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FORTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Pacific regional seminar on the 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

Castries, Saint Lucia

11 to 13 May 2022

**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE
OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

INTERVENTIONS BY AMBASSADOR ANTHONY LIVERPOOL,

PERMANENT SECRETARY

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration and Trade

At

C-24 Regional Seminar

Of

Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth

International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

11-13 May 2022

Wednesday, 11 May-4:45 – 6:00 pm

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of my country, Antigua and Barbuda in my national capacity. Let me take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to the government and people of St. Lucia for hosting us during what can be seen as a seminal moment in history. Madame Chair, I say seminal, as, at our charge, we the custodians can and have to influence the advancement on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.
2. Madame Chair, let me begin and take this opportunity to congratulate you and the members of your bureau and the secretariat who are positioned to lead this seminar to a fruitful and productive session. Please be assured of Antigua and Barbuda's most total cooperation and support during the course of this session. Your record of ably steering this committee speaks for itself, and the excellent manner you have presided over this committee is commendable.
3. Let me pause, Madame Chair, to recognize and stand in solidarity with all countries fighting COVID-19 and extend my country's sincere condolences for their loss. In quoting Chef de Cabinet's words Mr. Courtenay Rattray on behalf of the UN Secretary-General at the opening session of the Special Committee on Decolonization 8 February 2022, "We must not forget the challenges facing the Non-Self-Governing Territories, particularly in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic."

Madame Chair,

4. As a nation that overcame the challenges of colonialization, Antigua and Barbuda stands in solidarity with our brothers and sisters near and far in defeating this scourge of colonialism. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Antigua and Barbuda knows what it means to be left behind. Let's make this session the opportune time to correct that wrong. We have to give the peoples under colonialization opportunities to share their stories and be fully engaged in seeking solutions to their own challenges in governance, more so in light of the circumstances, we now find ourselves with the Covid-19 pandemic. Our thoughts and solidarity are with all those affected by the pandemic in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Agenda item 2 (a) (ii), Perspectives of the administering Powers, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and other stakeholders: Political developments in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: In the Caribbean region.

Madame Chair,

5. I now turn my attention to (agenda item 2 (a) (ii), Perspectives of the administering Powers, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and other stakeholders: Political developments in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: In the Caribbean region.
6. Madam Chair, I take the floor on this occasion to speak on the matter of the BVI one of the remaining 17 territories still under the yoke of colonialism and is geographically located in my region and more so within the subregion of the leeward Islands in the Caribbean.'
7. The BVI is of interest and concern to the peoples of Antigua and Barbuda by long standing family ties and economic and social relationships.

8. Antigua and Barbuda is extremely concerned following the release on April 29, 2022, of the Report of the British Virgin Islands Commission of Inquiry (COI) regarding the situation of governance in the BVI.
 9. Some of the proposed recommendations outlined signals a very counter-productive approach to governance for a people who have demonstrated for many years the capacity for self-rule and management of their economy.
 10. The people of the BVI have the responsibility and autonomy to solve any national problems relating to social development and governance.
 11. Antigua and Barbuda recognize the importance of the proposals designed to improve the system of governance on the island but strongly recognize that the duly elected representatives and people of BVI have the responsibility to ensure
 12. good governance with full transparency and accountability and should work together to achieve mutually acceptable solutions designed to improve and enhance the lives of the citizens and residence of the island.
 13. We support the government of the British Virgin Islands objection to the recommendation for 'direct rule by the governor in Council.
 14. Antigua and Barbuda strongly reiterate the point that "The imposition of direct rule, and the history of such imposition in the Caribbean, was never intended to deliver democratic governance or to be an instrument of economic and social development of our countries and peoples. Such action to suspend the House of Assembly in the BVI and impose direct rule from London would be inconsistent with the United Nations Resolution 1514 of 1960 – the United Nations Declaration on The Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.
15. The new National Unity Government reflects the desire of the people British Virgin Islands to have a government that transcends political parties and represents their collective interests.

Thank you:

Thursday, 12 May-10:00 – 11:15 am

Agenda item 2 (a) (iii). Perspectives of the administering Powers, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and other stakeholders: Political developments in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: In other regions.

Madame Chair,

16. As we turn our attention to (agenda item 2 (a) (iii)), Perspectives of the administering Powers, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and other stakeholders: Political developments in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: In other regions, I have the honour once again to take the floor in my national capacity on behalf on my country Antigua and Barbuda on the Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

17. Madam Chair, as a friend of Argentina and the United Kingdom, my country has expressed in several organizational meetings and fora that we strongly encourage both parties to resume sovereignty negotiations to find as soon as possible a peaceful and definitive solution to the dispute on the question of the Malvinas Islands in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, as stated by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/49.

18. Antigua and Barbuda stands firm with The Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States(CELAC), in the Summit of Mexico, September 2021, to the commitment of continue working, in the framework of international

law, particularly of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of December 14th, 1960, to make the region of Latin America and the Caribbean a territory free of colonialism and colonies. In that we stand firm and we reaffirm our position. We therefore, once again, call on our friends, Argentina and the United Kingdom, to settle this dispute of sovereignty with in a manner of humility, so that the peoples of these countries can move forward.

Madame Chair,

19. I once again take the floor to speak in my national capacity on the question of Western Sahara.
20. Support the political process, held under the exclusive auspices of the UN Secretary General, aimed at reaching a realistic, practicable, and enduring political solution based on compromise, to the regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara, as recommended by the 18 Security Council resolutions since 2007.
21. Welcome the roundtable process, with the participation of Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and "polisario", in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council, in particular resolution 2602, adopted on 27 October 2021. In this regard, highlight the request of the Security Council to the 4 participants to remain committed, showing realism and spirit of compromise, throughout the political process to ensure a successful outcome.

22. Welcome the appointment of Mr. Staffan De Mistura as the new Personal Envoy of the SG for the Sahara and the holding of his first regional visit, from January 12 to 19, 2022. Support in this regard, his efforts to resume the roundtable process, building on the progress of the former Personal Envoy, Mr. Horst Köhler, with the same 4 participants and in the same format, in application of Security Council resolution 2602.

23. Support the Moroccan Autonomy Initiative as the compromise solution. It is consistent with international law, the UN Charter and the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Recall in this respect, that the Security Council, in its successive resolutions since 2007, including resolution 2602, has welcomed the serious and credible efforts of Morocco, namely the Autonomy Initiative, to resolve this regional dispute. This Autonomy Initiative enjoys strong international support, most recently from Germany and Spain.

24. Welcome the holding, on September 8, 2021, of general elections -legislative, communal and regional- in Morocco, including in the Moroccan Sahara, which took place in a democratic, free and transparent atmosphere without any incident as confirmed by all national and international observers. Stress, in this regard, that the population of the Moroccan Sahara recorded a participation rate of 66%, the highest at the national level, and elected its true representatives.

25. Highlight the participation of the elected representatives of the Moroccan Sahara, voted for by the population of the Moroccan Sahara during the September 8 elections, in the regional

seminars and sessions of the C24. Welcome, also, the participation of the elected representatives of the Moroccan Sahara in the two round tables in Geneva.

26. Acknowledge the socio-economic development in the Moroccan Sahara, thanks to Morocco's efforts and investments, within the framework of the New Development Model of the Southern Provinces launched in 2015. This model has greatly empowered the populations of these two regions of Morocco and raised the Human Development Indices there. Welcome in this regard, the inauguration of several General Consulates in the Moroccan cities of Dakhla and Laayoun.
27. Commend Morocco's efforts and achievements in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic in the Moroccan Sahara, including the vaccination campaign that allowed for a wide access to the Covid vaccine.
28. Welcome Morocco's substantial achievements in the field of Human Rights, which have been welcomed by Security Council resolutions, notably 2602 (strengthening the role of the regional commissions of the National Council for Human Rights in Laayoune and Dakhla, bilateral cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the treaty bodies and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council).
29. Welcome the full respect by Morocco of the ceasefire in the Moroccan Sahara and call on the other parties to return to the ceasefire for the sake of the whole region's security and stability.

30. Express concern about the situation of the Tindouf camps' populations, particularly women and children, and denounce the violations of their fundamental rights. Insist, in this context, on the need to proceed with their registration in accordance with international humanitarian law, the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Recommendations of the Secretary General and all Security Council resolutions since 2011, including resolution 2602.

Friday, 13 May-11:20

Closing

31. Madame Chair, it would be remiss of me not to once again extend my heartiest congratulation to the Government and people of St. Lucia for ably hosting this seminar. The gracious and warm hospitality was felt and greatly appreciated.

32. To you and your team, Madame Chair, I thank you for ably steering this seminar to its fruitful conclusion. Antigua and Barbuda looks forward to the implementation of our recommendations.

33. I am aware that the task ahead of us is enormous. However, we have a responsibility to all peoples under the yoke of colonialism to give a voice to promote their social, economic, political and educational progress and to assist in developing appropriate forms of self-government and to take into account the political aspirations and stages of development and advancement of the peoples of each Territory.

34. I once again call on us all to be true vanguards of the Charter of the United Nations by recognizing that the interests of dependent Territories are paramount. Further, I encourage all parties to continue to show political will and work in an atmosphere that promotes continuous dialogue and requests that political, economic, human rights, and security concerns continue to be at the forefront of all negotiations. My country remains committed to the complete and immediate eradication of colonialism in all its forms. Antigua and Barbuda appeals to all stakeholders to give their full support and invoke political compromise to continue to work to improve human rights and the economic and social development of the people in these territories. I thank you.