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Distr. RESTRICTED
CRS/2009/CRP.7

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: challenges and opportunities in the process of
decolonization in today's world

Frigate Bay, Saint Kitts and Nevis
12 to 14 May 2009

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

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

2009 Caribbean Regional Seminar

Frigate Bay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, 12-14 May 2009

**H.E. R. M. Marty M. Natalegawa,
Permanent Representative of Indonesia,
Chairman of the Special Committee**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we are approaching the very end of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in 2010, let us together take a closer look and see where we are, and where we can go from here.

In doing so, we need to keep sight of the fundamental responsibilities and obligations of all those concerned, and adhere to the United Nations' core principles and resolutions on decolonization.

As indicated in the agenda of the seminar, I shall focus my presentation on three main topics, namely:

- (1) Dynamics of a changing world,
- (2) Strengthening cooperation with administering Powers, and
- (3) The role of the Special Committee in facilitating enhanced outreach to and participation of the people of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the United Nations decolonization process

Before elaborating those three main topics, let me start by taking stock on the progress thus far and where we are now.

The process of decolonization promoted by the Special Committee has evolved over the years. The Special Committee has now the essential task of "delisting" the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, in accordance with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, subsequent relevant General Assembly resolutions, and the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

At last year's seminar, I underlined the need to approach each case of decolonization with an open mind, to build on the available options and to bring about a pragmatic, results-oriented evolution of positions to help move the decolonization process forward.

I believe such an approach remains valid.

However, it is not for the Special Committee alone to pursue such approach. It requires active involvement of all stakeholders concerned, particularly the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, and meaningful cooperation of the administering Powers.

On the part of the Special Committee, we reaffirm our commitment towards genuine and constructive dialogue with all stakeholders, including the administering Powers.

To speed up the process of decolonization, the Special Committee has held regional seminars; commissioned United Nations publications and other information material, including on the internet; analyzed the situation concerning each Non-Self-Governing Territory as reflected in the annual working papers prepared by the Secretariat; and made recommendations to the international community in annual decisions.

Through such efforts, the Special Committee has also aimed at fostering a better understanding of the intricacies of the conditions on the ground as well as contemporary dependency dynamics and arrangements at work.

While it may be true that some of our deliberations in the past years could have been more in depth, some working papers more illuminating, and some resolutions more action-oriented, I believe it is still fair to say that the Special Committee has nevertheless squarely succeeded in keeping decolonization on the international agenda.

And yet, we still have to find a way to de-list the next Non-Self-Governing Territory.

Therefore, and based on the three main topic areas I mentioned before, I shall try to offer some "food for thoughts" that could hopefully trigger further discussions on how the international community's abiding interest in decolonization could be fine-tuned with today's world.

The first area is "dealing with the dynamics of a changing world".

The dynamics of today's world, which is increasingly in the grip of global economic and environmental problems, pose challenges that require timely and tangible assistance and support for those in need. Hopefully, some of these dynamics can also be addressed in a way that produces opportunities in the future.

These dynamics affect us all, be they independent States, or Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Not too long ago, globalization seemed to offer certain opportunities for some Non-Self-Governing Territories, especially in the offshore financial sectors and high-end tourism. At present, however, many of the Non-Self-Governing Territories are facing growing economic, social, environmental and other challenges.

We are all familiar with the range of precarious issues that affect many of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in a number of ways - the turmoil in financial markets and institutions; economic recession which leads to growing unemployment and reduced prosperity; growing concerns of food and energy security and access to external trade; strengthening of good governance; population growth management; climate change and environmental degradation; and potential health crises.

For instance, it is widely recognized that the challenges of energy price fluctuations and the global economic crisis have affected Non-Self-Governing Territories that rely on tourism and international business for economic prosperity.

There are anxieties that, if not addressed properly, climate change would bring a wide array of disastrous impacts to small-islands, including small-island Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Distinguished Participants,

In the face of a changing world, the Special Committee needs to examine how it can play a more supportive role for the benefits of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, on a case-by-case basis. We look forward to hearing your views on this.

Such a role, nevertheless, needs to be in line to the mandate of the Special Committee. It needs to be aimed at encouraging enhanced capacity of the Territories for self-governance, that would help usher in decolonization.

The various components of the United Nations system as well as other regional and international entities also have a valuable role in helping to alleviate the impact of various global problems, in accordance with their respective mandates.

The annual reports on the United Nations specialized agencies, as well as the Special Committee's informational outreach efforts, including through the United Nations website on decolonization, can be informative and helpful in promoting assistance and support to Non-Self-Governing Territories.

United Nations Regional Commissions, such as ECLAC and ESCAP, as well as the United Nations Development Programme, through proper mechanism, can provide or facilitate concrete technical cooperation projects for Non-Self-Governing Territories in support of their sustainable development. We therefore look forward to hearing the presentations to be delivered by our colleagues from UNDP and ECLAC on a later stage during this seminar. On a related note, and in the context of the Caribbean region, it is worth recalling that last year the Cayman Islands became a new associate member of the ECLAC, joining in that capacity the other five Non-Self-Governing Territories from the Caribbean.

Now let us turn into the second area, namely, "strengthening cooperation with administering Powers".

I shall start by pointing out that continued positive developments in the case of Tokelau is a clear example of how strong partnership and close cooperation between the Special Committee with the people of Tokelau and New Zealand as the administering Power is beneficial for all parties.

It provides the Special Committee with the capability to objectively assess the situation on the ground, and in turn the Special Committee can provide the wider United Nations membership with well-informed recommendations in

supporting the decolonization process of Tokelau, within the pace that the people of Tokelau are comfortable with.

In other Territories, it seems fair to conclude that overall progress during the Second Decade has been rather limited. We also continue to face limited cooperation by the relevant administering Powers.

I am, therefore, heartened to acknowledge the participation of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and France in this year's seminar.

As exemplified by the case of Tokelau and New Zealand, the Special Committee is convinced that enhanced cooperation with the administering Powers will benefit not only the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the Special Committee, it will benefit also the administering Powers themselves.

This, for instance, will enable the Special Committee to have objective assessment on power sharing and constitutional modernization.

Better liaison and an open exchange of views with the Special Committee could increase a common understanding of joint approaches to implementing the United Nations' decolonization mandate.

The obligations and responsibilities of the administering Powers are clear under the United Nations Charter and General Assembly resolutions.

It is to be hoped that sooner rather than later, all administering Powers will seek to fulfill their Charter obligations and involve themselves actively in facilitating the process of decolonization.

In any event, the Special Committee will continue its informal dialogue with the administering Powers to discuss how best to advance "delisting" within the context of the United Nations' decolonization agenda.

The Special Committee also continues to encourage strengthened and participatory dialogue between an administering Power and the relevant Territorial Government, particularly to address any possible dynamics in a Territory's internal governance. In this context, and with regard to developments in the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Special Committee would encourage the territorial Government and the administering Power to work together to find a satisfactory solution.

Distinguished Participants,

At this juncture, I would like to share with you some findings which are contained in working papers prepared by the Secretariat in 2009.

There continue to be opportunities for the parties concerned to build on completed or on-going internal constitutional review exercises in several United Kingdom- and United States-administered Territories, or to build on the Nouméa Accord process in **New Caledonia**, where France is the administering Power.

For example, with regard to the **British Virgin Islands (BVI)**, there is a sense that after the successful conclusion of the recent internal constitutional modernization exercise, the Territory might be considered a suitable case for "delisting".

After years of constitution-related discussions, the key stakeholders, civil society and the population at large would appear to be sufficiently sensitized and informed about the relevant self-determination issues.

The Secretariat working papers also indicate that there are several internal constitutional review processes underway or completed in various Non-Self-Governing Territories. These processes often raise status-related questions, and the Special Committee continues to observe closely these developments, including in **American Samoa** and the **United States Virgin Islands**, Territories administered by the United States.

In due course, internal constitutional modernization exercises are also expected to be completed in **Anguilla**, **Cayman Islands**, and **Montserrat**, all of which are administered by the United Kingdom, and have been actively considering constitutional and status-related issues for some time.

Within the meaning of the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions and provisions of the United Nations Charter, and with the involvement of the relevant Territorial Government and the administering Power, we may be able to build upon this.

In any case, to recall a principle that I underlined at last year's seminar, the Special Committee will need to be assured that the people concerned are in fact on a path to self-determination, and the international community has to be satisfied that the people of the Territories are in a position to express their will in a free and unequivocal manner.

The third area is "facilitating enhanced outreach to the peoples of the Territories".

Traditionally, the work of the Special Committee in this regard has been geared towards raising awareness among the peoples of these Territories on the subject of decolonization.

This has focused on a number of activities, such as the dissemination of publication material, including on the internet, as well as updating website functionalities that are based primarily, as mandated, on information made available by the administering Powers under Article 73 e of the United Nations Charter.

Moreover, with the growing availability of information on decolonization in electronic form around the world, including the results of the C-24's work, it is hard to make a convincing case that there exists a so-called "information deficit" on the subject of decolonization and self-determination among Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Our task now is to explore new and innovative means that can complement our "traditional" efforts.

Distinguished Participants,

Our common quest is to make the work of the Special Committee more relevant to the 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories under its purview.

I have tried to explore some ideas that the seminar might wish to explore. I believe I can speak on behalf of other members of the Special Committee that we are very keen to hear your views and further thoughts.

I look forward to discussing these and other issues with you over the next three days.

Thank you.

Frigate Bay, Saint Kitts and Nevis
12 May 2009