



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Third session

QUESTION OF THE DISPOSAL OF THE FORMER ITALIAN COLONIES

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Selim SARFER (Turkey)

1. On 15 September 1948, the Governments of France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America jointly addressed a communication to the Secretary-General, informing him that, in conformity with Article 23 and paragraph 3 of Annex XI of the Treaty of Peace with Italy, the question of the disposal of the former Italian colonies was referred to the General Assembly (A/645 and A/645/Add.1).
2. The General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee (A/653), referred the question, at its 142nd plenary meeting held on 24 September 1948, to the First Committee for consideration and report.
3. This item was not examined by the First Committee in Paris during the first part of the third session; its consideration was begun during the second part of the session, at the 238th meeting of the First Committee held on 6 April 1949.
4. At that meeting, the Committee adopted a draft resolution (A/C.1/431) presented by the United States of America, inviting the Government of Italy, in accordance with its request (A/C.1/430), to appoint a representative to sit, without vote, during the Committee's consideration of the question.
5. At its 242nd meeting, on 11 April 1949, the Committee adopted, by fifty-one votes to none with two abstentions a draft resolution presented by the United Kingdom (A/C.1/432/Rev.1) as amended by the delegations of France (A/C.1/434) and of Egypt. The resolution, as adopted (A/C.1/435), provided that a Sub-Committee composed of Brazil, Egypt, France, Haiti, India, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States of America should examine the requests presented by political parties or organizations of the territories concerned not later than 23 April 1949, and report to the Committee on the extent to which those bodies represented substantial sections of opinion in those territories.

/6. The Sub-Committee

6. The Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee 14), at its first meeting, established a Working Group composed of the representatives of Norway, Brazil and Haiti to examine and report on the credentials of the parties' representatives. The Working Group was also entrusted with the task of a preliminary investigation of the parties. The Sub-Committee addressed four reports to the First Committee (A/C.1/439, A/C.1/441, A/C.1/443 and A/C.1/445) concerning the various requests received and the preliminary information obtained, as well as a general report on the political parties and organizations connected with the three territories (A/C.1/442).

7. Following the recommendations of Sub-Committee 14, the First Committee heard the representatives of the following parties or organizations:

- For Libya: The National Congress of Cyrenaica
The National Council for the Liberation of Libya
The Jewish Community of Tripolitania
The Association of Libyan Ex-Servicemen
- For Eritrea: The Moslem League of Eritrea
The New Eritrea Pro-Italia Party
The Unionist Party
The Italo-Eritrean Association
- For Somaliland: The Somali Youth League
The Somalia Conference and the Progressive League
of Mijertein
- For the three territories:
The National Associations of Refugees from Libya
and East Africa

8. The general discussion in the Committee took place between 6 April 1949 and 3 May 1949 (238th to 254th meetings).

9. On 9 April, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics presented suggestions (A/C.1/433) which were subsequently revised (A/C.1/433/Rev.1), recommending a direct United Nations Trusteeship for Libya, Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. The revised proposal envisaged for each of the territories an administrator with full executive powers appointed by the Trusteeship Council and an advisory committee of nine members: United Kingdom, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, France, Italy, and United States of America in each case; with the addition of Egypt in the case of Libya and Ethiopia in the case of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. These six members were to choose three residents of the territories concerned, one European

/and two

and two indigenous, to complete the membership of the advisory committee. Furthermore, independence would be granted to Libya and Eritrea after a period of five years and to Somaliland after a period of ten years. Finally, a territorial concession in Eritrea, with an outlet to the sea through the port of Assab, would be made in favour of Ethiopia.

10. The representative of Uruguay presented on 19 April a draft resolution (A/C.1/438) proposing the establishment of a sub-committee of eleven members to prepare a draft resolution concerning the future of the three territories. This sub-committee would be composed of the four interested Great Powers, Egypt, Ethiopia, Union of South Africa, and four other States to be selected by the First Committee.*

11. Four new proposals were submitted to the First Committee on 4 May 1949. The representative of the United Kingdom presented a draft resolution (A/C.1/446) recommending the following plan:

For Libya, independence after a period of ten years subject to approval by the General Assembly. During the interim period, Cyrenaica would be placed under the trusteeship of the United Kingdom, and the remaining part of Libya under the International Trusteeship System under terms and conditions to be recommended to the fourth regular session of the General Assembly by the Governments of Egypt, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

For Eritrea (with the exception of the Western Province which would be incorporated into the Sudan), incorporation into Ethiopia, with special protection for the various minorities.

For Italian Somaliland, Italian trusteeship.

12. On the same day, the representative of Australia submitted a draft resolution proposing the establishment of a special committee of seven members to conduct an investigation on the question and prepare a report for the General Assembly not later than 1 September 1949 (A/C.1/447).

13. The representative of India submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/448) proposing that Libya and Italian Somaliland be placed under international trusteeship, with the United Nations Organization as the Administering Authority, for a period of not less than ten and not more than twenty years. At the end of that period, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Trusteeship Council, would determine, after a plebiscite, whether those territories would become independent or be joined to adjacent territories. A special commission of seven members would be dispatched to Eritrea to ascertain the wishes of the population and report whether the whole or any part of Eritrea would be amalgamated with Ethiopia.

* This resolution was withdrawn after the adoption of the United States resolution which led to the establishment of Sub-Committee 15.

14. Eighteen Latin-American States submitted a joint draft resolution (A/C.1/449) recommending that each of the three territories should be placed under the International Trusteeship System. Recommendations regarding the terms and conditions of that trusteeship would be submitted to the fourth regular session of the General Assembly by France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, together with Egypt in the case of Libya, and Ethiopia in the case of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. Moreover, independence would be granted to Libya after a period of ten years if the General Assembly so decided, and to Eritrea and Italian Somaliland after an undetermined period. Finally, the just claims of Ethiopia would receive satisfaction.

15. The representative of Iraq submitted on 6 May a draft resolution (A/C.1/453) which was subsequently replaced by three separate proposals (A/C.1/455, A/C.1/456, and A/C.1/457), recommending:

With respect to Libya, immediate independence;

With respect to Somaliland, a collective (five States) trusteeship, the terms and conditions of which would be submitted to the fourth regular session of the General Assembly by Egypt, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America;

With respect to Eritrea, a commission of five States to ascertain the wishes of the population and report to the fourth regular session of the General Assembly.

16. The United States delegation presented on 9 May a draft resolution (A/C.1/458) recommending the establishment of a sub-committee consisting of the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, India, Iraq, Mexico, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom and United States of America.

The sub-committee would "consider the various proposals which have been submitted or may be submitted to the Committee, draft a resolution for the Committee's consideration and report to the Committee not later than Thursday noon, 12 May 1949".

17. By 13 votes to 12, with 27 abstentions, the Committee approved a suggestion of the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to add the representative of Poland to the proposed sub-committee. By 12 votes to 8, with 32 abstentions, the Committee rejected a proposal to add the representative of Czechoslovakia to the sub-committee.

The United States proposal, as amended, was adopted by the Committee by 33 votes to none, with 20 abstentions.

/18. The Sub-Committee

18. The Sub-Committee (Sub-Committee 15), after holding four meetings on 10 and 11 May, presented a report (A/C.1/466) containing two draft resolutions, one of which had been adopted by 10 votes to 4, with 1 abstention. The other draft resolution, presented as a minority proposal adopted by 2 votes to none, with 13 abstentions, was the draft resolution of the representative of Iraq, concerning Libya (A/C.1/455).

The draft resolution of the majority of the Sub-Committee recommended:

1. That Libya be granted independence ten years from the date of the adoption of the resolution, subject to approval by the General Assembly; and
 - (a) that Cyrenaica be placed under United Kingdom trusteeship;
 - (b) that the Fezzan be placed under French trusteeship;
 - (c) that Tripolitania be placed under Italian trusteeship by the end of 1951 and that, until that date, the British temporary administration be continued with the assistance of an advisory council comprising Egypt, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and a representative of the people of the territory;
2. That Italian Somaliland be placed under Italian trusteeship;
3. That Eritrea, except the Western Province, be incorporated into Ethiopia, with appropriate guarantees for the protection of minorities and municipal charters for Asmara and Massawa; and that the Western Province be incorporated into the Sudan;
4. Finally, that the agreement designed to give effect to those recommendations be worked out by the Trusteeship Council or the Interim Committee of the General Assembly, as the case may be, and submitted for approval to the fourth regular session of the General Assembly.

19. After the general discussion was closed, the Committee examined the various draft resolutions, and in particular, the draft resolution proposed by Sub-Committee 15, at the 255th to 257th, 264th and 269th to 272nd meetings between 4 and 13 May.

20. At the 269th meeting held on 12 May 1949, the Committee adopted, by 23 votes to 15 with 17 abstentions, a Polish proposal that a hearing be granted to the delegations of the political parties and organizations previously heard, with regard to the proposals of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Iraq and the majority of Sub-Committee 15. Following this decision, the Committee heard statements by the representatives of the National Council for the Liberation of Libya, the Moslem League of Eritrea, the Italo-Eritrean Association, the New Eritrea Pro-Italia Party, the Jewish Community of Tripolitania, the Somali Youth League and the Somalia Conference.

/21. The representative

21. The representative of Chile submitted on 12 May a draft resolution (A/C.1/467) recommending that the Economic and Social Council take into consideration the problems of economic development and social progress of the former Italian colonies.
22. The representative of Haiti submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/469) according to which the General Assembly, considering the agreement between the Great Powers to which reference was made in the Sub-Committee's report, declared that the item dealing with the question of the disposal of the former Italian colonies was no longer relevant. This draft resolution was subsequently withdrawn.
23. The Committee decided to vote upon the various draft resolutions in the following order: the Iraqi resolution on Libya (A/C.1/455), the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic's revised suggestions (A/C.1/433/Rev.1), the Indian draft resolution (A/C.1/448 and Corr.1), the Iraqi draft resolutions on Italian Somaliland and Eritrea (A/C.1/456 and A/C.1/457), the draft resolution submitted by Sub-Committee 15 (A/C.1/466), and the Chilean draft resolution (A/C.1/467). The Australian draft resolution (A/C.1/447) and the draft resolution of the eighteen Latin-American States (A/C.1/449) were to be voted upon if no decision had been reached.
24. The Iraqi draft resolution on Libya (A/C.1/455) was put to the vote by roll-call and rejected by 22 votes to 20, with 8 abstentions.*
25. The revised suggestions of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (A/C.1/433/Rev.1) were put to the vote, paragraph by paragraph and by roll-call with the following results:
- (a) The first paragraph was rejected by 30 votes to 13, with 10 abstentions;
 - (b) The second paragraph was rejected by 31 votes to 12, with 11 abstentions;
 - (c) The third paragraph was rejected by 33 votes to 14, with 10 abstentions;
 - (d) The fourth paragraph was rejected by 33 votes to 7, with 17 abstentions.
26. With respect to the Indian draft resolution (A/C.1/448 and Corr.1), the preamble and the operative paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) were put to the vote by roll-call with the following results:
- The preamble was rejected by 26 votes to 19, with 12 abstentions;
 - Paragraph (a) was rejected by 29 votes to 19, with 9 abstentions;
 - Paragraph (b) was rejected by 33 votes to 4, with 20 abstentions;
 - Paragraph (c) was rejected by 34 votes to 13, with 9 abstentions;
 - Paragraph (d) was rejected by 32 votes to 15, with 10 abstentions.

* The roll-calls mentioned in this and following paragraphs are set out in the Summary Record of the 272nd meeting of the Committee (A/C.1/SR.272).

In view of the above votes, the last three paragraphs of the Indian draft resolution were not put to the vote.

27. The Iraqi draft resolution on Italian Somaliland (A/C.1/456) was put to the vote by roll-call as follows:

The preamble and paragraph (a) were rejected by 36 votes to 12, with 10 abstentions;

Paragraph (b) was rejected by 40 votes to 4, with 15 abstentions.

28. The Iraqi draft resolution on Eritrea (A/C.1/457) was put to the vote by roll-call and rejected by 35 votes to 12, with 12 abstentions.

29. The Committee had before it a number of amendments to the draft resolution of Sub-Committee 15, submitted by seven different delegations.

Four amendments submitted by the representative of Egypt (A/C.1/468) were put to the vote by roll-call.

The first amendment, which would eliminate the intervention of the General Assembly in the establishment of the independence of Libya, was rejected by 20 votes to 17, with 21 abstentions.

The second amendment, placing united Libya under the International Trusteeship System, was rejected by 32 votes to 10, with 17 abstentions.

The third amendment, proposing that Italian Somaliland be placed under a collective trusteeship, was rejected by 42 votes to 9, with 8 abstentions.

The fourth and last Egyptian amendment, proposing the establishment of a Committee to examine Egypt's claims for the rectification of its western frontiers with Libya, was rejected by 33 votes to 8, with 18 abstentions.

30. An amendment (A/C.1/473) to paragraph 1 of the Sub-Committee's draft resolution was submitted by the Norwegian representative to replace the phrase "provided that the General Assembly then decides that this step is appropriate" by the following: "unless the General Assembly then decides that this step is not appropriate at that time". This amendment was adopted by 33 votes to 15, with 10 abstentions.

31. An amendment (A/C.1/475) submitted by the representative of Costa Rica proposing that a specific reference to independence be inserted in the paragraph dealing with Italian Somaliland, was adopted by 41 votes to none, with 15 abstentions.

32. An amendment (A/C.1/471) submitted by the representatives of Costa Rica, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, proposing that the Western province of Eritrea be placed under the joint trusteeship of Egypt and the United Kingdom, was rejected by 22 votes to 15, with 19 abstentions.

33. An amendment (A/C.1/472) submitted by the representative of Ecuador proposing that the Western province of Eritrea be placed under the trusteeship of a Latin-American Republic was subsequently withdrawn.

/34. An amendment

34. An amendment submitted by the representative of Greece (A/C.1/474), proposing that Australia be added to the Advisory Council of Tripolitania, was withdrawn following a statement of the representative of Australia.

35. The representative of Ethiopia submitted an amendment (A/C.1/470) suggesting that in respect of the boundaries of the territories concerned the co-operation of the States involved should be sought. This amendment was adopted by 30 votes to 4, with 21 abstentions.

36. Following the refusal of Egypt to be represented on the Advisory Council of Tripolitania, the United Kingdom representative submitted an oral amendment proposing that Egypt be replaced by Turkey. This amendment was adopted by 32 votes to 5, with 19 abstentions.

37. The draft resolution of Sub-Committee 15, as amended, was then put to the vote with the following results:

- (i) The preamble and the preliminary sub-paragraph of paragraph 1 were adopted, by a show of hands, by 38 votes to 15, with 4 abstentions.
- (ii) Sub-paragraph (a) of paragraph 1 was adopted, by roll-call, by 35 votes to 17, with 5 abstentions.
- (iii) Sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 1 was adopted, by roll-call, by 32 votes to 16, with 9 abstentions.
- (iv) Sub-paragraph (c) of paragraph 1 was adopted, by roll-call, by 32 votes to 17, with 8 abstentions.
- (v) The last sub-paragraph of paragraph 1 was adopted by 37 votes to 15, with 1 abstention.
- (vi) Paragraph 2 was adopted by 36 votes to 17, with 5 abstentions.
- (vii) Paragraph 3 dealing with Eritrea was voted upon in two parts. The part referring to the disposal of Eritrea except for the Western Province was adopted, by roll-call, by 36 votes to 6, with 15 abstentions.
- (viii) The part of paragraph 3 dealing with the disposal of the Western Province was rejected, by roll-call, by 19 votes to 16, with 21 abstentions.
- (ix) Paragraph 4 was adopted by 36 votes to 14, with 7 abstentions.

38. The draft resolution of Sub-Committee 15, as amended, was then adopted as a whole by 34 votes to 16, with 7 abstentions, as follows:

In favour: Venezuela, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia,
/France,

France, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Luxembourg,
Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway,
Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Union of South Africa,
United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay.

Against: Yemen, Yugoslavia, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist
Republic, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, India, Iraq, Lebanon,
Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Syria,
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics.

Abstentions: China, Haiti, Israel, Liberia, Siam, Sweden, Turkey.

39. The Chilean draft resolution (A/C.1/467) was adopted by 34 votes
to none, with 15 abstentions.

40. The representative of Australia informed the Committee that he
wished to withdraw his resolution (A/C.1/447).

41. The First Committee recommends the adoption by the General Assembly
of the following resolutions:

QUESTION OF THE DISPOSAL OF THE FORMER ITALIAN COLONIES

A.

The General Assembly

In accordance with Annex XI, paragraph 3, of the Treaty of Peace with Italy,

Having considered the relevant provisions of the Charter,
Having studied the question of the disposal of the former Italian Colonies,

Having taken note in particular of the report of the Four Power Commission of Investigation, and having heard organizations representing substantial sections of opinion in the territories concerned,

Recommends

1. That Libya be granted independence ten years from the date of the adoption of this resolution, unless the General Assembly then decides that this step is not appropriate at that time;

(a) That Cyrenaica be placed under the International Trusteeship System, with the United Kingdom as the Administering Authority, without prejudice to its incorporation in a united Libya;

(b) That the Fezzan be placed under the International Trusteeship System, with France as the Administering Authority, also without prejudice to its incorporation in a united Libya;

(c) That Tripolitania be placed under the International Trusteeship System by the end of 1951, with Italy as the Administering Authority, also without prejudice to its incorporation in a united Libya. During the interim period, the present British temporary administration shall continue, with the assistance of an Advisory Council consisting of representatives of Turkey, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and a representative of the people of the territory. The Advisory Council should determine its scope and duties in consultation with the Administering Authority;

That the Powers charged with the administration of the three territories take all necessary measures to promote the co-ordination of their activities in order that nothing be done to prejudice the attainment of an independent Libyan State. The Trusteeship Council will be responsible for supervising the execution of this provision;

2. That former Italian Somaliland be placed under the International Trusteeship System with a view to its independence,

/with

with Italy as the Administering Authority;

3. That Eritrea, except for the Western Province, be incorporated into Ethiopia, under terms and conditions set forth below, to include the provision of appropriate guarantees for the protection of minorities and, without prejudice to the sovereignty of Ethiopia, appropriate municipal charters for the cities of Asmara and Massawa;

4. That agreements and instruments designed to give effect to the foregoing recommendations in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the provisions of the Treaty of Peace with Italy be submitted for the subsequent approval of the fourth regular session of the General Assembly (except those for Tripolitania, which shall be submitted to the sixth regular session); that the Trusteeship Council, where trusteeship is concerned, and otherwise the Interim Committee of the General Assembly, be authorized to represent the General Assembly in working out such agreements, in co-operation with Italy where Italian interests are concerned, and with the States involved where boundaries are concerned, and that, in the case of Libya, the trusteeship agreements so to be submitted provide for such adequate inter-territorial administration relationships as will promote the attainment of an independent, unified Libyan State.

B.

The General Assembly

Recommends that the Economic and Social Council should, in studying and planning its activities in connexion with economically under-developed regions and countries, take into consideration the problems of economic development and social progress of the former Italian colonies.
