

Distr. RESTRICTED
CRS/2007/DP.4

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean Regional Seminar on the implementation of the Second
International Decade for the Eradication of
Colonialism: next steps in decolonization

St. George's, Grenada
22 to 24 May, 2007

Dr. Lana W. Connor Hoyoung
Anguilla National Council of Women (ANCW)
Anguilla

DISCUSSION PAPER

1.

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished Ministers, Representatives of the Non – Self Governing Territories
Distinguished Delegates and Ambassadors
Experts, Non Government Organization
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am indeed grateful to the to UN Special Committee on Decolonization for giving the Anguilla National Council of Women the opportunity to make this presentation. Madam Chair on behalf of the Anguilla National Council of Women, Civil Society, the People of Anguilla and by extension the Government and other Elected Members of the House of Assembly; We extend a hearty congratulations to you on your appointment as Chairperson for this Committee, we further salute you being a Caribbean woman. Greetings, to one and all.

Madam Chair person It is by no means a share co-incident that this meeting is being convened in the month of May when within in days May 30th to be exact, Anguilla will be celebrating 40 years on the road to Self – Determination. It means that the vision and goals are yet alive in the hearts and minds of the Anguillian people. It is especially noteworthy, that the women of Anguilla were in the fore front of that land marked event, and we continue to keep the flame glowing in our quest for the realization of becoming a free people. We dare say to the United Nations Special Committee of 24 that you will only see some real action or movement taking place when we the women across the region become fully involved, at the Economic, Political and Social levels in our societies, we then must be fully part of the Decision Making Process. In other words our women, our Youth must be empowered. Madam Chair I iterate that while we openly accept the opportunity to discourse on the roles and perspectives of women in decolonization, the theme is that of Decolonization, that remains inclusive of us all people , who are trapped in servitude, continue to be controlled and have decisions imposed upon us. It is within this context that this presentation embraces the views, the emotions and position of the various sectors of the Anguillian society committed to Self Determination.

Madam Chair it was following the publication of the 1999 “*White Paper Partnership for Progress and Prosperity :Britain and the Overseas Territories.*” Whereby the United Kingdom Government outlined a series of Constitutional Reviews.

This brought about a new dimension. Anguilla was trusted into constitutional reform through a cunning statement by the UK Government that there was “no pressure from the United Kingdom Government for the Overseas Territories to move towards Independence, the United Kingdom Government would not stand in the way of any Overseas Territory becoming Independent. Madam Chair, this is where the wool was cast over the people’s eyes, coupled by the fact that there was and is economic progress. Our people momentarily overlooked the other part of the agreement whereby the United Kingdom Government made it clear that as long as the Territories wish to retain links with the United Kingdom, the United Kingdom Government will retain sufficient Powers, through the Governor to ensure the implementation of International Obligations, to protect itself against contingent liabilities and to ensure good governance. This condition gave the Administering Power control over the Administration of Justice, Independence of the judiciary, and Political impartiality of the Public Service. Madam Chair such en-actions in practice have led our people to have allegiances: to sight one instance Madam Chair, Permanent Secretaries are answerable to the Governor and often fill the position to act as Deputy Governor. The Territorial Government falls in the unpleasant situation of being the servant of the Permanent Secretary. We are saying as women we need real power to our Territorial Government.

Human Rights Conventions

Madam Chair in the extension of International Obligations and Conventions to us we still awaiting the extension of the three basic Human Rights Conventions namely (1) *International Convention on Civil and Political Rights*. (2) *The International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights*. (3) *The Convention on the Elimination of all form of Discrimination Against Women*. We are aware that our Territorial Government has agreed to the extension of these vital extensions but to date nothing has happened. We cannot then exercise our basic rights to comply with article 1 of the International Civil and Political Rights. Instead Madam Chair, we have been subjected to legislation by Order in Council in such culturally sensitive areas as the death penalty and homosexuality under the mistaken belief that the only alternatives in constitutional arrangements available to us were that of Independence or Rule by Order in Council. The British rightly call it the “Nuclear Option” As Dane Bernice Lake QC rightly put it “*Rule by Order in Council is destructive of the people’s spirit, identity and dignity. It is a rule threat of a mushroom cloud such as struck Nagasaiiki and Hiroshima.*”

Madam Chair the women of Anguilla and the Territorial Government made it clear to the UK Government that we reject Legislation by Order in Council. Given the background and history by which some of these instruments have been extended, by Order in Council we are in the rigours of Colonialism, a people deprived of a voice and a culture. We have further through Media-education programmes made the people of Anguilla know of their rights to knowledge and freedom. We have seen efforts to have Human Rights taught in schools but until we have education on citizenship, planned and developed, public education programmes be they seminars, forums, town hall meetings, groups visits, church gatherings, we are people in waiting.

Constitutional Reform

The Women of Anguilla sees Decolonization as a process, whereby the people of Non Self Governing Territories can embrace the principle of Self Determination. Madam Chair it was not until that historic meeting of the C24 held in Anguilla in 2003 did the bombshell drop that the British was guilty of duplicity in with holding from us that they were mandated by that Resolution to leave with us a third option which covered Full Internal Self Government. They with held from us the fact that we should have been allowed to consider:

(a) Independence, (b) Full Internal Self Government or (c) Colonialism by Integration with Britain. Further more Madam Chair in May 2003 it became clear to us from that seminar that the United Kingdom Government was now on a new path advocating Constitutional Modernization while at the same time prohibiting further examination and education of our choice to Self Determination. Options that are available under the United Nations Charter Article 73, Resolution 1541 In is with in this blanket clouds of uncertainty that constitutional modernization is propelled by perceived economic boom that is taking place. Meanwhile, the UK Government is tightening its grasp on the people of Anguilla and by extension its territories by increasing the powers of the Governor. It is even perceived by some of our leaders that colonial mastery is the path for sound and stable economic growth. One of our own Historian and writer, Mr. Colville Petty so ably captured the situation, when He wrote "*Anguillian politicians had come to relate colonialism and instability with independence*". In addition our Chief Minister The Honourable Osbourne Fleming made the press release that "*while the Constitutional Reform Committee Meetings in the villages did not have public response he was satisfied that all Members of the*

House of Assembly were in attendance” The result is that those meetings are presently on hold. However on Radio programmes such as Talk Your Mind and To The Point the issues and dissatisfaction with the increased powers given to the Governor are being highlighted. Madam Chair amid these clouds the women of Anguilla are gradually changing these myths we have begun to enlighten our people . We can only achieve this through education to the people. We do not achieve this in mass meetings but rather through the biblical strategy by going into the by ways and hedges to the people and to the masses.

Work

It is clear that our economic boom is not truly for the people instead we are losing our island and our people have little rights and protection in the work place Madam Chair on International Women Day March 8th 2007 when the NWC took up the call for Minimum wages . The rally was in the House of Parliament, Madam Chair it was unbelievable rewarding when the workers kept calling about the violation of their rights and poor wages. Again May 1st is Internationally recognized as Labour Day over the passed years it was coined *Fun Day* with this increased consciousness this year there was a national move to return to Labour Day highlighting the workers rights and Labour Laws. Our people is awakening and we are prepared to deal with the issues facing our people in making their plea to self determination.. Let me say we support Constitutional Reform , but it must carry the voices of the people. This can only be done when the people’s human and democratic rights are articulated in a referendum, after a period of awareness and education

Madam Chair as women representing the largest sector of the population we call on your Committee to persuade the British Government to honour Mr. Roy Osborne Deputy Head of the Overseas Territories pledge where he assured the delegates that *“The UK Government would permit the UN Special Committee to carry out public education programmes in the OT’s regarding the options specified under the UN Charter.”*

Present Situation

The British Government and the Territorial Government are in the process of Constitutional/ Modernization Advancement based on the 1999 “White Paper” whereby we only have two options either Independence or retain the status quo of Integration that is colonial in nature. There was the Constitutional Committee that

ended abruptly and now the Mitchell's Commission that have set about to draft and make recommendations the constitution. The processes that are not propelled by the people but rather is interpreted as imposed upon them. As women our role is retain a watchful eye and stand in the gap for our people . We reject any false semblance of involvement of us women to make it appear gender equitable by appointing any woman on a committee. We believe we have the right to choose and the ability to choose our representation. We therefore call on our Administering Power and our Territorial Government to recognize the linkage between the self determination process and that of Constitutional Reform for the realization of us women and the people of Anguilla as reinforced by the UN General Assembly as late as December 2005 when it stated:

“..... in the process of decolonization there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which is also a fundamental human right recognized under the relevant human right conventions.

Madam Chair we firmly believe that constitutional reform must be a true reflection of us being a people empowered for self determination and by that more power be given to us the people through our Territorial Government. We can only achieve this as we continue to educate our people identifying our values and culture. Madam Chair not in any effort to deviate from the topic but rather to emphasize the growing awareness one calypso released this week asked the question on our 40th Anniversary celebration “ How do we get from that to this” it means people have sighted the off track on the road to self determination and is determined to return.

Achievements

Madam Chair it is only fair, just and true to say that the Government and people of Anguilla are enjoying economic boom but only a little is really trickling down to the masses. There is a stable working relationship with the UK Government whereby Anguilla has made strides:

1. On the economic front as we do NOT depend or receive any grant Aid from Britain.
2. We in have a local appointed as our Deputy Governor and who further acts as Governor
3. Our children who are in the UK studying will now pay the same cost as one who is born in England
4. A airport has been built capable of take I jet aircrafts.
5. Renovation and reconstruction of the seaports bringing them to standard for the growing tourist industry.

It by these by these apparent successes and milestones gives the gleam of the Dependency syndrome of a safety net. Our people momentarily welcome the status quo, but there is a trickling question is What does the UK Government want us to comply with in return, until we see the real response and demand compliance from Britain, we are side tracking our road map of self determination.

Way Forward

Madam Chair as the Committee of 24 approach the end of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, we the women of Anguilla want to remind you that the process is far from complete, but remains pivotal to the people of Anguilla as we continue to aspire to and will one day achieve. We therefore advocate:

- That the UN Special Committee of 24 beyond the Second Decade continue to monitor The Non Self Governing Territories beyond the Second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism
- That the UN Special Committee seek permission from the Administering Powers of the Territories to establish Focal Points in each Territory to carry out the education programmes as needed by the people
- Be known that we women of Anguilla confirm that we are not ready to be delisted
- That International and regional Organizations to which many of the Territories are associated with be called upon to assist the territories in the process of self determination

Madam Chair we are aware that at the moment our Territorial Government is riding on a perceived comfort zone that appears to blind our vision of the 1967 that of SELF DETERMINATION but is further propelled by the affirmation of the Administering Power that they have no obligation to honour any mandate by UN: where we look to, as the seat of justice and freedom for all. We therefore conclude Madam Chair that while there is action going on in the territory, it is evasive of the people's rights; and to date we say Anguilla should NOT be delisted from the process of decolonization

I thank you