

ILC Legal Analysis on UN Article 76b

Future of the Cameroons under British Administration

From paragraph 82 to 126

82. In accordance with the provisions of article 5 of the Trusteeship Agreement, the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British administration had been administered as an integral part of Nigeria and as such had shared, to an appreciable extent, the political advances in Nigeria.

83. As a result of constitutional conferences held in London and Lagos in 1953 and 1954, in which representatives of the Trust Territory also participated, the Federal Constitution of Nigeria was introduced on 1 October 1954. As from that date, the Southern Cameroons was separated from the Eastern Region of Nigeria and was constituted as a separate unit, with a Government of its own with quasi-federal status. The Northern Cameroons, however, at the request of its representatives, continued to be administered as part of the Northern Region of Nigeria.

84. The 1954 Nigerian Constitution was reviewed at a further Constitutional Conference held in May and June 1957¹⁰⁵. The Conference, in which representatives of both the Northern Cameroons and the Southern Cameroons participated, agreed upon further constitutional advances to be implemented in the future.

85. No definite date was set for the independence of the Federation of Nigeria. At the opening of the Conference, the three regional Premiers and the Leader of Government Business in the Southern Cameroons had asked that the Government of the United Kingdom should undertake to grant independence to the Federation in 1959. In a series of statements at the Conference, the Secretary of State for the Colonies indicated that no such undertaking could "be given, although the Government of the United Kingdom stood as firmly as anyone in Nigeria behind the proclaimed objective of full self-government within the British Commonwealth. He stated that the strain of regional self-government was yet to be undertaken and that it would be necessary, for the picture to become clearer, to await the report of the Minorities Commission, to see whether any more States

¹⁰⁵ Report by the Nigeria Constitutional Conference held in London in May and June, 1957Cmd 207 (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957).

would be created; and also the report of the Fiscal Commission, which would have much contentious business to settle. On the understanding reached during the Conference that the new Nigerian Parliament to be elected in 1959/1960 would debate a resolution asking the Government of the United Kingdom to agree to full self-government within the British Commonwealth by a date in 1960, however, the Secretary of State gave an undertaking that his Government would do its utmost to meet the resolution in a reasonable and practical manner.

86. In expressing disappointment at the statement of the Secretary of State, the three regional Premiers and the Leader of Government Business in the Southern Cameroons Jointly declared that the year 1959 had been unanimously proposed by the people of Nigeria. They themselves had given consideration to a date in 1960 only because they appreciated that solution of the various problems that must be disposed of before independence would take a longer time than they had thought. Having gone this far on the path of reason and realism, they had thought that the Secretary of State would accede to their united wishes. In the circumstances, they could do no more than take note of the statement of the Secretary of State, while reserving the right to pursue the issue further with a view to impressing on the Government of the United Kingdom the necessity for granting independence to the Federation of Nigeria not later than 2 April 1960.

87. In the course of his separate discussions with the representatives of the Southern Cameroons, the Secretary of State made a statement, of which the Conference later took note, about the future position of the Trust Territory when Nigeria should become independent. The text of this statement was as follows:
"Her Majesty's Government fully recognize their obligations to the Cameroons under the Trusteeship Agreement.

"One of these obligations has been and is to administer the territory as an integral part of Nigeria. This has of course been on the assumption that Nigeria was a dependent territory. When Nigeria becomes an independent country, this arrangement will no longer be possible so the Trusteeship Agreement will in any case have to be reviewed at that stage.

"When Nigeria becomes independent one possibility would be that the Cameroons should remain part of it. This would involve the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement and would require consultation with the United Nations. I can state

quite categorically that there can be no question of obliging the Cameroons to remain part of an independent Nigeria contrary to her own wishes.

"Before Nigeria becomes independent the people of the North and South sectors of the Cameroons would have to say freely what their wishes were as to their own future. Among the options open to them would be to continue under the Trust Administration of the United Kingdom. I must in fairness add the warning that you would not thereby be given the golden key of the Bank of England. But many of the best friends of the Cameroons do not foresee a destiny more likely to promote her happiness and prosperity than in continued association with Nigeria.

"Her Majesty's **Government will of course pay the very greatest regard to their views, whatever form they may take.**"¹⁰⁶

88. At the twenty-first session of the Council, the representative of the Administering Authority, having referred to this statement, said¹⁰⁷ that he did not intend at that time to deal with the future of the Trust Territory; the appropriate time would come later. When that time should come, the Administering Authority would submit proposals regarding the future of the Territory.

89. The Trusteeship Council decided¹⁰⁸ to defer its evaluation of the reforms concerning the Cameroons resulting from **the Constitutional Conference to a more appropriate occasion, that is to say, until after the 1958 Visiting Mission had reported on conditions prevailing in the Trust Territory.** The Council at the same time took note¹⁰⁹ of the statements of the United Kingdom Secretary of State for the Colonies that "there can be no **question of obliging the Cameroons to remain part of an independent Nigeria contrary to her own wishes**" and that "before **Nigeria becomes independent the people of the North and South sectors of the Cameroons would have to say freely what their wishes were as to their own future**".

106 Report by the Nigeria Constitutional Conference held In London in May and June, 1957, para. 63. Cmd 307 (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957)*

107 T C (XXII), 857th mtg., para. 15.

108 T C (XXI), Annexes, a.i. k, p. 38, T/L.835? annex, para. 4

109 Ibid., para. 3

90. At the twenty-second session of the Trusteeship Council, the representative of the United Kingdom, by a letter¹¹⁰ dated 27 June 1958, submitted a memorandum by his Government concerning the future of the Cameroons under British administration. The memorandum referred to constitutional developments in the Federation of Nigeria as well as in the Trust Territory, which was administered as an integral part of the Federation, and stated that when the Government of the United Kingdom relinquished its powers of administration in the Federation of Nigeria, it would no longer be possible to administer the Cameroons as part of Nigeria in accordance with the Trusteeship Agreement. It was therefore necessary to consider what arrangements should then be made for the administration of the Trust Territory; **these arrangements must involve either modification or termination of the present Trusteeship Agreement.**

91. The memorandum further stated that the United Nations, as the other principal party to the Trusteeship Agreement, **would wish to give careful thought to the matter, involving as it did the future of the inhabitants of the Trust Territory, and would wish to ascertain the facts of the situation and, in particular, the views of the inhabitants themselves by appropriate means.** Such processes could not be hurried, since adequate time for discussion of the issues involved must be allowed, both to the inhabitants of the Trust Territory and to the United Nations. Even though it was not then possible to state precisely when new arrangements would be needed, they should be put in hand quickly, since the Government of the United Kingdom had undertaken to fix a date during 1960 for the independence of the Federation of Nigeria, if asked to do so by the Nigerian Parliament.

92. The Government of the United Kingdom, therefore, reported the situation to the Trusteeship Council at its twenty-second session in order that the Council might consider, as a first step, instructing its 1958 Visiting Mission to West Africa to include in its report observations which might be helpful when a decision had to be taken by the United Nations and the Administering Authority upon the method of consulting the peoples of the Trust Territory about their future.

93. Further, the memorandum recalled **the promise by the Government of the United Kingdom that the Inhabitants of both the northern and the southern sections of the Trust Territory would be given an opportunity freely to express their own wishes about their future; it stated that the Government of the United Kingdom**

110 T C (XXII), Annexes, a.i. 6, T/1393-

attached great importance to the consultation of the peoples of the northern and the southern sections of the Cameroons about their future, and it was not too soon to begin the process leading to it. The outcome of that consultation would in time result in modification or termination of the Trusteeship Agreement.

94. It was accordingly suggested in the memorandum that it would be appropriate and useful for the forthcoming Visiting Mission to West Africa to make an assessment of the situation for the Council, and that a passage along the following lines should be included to that end in the Visiting Mission's terms of reference:

"The Visiting Mission should include in their report their views on the method of consultation which should be adopted when the time comes for the people of the northern and southern sections of the Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration to express their wishes concerning their future."¹¹¹

95. The Trusteeship Council considered the United Kingdom memorandum together with a draft resolution¹¹² on the terms of reference of the Visiting Mission to West Africa, submitted by Italy. The draft resolution contained the following paragraph to cover the suggestion made by the United Kingdom:

"5 "Further requests the Visiting Mission to include in its report on the Cameroons under British administration its views on the method of consultation which should be adopted when the time comes for the people of the Northern and Southern Sections of that Territory to express their wishes concerning their future."

96. While there was general agreement in the Trusteeship Council for inclusion in the terms of reference of the Visiting Mission of a paragraph on the lines suggested in the draft resolution submitted by Italy, there was difference of opinion in regard to its phraseology. Guatemala moved¹¹³ an amendment orally to delete the words "method of" and modify the sentence so that it would read "... on the consultation which would take place when the time comes ..." A number of representatives objected to the reference to "the Northern and Southern Sections" of the Territory and asked for a separate vote on those words. The amendment by Guatemala received 7 votes in favour and 7 vote against and was therefore not

111 T C (XXII), Annexes, a.i. 6, T/1393, para.

112 T/L.866 (mimeographed).

113 T C (XXII), 932nd mtg., parae. 33 and 42.

adopted¹¹⁴. The words "of the Northern and Southern Sections", when put to the vote separately, received¹¹⁵ 7 votes in favour and 7 against. Consequently, these words were deleted from the paragraph. The draft resolution as a whole, with the paragraph in question as amended, was approved¹¹⁶ by the Council by 13 votes to 1, with no abstentions. The text of the paragraph as contained in the resolution¹¹⁷ of the Trusteeship Council on the terms of reference of the Visiting Mission follows:

"Further requests the Visiting Mission to include in its report on the Cameroons under British administration its views on the method of consultation which should be adopted when the time comes for the people of that Territory to express their wishes concerning their future."

97. The future of the Cameroons under British administration was considered in connection with the special report of the Trusteeship Council¹¹⁸ at the thirteenth session of the General Assembly. Four petitioners (including one from the British Cameroons)¹¹⁹ were granted hearings.

98. Early in the debate in the Fourth Committee on this question, there was an intervention, in which the representatives of the Administering Authority stated¹²⁰ that whatever arrangements were made concerning the future of the Cameroons under British administration, the Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory would have to be either terminated or modified. The Visiting Mission was in the field at that time, the representative continued, and its report would be considered by the Trusteeship Council the following February or March (1959). The Government of the United Kingdom intended to place that report, together with the conclusions of the Council, before the General Assembly at the next regular session. Subject to the view of the Visiting Mission and the Council, it was the intention of the Administering Authority to ask the General Assembly to agree that the

114 Ibid., para. 45.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid.

117 T C resolution 1907 (XXII).

118 G A (XIII), Annexes, a.i. 13, p. 17, A/4094.

119 Mr. Ndeh Ntumazah, representative of One Kamerun. G A (XIII), 4th Com., 775th, 776th, 779th, 780th, 792nd, 807th and 808th mtgs.

120 G A (XIII), 4th Cora., 803rd mtg., para. 11.

consultations, once authorized, should be held at the earliest possible date. The representative of the Administering Authority further suggested a time-table for the organization and holding of a consultation which would fit into the regular programme of meetings of the Trusteeship Council and the General Assembly, as well as a brief special session of the letter in 1960, to decide on action to be taken in the light of the results of the plebiscite. It would be necessary for a decision to be taken well before the date of Nigerian independence to permit many necessary practical and legal arrangements to be made in the Trust Territory.

99. During the course of the general debate on this item, however, many members considered that no action could be taken until conditions in the Trust Territory were better known. The representative of India¹²¹ thought that, pending the submission of the Visiting Mission's report, the Fourth Committee would be unable to decide on the holding of elections or the unification of the two Territories or any other important matter affecting their future. Only a special session of the General Assembly would make possible the consideration of such a question in detail. A special session could also set up machinery for determining the wishes of the people.

100. As a result, the General Assembly decided¹²² on 5 December 1958 to resume its thirteenth session on 20 February 1959 to consider the question of the future of the two Cameroons exclusively.

101. Between 5 December 1958 and 20 February 1959, the Visiting Mission returned to United Nations Headquarters in New York and submitted¹²³ its reports on the two Cameroons. In the report on the Cameroons under British administration,¹²⁴ the Mission expressed its opinion¹²⁵ that the wishes of the northern and southern peoples of the Trust Territory should be determined separately.

121 G A (XIII), 4th Com., 814th mtg., para. 14.

122 G A resolution 1281 (xiii).

123 T C (XXIII), 953rd mtg., paras. 1-7.

124 T C (XXIII), Suppl. No. 2 (T/1426 and Add.1).

125 Ibid., para. 170.

102. To enable it to complete its report, the Visiting Mission awaited the outcome of the 21 January 1959 elections. After studying the results, the Mission concluded¹²⁶ that they were not decisive so far as the future of the Southern Cameroons was concerned. The Mission stated, however, that if general agreement should develop in the newly elected House of Assembly concerning the future of the Southern Cameroons, formal popular consultation might prove unnecessary; but if no such agreement emerged, it might only be through consultation at some appropriate future date, probably through a plebiscite, that it would be possible to resolve the basic issues. In that event, the Visiting Mission considered that the conditions for such consultation, including its timing and the question or questions to be put to the people, would have to be determined by the General Assembly and the Administering Authority in consultation and - so far as possible and practicable - in agreement with the political parties in the Southern Cameroons.

101. The representative of the United Kingdom, the Administering Authority, informed¹²⁷ the Trusteeship Council at its twenty-third session that, following the elections, Mr. John Foncha, the leader of the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), had formed the Government of the Southern Cameroons and that this Government had introduced two motions during meetings of the House of Assembly. In one motion, the House of Assembly asked the Administering Authority to take immediate steps to fulfil the will of the people of the Southern Cameroons as indicated in the elections, that is, to implement the policy of the Government of the Southern Cameroons, which advocated the secession of the Southern Cameroons from the Federation of Nigeria before the latter should attain independence, and the maintenance of the Trusteeship Agreement under a modified form for some time, during which the possibilities of reunification with a section of the British or French zones could be explored.

104. In the second motion, the House of Assembly, bearing in mind the fact that a plebiscite was likely to be the means of determining whether or not the Southern Cameroons should secede from the Federation of Nigeria, requested the Administering Authority to postpone the registration of voters in the Southern Cameroons for the forthcoming general elections to the Federal House of Representatives of Nigeria until it should become clear whether or not the Southern Cameroons would continue to send representatives to the House of Assembly.

¹²⁶ Ibid., para. 218.

¹²⁷ T C (XXIII), 959th mtg., para. 2.

105. The Opposition moved an amendment to the first motion, whereby the Premier and Leader of the Opposition would be mandated by the House of Assembly of the Southern Cameroons to inform the Trusteeship Council that the House of Assembly was of the opinion that there was no better future for the Southern Cameroons than in its Continued association with Nigeria, and further, to request the United Nations to explore other and more effective means of ascertaining the wishes of the people of the Southern Cameroons about their future relationship with the Federation of Nigeria. The two government motions were carried by 14 votes to 12.

106. The representative of the Administering Authority stated that it was clear from the voting in the House of Assembly that no general agreement, as envisaged by the conclusions of the Visiting Mission, had been achieved; both parties accepted the fact that a plebiscite would be required in order to determine the future of the Southern Cameroons, and this was also the view of the Administering Authority. Conditions for a consultation, including its timing and the questions to be put to the people, would have to be determined by the General Assembly and the Administering Authority in consultation with the political parties represented in the House of Assembly.

107 With regard to the Northern Cameroons, the Visiting Mission, concluding its recommendations, reported¹²⁸ that, on the basis of the facts and opinions known to it, there was no difference of opinion on the principal question of its future which would require or justify the holding of a formal consultation on the subject. The Visiting Mission believed it manifestly the opinion of the population of the Northern Cameroons as a whole, so far as it could be expressed at the time and in the foreseeable future, that it should become permanently a part of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria when the latter should attain independence. The Visiting Mission accordingly suggested that, if the General Assembly should accept such a union as a basis for the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement, no further consultation need be held.

108. Top representative of the Administering Authority declared¹²⁹ that the attitude in the north, according to the Visiting Mission, was more one of

128 T C (XXIII), Suppl. No, 2 (T/1426 and Add.1), para. 181.

129 T C (XXXIII), 959th mtg., paras. 8-11.

resignation to the imposition of a plebiscite than of positive acceptance of it. The Administering Authority stated that it had carefully considered the report of the Visiting Mission on the question of holding possible further consultation in the north. Having found the arguments presented by the Mission very convincing, it endorsed its conclusions. Had it been shown that a plebiscite was necessary in the Northern Cameroons, the Administering Authority would have been perfectly ready 'to agree to it. Since the Mission had concluded, however, that it was not, the representative of the Administering Authority did not think that the Trusteeship Council could consider imposing or holding a plebiscite in the Northern Cameroons.

109. The Council considered¹³⁰ that the conclusions of the Visiting Mission would require further examination by the General Assembly and transmitted to the General Assembly the report of **the Visiting Mission, the observations of the Administering Authority and the records of the Council's discussions, in order that the General Assembly might take such** action as it deemed appropriate, in accordance with **Article 76 b of the Charter**, after it had duly examined the question in the light of the documents and any further views that might be expressed before it.

110. On 20 February 1959, the General Assembly resumed its thirteenth session to consider the future of the two Trust Territories of the Cameroons. The United Kingdom delegation included, among others, the United Kingdom permanent representative, the Commissioner of the Cameroons and three elected representatives of the Cameroonian people: Mr. John Foncha, the new Premier of the Southern Cameroons; Dr. E.M. Endeley, the former Premier and current Leader of the Opposition in the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly; and Mailam Abdullahi, the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs in the Government of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria. Petitioners¹³¹ appearing before the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly included four from the Trust Territory: one representative of the political party, one Kamerun; **two representatives of the National Union of Kamerun Students** and **one representative of the Kamerun Students Association of America.**

130 T C resolution 1926 (XXIII).

131 G A (XIII), 4th Com., 850th-859th, 873rd and 874th mtgs.

111. The representative of the Administering Authority for the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration pointed out¹³² that **even though the main emphasis in the General Assembly debate had center on the Cameroons under French administration, nearly all the speakers had devoted part of their attention to the Trust Territory under British administration.**

112. The representative of the Administering Authority, in his opening statement reiterated¹³³ his **agreement with the Visiting Mission that conditions for a plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons should be determined by the General Assembly and the Administering Authority, so far as possible in agreement with the political parties in the House of Assembly of the Southern Cameroons.** It was the duty of the resumed session to consider whether enough was then known about the various possibilities to enable the General Assembly to settle how the future of the Territory should be determined and, **in particular, whether there was sufficient agreement between the parties to permit decisions, as to the questions to be put and the timing of the plebiscite, to be taken at the thirteenth session.**

113. **Mr. John Foncha**, the new Premier of the Southern Cameroons, stated¹³⁴ that his party, Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), which had won the general elections, advocated separation from the Federation of Nigeria and continuation of Trusteeship for the short period during which the possibility of effecting reunification of the two Territories could be explored. Reunion with the Northern Cameroons would be welcome, if the latter had meanwhile worked out its separation from the Federation of Nigeria. Concerning the terms of the plebiscite, the Premier of the Southern Cameroons stated:¹³⁵ (a) **the issue should be that of separation from the Federation of Nigeria or of remaining with it. Reunification could come only after separation, after it had been discussed with the other Government concerned, and it should not be a question in the plebiscite;** (b) Symbols should be used In preference to oral questions in order to guard against fraud and to permit the voting to be completed in time and to the satisfaction of the people; (c) A new register of electors for the plebiscite should be established. In the circumstances it would be better to exclude Nigerians and Cameroonians from the French- administered Territory from the plebiscite; (d) Southern Cameroonians

132 Ibid., 873rd mtg., para. 22.

133 Ibid., 846th mtg., paras. 20 and 21.

134 G A (XIII), 4th Com-, 846th mtg., paras. 25 and 26.

135 Ibid., para. 29.

abroad should be allowed to vote by proxy; and (e) Adequate time should be allowed for registration, and voting should take place in the ensuing dry season.

114. Dr. E.M. Endeley, the Leader of the Opposition, presented¹³⁶ other views about the organization of a plebiscite. **He thought that the question put to the voters should be simple and easy to understand. In his view, they should be asked whether they wanted continued association with Nigeria** under the terms of the White Paper¹³⁷ or whether they wished the Territory to unite with an independent French Cameroons. **Secession was important only as a prelude to unification and should not be referred to specifically in the question.**

115. The petitioners from the Trust Territory also presented¹³⁸ their opinions concerning the terms of the plebiscite.

116. Sentiment during the general debate appeared to crystallize in favour of holding a plebiscite in the northern part of the Trust Territory of the Cameroons under British administration. This was contrary to the recommendations of the Visiting Mission. In his initial statement before the Fourth Committee, one of the petitioners had declared¹³⁹ that the administrative grip of Nigeria on the Northern Cameroons was so strong that, in its report¹⁴⁰ on the Territory, the 1958 Visiting Mission had mentioned evidence of it and of the intimidation used by the majority party to suppress opinions contrary to its own. **The petitioners who had come before the United Nations to argue the contrary could not claim that they represented the people of the Northern Cameroons, for a democratic election under universal adult suffrage and by secret ballot had never been held in the Northern Cameroons.** It was, he added, the stated intention of the Government of the Northern Region to continue to withhold suffrage from women. For that reason alone, if for no other, the United Nations should not acquiesce in the separation of that zone from the rest of the Cameroons.

136 Ibid., paras. 32-40.

137 Report by the Resumed Nigeria Constitutional Conference, Cmd 569 (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958).

138 G A (XIII), 4th Com., 850th mtg., paras. 33-36 (Mr. Ndeh Ntumazah); paras. 57-41 (Victor Ngu); 852nd mtg., paras. 7-11 (Magnus Mukoko-Mokeba); and 855rd mtg., paras. 4-8 (Fongum Gorji-Dtnka).

139 Ibid., 855rd mtg., para. 7.

140 T C (XXIII), Suppl. No. 2 (T/1426 and Add.I).

117. It was stated¹⁴¹ by one representative subsequently in the debate that, while his delegation gave due weight to the Visiting Mission's conclusion that the population of the Northern Cameroons manifestly desired unification with the Federation of Nigeria, it considered that the conclusion must be ratified by a consultation of the population, particularly in view of the fact that the area had no representative institutions and because the question involved was not merely independence but integration with another country.

118. Another representative argued¹⁴² that there had never been any opposition in the Northern Region to a plebiscite, if that was considered the best way of ascertaining the wishes of the people. The Government of the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria, however, could hardly have favoured a plebiscite after the Visiting Mission had reported that it did not consider one necessary. The Government of the Northern Region concurred in this opinion but it was, of course, a matter for the General Assembly to decide. In saying that he was prepared to agree to a plebiscite, he did so on the understanding that the conditions under which it would be held would be suited to the circumstances of the Northern Cameroons. It would clearly be to the advantage of all concerned if a plebiscite were held before the Nigerian federal elections. If it were held in November 1959, the result could be endorsed by the General Assembly in December, and the position in the Northern Cameroons would then be quite clear. He also suggested terms for holding a plebiscite in the northern Trust Territory which would be acceptable to his Government.

119. The question of female suffrage in the Northern Cameroons was raised in connection with the probable plebiscite in that region. The representative of Liberia introduced an amendment¹⁴³ to the draft resolution¹⁴⁴ submitted by eight Powers on the question. By the amendment, the words "on the basis of universal adult suffrage" would be inserted in the text, while the phrase "and that the plebiscite should be conducted on the basis of the electoral register at present being compiled for the elections to the Federal House of Representatives" would be deleted.

141 G A (XIII), 4th com., 861st mtg., para. 37-

142 Ibid., 864th mtg., paras. 1-19

143 G A (XIII), Annexes, a.i. 13, p. 25, A/4095, para. 31 (A/C.4/L.587/Rev.I).

144 Ibid., para. 30 (A/C.4/L.582/Rev.I).

120. The representative of the Administering Authority pointed out¹⁴⁵ that his Government was **all in favour of having women play a full part in the political life of their country, and it had done all it could to advance the political rights of women in the Territory, but did not consider it wise to force a people to alter its customs. If the people of the Northern Cameroons thought that the right to vote should be limited to men, the United Nations should not oblige them, for the purpose of the plebiscite, to adopt a different kind of suffrage, for which they were not yet ready.**

121. The Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs added¹⁴⁶ that there was no question of refusing women the suffrage when the people were ready to accept it, but to grant it at the present juncture would be completely contrary to social custom, quite apart from any religious considerations. Before women were given the vote in the Northern Cameroons, they must be educated, a problem to which his Government was giving its serious attention.

122. The sponsor of the amendment found¹⁴⁷ these arguments unconvincing. Stating that it had been conceded by the Minister for Northern Cameroons Affairs that the right to vote would eventually be granted to women, she argued that the United Nations should press for that right to be granted immediately. It was obvious that women could not be compelled to vote, and it was admitted that women in the Northern Cameroons were not accustomed to voting, but that did not mean that women would not seize the opportunity if it were offered. The United Nations had certain rights in the Territory, and thus had the right to apply a basic principle of the United Nations.

123. The two parts of the amendment submitted by Liberia were rejected¹⁴⁸ at the time of the vote; the first part by 34 to 25, with 22 abstentions, and the second by 43 votes to 21, with 17 abstentions.

145 G A (XIII), 4th Com., 874th mtg., para. 44.

146 Ibid., para. 47.

147 G A (XIII), 4th Com., 878th mtg., para. 8.

148 Ibid., 879th mtg., para. 41.

124. On 13 March, the report of the Fourth Committee¹⁴⁹ was submitted to the General Assembly in plenary session. In virtually the same text¹⁵⁰ that had been submitted by seven sponsors in the Fourth Committee, draft resolution II, concerning the Trust Territory under United Kingdom administration, was presented to the General Assembly. The resolution¹⁵¹ was subsequently adopted by a vote of 56 votes to none, with 24 abstentions.

125. The text of the operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"1. Recommends that the Administering Authority, in pursuance **of Article 76 b of the Charter of the United Nations**, take steps, in consultation with a United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner, to **organize, under the supervision of the United Nations, separate plebiscites in the northern and southern parts of the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration, in order to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants of the Territory concerning their future;**

"2. Recommends further that in the northern part of the Territory the plebiscite should take place about the middle of November 1959, that the people of the northern part of the Territory should be asked:

'(a) Do you wish the Northern Cameroons to be part of the Northern Region of Nigeria when the Federation of Nigeria becomes independent? or

'(b) Are you in favour of deciding the future of the Northern Cameroons at a later date?"

and that the plebiscite should be conducted on the basis of the electoral register at present being compiled for the elections to the Federal House of Representatives;

"3. Recommends **further that the plebiscite in the southern part of the Territory should be conducted during the next dry season between the beginning of December 1959 and the end of April 1960;**

149 G A (XIII), Annexes, a.i. 15, A/i*095.

150 Ibid-, para. 50 (A/C.4/L.582/Rev.i).

151 G A resolution 1550 (XIII).

"4. Decides that the two alternatives to be put to the people of the southern part of the Territory and the qualifications for voting in the plebiscite there should be considered by the General Assembly at its fourteenth session;

"5. Expresses the hope that all concerned in the Territory will endeavour to reach agreement before the opening of the fourteenth session of the General Assembly on the alternatives to be put in the plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons and the qualifications for voting in it;

"6. Decides to appoint a United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner who shall exercise, on behalf of the General Assembly, all the necessary powers and functions of supervision, and who shall be assisted by observers and staff to be appointed by the Secretary-General in consultation with him;

"7. Requests the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner to submit to the Trusteeship Council a report in two parts on the organization, conduct and results of the plebiscites, the first part of the report, which shall deal with the northern part of the Territory, to be submitted in time for transmission to the General Assembly for consideration before the end of its fourteenth session;

"8. Requests the Trusteeship Council to transmit to it the reports of the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner, together with any recommendations and observations it considers necessary."

126. The General Assembly then elected¹⁵² Mr. Djalal Abdoh, permanent representative of Iran, as the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner for the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration.

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152 G A (XIII), Plen., 79 th mtg., para. 124.