they were today.

26. In most backward parts of Africa—backward economically and politically through no fault of any particular country—the new concept of freedom and democracy was gaining strength. In certain Trust Territories and Non-Self-Governing Territories the mass of the people was still oblivious to political advancement and liberty. People were the same in every country. In the economically and politically advanced countries too, most of the people were indifferent to politics. The most important factor was that certain groups and certain leaders of their communities in Africa shared Western ideas of liberty and wanted parliamentary institutions. That was a most encouraging sign. Even the uneducated people of those territories were alive to the new ideas of freedom and democracy.

27. Some of the colonial Powers still clung to nineteenth-century ideas, although in a different guise. It was the duty of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Trusteeship Council to bring it home to those Powers that times had changed and that not only in their own interests, but in the interests of the whole world, they should change with them. It would be impossible in the long run to prevent Trust Territories or Non-Self-Governing Territories from attaining freedom and independence or self-government. The question was no longer a subject of debate. The colonial Powers should decide whether, when the time came, they wished to make permanent enemies of the former dependent peoples or whether they wished to retain them within their empires.

28. With reference to political matters, the real problem was whether any given territory was being administered with a view to its eventually becoming self-governing or independent, or whether it was a mere field for exploitation.

29. The idea of fusion of a Territory with the metropolitan Power was utterly futile. History was full of instances of that fact. One great empire had realized the significance of the changes that were taking place and had come to a statesmanlike arrangement with many of its associates in Asia. That Power had seen from time immemorial that it was impossible to change a people, a culture, a language or a religion. Other great empires, however, still harboured the nineteenth-century concept of imperialism. The representatives of those Powers claimed that a line should be drawn between a people which had a background and a culture and a people which had not, and that fusion was possible for the latter though not for the former. He doubted the validity of that argument. Not even

an African territory with no culture or historical background could be fused with a completely different metropolitan country. He hoped that differences of colour would eventually cease to matter, but at present that difference in itself was enough to make fusion impossible. Europeans and Africans had a different conception of life. It would be a glorious day when those differences had ceased to exist, but that day was yet far off.

30. It was not true, moreover, that Africans were completely without culture. That was a false idea which had helped to confuse men's minds. Every people had its own customs, background and conception of life; it might even be said that African culture was stronger than others in that there had been less outside interference in the continent. There were many different languages in Africa and it would be difficult to channel the cultural life of the people.

31. Another important question was that of the training of people for self-government or independence, which would be essential before they could attain liberty. The Administering Authorities should set up parliamentary institutions in the Trust Territories without delay. The Africans might perhaps be averse to such institutions at first, because they were unfamiliar with them, but if they were taught how to use them there could be no doubt that they would accept them eagerly.

32. Freedom of expression, both within and without the Trust Territories, was of the utmost importance. It was useless to try to prevent people from thinking or to impose foreign ideas. No one could stop people from developing along their own lines.

33. In the economic field there was, generally speaking, great backwardness in the Trust Territories. The Administering Authorities were not to blame for the state of affairs, which had existed for centuries, but the General Assembly and the Administering Authorities should be blamed if development was proceeding too slowly. One of the most urgent problems in Africa was that of land reform. He welcomed the valuable study on that subject which had been initiated by the Trusteeship Council and he was glad to see that the Technical Assistance Administration was beginning to function in certain territories.

34. In the social and educational fields, he had frequently emphasized the importance of the three interdependent questions of roads, health and schools. More than any other continent, Africa direly needed roads; a good road system would lead to social contacts, exchange of ideas, economic exchanges and political development, and would eventually create a sense of unity between peoples and tribes.

35. He was glad to note that the Trusteeship Council was alive to the importance of health questions. Social reform and social advancement had inevitably suffered from the frequent wars that had occurred during the last half century. Africa urgently needed hospitals, doctors and nurses. The people were rapidly abandoning their belief in magic and demanded modern medical

treatment. Much had been done in that field, but much still remained to be done. As the health of the population improved, the people would learn how to co-operate and would become a more useful community.

36. Probably no phenomenon would strike an observer in Africa so much as the clamour for schools, as he knew from personal experience in Africa with a visiting mission. A great deal was being done to develop educational facilities, but there was still much to be done in that respect. One of the greatest obstacles to the spread of education was the lack of trained teachers. Training of teachers was the cornerstone of educational development in the Trust Territories.

37. The Trusteeship Council had gained a fund of experience; it had learned how to work and what the real problems to be faced were. Its work was not perfect however. More speed was desirable, and also more sympathetic treatment of certain problems. Two aspects of its work—visiting missions and petitions should receive serious consideration, as they were a fundamental part of its task. The visiting missions had provided the Council with a large store of information which had been of great value to it. With regard to petitions, the Iraqi delegation was far from satisfied with the way in which they were handled in the Trusteeship Council. They were being treated in a more or less mechanical way. While it was true that some petitions were of a trivial nature and could justifiably be treated lightly, action on those raising important problems should not be delayed. He hoped that the Committee would seriously consider that question at the current session.

38. Another important question was that of the Questionnaire. Ever since the Council had been in existence, it had been working on the Provisional Questionnaire, but practically nothing had been achieved. The Council had set up a committee to study the question, which had met several times, but was awaiting replies from the Administering Authorities. He would note one exception: the United Kingdom, which had sent in comments on the new draft questionnaire prepared by the Secretariat.

39. With regard to the Ewe problem, he assured the Committee that there was no ulterior motive behind

Iraq's interest in that question; it merely wished to ensure that the reasonable claims of the people received satisfaction. The substance of the problem would be dealt with at a later date, but he wished at that time to raise two points. First, he asked the Chairman when it was intended that the leaders of the Ewe people should be given a hearing, in accordance with the Committee's decision to that effect (202nd meeting). He understood that the French and United Kingdom delegations intended to present a paper on the subject within the next few days. It might be wise to defer hearing the leaders of the Ewes until after the publication of that paper. He would raise the second point because of the time element involved. He understood that an election to be held in Togoland under French administration on 9 December 1951 would be held in accordance with the two-college electoral system. The French Parliament had, however, passed a law abolishing elections in two colleges. He therefore asked the French representative under what system the elections in Togoland would be held.

40. Sir Alan BURNS (United Kingdom), replying to the Iraqi representative, said that the document in question would be handed to the Secretariat on the evening of 10 December.

41. Mr. PIGNON (France), answering the Iraqi representative, explained that legislation providing for the institution of a single electoral college in Togoland under French administration, in conformity with the oft-expressed desire of the Trusteeship Council, had not yet been adopted, but still had to be voted by the French Parliament. The forthcoming elections in Togoland under French administration would be held under the old electoral system, in other words in two colleges, but as soon as the pending legislation had become final, new elections would be held in the Territory under the new regulations.

42. After a brief exchange of views, the Chairman noted that the consensus of opinion was in favour of fixing the hearing of the Ewe representatives for 13 December subject to the arrangements for distribution on 11 December of the joint memorandum to be submitted by the French and United Kingdom delegations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.