

Annex II

Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: innovative steps to ensure the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 24 to 26 May 2023

I. Introduction

1. At its seventy-fifth session, the General Assembly, by its resolution [75/123](#), declared the period 2021–2030 the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and called upon Member States to intensify their efforts to continue to implement the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism ([A/56/61](#), annex) and to cooperate with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in updating it as necessary, with a view to using it as the basis for a plan of action for the Fourth International Decade.

2. In its resolution [77/149](#), the General Assembly approved the programme of work of the Special Committee envisaged for 2023, which included the holding of a seminar in the Pacific region.

3. The purpose of the seminar was to enable the Special Committee to obtain the views of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, experts, members of civil society and other stakeholders in the process of decolonization, who can assist the Special Committee in identifying policy approaches and practical ways that can be pursued in the United Nations decolonization process. Discussions at the seminar would assist the Special Committee in making a realistic analysis and evaluation of the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, on a case-by-case basis, as well as the ways in which the United Nations system and the international community at large could enhance programmes of assistance to the Territories.

4. The respective contributions of the participants will serve as a basis for further consideration by the Special Committee at its substantive session, to be held in New York in June 2023, with a view to submitting proposals to the General Assembly concerning the fulfilment of the objectives of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

II. Organization of the seminar

5. The seminar was held in Bali, Indonesia, from 24 to 26 May 2023. Five meetings were held, in which the representatives of States Members of the United Nations, Non Self-Governing Territories, administering Powers and non-governmental organizations, as well as experts, took part (see appendix I). The seminar was organized in such a way as to encourage an open and frank exchange of views.

6. The seminar was conducted by the Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia to the United Nations and Chair of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Menissa Rambally, with the participation of the following members of the Committee: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Dominica, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste

and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Two administering Powers, France and the United States of America, participated as observers. Other Member States participating as observers were Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Belize, Gabon, Morocco, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

7. At the 1st meeting, on 24 May 2023, Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir (Indonesia) and Gbolié Désiré Wulfran Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) were appointed Vice-Chairs of the seminar, while Fred Sarufa (Papua New Guinea) was appointed Rapporteur.

8. At the same meeting, the seminar adopted its Programme of Work (PRS/2023/CRP.2).

9. The agenda of the seminar was as follows:

1. Role of the Special Committee:
 - (a) Strengthening cooperation and engagement with the administering Powers and relevant stakeholders;
 - (b) Exploring innovative steps in moving the decolonization agenda forward, on a case-by-case basis.
2. Perspectives of the administering Powers, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and other stakeholders:
 - (a) Political developments in the Non-Self-Governing Territories:
 - (i) In the Pacific region;
 - (ii) In the Caribbean region;
 - (iii) In other regions;
 - (b) Addressing challenges posed by the pandemic undermining progress towards the implementation of sustainable development goals;
 - (c) Building resilience in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: key lessons and recommendations.
3. Role of the United Nations system in supporting the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.
4. Proposals to building transformative pathways to advance the Fourth International Decade.

III. Proceedings of the seminar

A. Opening of the seminar

10. On 24 May 2023, Menissa Rambally (Saint Lucia) opened the seminar in her capacity as the Chair of the Special Committee.

11. At the same meeting, the Deputy Minister for Multilateral Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Tri Tharyat, addressed the seminar.

12. Also at the same meeting, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, addressed the seminar via a pre-recorded video.

B. Statements and discussions¹

13. At the 1st meeting, on 24 May, the seminar began its consideration of agenda item 1 (a) and (b). The Chair made a statement. Statements were made by the representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Cuba, Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea, the Syrian Arab Republic, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Russian Federation, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, the Congo and Argentina.

14. At the same meeting, the seminar began its consideration of agenda item 2 (a) (i) and heard presentations by Mickael Forrest on the question of New Caledonia and by one expert, John Connell. Statements were made by the representatives of France, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Nicaragua and Indonesia. A statement was also made by the Melanesian Spearhead Group.

15. At the 2nd meeting, on 24 May, the seminar began its consideration of agenda item 2 (b) and (c) and heard a presentation by one expert, Vivi Yulaswati. Statements were made by the representatives of Indonesia, Chile and Saint Lucia. A statement was made by Eliezer Benito Wheatley. A statement was also made by the expert, Carlyle Corbin.

16. At the same meeting, the seminar resumed its consideration of agenda item 2 (a) (i). Statements were made by the representatives of South Africa and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Statements were also made by four experts, Naïa Wateou, Roch Wamytan, Magalie Tingal and Julien Boanemoui.

17. At the same meeting, the seminar began its consideration of agenda item 2 (a) (ii) and heard a presentation by Eliezer Benito Wheatley on the question of the British Virgin Islands. Presentations were also made by two experts, Carlyle Corbin and Martha Quiñones Domínguez. Statements were made by the representatives of Cuba, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Nicaragua, Belize and Fiji. An additional statement was made by Eliezer Benito Wheatley.

18. At the 3rd meeting, on 25 May, the seminar began its consideration of agenda item 2 (a) (iii) and heard presentations on the questions of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)² by John Birmingham, of Gibraltar by Joseph John Bossano, of Saint Helena by Karl Thrower and of Western Sahara by Sidi Mohamed Omar and Ghalla Bahiya. A statement was made by an expert, Facundo Rodríguez. Statements were made by the representatives of Spain, Argentina, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea, Cuba, the Syrian Arab Republic, Timor-Leste, Côte d'Ivoire, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Antigua and Barbuda, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Nicaragua, Chile, the Congo, Dominica, Saint Lucia, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Namibia and Angola.

19. At the fourth meeting, on 25 May, the seminar continued its consideration of agenda item 2 (a) (iii). Statements were made by the representatives of Belize, Gabon, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Senegal, Morocco and Fiji. An additional statement was made by John Birmingham. A statement was also made by an expert, Martha Quiñones Domínguez. Additional statements were made by the representatives of Algeria and Morocco. Additional statements were also made by Sidi Mohamed Omar. An additional statement was also made by an expert, Facundo Rodríguez.

¹ Statements and discussion papers of the seminar are available on the United Nations decolonization website, <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/>.

² A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falklands Islands (Malvinas).

20. At the same meeting, the seminar resumed its consideration of agenda item 2 (b) and (c). Statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Cuba, Antigua and Barbuda, Cote d'Ivoire and Gabon. A statement was also made by Sidi Mohamed Omar and Eliezer Benito Wheatley. A statement was also made by an expert, Martha Quiñones Domínguez.

21. Also at the same meeting, the seminar began its consideration of agenda item 3 and heard presentations via a pre-recorded video by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ilze Brands Kehris, and the Chief of the Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Dale Alexander. A statement was made by the representative of India. A statement was also made by Sidi Mohamed Omar. A statement was also made by an expert, Carlyle Corbin. Statements were also made Eliezer Benito Wheatley and Mickael Forrest.

22. At the same meeting, the seminar considered agenda item 4. Statements were made by the representatives of Papua New Guinea, South Africa, Cuba and France. Statements were also made by Eliezer Benito Wheatley and Joseph John Bossano. Four experts made statements, Carlyle Corbin, Martha Quiñones Domínguez, Magalie Tingal and Roch Wamytan. An additional statement was made by Eliezer Benito Wheatley. An additional statement was also made by an expert, Magalie Tingal. An additional statement was also made by the representatives of France and Papua New Guinea.

23. At the 5th meeting, on 26 May, the members of the Special Committee present at the seminar agreed on the draft conclusions and recommendations of the seminar.

C. Closing of the seminar

24. At the 5th meeting, on 26 May, the Rapporteur presented a draft resolution expressing appreciation to the Government and the people of Indonesia (see appendix III), which the seminar participants adopted.

25. At the same meeting, the Rapporteur presented the draft report of the seminar, contained in document PRS/2023/CRP.4 as orally revised, which the seminar adopted.

26. Also at the same meeting, the Deputy Minister for Multilateral Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Tri Tharyat, made closing remarks. The Chair of the Special Committee also made a closing statement.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

27. Members of the Special Committee participating in the seminar recalled the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#), and the role of the Special Committee to examine the application of the Declaration, to make suggestions and recommendations on the progress in and extent of the implementation of the Declaration, and to report to the Assembly.

28. In addition, pursuant to rule 9 of the rules of procedure of the seminar ([A/AC.109/2023/19](#), annex), participating members would present the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar to the substantive session of the Special Committee, in June 2023.

29. Participating members welcomed the offer by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to host the 2024 regional seminar of the Special Committee, as announced by the representatives

of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Antigua and Barbuda at the seminar, respectively, and noted the support received in the seminar.³ The Chair noted that she had been previously informed of additional expressions of interest to host the 2024 Caribbean Regional Seminar and that the decision on the venue and timing would be made by the Special Committee.

A. Implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: advancement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories through the coronavirus disease pandemic and beyond

30. In their concluding observations, the participating members of the Special Committee:

(a) Recalled that the period 2021–2030 was proclaimed by the General Assembly as the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, assessed the progress achieved, reviewed existing methods of work and garnered renewed momentum with a view to completing the Special Committee’s historic task;

(b) Recognized that the eradication of colonialism was one of the priorities of the United Nations and continued to be one of its priorities for the Fourth International Decade that had begun in 2021, and stressed the need to allocate adequate financial support to the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the Secretariat in order to fully implement the mandates entrusted to it by Member States;

(c) Reaffirmed the role of the Special Committee as the primary vehicle for fostering the process of decolonization and for expediting the implementation of the plan of action to move towards achieving the goals of the Fourth Decade, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/123](#), as well as for monitoring the situation in the Territories;

(d) Reiterated that the United Nations should continue to lead the political process towards decolonization with the resolute support of the Secretary-General and the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and stressed that support by the United Nations should be provided until all outstanding decolonization issues were resolved in a satisfactory manner;

(e) Noted that the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, set out in General Assembly resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#) of 14 December 1960, was not complete so long as there remained Non-Self-Governing Territories that had yet to exercise their right to self-determination, in accordance with the relevant resolutions with regard to all Territories considered under the agenda of the Special Committee,⁴ including those adopted by the Assembly and the Committee on special and particular colonial situations, and underscored the fact that the inalienable rights of the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories must be guaranteed by the United Nations and the Committee in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and Assembly resolutions [1514 \(XV\)](#) and [1541 \(XV\)](#) of 14 and 15 December 1960;

³ All statements and discussion papers of the seminar are available on the United Nations decolonization website, <https://www.un.org/en/decolonization/>.

⁴ A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falklands Islands (Malvinas).

(f) While recognizing how much remained to be done in the area of decolonization, acknowledged the efforts made to revitalize the work of the Special Committee in line with its mandates;

(g) Identified a number of issues in the process of decolonization during the Fourth Decade, including the impact of climate change, especially in Non-Self-Governing Territories, the global economic, financial and health crises, in particular the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the role of regional cooperation, education and public awareness, the role of civil society, the role of women, the empowerment of vulnerable people and the need for capacity-building for full self-governance;

(h) Took into account General Assembly resolution 1803 (XVII) regarding the sovereignty of peoples over their natural wealth and resources, in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on decolonization;

(i) In view of the cross-cutting nature of many of the challenges faced by some Non-Self-Governing Territories in the dynamics of today's interconnected world, underlined the fact that efforts must be made, through the involvement of relevant stakeholders and on a case-by-case basis, for the continued strengthening of administrative capacity, good governance and economic sustainability of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, which would allow the Territories to address the cross-cutting issues in a holistic manner;

(j) Acknowledged that climate change had exposed many of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to even greater environmental and economic vulnerability, and that the ongoing global economic, financial and health crises, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, had highlighted the importance of the economic sustainability and diversification of the economic base in the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(k) Recognized the important role played by United Nations agencies, regional organizations and regional arrangements in assisting many Non-Self-Governing Territories in coping with various emerging challenges and making progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and in that regard called upon them to accelerate their engagement with the work of the Special Committee, including through participation in the regional seminars on decolonization, upon the invitation of the Committee and through the regular session of the Committee under the relevant agenda items, and called upon the Special Committee to develop programmes of collaboration with the relevant United Nations bodies pursuant to relevant General Assembly resolutions;

(l) Underlined the fact that education and public awareness, including of the indigenous people, remain crucial elements for decolonization and, in this connection, recalled the responsibility of the administering Powers to ensure that the peoples concerned would be in a position to make an informed decision regarding the future political status of their Territories, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions and bearing in mind relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, in which the Assembly called upon the administering Powers, in cooperation with the territorial Governments and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territories in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination;

(m) Welcomed calls for joint projects for the enhancement of public education about the nature of the constitutional relationship in some Territories involving the United Nations, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the administering Powers, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

(n) Stressed the important role of women in the process of decolonization, including in education, poverty eradication and community empowerment;

(o) Recognized the role of and the need for increased dialogue with civil society in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

(p) Recognized the role of civil society, including the business community and non-governmental organizations, in the development process and in facilitating the achievement of economic sustainability and the well-being of the peoples in the Territories;

(q) Underlined the fact that status-related and/or constitutional review exercises in some of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were delicate processes that should meet certain expectations towards accomplishing their decolonization, on a case-by-case basis and where appropriate, including through informal, working-level communication and dialogue among all concerned;

(r) Reiterated that enhanced interactions and cooperation between the Special Committee and the administering Powers remain crucial to the implementation of the United Nations decolonization mandate and would be beneficial to all stakeholders, including the administering Powers themselves, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [77/149](#) and all other relevant resolutions, and in this connection welcomed the participation of France and the United States of America, and reiterated their call upon all administering Powers to engage with the Special Committee in constructive dialogue in the future;

(s) Reiterated that progress could only be achieved with the active cooperation of the administering Powers, and in that regard underlined the fact that it was considered useful to reiterate the request for the use of the Secretary-General's good offices in this process, and the importance that the relevant working papers prepared by the Secretariat include further information on the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard;

(t) Stressed the importance of full and meaningful participation in the regional seminars by those invited, in accordance with the guidelines and rules of procedure for the seminars;

(u) Recognized the importance of the active engagement of other States Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Special Committee in the work of the Committee, and in that connection welcomed the participation of Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Belize, Gabon, Morocco, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine and Zimbabwe in the seminar.

B. Implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: advancement of the Non Self Governing Territories through the coronavirus disease pandemic and beyond in the Pacific

31. In their concluding observations, the participating members of the Special Committee:

With regard to the situation in Guam:

(a) Expressed solidarity with the people of Guam, affected by Typhoon Mawar;

(b) Noted the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela underlining the responsibility of the administering Power in providing the necessary assistance to the Territory in line with Article 73 of the Charter of the

United Nations, and expressing support for the dispatch of a visiting mission to the Territory;

(c) Also noted the statement made by the representative of the United States of America giving thanks for the expressions of concern and solidarity with the people of Guam, affirming the importance of building resilience in the Territories, and stating that, in response to typhoon Mawar, the President of the United States had declared a state of emergency and ordered federal assistance and the coordination of relief efforts.

With regard to the situation in New Caledonia:

(a) Welcomed the participation of a representative of New Caledonia and expressed their appreciation for the information provided;⁵

(b) Noted the statement by the representative that New Caledonia was entering a transition period in which it welcomed the support of its administering Power in involving the United Nations to continue the process of decolonization;

(c) Also noted the statement by the representative regarding policies and plans towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as measures towards the protection of its resources, including through a forum to determine their sustainable and responsible use and a draft law establishing a 10-year moratorium on their exploration;

(d) Further noted the statement by the representative on the fundamental role of the territorial Government in the discussions regarding the institutional future of the Territory;

(e) Noted the statement by the representative of the administering Power regarding its commitment and cooperation in the decolonization process of New Caledonia, including through the continued efforts of the Minister of the Interior in engaging with all parties;

(f) Also noted the statement by the representative that the conditions and validity of the third referendum had been recognized by various bodies and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had not impeded its conduct, and that security had been deployed to allow Caledonians to vote and for protection against protest and pressure;

(g) Further noted the statement by the representative that the reports requested by the pro-independence parties would be submitted and an audit of the Nouméa Accord would be shared during the substantive session of the Special Committee;

(h) Took note of the invitation reiterated by the administering Power for a third visiting mission;

(i) Noted the statement by the representative of the President of the Assembly of the South Province that the people of New Caledonia had rejected independence in the three referendums and, while political partners were to discuss the way forward, pro-independence groups had not participated, in particular in the trilateral meetings held in Paris;

(j) Also noted the statement by the representative regarding the exclusion of people from the electoral body and the inability of New Caledonians to acquire citizenship and to vote;

(k) Further noted the statement by the President of the Congress of New Caledonia recognizing the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals in

⁵ Member of the 17th Government, in charge of sectors including culture, youth, sports, promotion of solidarity and tourism.

building an equitable future for all, of technologies to overcome challenges and of civil participation and international cooperation;

(l) Noted of the statement by the President to ensure full sovereignty and social cohesion, with the well-being of the people as the key indicator;

(m) Also noted the request of the President to the Special Committee for support before the International Court of Justice regarding the right of New Caledonia to choose its own future in the light of the 2021 referendum and for assistance as mediator between pro-independence parties and the administering Power, as well as to the United Nations for support in guaranteeing fair and transparent negotiations;

(n) Further noted the statement by the representative of the Front de libération nationale kanak et socialiste regarding the dispute between the administering Power and the people who did not recognize the outcome of the 2021 referendum, which jeopardizes sustainable development in the Territory;

(o) Noted the statement by the representative that the call for non-participation in the 2021 referendum had been due to COVID-19, which had affected the Kanaks and led them to decide that the referendum could not be held under normal conditions;

(p) Also noted the statement by the representative that the Front de libération nationale kanak et socialiste would be taking the case to the International Court of Justice as a last resort after having been on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories for 37 years and still continuing to suffer, and asking for the support of the Special Committee in those efforts;

(q) Further noted the statement by the representative expressing commitment to work constructively to find a fair and equitable solution for the people in New Caledonia and their belief in a consensus that respected the right to self-determination;

(r) Noted of the statement by an indigenous leader that, 30 years after the Nouméa Agreement, France had not fulfilled its obligations as an administering Power, had refused to accept the rules of Kanaks and had decided unilaterally to hold the third referendum;

(s) Also noted the statement regarding subsequent social and cultural challenges, and the risk of backtracking and the call on the international community to engage in the decolonization process of the Territory;

(t) Further noted the statement by the representative of Papua New Guinea recalling the statement by the Melanesian Spearhead Group to the Fourth Committee in 2022, in which the group had expressed concerns over the manner the 12 December 2021 self-determination referendum had been conducted and that the assertion by the administering Power that there had been no problems was incorrect, and for the consequences of the referendum and the need to work with the people of New Caledonia and the administering Power to be taken into account to ensure a future that people want;

(u) Noted the statement by the representative of the Melanesian Spearhead Group referring to the spirit and intent of the Nouméa Accord, as well as the circumstances and manner in which the third referendum had been conducted in December 2021, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the call to postpone it, and calling into question the credibility and legitimacy of the results when 56.13 per cent of the registered voters did not participate.

C. Implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: advancement of the Non Self Governing Territories through the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and beyond in the Caribbean

32. In their concluding observations, the participating members of the Special Committee:

With regard to the situation in the British Virgin Islands,

(a) Welcomed the participation of a representative of the British Virgin Islands in the seminar and expressed their appreciation for the information provided;⁶

(b) Noted the statement made by the representative that the United Nations decolonization framework continued to be applicable to the British Virgin Islands and that, for the Territory, which had been financially and economically self-sufficient since 1978 and did not receive grant aid or any budgetary support from the administering Power, decolonization was primarily a question of changing political status;

(c) Also noted the statement recalling the crisis caused by the 2022 report of the Commission of Inquiry, the decisions of the administering Power not to pursue direct rule and to put on hold an Order in Council that could suspend the Constitution at its discretion, despite the government of national unity having developed a reform programme; the position of the Caribbean Community and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States had been consistent that the Order should be removed and the right to self-determination of the people of the Territory should be respected;

(d) Further noted the statement that the territorial Government, as well as parliamentarians of the United Kingdom, considered that the Order should be removed given the commitment to reform and good governance demonstrated by the territorial Government and the wish expressed that United Kingdom would move swiftly to remove the order before May 2024;

(e) Noted the statement that, over the past year, the territorial Government had heeded the wishes of its people who wanted their government to put in place stronger checks and balances, increase transparency, improve the delivery of public services and uphold integrity in public life;

(f) Also noted the information provided that the new territorial Government elected in April 2023 had a fresh mandate to continue the reform process and to transition the Territory to a more diversified, tourism-led, investment-driven, low-carbon economy, with a strong focus on implementing the national sustainable development plan launched in February 2023;

(g) Further noted the statement that, at the 2023 Joint Ministerial Council, the Territory had expressed a desire for a new modern partnership with the administering Power based on mutual respect, responsibility and respect for international law; however, the Order in Council in reserve remained an impediment to normalized relations;

(h) Noted the statement providing updates regarding the work of the Constitutional Review Commission launched in 2022, which among other things was considering a mechanism for permanently transferring to the territorial Government the powers reserved to the Governor;

⁶ Special Envoy of the Premier.

(i) Also noted the statement that complete decolonization of the Territory should be made in partnership with the administering Power, the United Nations system and regional and subregional organizations;

(j) Further noted the statement making specific requests, namely, that: (i) the Special Committee dispatch a visiting mission in 2023; (ii) relevant United Nations departments provide assistance with a local education campaign on the self-determination options; (iii) the United Nations system provide assistance with resource mobilization efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals; (iv) the United Nations system redouble its efforts to implement the annual General Assembly resolution adopted on the question of the British Virgin Islands; and (v) the self-governance assessment be referenced in the resolution and shared with members of the Committee.

With regard to the situation in Montserrat:

Expressed their appreciation for the presence of a representative of the Territory⁷ and the statement made by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda,

With regard to the situation in Puerto Rico:

(a) Welcomed the participation of the expert from Puerto Rico and the information provided;

(b) Noted the statement by the expert that most of the Territories, as well as Puerto Rico, are small islands that face the challenges of climate change, with a particular impact on the tourism sector, and that while all Sustainable Development Goals are interconnected, such challenges are particularly linked to Goals 13 (climate action), 14 (life below water) and 7 (affordable and clean energy);

(c) Also noted the statement made by the expert regarding innovative measures needed for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in the Territories, including the provision of grants for infrastructure by the administering Powers, aimed at strengthening the territorial economies in the process of adapting to climate change, within an endogenous planning model, avoiding falling into a debt trap and without exogenous political control;

(d) Further noted the statement made by the expert regarding climate-resilient development paths that can help the Territories to be prepared to deal with exceptional situations, make progress in the road towards sovereignty and ensure the achievement of the three Goals mentioned, in particular through the development of risk management plans, and building energy and environmental sovereignty.

D. Implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: advancement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories through the coronavirus disease pandemic and beyond in the other regions

33. In their concluding observations, the participating members of the Special Committee:

With regard to the situation in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas):

Recalled the relevant General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions and decisions on that question, which requested the resumption of negotiations between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with the aim of finding a lasting solution to the sovereignty dispute, taking

⁷ Director of External Affairs.

into account the interests of the population of the Islands, in accordance with Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) and the subsequent relevant resolutions adopted at the United Nations, including Assembly resolution 31/49, in which the Assembly called upon the two parties to refrain from taking decisions that would imply the introduction of unilateral modifications in the situation while the Islands were going through the process recommended by the Assembly, and reiterated the request to the Secretary-General to strengthen his efforts in fulfilling his mission of good offices in compliance with Assembly and Committee resolutions on that question;

With regard to the situation in Gibraltar:

Recalled the need to put into practice the appeal made by the United Nations to Spain and the United Kingdom to hold talks on the question of Gibraltar in order to reach, in the spirit of the Brussels Agreement of 27 November 1984 and listening to the interests of the population of Gibraltar, a definitive and negotiated solution to the controversy in the light of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the applicable principles and in accordance with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, noted that, given that the tripartite Forum for Dialogue on Gibraltar had ceased to exist, Spain and the United Kingdom were trying to set up a new mechanism for local cooperation, in the interest of social well-being and regional economic development, in which the competent Gibraltar local authorities and the competent Spanish local and regional authorities would participate, and expressed the hope that the mechanism could start work soon;

With regard to the situation in Saint Helena:

(a) Welcomed the participation of a representative of the Territory and expressed appreciation for the information provided;⁸

(b) Noted the statement that, in the period 2018-2019, the previous territorial Government had decided, with the support of the administering Power, to move towards closer ties with the United Nations by declaring Saint Helena a small island developing State and joining one of the regional commissions; however, as the COVID-19 pandemic hit the Territory, the political focus had shifted;

(c) Also noted the statement that, in April 2023, the elected members of the Legislative Council had unanimously decided that the primary remit of the Special Committee continued to have significant meaning for the people of Saint Helena;

(d) Further noted the statement that a constitutional amendment order that had come into effect on 25 October 2021 had made a provision for the introduction of a ministerial system of government to replace the previous committee system;

(e) Noted the statement regarding the general election held in October 2021, and that the community had placed social responsibility high on its list of priorities for the Government and other elected members;

(f) Also noted the statement about the long-term reliance on the financial support from the administering Power, mainly owing to the complex challenges associated with developing the economy of Saint Helena, including factors such as geographical isolation leading to higher travel and transportation costs, a small shrinking tax base and large-scale emigration, which has increased the age dependency ratio;

(g) Further noted the statement that it was time for Saint Helena to engage with the Special Committee and other specialized entities of the United Nations, including the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; the Special Committee

⁸ Member of the Legislative Council.

could help Saint Helena gain access to the full range of institutions of the United Nations in order to achieve the final goal of ensuring that the people of the Saint Helena can hold a referendum on self-determination free from any external pressures and influences in an informed way.

With regard to the situation in Western Sahara:

Recalled the mandate of the Special Committee towards self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, reaffirmed all resolutions of the General Assembly and supported all resolutions of the Security Council on the question of Western Sahara and the commitment of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara to finding a solution to the question of Western Sahara, underscored the need for renewed efforts to reinvigorate the search for a lasting political solution to the issue, called upon the parties to continue to show political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue in order to enter into a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations, thus ensuring implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions and the success of the negotiations, and reiterated the call upon the parties, made at previous regional seminars, to continue such negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

E. Role of the United Nations system in providing assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories

34. In their concluding observations, the participating members of the Special Committee:

(a) Welcomed the participation by pre-recorded video message of the representatives of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), noted the information provided and expressed gratitude to the Chair, who had sent invitations, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 77/149, as well as to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Labour Organization, the International Maritime Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Environment Programme, OHCHR, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund, the World Bank, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization;

(b) Encouraged all the agencies, funds and programmes, as well as other organizations of the United Nations system, to intensify their engagement with the work of the Special Committee, including through participation upon the invitation of the Committee in the forthcoming regional seminars on decolonization, taking into account the responsibility of the agencies to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(c) Expressed their support for the strengthened role of regional commissions in enhancing and expanding the involvement of Non-Self-Governing Territories in

their activities as associate members, in particular the ECLAC Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee and ESCAP, in accordance with their mandates and the relevant United Nations resolutions on decolonization.

F. Suggestions and proposals for the Fourth Decade

35. In their concluding observations, the participating members of the Special Committee:

(a) Reaffirmed, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other relevant international law, that all peoples have the right to self-determination and, by virtue of that right, to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development;

(b) Also reaffirmed that any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) Reconfirmed that the United Nations had a valid ongoing role in the process of decolonization, that the mandate of the Special Committee was a major programme of the Organization and that United Nations support should be provided until all outstanding decolonization issues and related follow-up matters have been resolved in a satisfactory manner, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions;

(d) Reaffirmed the role of the Special Committee as the primary vehicle for fostering the process of decolonization and for monitoring the situation in the Territories;

(e) Underlined the importance for the Special Committee to develop a proactive and focused approach, and strengthened implementation of its mandate, in fulfilment of the goal of decolonization vis-à-vis the Non-Self-Governing Territories on the United Nations list and the need for the Committee to continue to approach each case in a spirit of openness, to build on the available options and to bring about more dynamism in the decolonization process, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions;

(f) Reiterated their support for the current participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the relevant regional commissions of the United Nations and in the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, and called for the increased involvement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the programmes and activities of the United Nations system in speeding up the decolonization process;

(g) In view of the contribution of various regional organizations and regional arrangements to the capacity-building of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, advised that their effective participation in the work of the relevant regional organizations and regional arrangements needed to be facilitated, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and through the appropriate mechanisms, along with the strengthening of concrete regional functional cooperation in various areas, such as governance, natural disaster preparedness, climate change and community empowerment;

(h) Also in view of the important role of regional organizations and regional arrangements in providing assistance to the relevant Non-Self-Governing Territories in support of the process of decolonization, suggested that the Special Committee, in accordance with its mandate and the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, strengthen its interactions and collaboration with relevant regional and subregional organizations;

(i) Learning lessons from the practice of holding annual regional seminars, stressed the necessity for the Special Committee to consider updating the rules of procedure for the seminars in order to allow equal and appropriate attention to each Territory on the agenda;

(j) On the issue of public outreach to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories on decolonization issues, advised the Special Committee, in collaboration with the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat, to engage actively in and seek new and innovative ways to promote a public awareness campaign aimed at fostering an understanding among the people of the Territories of the options for self-determination, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions on decolonization, including to complement their ongoing efforts and ensure that the information provided effectively reached the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(k) To maintain the global focus of the decolonization agenda, also advised that the Special Committee might hold activities in observance of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, including the following:

(i) Holding a special meeting of the Special Committee, specifically devoted to the Week of Solidarity, with invitations extended to the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council, the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council and the President of the Trusteeship Council;

(ii) Organizing an exhibit of documentaries at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library on the history of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(iii) Organizing, at Headquarters, a photo exhibit devoted to the history of the Special Committee, which should feature photographs and other audiovisual material from the archives of the Department of Global Communications;

(iv) Organizing, at Headquarters, a screening of documentaries and an exhibition of audiovisual material on liberation movements in the Territories;

(v) Organizing a talk show with the Chair of the Special Committee on United Nations Radio that might subsequently be broadcast in syndicated form to local radio stations collaborating with the Department of Global Communications in disseminating United Nations material;

(l) Suggested that the Special Committee, through its partnership with the Department of Global Communications and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the Secretariat, should compile a press kit on decolonization containing the essential information on the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories and other relevant information to ensure that journalists adequately covered the issue of decolonization, suggested that such a kit might be distributed in both printed and electronic form to the local media in the country hosting the annual regional seminar, and affirmed that all publications that might form a kit were already available;

(m) Recommended that the Special Committee should forge a close working relationship with non-governmental organizations concerned with decolonization, primarily in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and that, as a first step in that direction, it might request the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the Secretariat to compile a list of such organizations with expertise in that area, using as the basis for such an exercise the current list of

non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (E/2022/INF/5) and, in vetting other non-governmental organizations that did not yet have such status, being mindful of the need to ensure that non-governmental organizations chosen as partners would abide by the ideals of the United Nations and not engage in activities against certain Member States;

(n) Affirmed the understanding that all those proposed activities would be adequately covered in the United Nations media and receive global exposure through the network of United Nations information centres;

(o) On the issue of education, suggested that the relevant territorial Governments and the administering Powers should consider incorporating decolonization issues into the school curricula of the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(p) On the status-related and/or constitutional review exercises and the overall process of decolonization, stressed that such processes should be approached on a case-by-case basis and in a way that was respectful of human rights, transparent, accountable, inclusive and participatory, with the involvement of the people concerned, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions on decolonization and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

(q) On the relationship with administering Powers, advised that interactions and cooperation between the Special Committee and the administering Powers should continue to be nurtured and strengthened through various possible platforms and means, including informal working-level dialogue, and reaffirmed that all administering Powers, particularly those that had not done so, needed to engage effectively in the work of the Committee;

(r) In that connection, underlined the crucial importance of intensifying current efforts to enhance communication and cooperation between the Special Committee and the administering Powers and urged the Committee to continue to explore and seek possible concerted interaction in that regard, in formal and informal settings and on a case-by-case basis, with a view to making progress in decolonization during the Fourth Decade;

(s) In addition, underlined the crucial importance of increasing current efforts to enhance relations between the Special Committee and other concerned Member States, stakeholders as well as experts and civil society in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

(t) In view of the valuable contribution of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the seminar, reiterated that the Special Committee, through the proper mechanism and with the assistance of the Secretariat, should continue to work towards full participation of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in future seminars and that the administering Powers should facilitate the participation of the elected representatives of the Territories in the seminars in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations;

(u) Underlined the importance of enhancing relations between the Non-Self-Governing Territories, particularly in sharing information about their Territories, and in that regard continued to note the proposal made by a representative of a Non-Self-Governing Territory on the creation of a network among the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(v) In that connection, underscored the fact that the Special Committee should continue to retool its methods of work and hone its capacity to conduct the seminars in an innovative manner to ensure a higher degree of United Nations-funded participation by its members in the regional seminars in order to allow the Committee

to better hear the views of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions on decolonization;

(w) On the role of the United Nations system in providing assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, stressed that the relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies needed to fully engage with the work of the Special Committee and strengthen their efforts, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and through the appropriate mechanisms, to provide assistance to the Territories, and in that regard a proposal was made that the Committee should request the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to encourage active interaction between international organizations established in the United Nations system and the Committee, and underlined the fact that the Committee needed to develop ways and means to encourage the participation of those agencies and bodies, including improving communication and promoting their participation in the regional seminars to interact with the Committee and providing reports on the work in the Territories;

(x) Advised the Special Committee that it needed to develop ways and means through which it could make a better assessment, on a case-by-case basis, of the current stage of decolonization and self-determination in each Non-Self-Governing Territory in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations, which could serve as a checklist of the progress made and things to be done and in that connection invited the Committee to continue to develop a specific project proposal in this regard;

(y) Reiterated that the Special Committee needed to continue working towards sending visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, with the involvement of the relevant territorial Government and administering Power, on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with General Assembly resolution [77/149](#) and other relevant United Nations resolutions, and in that regard noted the interest expressed at the seminar in such visiting and special missions;

(z) Reaffirmed that the process of decolonization was incomplete until such time as all the outstanding decolonization issues and related follow-up matters were resolved in a satisfactory manner, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

(aa) Stressed that, within the context of the Fourth Decade, the Special Committee should continue to take stock of current challenges and opportunities for the decolonization process and draw up a pragmatic plan of action for the Fourth Decade with a view to accelerating the decolonization process;

(bb) Encouraged the administering Powers to provide to the Special Committee, under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations, the status of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Appendix I

List of participants

Members of the Special Committee

Antigua and Barbuda	Claxton Duberry
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Carmen Rosa Rios
Chile	Andres Alejandro Borlone Diaz
Congo	Jean Claude Manzeri Ngondo ^a
Côte d'Ivoire	Gbolié Désiré Wulfran Ipo
	Yassi Maximin Brou
Cuba	Yusnier Romero Puentes ^a
Dominica	Sheldon Peter Anthony
Fiji	Amenatave Vakasavuwaqa Yauvoli
	Bulou Keleni Gutugutuwai Tikomaisuva
India	Prakash Gupta
	Neeharika Singh
	Saurabh
Indonesia	Tri Tharyat
	Arrmanatha C. Nasir
	Caka A. Awal
	Agung. C. Sumirat
	Simon D. I. Soekarno
	Danang Waskito
	Arianto Surojo
	Mariska D. Dhanutirto
	Suprianto Suwito
	Dwi Wisnu Budi Prabowo
Iraq	Ammar Hameed Saadallah Al-Khalidy
Nicaragua	Compañero Gadiel Arce Mairena
Papua New Guinea	Fred Sarufa ^a
Russian Federation	Rodion Grudinsky ^a
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Ghislaine Vivienne Anne-Marie Williams
Saint Lucia	Menissa Marcelle Rambally ^a

	Carlton Henry
	Michelle Joseph ^a
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Inga Rhonda King ^a
Sierra Leone	Alhaji Fanday Turay ^a
	Idriss Samaguty Tejan
Syrian Arab Republic	Bassam Sabbagh ^a
Timor-Leste	Karlito Nunes
	Joaquim José Costa Chaves
	Aurelio Barros
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Joaquín Alberto Pérez Ayestarán
	Radamés J. Gómez Azuaje
States Members of the United Nations	
Algeria	Amar Bendjama
	Lahcene Kaid Slimane
	Toufik Koudri
	Nazim Khaldi
	Abderrazak Tas
Angola	João Iambeno Gimolieca
Argentina	Gonzalo Sebastián Mazzeo
	Maximiliano Javier Alvarez
Belize	Carlos Fuller
Gabon	Lilly Stella Ngyema Ndong
Morocco	Omar Hilale
	Ouadie Benabdellah
	Redouane Houssaini
	Omar Kadiri
	Abdelaziz Haouaria
	Moulay Ahmed Mghizlat
	Majdoline Mouflih
	Mouna Ouazzani Chahdi
	Zouhair Kenfaoui
	Walid Hasbi

Namibia	Helena Ndapewa Kuzee
Senegal	Diamane Diome
South Africa	Murray Duncan Marshall Sterley
Spain	Pablo Gutiérrez-Segú
Ukraine	Vasyl Hamyanin
Zimbabwe	Tirivavi Mawire

Administering Powers

France	Marine de Carne De Trécesson
United Kingdom	Winda Listiyani
United States	Anthony Cartelli

Non-Self-Governing Territories

British Virgin Islands	Eliezer Benito Wheatley Ricardo Wheatley Siobhan Flax
Falkland Islands (Malvinas) ^b	John Birmingham
Gibraltar	Joseph John Bossano Nicholas Passano
Montserrat	Debra Lewis
New Caledonia	Mickael Forrest
Saint Helena	Karl Thrower
Western Sahara	Sidi Mohamed Omar (Frente POLISARIO) M'hamed Abba Ghalla Bahiya

Regional organizations

Melanesian Spearhead Group	Leonard Louma Christopher Waiwori
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Experts

Julien Boanemoui
Renaldo Bourgeois
John Connell
Carlyle Corbin
Martha Quiñones Domínguez

Facundo Rodríguez

Magalie Tingal

Roch Wamytan

Naïa Wateou

Vivi Yulaswati

^a Member of the official delegation of the Special Committee.

^b A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

Appendix II

Message of the Secretary-General to the Pacific regional seminar

Delivered via pre-recorded video

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to greet all participants of the 2023 regional seminar of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization.

I thank the Government and people of Indonesia for hosting this important event.

And I commend your focus this year on advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Halfway to the deadline for the 2030 Agenda, we are leaving more than half the world behind.

Progress has stalled – and in some cases even reversed.

The Sustainable Development Goals are the path to peace and prosperity for all on a healthy planet.

No country can afford to see them fail.

But for many Non-Self-Governing Territories that are small islands on the frontlines of the climate emergency, the stakes are existential.

As a global community, we must ensure the Territories have the resources and support they need to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, build resilience, and invest in their future.

Today, 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remain under the purview of the Special Committee.

Our shared goal is to give greater priority to the decolonization agenda and spur accelerated action.

This process must be guided by the aspirations and needs of the Territories on a case-by-case basis.

I am grateful to the Committee for your unwavering commitment to the complete elimination of colonialism.

And I count on you to generate new ideas and open new pathways for stronger cooperation between the Territories, administering Powers and other stakeholders, in accordance with relevant resolutions.

Together, we can turn the tide and kickstart a new drive for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Territories and beyond.

I wish you a successful meeting.

Thank you.

Appendix III

Resolution expressing appreciation to the Government and the people of Indonesia

The participants in the Pacific regional seminar,

Having met in Bali from 24 to 26 May 2023 to consider the challenges and opportunities in the process of decolonization in today's world,

Having heard important statements at the opening of the seminar by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, and the Deputy Minister for Multilateral Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Tri Tharyat,

Taking note of the important statements by the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories,

Express their profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Indonesia for providing the Special Committee with the facilities necessary for this seminar, for the outstanding contribution that they have made to the success of the seminar and, in particular, for the very generous and kind hospitality and the warm and cordial reception accorded to the participants throughout their stay in Indonesia.

