

Distr. RESTRICTED

CRS/2017/CRP.21

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

**Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: the future for decolonization in
the Non Self-Governing Territories: what are the prospects?**

**Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
16 to 18 May 2017**

STATEMENT BY

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ALGERIA

Mister Chairman,

The Algerian delegation is pleased to see you presiding over the work of our current session, which is focused on the implementation of the Declaration of Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Your personal and professional qualities, as well as your commitment to the values and principles that are the hallmark of our committee are worthy of special note.

Furthermore, you are the Representative of a friendly country which has a distinguished record with respect to its longstanding support for the struggles of peoples for self-determination, and its commitment to just causes.

I would like in this context to extend to you, very best wishes of success in fulfilling your duties as chair and assure you of the full cooperation of the Algerian delegation.

May I also take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to the government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for hosting this Seminar and for the warm friendship and hospitality extended to the participants and the valuable efforts put into ensuring the success of this Seminar.

Mister Chairman,

Since its creation, the Special Committee has been positively and efficiently accompanying the long process of emancipation of the colonial peoples and their search for independence and sovereignty.

Based on the relevant provisions of resolution 1514, our Committee managed, whenever needed, to find the necessary energy and resources to implement the various processes of accession to independence.

My country, whose struggle for liberation and independence was crowned by a political process of self-determination which allowed the Algerian people to take full control of their destiny, is completely aware of the importance attached to the Committee's work and its noble mission in the cause of freedom for and emancipation of peoples under colonial rule.

That said, Algeria is totally aware of the necessity for the entire international community to continue its multifaceted support for and assistance to the C24, to allow it to achieve its historical mission of eradicating the last colonies in the world in accordance with the objectives established in resolution 1514 (XV).

Mister Chairman,

While the third Decade on Decolonization is fully underway, this Seminar offers us an opportunity to assess, through our deliberations, the extent of the progress thus far achieved on the path towards the total elimination of colonialism, as well as to better understand and consider the situation of each of the territories still on the Committee's list

and identify the remaining steps needed for the achievement of the objectives we have set on this path.

In this context, some peoples have managed, during the recent period, to benefit from the support of the Committee in acceding to full sovereignty. This is the case, for example, for the Republic of Timor Leste which acceded to independence through the implementation of resolution 1514 (XV) of the General Assembly.

Other peoples still under colonial rule and foreign occupation are still waiting the for the International Community to live up to its responsibility and lend them the necessary decisive support to allow them exercise their right to self-determination.

Such is the case of the people of Western Sahara whose cause was inscribed on the United Nations agenda the same year as Timor Leste, and which has, since then, been the focus of the efforts by the United Nations.

Mister Chairman,

As you are aware, the international Community has been seized, for more than half a century, with the question of Western Sahara. Indeed, although the territory of Western Sahara has been inscribed, since 1963, on the list of the Non Self Governing Territories, its people continues, unfortunately, to suffer the devastating consequences of the occupation and face injustice, deprivation and denial of their basic rights, reducing to living in poverty in their own land or obliged to take the path of asylum.

The armed struggle entered into by the Sahrawi people for their independence, under the leadership of the Frente Polisario, has obliged Morocco to accept a Settlement Plan providing for a cease-fire, confidence building measures including exchange of prisoners and ultimately the holding of a referendum for self-determination under the auspices of the United Nations. All that with the clear understanding that the implementation the Settlement Plan had to be carried out by both the Organization of African Unity (Now the African Union) and the United Nations.

Since its adoption by the Security Council in 1990, the Settlement Plan has suffered continuous attempts aiming at distortion and weakening by the occupying power. Said occupying power has since then used all means available to impede all initiatives of the international community aimed at ensuring a just and lasting settlement and countering such initiatives with unilateral solutions which are by nature biased, fragmented and with no legitimate legal or political basis.

It is therefore a systematic perversion of the settlement process that the international community has been dealing with for more than three decades.

Such an obstructive approach is naturally suicidal since it serves no other propose than to gain time and to be part of a continued attempt to avoid having to deal with reality. It is an

approach devoid of any political vision for the Maghreb region and for the future of its peoples. It has obliged this country to leave the Organization of African Unity, following when the OAU, exasperated by the Moroccan attitude of non-compliance of its obligations under the Settlement Plan contained in resolution AHG 104, recognized the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

I should add at this point, in full disclosure, that Morocco returned to fold of the African continent early this year after having turned its back, for so long and sought re-admission to the African Union after having fully realized the inanity of its approach towards African countries.

Mister Chairman,

Over the years our Committee has continuously provided, through numerous contributions, its valuable support and encouragements to the two parties, to help them achieve a solution through the free exercise by the Sahrawi people of its right to self determination.

In this context, resolution on 2351 adopted by the Security Council on 27 April 2017, confirms the appropriateness of the Committee's position on the need to deliver on, without constraint or delay, the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence as the culmination of the Political settlement process between the two parties to the conflict: Morocco and Frente Polisario.

The Security Council resolution in this context is particularly clear and we would like to praise the unity of the council on this issue as well as the commitment of the Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres who underscored the necessity of the peace process with the main objective of the holding of a referendum of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

Recalling such a commitment is of great importance, to emphasize the primacy of international law of any other consideration, as well as to counter the growing belief that the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara as a non-self-governing territory could be achieved without the holding of a referendum.

I would like to remind the committee, in this connection, of a legal fact of crucial importance from December 2016, at the European Court of Justice which, following a judicial proceeding lodged by the Polisario Front, recalled in a famous judgment:

- that Western Sahara is a separate and distinct territory from Morocco,
- that the association and cooperation agreements signed between the European Union and Morocco applies exclusively to Moroccan territory within its internationally recognized border, excluding therefore Western Sahara.

In this context, we consider it of particular importance that our august Committee should reaffirm, with all its moral and political authority, the validity and relevance of the principle of the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and its expression

through the holding of a sincere, free and credible consultation under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union.

I would like to recall, in this context, Mr. Chairman, the important role of the African Union together with the United Nations, in the implementation of a just and lasting solution to this conflict. Our Pan-African Organization, which has been, since its inception, engaged through commendable initiatives and courageous decisions in this conflict, is determined, in this respect, to make its valuable contribution to the completion of the decolonization of the African continent. It is within this framework that the Peace and Security Council of the African Union has unanimously adopted its decision on 20 March 2017.

Such a position taken by our Committee would enable it, in this respect, to contribute in an effective manner, to the resumption of the process of resolving the conflict of Western Sahara.

In the same vein, and in order to raise the profile of our Committee, the Algerian delegation wishes to lend its full support to the proposal already made, and supported by several members of this Committee, for the dispatching of a mission of the Committee on Decolonization to Western Sahara.

In any event, my country, as an official observer of the settlement process, and as it has always done in the past, will continue to lend its contribution to a just and lasting settlement of the conflict of Western Sahara.

Algeria hopes that the UN Secretary General's call for an effective resumption of the settlement process between Morocco and the Polisario Front will be effectively implemented and that the negotiations will resume on a serious basis.

The Algerian delegation considers that such an initiative will send a strong and clear political signal from our Committee to the two protagonists and beyond, to the entire international community, emphasizing the Committee's faithfulness to its principles and its *raison d'être*, demonstrating its willingness to contribute to the settlement of this conflict, through concrete action.

I THANK YOU