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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

OPENING STATEMENT BY

THE CHAIR OF THE

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF 24

Opening statement

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to recognize amongst us here today the presence of the Honourable Philip J. Pierre, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia. We welcome and sincerely appreciate him taking the time to be with us here today. Honourable Prime Minister, your presence testifies to the importance you and your country attach to the work of the Special Committee.

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I also have the distinct honour to extend a warm welcome to all of you and to thank the Government and people of Saint Lucia for hosting this year's Seminar of the Special Committee on the theme "advancement of the Non-Self-

**Governing Territories through the coronavirus disease
(COVID-19) pandemic and beyond”.**

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It would be remiss of me to not also highlight the historic participation of the Territories in this year’s seminar – 11 of the 17 Territories are represented here today. Such strong participation is not only welcomed, but a clear illustration that the decolonization agenda remains of paramount importance in the community of nations.

Such engagement commits us even more in the search for concrete advances in the decolonization process.

As we observe annually in May the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, let us take this opportunity to reflect upon the role played by all in support of the work of decolonization, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the

United Nations and all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Over the next few days, I invite you to actively exchange ideas and opinions on the various topics proposed for discussion. Let us take advantage of the time amidst such robust participation for open and fruitful discussions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I intimated earlier, Saint Lucia is a country well known for its unwavering commitment to the cause of decolonization. On 6 occasions, 2001 to 2003, 2005 to 2006 and 2010, Saint Lucia held the chairmanship of the Committee, successfully guiding its work. Moreover, Saint Lucia's hosting of this year's Seminar despite the ongoing extraordinary and unprecedented global health situation and hosting the Seminar for the second time in the Committee's history is indicative of its robust dedication to the decolonization agenda.

During the 1999 Caribbean regional seminar, hosted by St. Lucia, in his statement of welcome, then Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Saint Lucia underlined that the seminars are “an important tool in providing the international community with a first-hand account of the conditions in the remaining Territories” and provide “an opportunity to hear from the people themselves of the situation on the ground”.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This fact remains true today.

And, in echoing his words, I would again emphasize the importance that we attach to these annual gatherings which provide the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of our mandate.