

Distr. RESTRICTED
PRS/2014/CRP.15

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND



TOKELAU

**Statement by Nicola Ngawati
Senior Policy Officer
Office of the Administrator of Tokelau
Special Relations Unit
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade
Wellington, New Zealand**

**Pacific Regional Seminar on the implementation of the 3rd International Decade for the Eradication
of Colonialism: accelerating action.**

**NADI, FIJI
21-23 May, 2014**

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellency Ambassador Mr Xavier Lasso Mendoza Rapporteur and distinguished Members of this Seminar, Ulu of Tokelau Alikai Faipule Kuresa Nasau.

On behalf of New Zealand, in its capacity as administering power for Tokelau, I have the honour to participate in this Seminar.

New Zealand expresses its gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Fiji for hosting this valuable seminar – we are very pleased that it is being hosted in the Pacific given the number of important issues on the Council's agenda that are currently taking place on the Council..

We are pleased to have the opportunity to hear about the spectrum of challenges being faced on the decolonisation agenda, which in the last year has achieved particular prominence, particularly in our region and present New Zealand's views on the question of Tokelau.

New Zealand continues to welcome the interest of the UN and the C24 in Tokelau. New Zealand particularly appreciates the close partnership we maintain with the Committee through its Pacific members, Papua New Guinea and Fiji.

We appreciate the opportunity to address this seminar on the Implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: accelerating action.

Mr Chairman, my presentation will focus on updating the Committee on the current position of New Zealand in terms of our perspective as an administering power. Taking into account Tokelau's unique status as a non self-governing territory of New Zealand and part of the Realm of New Zealand (which also includes Niue and the Cook Islands which are both countries with self-government in free association with NZ).

From the New Zealand perspective, we continue to work very closely with the Tokelau leadership and her people. This has been particularly important following the January elections in Tokelau and the inauguration of the current Ulu who is here with us today – Faipule Kuresa Nasau.

Overall we would characterise our relationship with Tokelau as in a very positive space. The Administrator has just returned from a visit to Tokelau where he held useful consultations with the new Council and village leaders on all three atolls. Recently the Administrator joined the Ulu at successful meetings with New Zealand's Governor General and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The strength of the relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand was reaffirmed. The relationship has been strong for nearly 90 years. In 100 years we expect to remain Tokelau's principal and enduring partner.

The challenges Tokelau continues to face, which flow from its extreme geographic isolation and small population (1411 at the last census), remain and will continue to be a factor that shapes our interaction with Tokelau and her people.

Despite these challenges, as Tokelau's constitutional partner, New Zealand has an important role in the government of Tokelau and the delivery of services to her people. We have resources which must continue to be made available to Tokelau. We are committed to working with Tokelau to ensure that every decision made makes a positive difference.

Our particular focus is around the provision of education to the next generation and health care. This continues to pose challenges with such a small population base, skill shortages and a relative lack of resources. In the midst of these challenges, however, there have been positives that I wish to highlight.

Shipping has been a key area of focus for both Tokelau and New Zealand over recent years. At the regional seminar last year in Ecuador, we announced that New Zealand achieved a significant step forward in our efforts to secure safe, reliable and efficient transport for Tokelau, when the Administrator of Tokelau signed a \$12m contract for a two year shipping charter service between Apia and Tokelau. I am now pleased to update the Council that construction of a new purpose built ship is under way with delivery expected in early 2015 . The new ferry will provide a comfortable service for 60 passengers as well as essential cargo. It will meet full international safety standards, and is innovative, highly fuel efficient and fit for purpose. The total cost of the ferry is NZ\$12.5m.

In addition, NZ is supporting Tokelau with safe ship to shore infrastructure, including new barges to bring passengers and cargo to shore, and upgrades to wharf areas.

We are pleased that Tokelau recently agreed to undertake a review of transport operations with a view to maximising efficiency, and ensuring value for money services. We have also reached agreement with Tokelau that the technical ship management functions of the new ship will be contracted out. This will ensure the safety of passengers, and longevity of the vessel.

Mr Chairman

Education has been a key focus area of our engagement with Tokelau recently, following the welcome review of education (initiated by Tokelau) of the state of education in Tokelau.

The review highlighted that "significant and urgent action is necessary" to improve the quality of education in Tokelau. New Zealand and Tokelau are working closely together to implement the various recommendations to ensure that Tokelau children receive an appropriate education. This supports our joint vision of healthy and active communities with opportunities for all.

The children of Tokelau are New Zealand citizens. Improved achievement by children will be the focus of our combined efforts. A 5-year work programme to help Tokelau to implement the recommendations has been agreed to achieve the changes required. The programme intends to improve governance and management of schools: increase teacher effectiveness improve literacy and numeracy achievement and improve early childhood education.

The recommendations from the education review have also raised **governance** implications, which we expect will be central to the soon to be completed health review, the review of telecommunications, and a recommended transport review

For us good governance is evidenced by high quality decisions and awareness of the responsibilities held by decision makers. It is evidenced by a willingness of the villages, the public service, and New Zealand, to accept advice, to explore new ways of addressing issues, and to seek solutions. Always working together in partnership.

The upgrade of Tokelau's infrastructure continues to be a major priority. Solar panels were installed on the 3 atolls on Tokelau in 2012 and have enabled approximately 90% of Tokelau's electricity generation to be through renewable resources, thus decreasing its reliance on fossil fuels. In 2013, two new schools and a hospital were completed. These buildings provide a safe and suitable environment for the provision of Tokelau's health & education services.

We are continuing to work closely with Tokelau to ensure **fishing revenues** continue to rise to provide welcome revenue for Tokelau. The Administrator continues to manage Tokelau's Exclusive Economic Zone – in close consultation with Tokelau and as envisaged in the Tokelau Fisheries Policy. Tokelau has recently hosted officials attending the Forum Officials Committee meeting and are expecting to host Ministers from the Pacific region in July.

Mr Chairman

As New Zealand noted in our last statement to the C24 Committee last June, the focus of the relationship between New Zealand and Tokelau since 2008 has been addressing the core requirements of the three atoll populations following the decision by the leaders of Tokelau and New Zealand that there should be an appreciable period of time before Tokelau would undertake any **further act of self-determination**. This decision was made following two self-determination referenda in 2006 and again in 2007 where Tokelau voters signalled that the timing and conditions were not yet right for constitutional change. From New Zealand's point of view, a focus on core services is still a priority before conditions for any future referendum could be seen to be met.

We continue to engage with Tokelau on a wide range of issues on a bilateral basis and on the wider regional and international stage. We

continue to encourage Tokelau engage meaningfully internationally, whilst noting constraints can arise, given Tokelau's constitutional status (where, formally New Zealand is responsible for Tokelau's foreign policy and trade policy) and her limited capacity to service an array of commitments.

Mr Chairman

The **Joint Commitment for Development** signed by New Zealand and Tokelau in 2011 clearly sets out what Tokelau and New Zealand have committed to do over the term of the agreement so as to achieve Tokelau's vision and development for the future.

New Zealand remains committed to the **long term development** of Tokelau. New Zealand will this year provide \$20.3m to Tokelau in the areas of transport; renewable energy; and budget support (which pay for core Government costs including health and education). New Zealand is the largest bilateral donor to Tokelau. It remains a balancing exercise for New Zealand to manage Tokelau's wish for control of some of its affairs and New Zealand's need to ensure that our substantial aid spend in Tokelau is effective and used wisely.

New Zealand takes great pride from its close association with Tokelau, and the challenges of supporting these remote communities of New Zealand citizens. We welcome your interest today and the on-going interest of the Special Committee (C24) in Tokelau.

ends