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THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for
the Eradication of Colonialism: accelerating action

Denarau, Nadi, Fiji
21 to 23 May 2014

STATEMENT BY

MR. KURESHA NASAU

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**

'ACCELERATING ACTION'

**STATEMENT BY ALIKI FAIPULE KURESA NASAU
ULU O TOKELAU
(TITULAR HEAD OF TOKELAU)**

**Pacific Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the Third International Decade
for the Eradication of Colonialism: accelerating action**

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21-23 MAY 2014

- Mr. Chairman - Your Excellency Ambassador Xavier Lasso Mendoza 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 contribution to this Seminar focusing on accelerating action on the eradication of colonialism under this 3rd decade initiative.

In the first instance I acknowledge the Almighty Father for His guidance and protection. I also wish to convey to this Seminar the good wishes and greetings from Tokelau. I would like to join you Mr. Chairman in acknowledging the support of the Fijian people and the Government of Fiji for their warm hospitality in hosting this important Seminar – Fakafetai lahi lele and vinaka vakalevu!

I would like to support and endorse the statement this morning by the Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji and that of the United Nations Secretary General. The question that I ask myself is how do we give priority to decolonization under the current global geo-political landscape and secondly how can we accelerate the eradication of colonialism during this 3rd decade?

Mr. Chairman, Tokelau's aspiration towards self-determination is very much alive in our islands. My aim today is not to talk too much about Tokelau's situation and its formal position as I intend to do this in New York next month but today I would like to seek views of this Seminar on how we accelerate our consolidated efforts towards the eradication of decolonization. What do we actually mean and are we talking about the same details?

We are all aware of Tokelau's position following the referendum in 2006 and 2007 in regard to the question on self-determination. Both referenda failed to reach the vote that would successfully get Tokelau self-determined in free association with the Government of NZ. In 2008, both Tokelau and New Zealand, as constitutional partners agreed to defer the question of another referendum for Tokelau until such time that Tokelau was ready – we agreed that being ready meant a reasonable quality of life for our people.

Let me be clear, that Tokelau is aware of this inalienable right of its people and this continues to be respected by the Government of New Zealand.

How can Tokelau accelerate its action for the eradication of decolonization? Following my recent consultations with our communities this month, it was clear that we cannot separate discussion of improving the quality of lives for our people and sustainability of our small population with the important question of

decolonization. It is evident that the improvement of our way of life and the sustainability of our land is a pre-requisite before a question of another referendum can be put forward. This, to me is becoming quite visible. I believe that the distinguished representative of Russia made an intervention on this point but I believe each situation should be encouraged and nurtured on a case-by-case basis.

So the question is what is the role of the Special Committee, the Administering Powers, Territorial Governments and other stakeholders if the landscape is put forward that the issues of improving the quality of lives for our people is becoming more visible as a pre-requisite before the question on an act for self-determination is put forward.

For Tokelau and New Zealand, we are working on several programs to address challenges of our isolation, vulnerability and sustainability through development in education, health, transport, telecommunication and infrastructure. Key to our development is the capacity and capability of our people to bring our people to meet and address the needs of a contemporary Tokelau.

Mr Chairman, it is important that if we deepen any acceleration efforts than the territories and administering authority should be supported by the Special Committee. The pressures of globalization will demand a new and fresh approach as eloquently conveyed by the Secretary General. Tokelau and New Zealand have been used as an illustration for an exemplary relationship between an administering power and a territory. Tokelau is proud of its relationship with New Zealand. Like any relationship, we have challenges, but we are adamant that we are the main partners and we will work together under a Principles of Partnership arrangement.

Tokelau is keen to ensure that we have infrastructural platform for sustainable development. New Zealand remains the first call for our development aspirations. While this will not change, we are aware that our development needs and priorities grow tremendously. To this regard, we seek more support from states and the UN family for their support not necessarily on financial support but moral support that we are part of development discussions as we address issues such as sustainable development goals beyond 2015, addressing the impacts of climate change, and the protection of our environment and oceans.

Mr. Chairman, Tokelau has also received significant support from UNDP as well, especially for its village and community development projects. 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. 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. Tokelau's self-determination cannot be addressed in isolation to the threat of climate change.

Finally, Mr. Chairman I would like to encourage your good-self and also this Decolonization Committee. I understand that there are unprecedented pressure on the Committee, but let me encourage you that your work and vigilance has been fruitful and a beacon of hope for this journey. The Committee's support has continued to keep alive and give priority to the issue of decolonization.

Mr. Chairman I thank you once again for the opportunity given to Tokelau to address this Seminar and I wish you all the best in the deliberations.

Fakafetai lahi lele & Vinaka!

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RESPONSE BY

MR. KURESHA NASAU

ULU O TOKELAU

Tokelau's Intervention on Measuring Quality of Life

Thank you Mr Chairman for the opportunity to respond to the question by the distinguished delegate from Cuba yesterday. I would also like to join others in thanking the Government of Fiji for hosting a very warm function last night.

I mentioned in my comments yesterday that in 2008, Tokelau and New Zealand agreed to park the question on another referendum and focus on improving the quality of life for our people. This decision in 2008 was reached following the referenda in 2006 and 2007 which were not successful in Tokelau achieving an act of self-determination in free association with NZ.

Tokelau commenced work on planning for the "improvement on the quality of life for our communities" which culminated in a first ever consolidated strategic plan for Tokelau for 2010-2015. The vision for this Strategic Plan is for healthy and active communities with opportunities for all.

Tokelau's National Strategic Plan focuses on 4 pillars to achieve its vision: (1) Good Governance, (2) Infrastructure Development, (3) Human Development and (4) Sustainable Development. The Government of New Zealand actively endorses our Strategic Plan through the Joint Commitment for Development it has signed with Tokelau that focuses priorities specifically to agreed identified key areas of development.

By the end of 2013 we had achieved about 60% of the outcomes under our national strategic plan. Tokelau will review its progress against our current Plan to determine priorities beyond 2015 and include in this the issue of self-determination and how it would address a possible referendum on its self-determination. It could be that the TNSP beyond 2015 will include some indication of the direction for Tokelau in regard to the question of a next referendum.

I am sure that the Government of New Zealand may wish to add further and I thank you again Mr Chairman for the opportunity.

Fakafetai.