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**FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM**

**Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: charting a dynamic course for decolonization in commencing the Fourth International Decade and in the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, through commitment to mandate, collaboration, pragmatism and agility**

**Parish of St. John, Dominica  
25 to 27 August 2021**

**OPENING STATEMENT BY  
THE CHAIR OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF 24**

**Special Committee on the Situation with regard  
to the Implementation of the Declaration on the  
Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries  
and Peoples**

Caribbean regional seminar 2021

**Elements for a substantive opening statement**

by

**Her Excellency Ms. Keisha McGuire**

**Chair of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the  
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial  
Countries and Peoples**

Dominica, 25 August 2021

Honourable Minister,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to open the 2021 Caribbean regional seminar today here in the Commonwealth of Dominica. On behalf of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24), I would like to again express our sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica for hosting this important annual event of the C-24. The Commonwealth of Dominica has been a dedicated member of the Special Committee since its joining in 2004. This seminar was originally scheduled to be held in May in commemorating the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that the world continues to face, however, it needed to be postponed. We gather, today, thanks to Dominica's generosity and its unwavering support to the cause of decolonization.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Government of Indonesia which kindly offered to host the 2020 Pacific regional seminar in Bali. It was truly unfortunate that the situation did not allow us to convene the regional seminar last year.

This year's seminar takes place against the background of the start of the Fourth International Decade for Eradication of Colonialism. We also meet after the successful conclusion of the 2021 substantive session of the C-24 held in-person at UN headquarters in New York in June. To highlight some of the achievements of this 2021 session:

- First, at the substantive session, the C-24 managed to resume to hear directly from the Non-Self-Governing Territories, administering Powers and other stakeholders as well as Member States.
- Second, the C-24 ensured to take into account the discussions on the Territories in the text of the resolutions by convening negotiations after the discussions and adopting the resolutions at a later stage. This implementation was delayed the 2020 substantive session could not be held, due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, I am happy to report this new working method of the Committee.
- Furthermore, the C-24 kept its tradition to adopt all its decisions and resolutions by consensus. Consensus building is an important working method that the Committee continues to strive for.

All the above reaffirm the Committee's commitment to its mandate, collaboration, pragmatism and agility, which are also part of this seminar's theme. Indeed, this year we aim to focus our discussions on charting a dynamic course for decolonization in the commencement of the Fourth International Decade and in light of COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic still persists globally and continues to devastate, claiming more than 4 million lives. Non-Self-Governing Territories are not immune to it. Rather they have been affected significantly. Many island Territories rely on tourism as their main economic drive. This pandemic has already impacted on the Territories' immediate economy and the long-term effects need to be addressed as the world economy faces a slow recovery.

The COVID-19 infection rate of the Non-Self-Governing Territories varies. Although a handful of Territories have been saved due to their geographical remoteness and maintain zero cases, many others suffer from infection cases and deaths among the populations. Many introduced strict travel restrictions and border closures. Some degree of restrictive measures remain in place in the Territories as sanitary requirements, while vaccines are being administered. Notable in this context is the administering Powers' cooperation with relevant authorities of the Territories in order to expeditiously distribute COVID-19 vaccines.

The Territories' fight against the pandemic continues. Their journey for recovery needs to be supported. This seminar is another vital opportunity for the C-24 to look at each Territory's situation in the context of decolonization, taking the COVID-19 pandemic into consideration.

Today I am delighted to see among us, despite the travel constraints relating to the pandemic, a number of participants from the Non-Self-Governing Territories, that is, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, French Polynesia, Gibraltar and Western Sahara as well as experts and Member States, including the administering Powers. The Special Committee is here to listen to all your views. Your voices are a critical component of the C-24 to advance the decolonization agenda.

Exactly 60 years ago, in 1961, the General Assembly established the C-24. Ever since, the C-24 has served as the lighthouse for Non-Self-Governing Territories in their decolonization journey, helping the Territories to find their own way to shore.

I look forward to a frank exchange of views in the next three days.

I thank you.