

Report of the Trusteeship Council

During the first part of the fifteenth session of the General Assembly the Fourth Committee was not able to examine the report of the Trusteeship Council² although it considered some aspects of it as separate items. A report on these items is given in subsequent paragraphs. The report as a whole will be considered by the Fourth Committee at the resumed session of the General Assembly in March-April, 1961.

Western Samoa

Addressing the fifteenth regular session of the General Assembly, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand stated that:

“... in the Trust Territory of Western Samoa, for whose administration New Zealand is responsible, the stage is now set for the Samoan people to assume full sovereignty within the international community.”

Later the Western Samoan Prime Minister, speaking in the Fourth Committee as a member of the New Zealand Delegation, confirmed his country's readiness for independence.

Despite two Soviet attempts at amendment, a New Zealand resolution co-sponsored by several African and Asian nations, was adopted first in the Fourth Committee and later by a vote of 81 in favour (including Canada), 10 against, no abstentions, in plenary session. The resolution recommends that a plebiscite take place in May 1961, under the supervision of the United Nations Plebiscite Commissioner, in which all adult Western Samoans may vote on the questions:

“1. Do you agree with the Constitution adopted by the Constitutional Convention on October 28, 1960?

“2. Do you agree that on January 1, 1962, Western Samoa should become an independent State on the basis of that Constitution?”

The Plebiscite Commissioner (Mr. Najmuddine Rifai of the United Arab Republic) was requested to submit a report to the Trusteeship Council for consideration at the sixteenth session.

Ruanda-Urundi

Recommended by the Trusteeship Council for inclusion in the agenda of the fifteenth session, the “Question of Ruanda-Urundi” became an occasion for a concerted attack on Belgium, the administering power, by the anti-colonial powers including the Soviet bloc. At issue were Belgium's plans covering the holding of communal elections in 1960 and legislative council elections in January, 1961, followed by a fully representative round table conference and, finally, termination of the trusteeship in 1962. These plans to some extent ran counter to recommendations of the Trusteeship Council

² Doc. A/4404