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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 SUBSTANTIVE STATEMENT

BY THE CHAIR OF THE

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF 24

**Special Committee on the Situation with regard
to the Implementation of the Declaration on the
Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries
and Peoples**

Pacific regional seminar 2022

Substantive statement by

Her Excellency Ms. Keisha McGuire

**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**

Saint Lucia, 11 May 2022

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I should like to reiterate our solidarity with all people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Territories have felt the multidimensional consequences of the pandemic, even those which up to today have registered zero cases and deaths, namely, Pitcairn, Saint Helena and Tokelau.

As the Secretary-General rightly pointed out at the Committee's first meeting in February, all Territories, including those with fragile economies, have made considerable efforts to address the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic, and underscored that the international community should commit to making 2022 a year of "recovery for all".¹

It is in this context that we want to pay particular attention to the health, economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Territories, as well as to share lessons learned in addressing such impacts.

The General Assembly has acknowledged that the pandemic "is a powerful reminder of our interconnectedness and vulnerabilities" and has also recognized the essential role played by

¹ [A/AC.109/2022/SR.1](#), paras. 1 and 3.

the United Nations in addressing “the critical interlinkages between health, trade, finance and economic and social development”.²

The General Assembly also stresses the importance of inclusiveness within the United Nations development system and with respect to the implementation of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and resolution 75/216 of 21 December 2020 on disaster risk reduction”.

Further, both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) annually stress the special challenges facing the Territories in “planning for and implementing sustainable development” and request United Nations entities and international and regional organizations “to strengthen existing measures of support and to formulate appropriate programmes of assistance to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories” on a case-by-case basis, within the framework of their respective mandates, in order to accelerate progress in the economic and social sectors of those Territories.³

The crisis brought about by the pandemic, as recognized by the General Assembly,⁴ is affecting efforts made for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. This is also the case for the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Nothing seems more appropriate than to reflect on these aspects, so important to the Territories, in the homeland of Sir William Arthur Lewis, who in 1979 won the Nobel Prize in Economics for his contributions in the field of economic development.

The seminar has consistently recognized the cross-cutting nature of many of the challenges faced by some Territories and underlined those 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 Territories.⁵

The Special Committee has been given a clear mandate by the General Assembly “to continue to examine the political, economic and social situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories”.⁶

For this reason, the broad participation of the Territories this year is central to the objective of the seminar since it will allow us to hear first-hand information about the challenges and solutions found to face the extraordinary times the pandemic has brought about in the territories and the world at large.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

² General Assembly resolution 74/307, preambular paragraphs 2 and 4.

³ General Assembly resolution 76/87, preambular paragraph 11 and para. 9 and ECOSOC resolution 2021/2 B, preambular paragraph 9 and para. 9

⁴ General Assembly resolution 74/307, preambular paragraphs 4.

⁵ For example, see conclusions and recommendations of the 2021 seminar (A/76/23, annex II, para. 28 (i)).

⁶ For example, General Assembly resolution 76/105, para. 8 (c).

Ladies and gentlemen,

The discussions we will have during this seminar will be also an opportunity to reflect on how the cooperation and assistance provided to the Territories towards sustainable development can be strengthened on case-by-case basis.

The experience gained and lessons learned from the pandemic provide the basis for promoting enhanced response to future pandemics and strengthening the “resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges”.⁷

All relevant stakeholders, including the administering Powers, Member States, United Nations system as well as international and regional organizations have a central role to play.

We must make sure that the recovery is “inclusive and sustainable”.⁸

I encourage you all to take advantage of the time for open and fruitful discussions.

Thank you.

⁷ For example, General Assembly resolution [76/90](#), para. 11.

⁸ General Assembly resolution [74/307](#), preambular paragraph 7.