

At its final session in Geneva in 1946 the Assembly of the League of Nations discussed the question of the fulfilment by the League of its responsibilities to the peoples of the mandated territories. On April 18, 1946, the Assembly adopted unanimously, with Egypt abstaining, the following resolution:

THE ASSEMBLY,

RECALLING that Article 22 of the Covenant applies to certain territories placed under mandate the principle that the well-being and development of peoples not yet able to stand alone in the strenuous conditions of the modern world form a sacred trust of civilization:

1. EXPRESSES its satisfaction with the manner in which the organs of the League have performed the functions entrusted to them with respect to the Mandates System and in particular pays tribute to the work accomplished by the Mandates Commission;
2. RECALLS the role of the League in assisting Iraq to progress from its status under an "A" Mandate to a condition of complete independence, welcomes the termination of the mandated status of Syria, Lebanon and Transjordan, which have, since the last session of the Assembly, become independent members of the world community;
3. RECOGNIZES that, on the termination of the League's existence, its functions with respect to the mandated territories will come to an end, but notes that Chapters XI, XII and XIII of the Charter of the United Nations embody principles corresponding to those declared in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League;
4. TAKES NOTE of the expressed intentions of the Members of the League now administering territories under mandate to continue to administer them for the well-being and development of the peoples concerned in accordance with the obligations contained in the respective mandates, until other arrangements have been agreed between the United Nations and the respective mandatory Powers.

4. THE INTERIM PERIOD

The meetings of the Executive Committee, the Preparatory Commission and the first part of the first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations all reflected the desire of the Members of the United Nations to set up the Trusteeship Council at the earliest possible date. It was generally recognized that the mandated territories would probably be among the first to be transferred to the International Trusteeship System by means of individual Trusteeship Agreements.

In the resolution on Non-Self-Governing Peoples of February 9, 1946, cited above, the General Assembly expressed regret that the Trusteeship Council could not be brought into being at that time; recognized that any delay in putting into effect the International Trusteeship System would prevent the implementation of the principles of the system and would deprive the populations of the Trust Territories of its advantages; and noted that the Preparatory Commission had recommended that the General Assembly should call upon those Members of the United Nations now administering territories held under mandate to undertake practical steps in concert with the other States directly concerned to place them under the International Trusteeship System. Before the recommendation of the Preparatory Commission had been considered by the General Assembly, several of the mandatory States had in fact declared their intention to negotiate Trusteeship Agreements for the purpose of placing mandated territories under the International Trusteeship System.

The resolution of the General Assembly welcomed these declarations, and invited all the States administering mandated territories to undertake the necessary steps to negotiate the Trusteeship Agreements by means of which the mandated territories would be placed under the International Trusteeship System, with a view to the submission of these agreements for approval, preferably not later than during the second part of the first session of the General Assembly.

In view of the unequivocal expression, in the resolution on Non-Self-Governing Peoples, of the General Assembly's desire that the establishment of the Trusteeship Council should be expedited, letters, dated June 29, 1946, were addressed by the Secretary-General to the States administering territories then held under mandate, i.e., Australia, Belgium, France, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa and the United Kingdom, calling their attention to the resolution.

In reply, the Governments of Australia, Belgium, France, New Zealand and the United Kingdom stated that they had either already prepared draft Trusteeship Agreements, or were in process of preparing the terms of such Agreements, with respect to the mandated territories under their control, and expressed the