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LEAGUE OF NATIONS

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Communicated to the
Council and Members
of the League.

London, March 21st, 1936.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT.

London, March 20th, 1936.

To the Secretary-General.

I am directed by my Government to request you to communicate the following declaration urgently to the Council of the League, the Committee of Thirteen, the Committee of Eighteen and all the Members of the League.

I. On March 2nd, 1936, a proposal for the application of an oil sanction to Italy was laid before the Committee of Eighteen. Another proposal was promptly made to and accepted by the Council, to the effect that an appeal should be made to the belligerents before any vote was taken on the oil sanction. Accordingly, the Committee of Thirteen, acting under the terms of reference given to it by the Council, issued an urgent appeal to the two belligerents to open negotiations immediately, within the framework of the League and in the spirit of the Covenant, with a view to the prompt cessation of hostilities.

II. The Ethiopian Government at once deferred to the desire expressed by the Committee of Thirteen. It took note of the fact that the essential element in the proposal was that the negotiations should be conducted in the spirit of the Covenant and within the framework of the League.

III. The Royal Italian Government sent the Committee of Thirteen a mere acceptance in principle. It was careful to avoid making any reference to the essential element in the Committee's proposal; it did not say that it agreed to negotiate within the framework of the League and in the spirit of the Covenant. Can the brevity of this reply be construed as an implicit acceptance of the fundamental condition laid down by the Committee of Thirteen? Circumstances afford unquestionable evidence that the Italian Government is still resolved to continue its aggression against Ethiopia until its enterprise is crowned with complete success - to bring about by unscrupulous and unlimited violence the subjugation of Ethiopia, in violation of Article 10 of the Covenant, whereby Italy undertook to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of every Member of the League.

It is important that all doubt on this matter should be dispelled without delay, and that the fundamental question should be put categorically to the Italian Government. The Ethiopian Government repeats its declaration that, acting in all frankness and loyalty, it will not agree to negotiate except in all frankness and loyalty, within the framework of the League and in the spirit of the Covenant.

In view of the terms of the Italian reply, and the circumstances attendant upon it and succeeding it, the Ethiopian Government feels justified in asserting that the sole purpose

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