

Welcome Remarks by Hon. C. Peter David
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Labour of Grenada
2018 United Nations C24 Pacific Regional Seminar
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St. George, Grenada

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Delegates,
UN Agencies,
Other distinguished participants,

It is an honour to welcome you to the beautiful tri-island State of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique, and a distinct pleasure for me to address this opening ceremony of the 2018 Pacific Regional Seminar of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization. We are pleased to once again welcome you to the Caribbean following last year's seminar held in our fellow CARICOM sister island, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. We acknowledge the important role played by our fellow GRULAC family members of Ecuador and Nicaragua for hosting such seminars in recent years.

Grenada's commitment is manifested in our dedication to decolonization and to the work of the Special Committee. Indeed, this is the third time that Grenada has hosted the seminar, first at the beginning of the First International Decade in 1992, and again in 2007 during the Second International Decade.

For us in the Caribbean, decolonization of the remaining territories is viewed as unfinished business of the United Nations, and is integral to the successful completion of our regional integration process. We trust that the same sentiment holds true in the Pacific region.

We would recall that the intention of organizing regional seminars was to provide a regional perspective on the challenges to decolonization faced by small island Territories.

This year's theme is highly relevant, and we remain convinced that the Seminar could certainly help to influence the future course of the Decolonisation process. It offers hope for finding a negotiated solution for the achievement of self-determination, and re-emphasizes the significance of the implementation of the

Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

Distinguished Delegates,

We in Grenada place great significance on the work of this Committee, having travelled along the path of Decolonisation ourselves. We salute the efforts of all who continue to work diligently in this process and further commend the United Nations for keeping the Eradication of Colonialism high on its Agenda.

The guiding principles enshrined in the UN Charter continue to guide the Decolonisation efforts to achieving self-determination and ensure that the interests of dependent Territories are paramount, and that political, social, economic and educational progress are promoted.

At the start of the decolonisation process, almost a *third of the world's population lived in Non-Self-Governing Territories*. Since then *more than 80 former colonies have gained their independence*. Today, we have 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories

remaining on our agenda. Most of these countries are our sister countries in the Caribbean

We must, therefore, intensify our efforts to continue to actively support and participate in the work of the Special Committee.

Grenada remains cognizant of the vulnerabilities that Non-Self-Governing Territories face. Many Territories remain subject to the unilateral imposition of policies which could have deleterious effects on their sustainable development aspirations and seriously impede the capacity of such Territories to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Vulnerability to natural disasters, and in particular, the effects of increasingly violent hurricanes and cyclones as a result of climate change, is a challenge that Small island Non-Self-Governing Territories share with other Caribbean and Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS). We recall Hurricanes Irma and Maria wreaking havoc in the Caribbean last September only days apart with unprecedented force, causing 'apocalyptic' devastation on colleague committee members: Antigua and Barbuda, Cuba and Dominica.

Several Non-Self-Governing Territories were not spared the ravages of these two record storms. The Territories of Anguilla, the British and U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Turks and Caicos Islands were also left with unprecedented levels of destruction. These hurricanes did not discriminate on the basis of countries' level of political status.

Distinguished Delegates,

We must continue to bear in mind that on the issue of contemporary decolonization, the international community can, and must, do better. But these issues can only be resolved through the concerted implementation of the extensive mandate that United Nations member states have adopted.

I challenge you at this session to focus considerable attention on ways to stimulate the United Nations system to intensify its work in decolonization, and to implement the programmes already approved for that purpose.

I leave with you these few thoughts as you continue your discussions in seeking genuine and lasting solutions to the issues at hand.

I hope that you will find time in your busy agenda to indulge and enjoy the warmth, charm and hospitality of our people, and the beauty of the 'Isle of Spice,' Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. **Pure Grenada.**

I Thank you.