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THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade
for the Eradication of Colonialism: first quarter review of developments and trends

Quito, Ecuador
28 to 30 May 2013

STATEMENT BY ALIKI FAIPULE SALESIO LUI

ULU O TOKELAU

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

'QUESTION OF TOKELAU'

**STATEMENT BY ALIKI FAIPULE SALESIO LUI
ULU O TOKELAU
(TITULAR HEAD OF TOKELAU)**

**Caribbean Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the Third International
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: current realities and prospects**

QUITO, ECUADOR

28-30 MAY 2013

Mr. Chairman - Your Excellency Ambassador Diego Morejón of the Republic of Ecuador

Rapporteur and Distinguished Members of this Seminar

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr Chairman, I am pleased to be here today to make a presentation to this Seminar on behalf of the people of Tokelau. I acknowledge the Almighty Father for His guidance and protection and wish to convey to this Seminar the good wishes and greetings from Tokelau. The Republic of Ecuador is a long way from my home but we have felt quite at home with the hospitality and support that has been accorded to me and my delegation to allow us to be here today. I would like to thank the Government of Ecuador and especially the people of Quito for that warm hospitality – Fakafetai lahi lele and muchas gracias!

Mr Chairman, I was encouraged by the Statement of the United Nations Secretary General at the Opening Meeting of the Special Committee on Decolonization in February this year when he urged the Committee to take a 'fresh and creative' approach in mobilizing the political will needed to eradicate colonialism. I heartily agree with the sentiments of the UN Secretary General and hope that this Seminar will provide a platform to share and examine our views so that we can collectively provide some thoughts on an approach to the challenge before the Committee. I thank you Mr Chairman for the theme of this Seminar to explore the 'current realities and future prospects' well into the Third Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

Mr Chairman, my presentation will focus on the current realities and hopefully provide a momentum for a new, fresh, and creative approach in mobilizing the political will and determination that is needed to eradicate colonialism.

The first point which I would like to highlight is that the 17 non self-governing territories in the list (those which require the Special Committee's attention) are all at very different levels of progress in terms of their aspirations, and attitudes of their respective administering powers. I believe there is a need to distinguish, within the listed territories' those that have demonstrated close support from their administering

power or partners from those that have yet to develop such a relationship. This is an important reality because through this criterion we can be more focussed on the support that is required for these territories in order for them to progress to the next level. Territories and their respective administering powers that can demonstrate a commitment to an act of self determination could perhaps be highlighted as Schedule 'A' territories, while others be given a different status within the list of non self-governing territories. The sooner the Special Committee can realise the true 'landscape and relationship' each of the territories and their respective administering powers has the sooner a more focused approach may be adopted towards the eradication of colonialism in this Third Decade.

Mr. Chairman in 2003, the Government of New Zealand and Tokelau signed the "Joint Principles of Partnership" which formally affirmed that Tokelau has the right to self determination, and that New Zealand has a responsibility to facilitate that process in Tokelau's best interests. The relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand is described in the UN General Assembly resolution 67/131 adopted on 18 December 2012 welcoming the commitment of both Tokelau and New Zealand to work together in the interests of Tokelau and its people. Tokelau is most grateful that, as the administering power, New Zealand gives us a substantial degree of autonomy in the management of our own domestic affairs.

Mr Chairman, what I am saying is that there should be consideration from the Special Committee in terms of the status of the relationship of colonies with their administering powers. Once there is a clear understanding of these realities then the prospects for resolution of the colonisation issue will be better.

The second point is that the Special Committee needs to play an active role in supporting the territories and administering powers in regard to the prospects for the future. As a Special Committee of the UN on this basic human right to self determination, the resolutions of decolonization need to feature more prominently in the General Assembly agenda if there is to be a "new momentum" to review each territory to determine its status within the list, and to take a stronger "problem solving approach" rather than simply reporting on the progress to date of the territories. Under this specific point I would like to put forward the two following suggestions:

(1) The Special Committee should actively explore the needs of each of the territories and see whether their capacity to engage internationally is limited or compromised by virtue of their current political status. In this regard I am talking specifically about territories that I referred to as "Schedule A" in my statement above. New Zealand and Tokelau's special relationship, for the most part, provides adequate funds for the necessary developments and activities that keep our small nation buoyant, however there are still many challenges that lie ahead particularly in the areas of renewable energy and climate change. This may be a time of financial constraints, but the development needs of Tokelau remain great, not least in respect to a reliable, safe and efficient shipping service. Tokelau has developed a Joint Commitment for Development together with New Zealand government which is currently utilized to refine and implement the Tokelau National Strategic Plan. This commitment outlines the key areas of development that will be given priority in terms of funds and efforts during the current National Strategic Plan period (2010-2015). For this we are most appreciative.

Mr. Chairman, Tokelau has also received significant support from UNDP as well, especially for its village and community development projects. However, as a recognized territory of New Zealand, Tokelau is still not eligible for many of the UN funds available under the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) development programmes.

The UN has taken responsibility for managing global efforts to address the key issues related to climate change and sea level rise. Tokelau as a collection of three low lying atolls is very concerned about these threats and has already been impacted by climate change through significant coastal erosion and ocean acidification. The reality of today's climate change for Tokelau is visible, for instance in the changes to the coastal environment. The impacts on the lives of our people are overwhelming, yet we are given to understand that there is no place for our participating in the international discussions on the control of these phenomena. At present Tokelau stands to lose not just her unique environment and land, but also her culture, language

and traditions which affirm the identity of her people. Regretfully since the establishment of the UN Framework for the Convention on Climate Change and the Conference of Parties, Tokelau has been unable to truly articulate its position in this situation.

As a non self governing territory of an Annex One country, we understand that there will be challenges in advocating Tokelau's perspectives. Tokelau has not been able to obtain membership of the Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to name but three such coalitions. Several fellow Pacific island states have questioned whether, if Tokelau is not a SID then who is? Mr. Chairman Tokelau simply wishes that its views, concerns, and lessons learned can be shared with its regional brothers and sisters and that our statements and comments can be made along-side all other SIDS in a similar situation to it.

As a territory, Tokelau is not eligible for Global Environment Funds (GEF) to assist her communities to mitigate and adapt to the challenges of its changing environment due to the effects of climate change. Mr. Chairman, we seek active membership in AOSIS, IRENA and SIDS, and we seek a change in policies so that Tokelau can become eligible for UN generated funds such as GEF, and from other entities which support actions toward renewable energy and climate change mitigation. We believe that the specific provision in the General Assembly Resolution 2625 of 1970 supports this aspiration of ours. Having the support of our administering power we should also have our interest and status recognised by the relevant international agencies. We seek the ability to be able to improve our own infrastructure and human resource capability and capacity through outside funding not ignoring New Zealand's support but reducing the burden Tokelau may present them. We seek support with these aspirations.

- (2) My second suggestion is that the Special Committee should revisit the 3 self determination options of integration, free association and independence, in relation to the wishes of the territories as to the type of Government that they

would aspire to under an act of self determination. All three options have their difficulties and it would be worthwhile for territories to understand these and the strategies that may be used to manage them, and hence provide greater incentive to move down the track to greater autonomy. The self determination options require efforts to make them real and relevant within the current evolving global landscape. The options need to encourage momentum and not hinder it.

Mr Chairman, the issues I have raised above may be different from that of other territories for various reasons. Tokelau's prospects for the future have been encouraged by two key factors. The first factor is Tokelau's determination to improve the quality of life for its people as demonstrated through our political will and drive to implement the Tokelau National Strategic Plan 2010-2015. The second is the continuing support of our national development priorities by the Government of New Zealand.

Mr Chairman, last September, we completed Phase I of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project which made Tokelau the first nation in the world to have all its electrical needs powered by solar energy. Tokelau is very proud of the achievement and is keen to progress towards 100% renewable energy under the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project [TREP Phase II], as it undertakes to take the lead in mitigating the impacts of climate change. TREP Phase I allows Tokelau to divert funds, normally used to purchase fossil fuel, to addressing other key development priorities under the Tokelau National Strategic Plan 2010-2015.

In about 3 weeks from today I will also be presenting Tokelau's Statement to the Special Committee in New York. On that, the first and most important point to make is that Tokelau is aware of its inalienable right to self-determination. As members of this Seminar are aware, Tokelau carried out a referendum in 2006 and also in 2007 to explore the option of self determination in Free Association with the Government of New Zealand. Tokelau has been enriched through the two Referenda and certainly as a consequence of the processes of self determination. Our people are now more aware of the issues of self government and self reliance.

Mr Chairman and members of the Seminar, in conclusion I would like to formally record our heartfelt thanks and continuing gratitude to the people of New Zealand for their support to Tokelau as it deals with current issues and looks with optimism to its future. We also like to thank you Mr Chairman and the Secretariat for organising this Seminar. Please accept our sincere gratitude. Mr Chairman, as you are aware, Tokelau seeks your indulgence for my delegation to leave the Seminar early in time to travel to Tokelau by ship for its Parliamentary Budget Session.

I thank you once again for the opportunity given to Tokelau to address this Seminar on Tokelau's current realities and prospects for the eradication of colonialism in our time.

I wish you all the best in the deliberations and a safe journey as you return to your homes.

Fakafetai lahi lele!