



Thursday, 22 November 1956,  
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**Chairman: Mr. Enrique de MARCHENA**  
(Dominican Republic).

**Tribute to the memory of Mr. Georges Séraphin**

1. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) paid a tribute to the memory of Mr. Georges Séraphin, who had so ably represented the Haitian delegation. The Fourth Committee and the Trusteeship Council had lost a devoted servant of the cause of the United Nations, and their members a zealous colleague and a good friend.
2. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) thanked the Guatemalan representative.
3. The CHAIRMAN, speaking on behalf of all the members of the Committee, associated himself with the Guatemalan representative's words. He asked the Haitian representative to inform his Government of the tribute paid to the memory of Mr. Georges Séraphin.

**Requests for hearings (A/C.4/330 and Add.1)**  
(*continued*)

4. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the request for a hearing contained in the communications from Mr. Victor Seneadza and others, which concerned Togoland under British administration (A/C.4/330, para. 1).
5. Mr. MACLAY (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom delegation had no objection to the Committee's hearing the petitioners.  
*The Committee decided to grant the request for a hearing.*
6. The CHAIRMAN then drew the Committee's attention to the requests for hearings which concerned the Cameroons under French administration and which were contained in document A/C.4/330 and Add.1.
7. Mr. BARGUES (France), referring to the request from the Association Bamiléké of Yaoundé (A/C.4/330, para. 2; A/C.4/330/Add.1, para. 1), said that the French delegation had no objection to the Committee's hearing the petitioners.

*The Committee decided to grant the request for a hearing.*

8. Mr. BARGUES (France) said, with regard to the Communications from the Jeunesse démocratique du Cameroun and from the Union démocratique des femmes camerounaises (A/C.4/330/Add.1, para. 2), that those two associations had communist affiliations. Together with the Union des populations du Cameroun, they had instigated the subversive movements of May 1955; as a result, they had been dissolved. The French delegation considered that the Fourth Committee should not receive petitions from organizations which were no longer legally in existence, or hear their representatives.

9. The CHAIRMAN called for a vote on the requests for hearings made by those two organizations.

*The Committee decided, by 30 votes to 13, with 5 abstentions, to grant the requests for hearings.*

10. The CHAIRMAN asked the Committee to take a decision on the request for a hearing contained in the letter from the Tanganyika African National Union (A/C.4/330, para. 4).

11. Mr. MACLAY (United Kingdom) said the United Kingdom delegation had no objection to the Fourth Committee's hearing the petitioner.

*The Committee decided to grant the request for a hearing.*

12. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) said he had not requested that a vote be taken on the requests for hearings concerning Togoland under British administration and Tanganyika, nor on the request from the Association Bamiléké; but if they had been put to the vote, he would have voted against granting those requests. As the Trusteeship Council had not yet examined the communications in question, it was failing in courtesy towards the Council to hear the petitioners before the Council had examined their case.

13. Mr. THORP (New Zealand) said that his delegation had no objection in principle to the hearing of petitioners from the Trust Territories by the Fourth Committee. The Charter provided that the General Assembly might—it did not say that it must—accept petitions and examine them in consultation with the Administering Authority. The Trusteeship Council was a principal organ of the United Nations set up to supervise the administration of the Trust Territories, and it was therefore primarily to the Trusteeship Council that the task of examining petitions should fall. In the present instance, the Trusteeship Council might properly have heard at least two of the petitioners.

14. Those remarks probably had no application to the requests concerning Togoland under British administration, since it was his expectation that the Trusteeship Council would not be called upon again to deal with conditions in that Territory.

## AGENDA ITEM 39

**The Togoland unification problem and the future of the Trust Territory of Togoland under British administration: reports of the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner and of the Trusteeship Council (A/3169 and Corr.1, A/3173 and Add.1, A/3323; A/C.4/332)**

15. Mr. ROLZ BENNETT (Guatemala) read from the *Journal of the United Nations* for Tuesday, 20 November 1956, an account of the 551st meeting of the Committee, from which it appeared that the Committee had decided to examine first the question of the future of Togoland under British administration and then the question of the future of Togoland under French administration. He would like to have confirmation of the fact that the Committee had actually so decided. He had three points to make. First, for his delegation the problem remained one and indivisible, although for reasons of convenience it had sometimes been necessary to separate the two items; secondly, the petitioners' right to speak of the future of both Territories had to be safeguarded; finally, the Committee must facilitate the task of the petitioners, for it had a duty to them as representatives of the populations of the Trust Territories just as the petitioners themselves had a duty towards those who had sent them.

16. The CHAIRMAN said that no vote had in fact been taken on the point mentioned by the Guatemalan representative. As there had been no objection, however, he had regarded the Committee as having taken the decision mentioned in the *Journal*. He fully understood the Guatemalan representative's concern with the interests of the petitioners and recalled that the Fourth Committee had always endeavoured to facilitate their difficult task. It was therefore agreed that petitioners could give their opinion concerning the future of both parts of Togoland in a single statement.

17. Mr. BARGUES (France) confirmed that it was customary, when the Chairman announced a decision and it was not opposed, to consider the decision as adopted. That being so, the summary record of the 551st meeting clearly indicated that the Committee had decided to divide the question of Togoland into two parts, had taken note of the statement of the French representative on Togoland under French administration, and had decided not to take up the problem of that Territory until after the special session of the Trusteeship Council. With regard to the petitioners, they would have the right to speak on the subject of the two Territories, since the question actually included in the agenda was the Togoland unification problem.

18. The CHAIRMAN, referring to the requests for hearings (A/C.4/329) which the Committee had approved at its 551st meeting, said that the Secretariat had received replies to its telegrams from four organizations. It seemed that three of the petitioners were already in New York and that others would arrive in the next few days. The Mouvement populaire togolais, the Parti togolais du progrès and the Union des chefs et des populations du Nord-Togo had not yet replied.

19. He proposed that the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner should be invited to participate in the work of the Committee during the discussion of the item now before it.

*It was so decided.*

*At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Espinosa y Prieto, United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner for Togoland under British Administration, took a place at the Committee table.*

GENERAL DEBATE ON THE FUTURE OF TOGOLAND  
UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

20. Mr. MACLAY (United Kingdom) said that the occasion was historic both for the people of Togoland under British administration and for the International Trusteeship System.

21. The documents before the Committee constituted a very complete account of the action taken in pursuance of resolution 944 (X) adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth session. He would therefore confine himself to giving some additional information.

22. In 1955 the General Assembly had authorized the holding of a plebiscite in Togoland under British administration to determine the future status of the inhabitants. The plebiscite had been held in May 1956 under United Nations supervision. The report of the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner (A/3173 and Add.1), the report of the United Kingdom Plebiscite Administrator (T/1269 and Add.1) and the special report of the Trusteeship Council (A/3169 and Corr.1) gave an account of the proceedings. By reading those three documents the Committee would realize how successfully the considerable problems of organization inherent in an operation of that kind had been overcome. On behalf of his Government he paid a tribute to the highly conscientious manner in which the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner had performed his duties. The General Assembly would note from the Plebiscite Commissioner's report that the wishes of the Togoland people had been freely expressed and faithfully recorded. Fifty-eight per cent of the voters, i.e., a clear majority, had been in favour of union with an independent Gold Coast.

23. The United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner and the United Kingdom Administrator had submitted their reports to the Trusteeship Council in June 1956. The Trusteeship Council, in its resolution 1496 (XVIII), had recommended to the General Assembly "that appropriate steps be taken, in consultation with the Administering Authority, for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory to become effective upon the attainment of independence by the Gold Coast". The election held in July throughout the Gold Coast and the Trust Territory had confirmed the results of the plebiscite. Moreover, on 18 September 1956 the United Kingdom Government had announced its intention that, subject to Parliamentary approval, the Gold Coast should attain independence within the Commonwealth on 6 March 1957. He accordingly supported the Trusteeship Council's recommendation to the General Assembly. He also asked that the United Kingdom memorandum (T/1270) should be circulated to the members of the Committee.<sup>1</sup>

24. Mr. ESPINOSA y PRIETO (United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner) thanked the representative of the United Kingdom for speaking so highly of his work. He had fully appreciated the importance of the duties entrusted to him when, for the first time a plebiscite was being organized in a Trust Territory with the co-operation of a non-self-governing people, the Administering Authority and the United Nations.

<sup>1</sup> Subsequently reproduced as document A/C.4/334.

25. The report in which he had given an account of the conduct of the plebiscite organized in accordance with the Assembly's recommendations as set forth in resolution 944 (X) of 15 December 1955 was inevitably a lengthy document. While confining himself to the essential facts, he had sought to give a faithful account of all the factors in the situation in order to supply complete data on which the members of the Committee could form an opinion. The different chapters of the report dealt with the basis and nature of the plebiscite, United Nations participation in the plebiscite, relations with the Administering Authority, the political aspects of the plebiscite, the plebiscite area, the organization of the plebiscite by the Administering Authority, the conduct of the plebiscite, complaints that were made, and lastly, such conclusions as the Commissioner had felt able to draw. The results of the plebiscite were summarized in paragraphs 493 and 494 and set out in detail in paragraph 495.

26. To be able to give the General Assembly an accurate picture of the situation, he had found it necessary to acquire a thorough knowledge of the issues debated and of the wishes of the two parties. His report had been intended to show all the obstacles he had encountered, as well as the suspicions, fears, and evidence of bad faith and prejudice. That was why he had given an extensive account of the circumstances in which the plebiscite had been conducted, including the influences to which the Togoland people had been exposed, the importance of the problem of the independence of the Gold Coast and the problem of the unification of the Ewe people, and the intense conflict between the trend towards centralization and the trend towards federalism. Chapter IV, which dealt with the political aspects of the plebiscite, and with the aims and activities of the two parties, was particularly important. The Committee would be able to judge the impartial attitude he had taken at certain difficult moments; he did not conceal the fact that there had been such moments, though he did not wish to exaggerate their importance. Examples would be found in paragraphs 199 and 222. In every instance, it had been necessary to display firmness, but also courtesy and consideration, and to invite the two parties to act according to their best traditions. The democratic method by which the great constitutional crisis of the Gold Coast had been solved in July had had a salutary effect. The presence of petitioners from the two parties at the Fourth Committee's debates was to be welcomed since what was involved was, in fact, the destiny of the Togoland people.

27. The plebiscite in Togoland had been conducted in extremely interesting political circumstances. Its organization had involved many details and a set of regulations concerning the setting up of voters' registers, registration, the examination of complaints and guarantees of complete equality and political liberty. The Togoland people and the Administering Authority could be proud of the manner in which the plebiscite had been conducted; it constituted a triumph for the secret ballot, which had protected the voters from all pressure. There had been certain unusual incidents such as the case of fetishism described in paragraph 208, but their importance should not be exaggerated. Of particular interest was the perfect example of a vote in the locality of Atikpui-Nyive, where on 9 May every person registered in the electoral lists had voted.

28. Speaking of his efforts to examine complaints impartially, he said that chapter VIII contained the text of every complaint and described the circumstances on which the action he had taken was based. While, as a representative of the General Assembly, he considered that the plebiscite had been conducted fairly, he had felt it necessary to include all the documents which maintained the opposite view. It was now for the members of the Committee to pass judgement.

29. He regretted that the rules of procedure of the Trusteeship Council had not allowed him to draft his report in Spanish, but was glad of the opportunity he had had to co-operate with the translators. He also wished to thank all his collaborators for their valuable assistance.

30. He had attempted throughout to ensure that the lofty purposes of the United Nations should not be thwarted. The results of the plebiscite had been announced in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. He had then reminded the parties that the destiny of the Territory was in the hands of the General Assembly, the highest organ of the United Nations, whose moral prestige would invest the decision taken with a sacred character. He hoped that a frank discussion in the Fourth Committee would reveal the smooth conduct of the plebiscite and its importance in world evolution.

31. Mr. AGUERO (Chile) congratulated the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Fourth Committee on their election.

32. He reserved the right to examine the question in greater detail at a later stage, but in the meantime he wished to emphasize the great importance of the plebiscite organized in Togoland under British administration. The whole world had been able to see that, with the help of a competent staff and proper organization, the United Nations had applied the precepts of the Charter and had fulfilled one of its principal purposes. The success achieved had increased the prestige of the Organization, on which peace and security in the world ultimately depended. The results obtained were due to the collaboration of the British authorities and the local population, and also to the devoted and impartial efforts of the Plebiscite Commissioner and the Secretariat. His delegation trusted that the example set by the United Kingdom, the United Nations and the Togoland people would prompt the States responsible for the administration of Trust Territories to make it possible for other peoples to take their place among the sovereign countries of the world.

33. Mr. RIVAS (Venezuela) proposed that the Committee should postpone the general debate pending the arrival of the petitioners.

34. Mr. DORSINVILLE (Haiti) pointed out that some petitioners had not intimated exactly when they were due to arrive in New York. If their reply was not forthcoming soon, the Committee could not defer the debate indefinitely.

35. Mr. RIVAS (Venezuela) agreed with that view. He merely wished to suggest that the discussion should not be closed until the Committee had heard all the petitioners.

36. Mr. RYCKMANS (Belgium) saw no reason why the Committee should not decide to keep the discussion open until it was in possession of all the

necessary data. However, the people of the Trust Territory had already given their views, and some of the representatives had certainly been able to form an opinion based on the results of the plebiscite. He was therefore opposed to the suggestion that the discussion should be deferred until the arrival of all of the petitioners.

37. Mr. KHOMAN (Thailand) agreed with both the Venezuelan and Belgian representatives. Their views were not incompatible.

38. The CHAIRMAN said he shared the opinion of the representative of Thailand. The Committee would proceed with the debate on the question pending the arrival of the petitioners.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.