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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

DISCUSSION PAPER

PRESENTATION

BY

DR. LANA W. CONNOR HOYOUNG

UNITED NATIONS

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 NON SELF GOVERNING TERRITORIES.**

(THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS)

PRESENTED

BY

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United Nations Decolonization Committee
Caribbean Regional Seminar May 12 – 14th 2009
Frigate Bay St. Kitts

**United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization ("C - 24 ")
Caribbean Regional Seminar May 12 – 14th 2009 in St Kitts**

Dr. Lana W Connor–Hoyoung

**Anguilla National Council of Women 2009
Secretary Soroptimist International Anguilla
Secretary Caribbean Women's Association CARIWA**

SUMMARY

"Challenges and opportunities in the process of Decolonization of the Non–Self Governing Territories in the Caribbean Region: The role of women in the current decolonization process."

As we approach the ninth year of the Second International decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, it is important for one to assess the experiences and actions pursued in the process of Decolonization in the Non-Self Governing Territories during the period under review. Decolonization remains upper most in the minds of the people living in the Non-Self Governing Territories in the Caribbean; however, the process is at varying stages in each territory. The global economic crisis presently is a major mitigating factor against the process of self determination by any territorial government. The Special Committee within this last decade has expanded its consultative process, through the involvement and active participation of the people in civil societies and through various bodies.

This paper addresses the role of women in the process of decolonization in Non-Self Governing Territories in the Caribbean. It will examine the challenges and opportunities impacting upon peoples' right to self determination by examining the new and modern approach to decolonization through Human Rights. The effects of Human Rights and Human Rights Conventions on the political, social, economic, legal, education and health systems. Constitutional Reform in regard to the Electoral Process, the Bill of Rights, Administering Powers and relationships. Research and the myriad of contemporary global issues have established that women's rights are an integral part of any human rights dialogue. The role of women in society is critical as if we seek to establish social justice, equality, good governance, and genuine democracy as we build modern nations through the process of self determination.

1.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Mr. Chairman, I bring you warmest greetings from the many Non - Governmental Organizations and civil society. I also bring greetings from the Anguilla Legislature who applaud your extended invitation to the Anguilla National Council of Women. In particular I bring greetings from the women of Anguilla who make up over 50 % of the population. We continue to pledge our full support to the United Nations Committee of 24 for their non failing efforts in leading the people around the world to achieve their right to live above the shackles of colonialism. The women of Anguilla with support from various affiliated organizations of the Caribbean Women's Association CARIWA reaffirm their belief in the statement *that" all people are entitled to exercise their right to self determination"*. We the people of Anguilla define ourselves as a population living in a distinct geographical and territorial boundary, with changing administrative functions; wherein remains the evidence of our in pursuit to self determination.

Mr. Chairman I stand with further requests of women of other kingdom territories of the Dutch and the United States that they are in solidarity with the moving of the process of decolonization forward, these are true voices of the people heralding the move

Historical Overview:

The Anguilla revolution of 1967 had been based on the ethos of we as people of the 1800's. Generation Anguillians even though threatened to be removed from their island remained vigilant and steadfast, weathered adverse climate conditions of drought and economic hardships. They had never one day become derailed by such conditions but rather remained on the rock our island and set the pace for us a people continue the mandate, **"being a people of self will"**. Little wonder then when the British Government decided to give greater autonomy by a process of Associated Statehood to many of the now Independent islands, Anguilla revolted against the process that embraced the political administration that would dictate both our social and economic advancement within the tri-state of what was known as the State of St. Kitts -Nevis and Anguilla, History has recorded such an episode as the **"Anguilla Revolution 1967"**. Anguillians stood to their beliefs and after much dialogue, unrest and petitions even to the United Nations for their rights as a people for self determination, a resolution came about in 1980. It out of this agreement that we as a people with respect for our Sovereignty and in the belief of fairness, that the island sort a political relationship that would allow the people greater autonomy for the managing of our political, social and economic situations. Furthermore the British government assured the people that they "would never put them

under a government they did not want. Never was it within the minds of us women and the people of Anguilla that Anguilla had reverted to full colonialism. To us women; the process towards self determination is still going on even though there are many challenges, but equally many opportunities are gained.

Self Determination

(Mr. Chairman) The right of people living under the shackles of colonialism to self determination remains a constant open debate as to the options available to them and what strategies are best used in the negotiation and what form of relationships whether it is Independence, Free Association, or Full Integration. The option therefore, must clearly be the choice of we the people openly expressed in a referendum. Presently, we in Anguilla have embraced the belief that **Self determination is a fundamental principle in achieving our human rights**. We further maintain that any arguments or debates for self determination are the collective rights of we the people rather than States as defined in Articles 1 and 55 of the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Chairman) However it is also known and well experienced among us Anguillian that if Self Determination is conceived only by the political directorate then it becomes the playing field for contentious discussions, rejection and rebellion. Evidently then, The acceptance of human rights and the extension of human rights covenants can be considered as one of the viable and practical ways forward. However it has been proven that one of the major challenges in embracing the Human Rights approach is that it long and costly. No wonder that, nearing the end of the second decade for the eradication of colonialism truly by the people, seems not to have been really accomplished in the Non self Governing territories in the Caribbean. It has been noted however that **“not until civil societies have been able to participate in such a forum on self determination will there be any true action and decisions made”..(Hoyoung International Women’s’ Day Rally 2006)** Furthermore, the territories are at different levels in having the six basic human rights conventions or instruments extended to them.

(Mr. Chairman) .. however since the last regional seminar held here in the Caribbean 2007 The women of the region have been kindled with a new spirit of determination and are becoming more informed and aggressive in the national debates and confront the scuttle manoeuvres to block the process. Within that same year we the women of Anguilla were assured by our government that Anguilla will push towards acclaiming self determination. The process is now marred by the global economic crisis that is impacting on us where families are plunge into poverty by massive unemployment, labour and immigration issues, family disruptions have left

us to conclude the opportunities for advancing Self determination presently does seem gloomy.

(Mr. Chairman)...We have to recognise that the history of human rights is one of many challenges such as how can we organize collaborative pressure to bring about the essential changes needed; the fact remains that human rights can only be achieved when alliances are being built through revision of the education , health, legal constitution review, and social Systems to include our culture, language, values and religion. The struggle is even more intense when International Human rights instruments have to be translated into domestic law and more degrading when instruments are trusted on us when they are being passed by order in Council

(Mr. Chairman)... some such debates resisting the Human Rights approach has to do with conventions passed such as Convention Against Torture (CAT) the Death Penalty the way we discipline our children, Other questions are related to Homosexuality, Health people living with HIV/AIDS is further stifled by the lack of programmes and services.

One of the greatest stumbling blocks facing our societies in seeking a relationship with the Kingdom territories is the pressure on the territories to comply with all the articles rather than having the ability to apply reservations on particular articles. The process will continue to be deferred as the colonies do not have the capacity or financial support to institute these programmes.

(Mr. Chairman)... the modus operandi of being territories of the Kingdoms mitigate against us in some cases from receiving financial assistance given to programmes in the region where we belong geographically and culturally bound. The myth remains that it is perceived that we the needy territories are in fact part and parcel of the donor agencies, unfortunately the territories have maintain their own National Budget

Mr. Chairman further it is noted that the territories in the region are at varying stages in having the six core conventions extended to them In particular Anguilla of the six has only three, namely the Convention Against Torture; (CAT) The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. As women we reaffirm in the open debate for the equality among our people it is both strategic and imperative that the Convention for the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) along with the various Optional Protocols be extended to Anguilla. The argument goes further to have the two other conventions namely The International Convention for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Convention for Economic Social and Cultural Rights to be

extended. We are a people who are identified by our values our norms our sanctions wrapped up in our culture socially and economically propelling the process of self determination.

The Human Rights Committee must therefore be strengthened with specific mandates where by people can be made aware of their Rights. Suffice to say Mr. Chairman Rights must come with respect for the other person, rights bring with it obligations Human rights bring with values and commitments It must function within the pluralism of our societies herein lies both challenges and opportunities for all in the process of self determination

However the fact remains when civil society and we the women take up the mantle to achieve such a cause then and only then will things happen; hence for us in Anguilla and I can vouch for many other people in the region we as people are still in the process of attaining self determination.

Constitutional Reform:

(Mr. Chairman)...1982 herald the evidence of a people moving towards Self Determination was realized when the Anguilla Constitution (1982) was enacted with a Bill of Rights. However within that same period the political directorate of the day remove the right of women in Anguilla to bestow **"Belonger-ship Status"** to their spouses while the men retained the right to do so . The women of Anguilla fought relentlessly until that right was restored in the Constitution of 1989 a position that now exist giving both men and women to bestow belongership to their non Anguillian spouses.

Mr. Chairman Anguilla within the political dialogue is undergoing modernization through the Constitutional review. This review is one of the strategic goals of the "White Paper of 1999. It is now 9 years since we have started. To date we have a draft constitution presented to the Government drafted by two renowned daughters of Anguilla. The process is far from complete for us the women and civil society is insisting on public debate prior to the visit of British officials. We believe that Key agencies and functions should be under the purview of we the people through our local government such as the Public Service, Constitution Reform, Electoral Process to name a few . We feel as civil society there is need to review the extended powers of HMG through the governor. Mr. Chairman these can only be achieved through a vigorous awareness education campaign to our people for true governance and democracy. As a people and citizens it is right to be informed.

Way Forward/Opportunities

- **Education**

As women of the remaining Non self governing territories we believe that in order to sustain and guide the process of attaining self determination than it must be part of our education system. I say that our education must remain relevant to the needs of our developing societies. Education must there be relevant , Education must be both formal and non-formal there must be direct use of the media public education use of flyers and pamphlets to all members of society.

The process of self determination must become an integral part of the media which is right to have a voice. Mr. Chairman, this is a classic example of a case tried at Privy Council and won by the people for freedom of speech.

Other opportunities as we move towards a self determined people are that of dialogue and true partnership. Bid me Chairman if I divert a bit to illustrate this process of development. At **UN meetings to which OTs; can attend as part of the British Delegation in the present system; The OTS' are treated as partners having a seat at and a voice to speak to the issues rose.** The question is which of the 3 options we are alluding to in the process of self determination

- **Political Rights/ Ownership**

The right to self determination as a people must embrace our territorial boundaries including ownership of our natural resources and the culture we uphold. Therefore we in the OTS' call for full political rights to us as people.

- As partners in process of development no laws should be trusted nor enacted in the OTS' by Order in Council
- The UN Decade on the Eradication of Colonization is extended for a third decade as it is far from being complete.
- That in mandating laws for the implementation of some contentious human rights is guided by sensitization of the people in respect to their values and culture.
- That the global economic crisis warrants financial assistance guidance to good governance and democracy by the Sovereign Governments

- Those regional bodies such as CARICOM, OECS, and CARIWA lend concrete support to Non Self governing territories in their struggle for Self Determination. (This is imperative as it affects (a) the migration and integration of our people in the region
 - (b) The schools of learning
 - (c) The adherence to the judicial Systems and law enforcements egg. Laws on Immigration such as Visa entry restrictions, the impact of the British Nationality Act on our children of non Anguillian parents are stateless

Mr. Chairman be it known that in move to circumvent the process of self determination we the women of Anguilla and rest of the Caribbean it should only be adhered to when there is referendum thereby allowing the people to vote in the affirmative or de-formative in no less than 66%

We acknowledge the benefits of our children being educated in the British system however what is our identity when return to the region Mr. Chairman on Leaving Antigua I donor pay CARICOM rates but a holder of the British passport I pay international rates. I do not stand in the line of CARICOM national then who are we.

We the women support the nurturing of good governance and so this can only be fully achieved when there is full equality and the institutionalization of equal rights to all.

The people must have access to affordable health and there must be full awareness of living healthy lifestyles.

Mr. Chairman in closing I wish to reemphasize that we the women of the remaining territories do affirm it is our right to self determination but it can only be achieve through the processes of good governance, education and awareness to the people so they could make knowledgeable decisions. These are our rights that can only be attained through the human Rights approach.

Thank You.