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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: towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: social, economic and environmental challenges**

**Saint George's, Grenada  
9 to 11 May 2018**

**STATEMENT BY**

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(TITULAR HEAD OF TOKELAU)**

**(ISSUED BUT NOT DELIVERED)**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM: COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS FOR DECOLONIZATION IN THE NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES**

***“A TOKELAU PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES: SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES”***

Chairman –  
Distinguished Members of this Seminar  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr Chair,

I give thanks and praise to God for his continuous protection, guidance and provisions that has brought us to this day.

Through you Sir, I convey to this Seminar well and warm wishes of the Government, Elders and the people of Tokelau - *Malo Ni!*

Firstly, please accept my apology for not being with you in person due to other pressing Government priorities. In the first week of May, Tokelau hosted a UN Agencies Mission to the Villages to meet the Taupulega (Village Councils) and Communities. On 8<sup>th</sup> May I will travel with the newly appointed Administrator of Tokelau, Mr Ross Arden to meet the three Taupulega for the first time in his capacity as the Administrator of Tokelau. I would also acknowledge here the Administering Power, the Government of New Zealand.

Secondly, thank you for the opportunity to present a Tokelau perspective on the issues of the Seminar.

Mr Chair, the theme of the seminar is timely and very relevant for non-self-governing territories as it highlights the importance of access to natural resources. I find the theme particularly important for Tokelau because environmental independence is needed in order for us to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Non-self-governing territories continue to face challenges in achieving those goals without accessing climate resources and it is now timely that the UN actively come up with solutions to address these constraints.

Tokelau is a Non-Self-Governing Territory of New Zealand. There is an expectation from Tokelau and the UN that the needs of Tokelau will be taken care of by the Administering Power. Tokelau over the years continues to report and provide progress reports to the UN Decolonization Committee on Tokelau's development progress and how New Zealand has supported Tokelau.

Tokelau has established its development priorities, setting realistic outcome targets in its Tokelau National Strategic Plan (TNSP) 2016-2020, which prioritizes good governance, human development, infrastructure development, sustainability and climate change. The TNSP determines development and other priorities for the 2016-2020 period. The TNSP also focuses on infrastructure development to support service delivery, including through transport and telecommunications solutions. It will then realign public expenditure to reflect the focus on these priority areas.

In light of the theme for this Seminar, I want to register here today that Tokelau has continued to highlight that, as a non-self-governing territory, there are major constraints that prevents Tokelau from accessing global environment funds which could greatly assist Tokelau in successfully implementing the Sustainable Development Goals particularly with the ongoing social, economic and environmental challenges.

Tokelau has continued to face major constraints on its economic growth and there are many contributing factors. Tokelau is small in size, isolation of each of the atolls both from each other and neighbouring countries; and limited natural resources. In addition, global issues such as climate change now hinder our effort to address the Sustainable Development Goals. The issue of Climate Change is a sensitive one for Tokelau and we continue to call on the UN Agencies to actively support Tokelau's distinct voice separate from the support from New Zealand especially in order to recognize Tokelau's voice and its sovereignty right as a people.

Tokelau has always been forthright on this issue in the past and we will continue to be so. The effects of climate change and sea level rising threaten the livelihood of everyone on Tokelau. As tiny atolls in the Pacific, the impacts of climate change and rising sea levels have encroached onto our land masses, eroding our beaches and contaminating our stores of water. Climate Change impacts have also affected our food security, with the quantity and type of seafood available in and around the atolls.

Our efforts to access funding from the climate change adaptation programme have been thwarted due to our status as a territory of New Zealand. I am grateful for the support of New Zealand for its efforts to help Tokelau secure funding from global climate change funds. However, there are still limitations for Tokelau and I would like to request the Committee to give support to Tokelau in its attempts to secure funding for its climate change adaptation programme in its own right. Climate Change does not discriminate – regardless of political status; our atolls remain at the frontline of the impacts of climate change.

We thank UNDP for its financial support that has allowed Tokelau to progress its work in building and repairing our seawall structures and recently keyhole gardens. We also acknowledges the support of FAO to build resilience through climate change adaptation projects such as replanting of native trees to stop soil erosions and provision of safety fishing gears to enable our fishermen to fish beyond the reefs and lagoons to allow conservations and sustainability of our depleted coastal marine resources. In the recent UN Agencies mission to Tokelau last May, there are new climate change projects specifically for waste management with the aim to produce biogas to supplement cooking for households.

Tokelau is committed to the issue of climate change and sea level rising. Tokelau remains committed to raising awareness and taking practical mitigating and adaptive measures not only

to protect our vulnerable atolls but also to protect everything that is Tokelauan – our language, our culture and traditions.

As a collection of low-lying atolls, highly prone to cyclones, Tokelau's development efforts will have a higher degree of sustainability if good governance, human resource development and sound infrastructure support its villages. These are the priority outcome areas, which Tokelau has identified in its TNSP to focus on good governance (inclusive of structures, systems and human developments), communications and infrastructures over the next five years. Our activities in the villages and across our nation are targeted towards these.

I will briefly outline some of the development in Tokelau to ensure that we all contribute to the common goal and vision that Tokelau is a "healthy and a vibrant living community with equal opportunities for all" not withstanding the ongoing social, economic and environmental challenges.

Mr Chair,

Tokelau continues its efforts to successfully implement the Sustainable Development Goals by enhancing its infrastructures, transportation systems and having robust governance institutions and public services to ensure that Tokelau continues to be a viable and living community now and in the future. Tokelau will continue to look to the UN for its independent role and support with regard to the implementation of the second international decade for the eradication of colonialism especially in light of the theme for this Seminar.

In conclusion, I thank this Seminar for its commitment to support small non-self-governing territories like Tokelau to continue on in its journey towards self determination and exploring innovative ways to open windows for territories to access global climate and environment funds. Enabling this will provide assistance to non-self-governing territories to implement sustainable development goals while addressing social, economic and environmental challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity for Tokelau to provide a perspective to the Seminar. I hope that the update from Tokelau gives the Committee an insight into the practical issues we are grappling with and how the leaders of our small nation are addressing them in its journey towards self-determination. I look forward to strong and realistic outcomes, as these will pave the way forward for the upcoming UN C24 meeting in June.

May the Almighty God bless you all in your work and guide your deliberations accordingly.

Ke Ola Pea ia Tokelau.

Fakafetai