

**Distr. RESTRICTED**

**CRS/2021/DP.1**

**ORIGINAL: ENGLISH**

**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**

**DISCUSSION PAPER**

**PRESENTATION**

**BY**

**MR. HERVE RAIMANA LALLEMANT-MOE**

## 2021 regional seminar

### **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, 25-27 August 2021*

*Presentation by Mr. Hervé Raimana Lallemant-Moe*

Freeing the pathway to decolonization with pragmatism and agility in a global pandemic context: the case of French Polynesia

*Madame Chair, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,*

*To tātou pā'āto'a, 'ia ora na! A māuruuru i te fārereira'a!*

*Good day everyone and thank you for the honor of inviting me, here in this beautiful island of Dominica.*

Let me begin by describing the pandemic situation in my country. The present situation is grim in French Polynesia with today more than 300 casualties and almost 40 000 covid-19 cases since 2020... It is maybe more than all of the other NSGTs combined in the Pacific.

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013, by the General Assembly resolution 67/265, French Polynesia was re-inscribed as a Non-Self-Governing Territory as one of the 17 listed remaining on the agenda of the C-24 under the Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations.

We can easily summarize the situation of French Polynesia toward the decolonization process in a few sentences:

First, the current French Polynesian government and elected institutions wants to be removed from the NSGTs list,

Second point, the French Polynesian opposition wishes for the United Nations' help to influence the administering Power into accepting the basis of a self-determination process,

Lastly, France, the administering Power, refuses to participate in this debate.

Since 2013, this *status quo* did not evolve whatsoever, and we need to find new pragmatic and agile solutions to move forward from this stationary situation.

French Polynesia is one of the most autonomous territories within the French Republic unitary system. However, in international law, this legal framework is more understood as the peak of a self-administration system but not a total self-governing autonomy.

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis emphasized jurisdictions and legal complexity between the French State and the local government of French Polynesia.

It revealed quite rapidly a shifting of control in favor of the French State and French Polynesia's full administrative autonomy appeared to recede in the context of preventing the coronavirus disease to spread.

With a local government largely legitimized by the last elections for the French Polynesian Assembly but opposed to the presence of French Polynesia on the NSGTs list, we must find pragmatic and agile solutions to not deny the democratic choices made in this territory by Polynesian people, **but also** preserve the C-24 mandate to uphold the United Nations Charter principles. Likewise, the issues highlighted by the Polynesian political opposition must not

be forgotten (nuclear testing compensation, self-determination process, natural resources sovereignty, etc.).

For many NSGTs, a solution may be summarized by a strange sentence: “more integration for more decolonization.”

Or to put it more simply: strengthening the autonomy of NSGTs inside the legal framework of administering Powers.

If we recognize French Polynesia as a special territory directly inside the French Constitution, the administrative autonomy will be able to progress to a political autonomy, mainly because of the legal protection gained by this process.

New legal tools would potentially be available (like territory’s jurisdictions full protection, new legislative system, self-determination process, etc.), but only applied if the democratically elected local assembly and government want to use it.

Although at this time, there is no apparent inclination from French Polynesia and France to substantially modify the French Polynesian’s legal status, and subsequently change the French Constitution for that intent, United Nations and C-24 can be pivotal actors in this issue.

They can accompany the aforementioned NSGT and administering Power toward this specific goal, especially in clarifying the notion of “decolonization” that can be the source of divisive interpretations, regardless of political orientations.

At first, to strive for a more autonomous – thus decolonized – French Polynesia within the French Republic (or for other NSGTs in the same situation), would be

a more constructive approach, than the present situation: A stalemate that is sadly profitable for nobody.

New Caledonia's third referendum regarding its self-determination is scheduled for December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Regardless of the referendum's results, the French Constitution will need to be modified.

This New-Caledonian agenda may create a small opening for French Polynesia to be recognized as a singular entity within the French Constitution, and create a "one for all" solution that will hopefully satisfy all the Polynesians involved in this international process, as well as the United Nations, the French State and create a constructive pathway for other NSGTs.

*Māuruuru roa! Te aroha ia rahi!*

*Thank you very much and bless you.*