

Action Taken by Trusteeship Council in first part of 1952

The Trusteeship Council, at its tenth and eleventh sessions in 1952, examined reports on various trust territories, among them Somaliland, and completed arrangements for the despatch later in the year of a visiting mission to study the Ewe and Togoland unification problem. A revised and somewhat simplified questionnaire to guide the administering authorities in preparing the periodic reports required from them has also been approved.

Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories

Chapter XI (Article 73) of the Charter contains a declaration by member states with responsibility for territories whose peoples have not yet attained full self-government. In this declaration, those members recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of non-self-governing territories (i.e. colonies or similar dependent territories which are not trust territories) are paramount. They accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote the well-being of the inhabitants of such territories, to ensure their political and economic advancement and protection against abuses, to develop self-government and free political institutions, and to transmit certain information on economic, social and educational conditions to the Secretary-General. This declaration, with the responsibilities it implies, is the only provision of the Charter dealing with dependent territories which are not trust territories.

The General Assembly, at its fourth session in 1949, set up a new committee for a three-year term to consider information submitted by the administering authorities under the terms of the declaration referred to above. This committee, which was formerly called the Special Committee on Information and is now known as the Committee for Information on Non-Self-Governing Territories, is composed of eight member states which transmit information and an equal number of non-administering states. The Committee analyses the material submitted by the administering authorities and makes general suggestions concerning improvements which might be made in the various fields covered. When the Committee was set up, it was requested to make a special study each year of one of the subjects on which information is provided by the administering states.

The work of the Committee for Information has been the subject of contentious debate during past sessions of the General Assembly. The main point at issue is whether or not the Committee should exercise functions broadly similar to those which the Trusteeship Council exercises for trust territories, i.e. to supervise the evolution towards self-government of the territories concerned. The declaration given in Article 73 places on the administering powers the obligation to transmit information on economic and social matters and on education, subject to such limitations as security and constitutional considerations may require. There is no mention of political information. However, some of the non-administering powers, who form a majority in the Assembly, wish to extend the scope of the