

Annex**Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: “Midterm review, follow-up and priorities for action”, held in Canouan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, from 17 to 19 May 2005****Contents**

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I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/146 of 8 December 2000, declaring the period 2001-2010 the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and called upon Member States to redouble their efforts to implement the plan of action contained in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General dated 13 December 1991 (A/46/634/Rev.1 and Corr.1), updated where necessary, to serve as the plan of action for the Second Decade. The report of the Secretary-General on the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (A/56/61) contains an updated plan of action.

2. In its resolution 59/136 of 10 December 2004, the General Assembly approved the report of the Special Committee, which, *inter alia*, called for the holding of a seminar in the Caribbean region in 2005, to be organized by the Special Committee.

3. As stated in the guidelines and rules of procedure for the seminar (A/AC.109/2005/1), the purpose of the seminar is to carry out a midterm review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the plan of action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, in order to define priorities for follow-up and intensified action in the remaining years of the Decade. The seminar will also assess the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories,^b in particular their constitutional evolution towards self-government and self-determination, with a view to developing, in cooperation with the administering Powers and the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, a constructive programme of work on a case-by-case basis for the decolonization of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The seminar will also identify areas in which the United Nations system and the international community at large could enhance programmes of assistance to the Territories within an integral framework ensuring the political and sustainable socio-economic development of the Territories concerned.

4. The topics considered by the seminar will assist the Special Committee in making a realistic evaluation of the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The seminar gave pre-eminence to a broad range of views of the peoples of those Territories. It also sought to secure the participation of organizations and institutions that are actively involved in the political, economic and social development of those Territories.

5. The contributions of the participants served as a basis for the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar, which will be carefully studied by the Special Committee with a view to submitting proposals to the General Assembly concerning the fulfilment of the objectives of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

II. Organization of the seminar

6. The seminar was held in Canouan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, from 17 to 19 May 2005.

7. The seminar held six meetings, in which representatives of States Members of the United Nations, Non-Self-Governing Territories, administering Powers, non-governmental, regional and other organizations and experts took part. The list of participants is given in appendix I. The seminar was organized to encourage an open and frank exchange of views.

8. The seminar was conducted by Julian Robert Hunte, Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia to the United Nations and Chairman of the Special Committee, with the participation of the following members of the Special Committee: China, the Congo, Cuba, Dominica, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (host country) and Tunisia. France, an administering Power, participated in the seminar as observer. Algeria, Argentina, Morocco and Spain also participated.

9. At the 1st meeting, on 17 May 2005, the following members of the Special Committee were appointed Vice-Chairmen of the seminar: Crispin Gregoire (Dominica), Birhanemeskel Abebe (Ethiopia), and Albert Sitnikov (Russian Federation). Orlando Requeijo Gual (Cuba) was appointed Rapporteur of the seminar and Chairman of the Drafting Group which was composed of the representatives of all members of the Special Committee attending the seminar: China, Congo, Cuba, Dominica, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.

10. The agenda of the seminar was as follows:

1. Strategies for the successful completion of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:

(a) Midterm assessment of the level of implementation of the plan of action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism;

(b) Assessment of progress in individual Non-Self-Governing Territories in the process of achieving sustainable political and economic development:

(i) By the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(ii) By the administering Powers;

(c) Decolonization and the political status options, including independence, integration or free association, in relation to the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories and Bermuda:

(i) General overview and implications of each option;

(ii) Perspective of the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(iii) Perspective of the administering Powers;

(d) Participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories in organizations, assistance programmes and activities of the United Nations system.

2. Priority action to speed up the implementation of the decolonization mandate in the remaining years of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:

(a) Action by the administering Powers and the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories:

(i) Developing on a case-by-case basis work plans for the completion of decolonization in the remaining Territories, in cooperation with the Special Committee;

(ii) Ensuring, in cooperation with the Special Committee and the wider United Nations system, that the Non-Self-Governing Territories under their

administration are prepared to make an educated choice regarding constitutional status in order to finalize the decolonization process;

(iii) Adopting measures needed to promote political, economic, cultural and educational advancement in the Territories;

(iv) Facilitating participation of the Territories in organizations, assistance programmes and activities of the United Nations system;

(v) Ensuring ownership by the Territories of their natural resources pursuant to General Assembly resolutions, and protection of the environment in Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(b) Action by the Special Committee:

(i) Strengthening dialogue with the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories, with a view to developing on a case-by-case basis work plans for the completion of the decolonization process in individual Territories;

(ii) Developing a programme of coordination with the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, and international and regional organizations, to examine and review conditions in each Territory so as to take appropriate measures to accelerate progress in the economic and social sectors of the Territories;

(c) Action by the United Nations system:

(i) Promoting participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in organizations, projects and programmes of the United Nations system within the scope of the respective charters;

(ii) Intensifying dissemination of information on the situation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and decolonization issues through the United Nations web site, radio, publications, photo exhibits and coverage of Special Committee activities;

(iii) Measures to promote the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on decolonization;

(iv) Developing political education programmes, in consultation with the Territories and the administering Powers, to foster an awareness among the people of the legitimate political status options available to them in the exercise of their right to self-determination, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 and 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960.

III. Conduct of the seminar

A. Proceedings of the seminar

11. On 17 May, Julian Robert Hunte (Saint Lucia) opened the seminar in his capacity as its Chairman.

12. The Honourable Michael Browne, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, addressed the seminar. His statement is reproduced in appendix II.

13. At the same meeting, the Chairman of the Special Committee made an opening statement (see appendix III).

14. At the same meeting, Maria Maldonado, Chief of Decolonization Unit, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, read out a message from the Secretary-General (see appendix IV).

15. At the same meeting, on the proposal of the Chairman, the members of the Special Committee attending the seminar decided to annex the statement of the Rapporteur of the Committee to the present report (see appendix V).

16. On 20 May, at the sixth meeting, the Chairman made a concluding statement.

17. At the same meeting, the participants adopted by acclamation a resolution expressing appreciation to the Government and the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (see appendix VI).

B. Summary of statements and discussions

Member States

18. The representative of Algeria stated that since 1965, the General Assembly had repeatedly called for the decolonization of Western Sahara, while confirming the inalienable right of the Saharawi people to self-determination. The people of Western Sahara had shown their confidence in the United Nations by accepting a referendum and settlement plan. Morocco had also accepted the plan but it had prevented the holding of a referendum for self-determination. The Security Council invited the two parties — Morocco and the Frente Polisario — to continue to overcome the problems facing the implementation of the Settlement Plan and to explore other solutions with a view to resolving their differences. In 2003, responding to a Security Council request for finding a solution, the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Mr. Baker, presented a Peace Plan for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara which envisaged that after 4 years of Saharawi administration under Moroccan sovereignty the people of the Territory, including Moroccan inhabitants, would choose among the options of independence, integration or continuation of autonomy under Morocco. The plan was supported by the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Frente Polisario accepted the plan, despite concerns about the fate of the Settlement Plan, but Morocco rejected it in April 2004. Since then, the Security Council, while making reference to the Baker plan, has continued to call for a mutually acceptable solution that would provide self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

19. The representative of Argentina stated that decolonization and self-determination were not synonyms. Self-determination should not be applicable in the case of any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country. Quoting General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), he pointed out that on the question of the Malvinas (Falkland Islands), self-determination had been ruled out due to the fact that the inhabitants of the Territory could not be distinguished from the occupying power, as they were descendants of the population illegally transplanted there by the United Kingdom. This was understood by the Special Committee and the General Assembly through resolution 2065 (XX), in which it recognized a dispute between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom over sovereignty of the Malvinas (Falkland Islands) and invited

both Governments to negotiate a peaceful solution, taking into consideration the objectives of the Charter, resolution 1514 (XV) and the interests of the inhabitants of the Islands. The representative of Argentina said that the Special Committee should continue to encourage the resumption of the negotiations between the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom in order to find a solution to the question in accordance with the recent resolutions and decisions of the United Nations.

20. The representative of the Congo stated that the dissemination of information among the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories regarding their rights to self-determination was a crucial part of the decolonization process. Only the people who were well-informed could make the right choice and avoid being “abused”. The special Committee should continue to bring attention to the responsibilities of the administering Powers, engaging them in a constructive dialogue with a view to implementing the mandate of the General Assembly. The active participation and engagement of the administering Powers was crucial in this process. The Special Committee should systematically review on an annual basis the implementation of the specific recommendations on decolonization and take into account the accurate needs expressed during this seminar by the representatives of the Non-Self Governing Territories.

21. The representative of Morocco underlined the unique position held by Morocco in the history of colonization as well as in the decolonization process, having been subject to three-fold colonization. Morocco, participated in good faith in the implementation of the Settlement Plan proposed in 1991. However, implementation of the plan was thwarted by obstacles leading to the conclusion by the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy of the inapplicability of the settlement plan and their recommendation for the search of an agreed political solution. This political solution was put forward by the Personal Envoy, Mr. Baker, in his first plan entitled “Draft Framework Agreement” in June 2001. Morocco accepted to engage in negotiations on the basis of this Draft Framework Agreement with the necessary flexibility, in order to settle definitively this regional dispute while the other parties rejected the proposal. Since the Security Council found it impossible to choose between the various options presented to it at that time, Mr. Baker, in January 2003 and without prior consultations, presented to the parties his proposed peace plan in which he tried to combined two irreconcilable approaches, that is, the Settlement Plan of which the failure and inapplicability were duly noted and the Draft Framework Agreement. Morocco’s conception of a political solution is to bring the parties, through dialogue and negotiations, to agree on a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution on the basis of a proposal of autonomy with respect for sovereignty and keeping with the recognition of self-determination as the preferred means of exercising individual and collective rights, and therefore overcome the current impasse and achieve progress towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, particularly in the light of the recent promising developments in the region of Maghreb.

Representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories

22. The representative of American Samoa said that the position of the people of American Samoa had been consistent, with their desire to retain their political status with the United States. They were independent within a federalized system of self-governing States and Territories. American Samoa had made progress on the issue

of self-governance and was in the process of now calling for a constitutional review in 2005. Two issues needed to be clarified before conducting this constitutional convention. A clear definition by the Special Committee of what self determination was, different from what American Samoa was doing, and second, a detailed process of what the Special Committee believed American Samoa needed to do to achieve self-governance different from what they were currently doing.

23. The representative of the British Virgin Islands noted that the islands had a mixed system in its Legislative Council. There were 13 members, 4 of whom were elected at large or territorial-wide and 9 District or Constituent Representatives. The Territory balanced its budget with a surplus and had done so over the last number of years. It received no aid from the United Kingdom in this respect. The 1999 White Paper, "Partnership for Progress", indicated that the United Kingdom wanted freedom for the Territories to run their own affairs to the greatest degree possible. Real progress was being realized, he said through the establishment of the Constitutional Review Commission in February 2004. It consisted of 9 members of varied backgrounds and had 7 specific terms of reference and a general reference to review the overall constitution. The report of the Commission had been submitted in April 2005 and would shortly be debated in their Legislative Council.

24. The representative of Saint Helena asked that the Special Committee, on behalf of the people of Saint Helena take up the following points of concern, with the British Government: the required infrastructure to support the airport project should not be funded from Saint Helena's annual aid programme. If air access was to deliver sustainable economic development, then it was prudent that it continued with its long-awaited programme of refurbishment and update of its present essential services to allow it to survive, cost-effectively. The policy of the Department for International Development of full cost recovery and increase of tariff before project approval was given, had to be addressed so as to encourage people to remain on the island and others to return, he said. The representative of the Territory also noted that the right to nationality should in principle be included in their new constitution, as set forth in Article 15 in the Universal Declaration of Human Right. Saint Helenians had been without a nationality when they were deprived of British citizenship, which was only restored in 2002, and they did not want a recurrence of this. He further noted that the Saint Helena status should not be included in their new constitution as it was not a human right and, therefore, not applicable. Saint Helenians did not need to be protected in this way. Provision for the acquisition of Saint Helena status was contained in the local legislation. Inclusion of the Saint Helena status in the constitution would undermine that law and could create an unsatisfactory situation in the future for Saint Helena.

25. The representative of Turks and Caicos Islands stated that the Turks and Caicos Islands was a British Overseas Territory. As a Government, they were not content with the relationship or constitutional arrangement. They had come into office on a mandate for economic as well as political change. The Constitutional Commission submitted its report over two years ago, and while they had had two meetings with United Kingdom officials on the matter, the talks now seemed stalled. Further, in the talks that had taken place, it did not appear to this government that there was a sincere willingness or effort to negotiate in good faith a new constitutional arrangement that reflected the aspiration of the Turks and Caicos people, as it had been reflected in their vote in the 2002 election and the Constitutional Commission recommendations. The Chief Minister therefore called

upon the Special Committee to use its influence to encourage the Government of the United Kingdom to meet its responsibilities to their territories, which aspired to be decolonized and to assist them in doing so and not tell them, as they had done in the past, to accept the status quo or jump to independence, without offering a parachute. This was a direct violation of human rights and dignity of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands. A reasonable period of full-internal self-governance was the parachute they were seeking, a period to put in place the necessary institutions to ensure the protection of human rights, democratic principles, independence of the judiciary, and good governance, among others, in a new State.

26. The representative of the United States Virgin Islands indicated that the participation of his territory in international organisations was important to capacity building in preparation for the assumption of more autonomy. He outlined the programme of government participation in the United Nations proceedings on decolonization dating back to 1975, and the annual presentation of official statements to the Special Committee and Fourth Committee since the 1980s. He chronicled the role of the United States Virgin Islands as an associate member in the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and in its subsidiary Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, the latter of which the territory served as chairman in 1988-1989, and again in 2004-2005. He presented information on the historical participation of the United States Virgin Islands, and a number of other Non-Self Governing Territories, in the capacity of observers, in United Nations world conferences in the economic and social sphere, beginning with the 1992 Earth Summit and most recently in the 2005 International Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States, as well as in selected special sessions of the General Assembly. He expressed concern that there had been no action on the request contained in the relevant General Assembly resolution calling for the participation of the United States Virgin Islands in the UNESCO Archival Programme, and called for implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and ECOSOC on assistance to the Non-Self Governing Territories.

27. The representative of the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) stated that the decolonization of Western Sahara has not been achieved, despite the efforts carried out by the international community during the last 15 years. Morocco, which invaded the Territory in 1975 in the framework of the illegal agreements she signed with the former colonial power, Spain, had refused to continue the implementation of the Settlement Plan approved by the Security Council in 1990-1991 and had rejected the latest peace plan elaborated by the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, James Baker, which had received strong support of the Council as stated in its resolution 1495 (2003). Morocco's obstruction to the efforts undertaken by the international community constituted a serious challenge to the United Nations credibility and particularly to that of the Special Committee, which, he said in the frame work of its mandate, should reaffirm its interest and responsibilities on the matter. As a question of decolonization, the conflict had to be resolved on the basis of the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council. The current stalemate represented a denial of this essential right and put regional stability and security at risk. Frente Polisario believed that the Committee should send a mission to the Territory. A fresh

assessment of the situation could bring both new momentum to the decolonization process and new hope to the Saharawi people.

United Nations Development Programme

28. The representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stated that UNDP corporately and through its field offices has been consistent in its support of the United Nations decolonization mandate and resolutions with the provision of technical assistance inputs and expertise. In the case of the Caribbean, the Caribbean Non-Self Governing Territories received support for the implementation of in-country policy and public awareness processes. Earlier this year, UNDP Offices in the Caribbean had proposed providing support for a Regional Governance Programme which was seeking to build on and strengthen the robust governance traditions of the Caribbean. UNDP Barbados office would support programming strategies to strengthen participatory democracy and promote greater participation by civil society and all population groups with the introduction of a democratic dialogue programme — using multi-stakeholder dialogue to support governance reforms in Barbados and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

Representatives of the regional organizations

29. The representative of the African Union (AU) stated that the AU fully supported the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the exercise to the right of self-determination and independence by the populations of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The AU also supported the Plan of Action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism which aims at advancing the decolonization process in the Territories. He underscored that the AU was seized of the question of Western Sahara and the issue of its self-determination. The AU emphasized the importance of diplomacy and negotiations in conflict resolution. In concluding, he remarked that efforts should be made to re-examine the bottlenecks in the implementation of the Peace Plan on Western Sahara.

30. The representative of the Organization of American States (OAS) thanked the Special Committee for its invitation to participate in the forum. She observed that the OAS had a long tradition of supporting and promoting democracy and noted that the OAS Charter, signed in 1948, identified the promotion and consolidation of representative democracy as one of the Organization's primary principles. She drew the Committee's attention to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which promotes representative democracy as a necessary condition for the full social, economic and political development of the peoples of the Americas and in this regard commended the Charter as required reading for those who sought to promote, strengthen and preserve democracy and democratic institutions. She noted the proposal of the Chairman of the Special Committee, that the OAS consider the dichotomy between colonization and the principles espoused in the Democratic Charter, and undertook to bring the issue to the attention of her principals.

Experts

31. Experts presented papers dealing with questions and issues proposed by the Special Committee:

(a) An expert from the United States Virgin Islands stated that in assessing the level of implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, he had examined the recommendations of the regional seminars and the resolutions during the first decade in comparison with those of the Second International Decade at midterm. He outlined the recurrent themes which emerged from the recommendations and resolutions in areas as political education, autonomy, legitimate political options, the UN role in the self-determination process and the human rights dimension of self-determination. He also noted the themes of ownership of natural resources by the Territories, participation of the territories in UN programmes, the role of visiting missions, the need for expanded dissemination of information on decolonization, and the lack of implementation of decolonization resolutions including the research requirements contained in the plan of action of the International Decade. He concluded that the achievement of full self-government should be the goal of the UN, rather than the mere adoption of resolutions to that effect, and that unless implementation of the decolonization mandate becomes the priority, the UN may not be able to withstand the pressure of inertia.

(b) An expert from Bermuda said that Independence remained the primary option for the achievement of self-determination by the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Elections and referendums were equally valid means for reflecting the will of the people although a referendum offered more safeguards for the incumbent party. Integration was not an option embraced by the administering Powers but actions of the European Union through its constitution reflected an ominous move in that direction without any input from the Territories under the administration of the United Kingdom.

(c) An expert from Montserrat said that Political progress was defined as a reduction of the autonomy deficit inherent in the colonial relationship. To achieve this, the 'reserved powers' of Governors had to be negotiable. The UK Foreign Office, however, was strongly opposed to this while all the Caribbean Chief Ministers were unanimous in their desire for minimal powers for the Governors. The growing frustration caused by this situation could catalyse and accelerate the movement towards full self-government. Meanwhile the perceived nexus between the affluence of the Territories and their constitutional status, persisted. More political education was needed to break the psychology and culture of dependence.

(d) An expert from Anguilla noted that her discussion paper on the dissemination of information on decolonization and the development of political education programmes highlighted the importance of the landmark Anguilla Seminar which created an unprecedented level of awareness and of discussion on options of self-determination (free association, integration and independence). Her paper called for a "de-shrouding" of the terms used to define the colonial reality, suggesting that the terms "British Overseas Territory" and "Administering Power" instead of "Colonies" and "Colonizing Power" created an illusion of partnership and equality. The paper pointed out that the education process must ensure the understanding that "self-determination and self-governance" were fundamental right of the peoples and that the fact that they were "non-self-governing" meant that this basic right had been denied and violated. The paper further called on the Special Committee as well as the political leaders and the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to challenge the Administering Power on its disregard for the options of free association and integration (options approved by the General Assembly) and its failure to prepare the Territories for self-determination.

Non-governmental organizations

32. A representative of the Anguilla Constitutional and Electoral Reform Committee noted that many of the people of Anguilla believed that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office already had a special constitution prepared for Anguilla, although she hoped that was not the case. The constitutional process in Anguilla had stalled, but they were hoping to move forward very soon with renewed vigour. The people of Anguilla called upon the United Nations to assist them and to their view that constitutional provisions should no longer be imposed upon the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

33. A representative of the Bermuda Independence Commission (Bermuda) stated that the Commission (BIC) was formed in December of 2004 by the Premier of Bermuda, the Honourable Alex Scott J.P.M.P. Commissioners represented a broad cross section of the community. The Commission was charged with causing a full debate on the subject, educating the people of Bermuda on independence, collecting information and presenting its report to the cabinet by the end of June 2005. The Commission had visited a wide range of countries, consulted with experts and met with the representatives of the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It has been made clear to the Commission by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that the only options open to Bermuda, which by definition had a relatively advanced constitution with cabinet and a Premier, are full independence or status quo. The Premier was likely to submit the BIC report to parliament causing further national debate. A decision on whether the option of independence should be put to the people is likely to follow that debate.

34. A representative of the Cayman Islands Chamber Non-Governmental Organizations Constitutional Working Group observed that he spoke on behalf of non-governmental organizations in the Cayman Islands involved in Constitutional Review. These organizations included: the Cayman Islands Chamber of Commerce, Cayman Ministers Association, People for Referendum, Concerned Citizens Group and the Forum. Pastor Ebanks, who chairs the NGO group, expressed disappointment that no progress had been achieved by the Special Committee to carry out the action plan to introduce United Nations-funded programmes to educate the people about the self-determination options that had been promised during the historic Caribbean seminar held in Anguilla in 2003.

35. A representative of the Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico emphasized that since 1898 Puerto Rico had been and still was a colony of the United States. The approval of Puerto Rico's constitution in 1952 did not change the nature of its colonial political relation with the United States of America. In the past, several initiatives had been tried by the people of Puerto Rico, such as proposals to the United States Congress and the President, regarding plebiscites, referendums and even legal actions, with no results. It seemed that the United States Government had no interest in dealing with the colonial situation of Puerto Rico. For the first time in many years there was a general consensus in Puerto Rico that the present political situation was unacceptable. The only discussion was about what should be the best and more effective process to achieve decolonization. His organization was proposing the Constitutional Assembly on Status as the only true mechanism of self-determination. This proposal had been adopted by two of the three political parties. At the moment there was no serious response from the United States Government. The representative of the Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico proposed that the

Committee recommend to the General Assembly that Puerto Rico be re-inscribed on the list of Non-Self Governing Territories. He expressed the hope that the Special Committee would promote an educational process in Puerto Rico, regarding all aspects of decolonization with emphasis on mechanisms such as the Constitutional Assembly on Status. He also proposed that as part of the educational process, the Special Committee should send a visiting mission to Puerto Rico.

36. A representative of Free Montserrat United Movement stated that the administering Power had used its power, influence and finances to keep Montserrat in a state of colonial dependency. He added that the administering Power had used the volcanic activity on Montserrat, to further its own agenda for holding on to Montserrat and to thwart the hopes and aspirations of the people to see some progressive move forward out of their colonial state. Montserrat had requested that the Associated Statehood option be revisited. He pointed out that this development was a clear indication that the people of Montserrat were not in favour of maintaining the status quo and that they wanted to see some indication of a process that would eventually lead to their own national identity and nationhood. For its part, the administering Power contended that Montserrat had only two options: to remain tied to it in a perpetual state of dependency and control or to achieve independence. That was the stated position that the administering Power had maintained for many years. The administering Power appeared to have no problems spending money to keep Montserrat dependent. However, the administering Power had yet to suggest a modality by which it would assist the Territory to move out of its colonial state, and eventually achieve independence.

37. A representative of the United Nations Association of the Virgin Islands stated that the Committee's recent experiences of direct contact on the ground in non-self-governing territories had illustrated the need for, and usefulness of, accurate and authoritative information on self-determination being provided to the governments and people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories by the United Nations. Recent events in the United States Virgin Islands revealed a profound lack of information and understanding of the issues of decolonization, self-determination and political status within the political directorate and the population, and a disinclination to accept correct information from local persons. There was an urgent need for the Committee to facilitate the provision of information and education on political status issues to the Territories.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

38. At its 6th meeting, held on 19 May 2005, the Chairman presented to the participants the following conclusions and recommendations:

Eradicating colonialism, role of the Special Committee and plan of action

1. The United Nations has a valid ongoing role in the process of decolonization. The mandate of the Special Committee is a major political programme of the United Nations.
2. After carrying out a midterm review, the seminar recommended that the Special Committee, the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories engage in constructive discussions and innovative ways to expedite the implementation of the goals of the Second International Decade and its

Plan of Action for the Eradication of Colonialism as contained in General Assembly resolution 55/146 of 8 December 2000.

3. The participants reaffirmed the role of the Special Committee as the primary vehicle for fostering the process of decolonization and for expediting the implementation of the Plan of Action towards achieving the goals of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/146.

4. The seminar recommended that the Special Committee continue to participate actively in monitoring the evolution of the Non-Self-Governing Territories towards achieving self-determination.

5. The Special Committee should include, as appropriate, the participation of the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, on a case-by-case basis, at the consultations between the Special Committee and the administering Powers.

6. Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

7. The participants noted that, in the development of work programmes for individual Territories, the participation of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in which there is no dispute over sovereignty should be ensured. They also pointed out that any work programme should include an information and education campaign for the peoples of these Territories, visiting missions of the Special Committee to ascertain the situation in those Territories first-hand and a consultation process acceptable to the peoples in those Territories leading to the exercise of their right to self-determination in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

8. The Special Committee should continue to develop a mechanism to systematically review, on an annual basis, the implementation of the specific recommendations on decolonization with a focus on implementing the mandate as contained in General Assembly resolutions and the plan of action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

Right to self-determination

9. The implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 is not complete as long as there remain Non-Self-Governing Territories that have yet to exercise their right to self-determination, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly and the Special Committee resolutions on special and particular colonial situations.

10. As long as the administering Powers exercise unilateral authority to make laws and other regulations affecting the Non-Self-Governing Territories without their consent, pursuant to such methods as legislation, orders in council and other methods, a Territory should not be considered self-governing.

11. In the process of decolonization, and where there are no disputes over sovereignty, there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which is also a fundamental human right. All available options for self-determination are valid as long as they are in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned and in conformity with the clearly defined principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, and as enunciated in General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 and 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960 and other relevant resolutions and decisions.

12. The participants expressed the view that, as long as there are Non-Self-Governing Territories, the inalienable rights of the peoples of those Territories must be guaranteed by the United Nations and the Special Committee in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

Public awareness and information campaigns

13. Continued examination of the spectrum of options for self-determination by all parties concerned and dissemination of relevant information among the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories are important elements in achieving the goals of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the plan of action.

14. The participants affirmed the need for the Special Committee to actively embark on a public awareness campaign aimed at fostering an understanding among the people of the Territories of the options for self-determination included in the relevant United Nations resolutions on decolonization, especially within the context of developing programmes of work for specific Territories.

15. The seminar recommended that the Special Committee, in conjunction with the Department of Public Information and other relevant United Nations bodies, develop a programme to disseminate information and raise public awareness in the Territories in order to heighten people's understanding of the legitimate political status options available to them in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including the 1960 Declaration, and bearing in mind the successful programmes in this vein undertaken for the former Trust Territories.

16. United Nations information centres should be directed to disseminate information on decolonization to the Territories and to the administering Powers. In this regard, the participants stressed that information centres, especially those located in the Caribbean and Pacific regions, could play a significant role in disseminating information, promoting public awareness and mobilizing support for the work of the United Nations with respect to the decolonization process.

17. The Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations should be asked to provide support and assistance for any consultation process to be held in a Non-Self-Governing Territory regarding any act of self-determination.

18. The participants encouraged the United Nations to assist those Non-Self-Governing Territories that are granted observer status at United Nations world summits and conferences and special sessions of the General Assembly by facilitating the dissemination of information to them regarding the conferences and sessions.

Visiting missions

19. The participants confirmed the need to dispatch periodic visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories with the aim of raising public awareness of decolonization issues and possible options available for self-determination, while assessing the situation in those Territories and of ascertaining the wishes and aspirations of the peoples thereof regarding their future status, and called on the administering Powers to cooperate in facilitating such visiting missions. They noted the numerous requests made at the seminar from representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories for visiting missions to be undertaken as soon as possible.

Cooperation with and assistance from agencies of the United Nations system and regional organizations

20. The participants supported closer cooperation between the Special Committee and the Economic and Social Council in order to promote increased United Nations assistance in the economic and social sphere to the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

21. All Non-Self-Governing Territories should be given access to relevant United Nations programmes in the economic and social sphere, including those emanating from the plans of action of United Nations major summits and conferences, in furtherance of capacity-building and consistent with the necessary preparation for the attainment of a full measure of internal self-government.

22. The seminar stressed that the wider United Nations system should continue to explore ways to strengthen existing measures of support and formulate appropriate programmes of assistance to the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories and seek concrete proposals for the full implementation of the relevant resolutions by the specialized agencies, as detailed in General Assembly resolution 56/67 of 10 December 2001.

23. The participants urged the Special Committee to solicit the assistance of the Economic and Social Council regarding the implementation of Council resolution 2004/53 of 23 July 2004 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations.

24. The participants recognized the vulnerability of small island Non-Self-Governing Territories, which continues to be of major concern and that this vulnerability will grow unless urgent steps are taken to address and strengthen the Territories' capacities, in accordance with the Mauritius Declaration of January 2005.^c

25. The seminar reiterated its support for the current participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the relevant regional commissions of the United Nations and in specialized agencies of the United Nations. It called for the increased involvement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in programmes and activities of the United Nations system in furtherance of the decolonization process, subject to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, including General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions and decisions on specific Territories.

26. Participants commended the activities of the United Nations Development Programme in providing assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories and encouraged it to further develop programmes specifically designed for the Territories.

27. The participants requested those members of the Special Committee that are members of the Economic and Social Council to support the inclusion of Non-Self-Governing Territories that are associate members of United Nations regional commissions as observers in the Council, pursuant to the relevant resolution of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Council.

28. The participants recommended that the Special Committee establish closer ties with CARICOM and Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and encouraged Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean region to develop closer contacts with the two organizations.

Constitutional and self-determination issues in the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean and the other regions

29. The participants took note of the advances made and challenges faced by some Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean which may contribute to a decision regarding their exercising the right to self-determination in the near future, while others are still facing difficulties in developing a process leading to their self-determination.

30. The Participants drew the attention of the administering Powers to the three options listed in resolution 1541 (XV) of 1960, by which the General Assembly declared that a Non-Self-Governing Territory could attain a full measure of self-government, as envisaged in the Charter, by: emergence as a sovereign independent State; free association with an independent State; or integration with an independent State.

31. The participants took note of the ideas expressed by the representative of the Governor of American Samoa, including the idea that a single standard of decolonization should not be applied to every Territory. Furthermore, they expressed their willingness to support the choice of the people of American Samoa as determined through United Nations mechanisms. Participants also took note of the statement by the representative of American Samoa requesting information regarding the steps the Territory should take to complete the process of decolonization.

32. The participants noted with concern the military installations and activities of the administering Powers in Non-Self-Governing Territories,

which run counter to the rights and interests of the people concerned and which create serious health and environmental hazards.

33. The participants, taking note of the statement made by the representative of Argentina, reiterated that the Special Committee should continue to encourage the resumption of negotiations between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom with the aim of finding a solution to the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), taking into consideration the interests of the population of the Territory, in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations.

34. With regard to Western Sahara, the participants urged the two parties to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in this respect, and urged the parties and States of the region to continue to cooperate fully with the United Nations to end the current impasse and to achieve progress towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. The participants recalled the mandate of the Special Committee towards the self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

Administering Powers and other Member States of the United Nations, inter-governmental organizations, United Nations programmes and civil society

35. The participants welcomed the presence of the representative of France as an observer and regretted the lack of representation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, taking into account its participation at previous seminars. They reiterated their call upon all administering Powers to engage the Special Committee in constructive dialogue in the future.

36. The Special Committee expressed its appreciation to Argentina, Algeria, Morocco and Spain for their participation in the seminar and encouraged other Member States to continue to cooperate with the Special Committee.

37. The Special Committee also expressed its appreciation for the participation of representatives of the African Union, the Organization of American States, the United Nations Development Programme as well as non-governmental organizations.

Role of the regional seminars

38. As activities of the plan of action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the regional seminars serve as an effective forum for focused discussion on matters of concern to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and afford opportunities for representatives of the peoples of the Territories to present their views and recommendations to the Special Committee.

39. The regional nature of the seminars, alternating between the Caribbean and the Pacific, remains a crucial element in their success. The administering Powers should be urged to facilitate the participation of the elected representatives of the Territories in the seminars and in sessions of the Special

Committee and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) in conformity with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the United Nations.

40. The participants recommended that the Special Committee integrate, to the extent possible, the recommendations of the Canouan seminar into its relevant resolutions on decolonization, as those recommendations are important expressions of the will of the people of the Territories.

41. The participants reiterated their appreciation of the outcome of the Madang seminar in 2004 and confirmed the need for the Special Committee to review the recommendations of the seminar and to make all possible efforts to include them in its follow-up actions.

42. The participants took note of the decision of the Special Committee to coordinate its annual seminars with other relevant activities to be conducted in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, including visiting missions, as appropriate, in order to better utilize its resources.

43. The Special Committee should adopt the report of the Canouan seminar and include it in its report to the General Assembly, as it did with the reports of the previous regional seminars.

44. The participants reiterated the importance of the conclusions and recommendations at the previous regional seminars, held in Vanuatu (1990), Barbados (1990), Grenada (1992), Papua New Guinea (1993, 1996 and 2004), Trinidad and Tobago (1995), Antigua and Barbuda (1997), Fiji (1998 and 2002), Saint Lucia (1999), the Marshall Islands (2000), Cuba (2001) and Anguilla (2003).

39. Also at the 6th meeting, the participants adopted a resolution expressing appreciation to the Government and the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (see appendix VI).

Notes

^a *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/59/23).*

^b At present, the list of Territories with which the Special Committee is concerned and to which the Declaration is applicable includes American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Gibraltar, Guam, Montserrat, New Caledonia, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, Tokelau, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the United States Virgin Islands and Western Sahara.

^c International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005. Mauritius Declaration. Document A/CONF.207/L.6 (consolidated).

Appendix I

List of participants

Members of the Special Committee

Saint Lucia*	Julian Robert Hunte Chairman of the Special Committee
	Michelle Joseph Member of the Special Committee
China*	Xie Yunliang Member of the Special Committee
Congo*	Luc Joseph Okio Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee
Cuba*	Orlando Requeijo Gual Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee
Dominica*	Crispin Gregoire Member of the Special Committee
Ethiopia*	Birhanemeskel Abebe Segni Member of the Special Committee
Indonesia*	Muhammad Anshor Member of the Special Committee
Papua New Guinea	Jimmy Ovia Member of the Special Committee
Russian Federation*	Albert Sitnikov Member of the Special Committee
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (host country)	Michael Browne Margaret Hughes Ferrari Suenel Fraser
Tunisia*	Kais Kabtaani Member of the Special Committee

States Members of the United Nations

Argentina	Jose Luis Vignolo
Algeria	Larbi Djacta
Morocco	Souad El Alaoui Hassana Malainaine Ali Salem Chagaf
Spain	Roman Oyarzun

* Member of official delegation of the Special Committee.

Administering Power

France (observer)	Genevieve Pouquet-El Chami
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Non-Self-Governing Territories

American Samoa	Lelei Peau
British Virgin Islands	Kedrick Pickering
Saint Helena	Eric George
Turks and Caicos Islands	Michael Misick Osvald Skippings Jeffrey Hall Norman Hamilton
United States Virgin Islands	Carlyle Corbin
Western Sahara	Ahmed Boukhari

Non-governmental organizations

Anguilla Constitutional and Electoral Reform Committee (Anguilla)	Lolita Davis Richardson
Bermuda Independence Commission (Bermuda)	Michael Winfield
Cayman Islands Non-Governmental Organizations Constitutional Working Group (Cayman Islands)	Al Ebanks Wil Pineau
Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico)	Julio Enrique Fontanet
Free Montserrat United Movement (Montserrat)	Chedmond Browne
United Nations Association of the Virgin Islands (United States Virgin Islands)	Judith Bourne

Experts

Carlyle Corbin (United States Virgin Islands)
Walton Brown (Bermuda)
Sir Howard Fergus (Montserrat)
Phyllis Fleming-Banks (Anguilla)

Programmes, funds, specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system

United Nations Development Programme	Paula Mohamed
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Regional organization

Africa Union

Omotayo Olaniyan

Organization of American States

Melene Glynn

Observer

Joseph Bossano (Gibraltar)

Appendix II

Statement by the Honourable Michael Browne, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

On behalf of the government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, I wish to extend a warm welcome to the beautiful island of Canouan, one of the lovely jewels of our multi-island country here in the Windward Islands. It is a special pleasure for me to address this opening ceremony of the 2005 Caribbean Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

We are delighted that the Committee on Decolonisation accepted our invitation to host this important forum which we in the Eastern Caribbean regard as a highly significant activity to promote the future development of the remaining small island non-self-governing territories in the Atlantic/Caribbean region and elsewhere.

Caribbean countries take seriously the responsibility of fostering the self-determination and decolonization processes, especially in our neighbouring countries which are part and parcel of our Caribbean civilization, but which have not yet achieved a full measure of self-government. In the Eastern Caribbean, this is especially critical since we regard the small territories — many of whom are our closest neighbours — as integral to the social and economic fabric of the Caribbean. To confirm this commitment, all six of the independent States of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) are members of the Special Committee.

Caribbean governments have provided important mechanisms for the integration of many of these territories in our institutions. In the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), three Caribbean territories are associate members while one is a full member. In the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), five territories are associate members and one is a full member. Further, two of the territories under review of the Special Committee share our common Eastern Caribbean currency.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines views the continued and expanded participation of these territories in regional institutions as a natural part of the Caribbean regional integration process. These regional bodies also have a special and complex dimension in this era of rapidly accelerating globalisation, requiring innovative strategies to meet the target of full decolonization by the end of this decade. As was concluded at the 2004 seminar in Papua New Guinea, we must begin to think outside of the basket. Clearly, the dynamic chairman of the Special Committee would have it no other way.

I am confident that these next three days will yield important results which will inform the process as it proceeds through the Special Committee proceedings in June, through to the General Assembly in the Fall, and most importantly, into the implementation phase. Indeed, without implementation, the recommendations will only gather dust on the shelf. We must ensure that this does not continue, as has happened so tragically in the past.

I wish you, the participants, all the best in your important deliberations. I hope you will find time to enjoy the unique attractions of this beautiful Island and also

visit some of the neighbouring Islands. Just to the South are the world famous Tobago Cays. It would be a shame if you failed to enrich your life experience by seeing these national treasures first hand.

I now formally declare open the 2005 Caribbean Regional Seminar on the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

Appendix III

Statement by Julian Robert Hunte, Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia to the United Nations, Chairman of the Special Committee

On behalf of the member States of the Special Committee, I wish to reiterate my thanks to the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for its generous offer to host this midterm review of the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, as we seek to assess progress made by the international community in carrying out its sacred mandate of advancing the self-determination process for the peoples of the remaining non self-governing territories.

Members of the Special Committee join me in expressing our gratitude for the most gracious hospitality extended to us since our arrival in this most picturesque part of the beautiful Windward Islands. My own country of Saint Lucia, as a neighbouring Windward Island State, takes special pride in the fact that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has become the most recent of our small island countries to offer itself as the venue for these proceedings. This region has a special role to play in completing the decolonization process for the remaining territories whose shores are washed by our beloved Caribbean Sea, and whose peoples are integral to the further development of our Caribbean civilization.

It was not so long ago that many of our countries were in a similar position of political and constitutional deficiency. We faced some of the same uncertainties regarding “the way forward” that are experienced today in many of the remaining territories. It is hoped that those of us who achieved a full measure of self-government in year’s past, through independence, free association or integration, can provide useful insights for those who will follow.

The year 2005 is a significant historical benchmark in the decolonization process, as two important activities converge to shed light on how far we have come in advancing the self-determination process, and how much remains to be done.

The first activity to which I refer is the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration which, among its important pronouncements, is the re-dedication of the international community to support efforts towards the right to self-determination of peoples. The second event is the midterm review of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism which is designed to assess the state-of-play in decolonization. This seminar convenes at the convergence of these two events, and a “Canouan Consensus” emerging from our dialogue should offer important insights for implementation of the road map on self-determination.

Preceding the Millennium Declaration, and the first — and now second — Plan of Action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, has been a long legislative authority for the realization of decolonization. We recall the series of resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, since its creation, through to the present day. We cite similar resolutions approved by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. We note the significant mandates contained in various human rights conventions such as:

- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- The Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Arising from this extensive mandate is the consistent reaffirmation by all United Nations Member States to develop programmes of political education in the territories on the options of political equality, to provide assistance to the territories from United Nations agencies, to conduct visiting missions, to operationalize the human rights dimension of self-determination, and to promote the repatriation of natural resources to the territories, among other directives. We are aware of the annual re-affirmation by the General Assembly for a transfer of powers to the peoples of the territories, consistent with sustained requests for such devolution of power resonating in many of these territories.

We are also aware of the many forward-thinking recommendations advanced before the Special Committee by the peoples of the territories themselves, including the enhancement of the role of such United Nations bodies as the Electoral Unit, the Committee on Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations regional commissions, and the United Nations specialized agencies in providing support to the territories in their process of political and socio-economic advancement.

We are further mindful of the measures called for in the plans of action of the international decades, especially the essential research and analysis on the situation on the ground in the individual territories that is critical to bridging the information deficit on decolonization.

These commitments continue to serve as the extensive and fundamental legislative authority for the way forward. The fact remains, however, that this issue is very much unresolved precisely because the critical element of implementation of the decolonization mandate has been woefully insufficient. It is only through implementation that we can bring to fruition this unfinished agenda of the United Nations by the end of this second decade.

In my opening address to the 2005 session of the Special Committee last February, I pointed out that we are going to have to undertake innovative measures to bridge the information gap on the situation in the territories, to urge the wider UN system to fulfil its mandate on assistance to the territories, and to enact a sustainable approach to the attainment of the full measure of self-government.

Indeed, these issues have been with us for much too long, and it must be emphasized that the responsibility of member States and the United Nations machinery does not end with the adoption of resolutions on decolonization. The second half of this decade must be concentrated on implementation. Otherwise, we will continue in a never-ending spiral of in-action, to return, year after year, to begin again. It is not my intention — nor, I am sure, the intention of my colleagues on the Special Committee — to be party to a process of inaction, with the adoption of resolutions as our only goal.

It is our intention, however, to accelerate our efforts, to “think outside the box,” by expanding our engagement with the wider United Nations system, and other relevant bodies.

This is why I am especially heartened that we have with us at this seminar Mrs. Paula Mohammed of the UNDP Office in Barbados who oversees the

governance programme for the Eastern Caribbean. The role of UNDP in providing support for the constitutional reform process in Anguilla several years ago was an important step in advancing the critical role that UNDP can play in modernizing the governance models in the remaining territories. The present assistance provided by UNDP to the United Nations Special Mission to Bermuda is another indication of that role, and I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Tom Gittens, UNDP's programme manager for the Atlantic/Caribbean, for his encouragement and commitment to the advancement of the territories under his purview. On the Pacific side, discussions on UNDP assistance to the New Zealand-administered territory of Tokelau, as it proceeds towards free association, is another promising development.

Just as decolonization is essentially a function of governance, it is, undeniably, also a function of democracy. I am therefore especially heartened by the presence of Ms. Merlene Glynn, the representative of the Organization of American States based here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The OAS has had an historical role in monitoring the decolonization process, within the framework of its earlier agenda item on "Non-Autonomous Territories in the American Hemisphere." Whilst this is no longer an active OAS agenda item, the self-determination of the territories in the Americas remains very much a hemispheric issue, and can be viewed within the scope of the OAS Democracy Charter. Indeed, colonialism as a contemporary practice is inconsistent with the principle of democracy, and the OAS can contribute significantly to the decolonization process by considering this dichotomy within its activities related to the Democracy Charter.

As we continue to move ahead, we are pleased to see the sustained interest among those who have historically supported these efforts. In this connection, I am delighted to acknowledge the presence of Ms. Susan Gordon, the Director of the Multilateral Relations Division of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who only a few short years ago represented her country on the Special Committee at United Nations Headquarters. Indeed, my colleague Ambassador Phillip Sealy, the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, was a member of the Special Committee visiting missions to several Caribbean territories in the earlier stages of his career.

It is our goal here in Canouan to ascertain at this midpoint of the second decade what steps we need to put in place to advance the decolonization process. The work of the United Nations in this area is enhanced each year through the convening of these regional seminars which bring together, for an important exchange of views and information, the various stakeholders in the advancement of democratic governance.

I am confident that this regional seminar will serve to heighten the awareness of Member States on the complexities of the situation in the individual territories.

I am optimistic that we will also be able to enhance the knowledge base of the representatives of the territories here with us on the statutory role of the wider United Nations system in facilitating the attainment of absolute political equality.

I am hopeful that we will be able to elaborate on the importance of the minimum standards of absolute political equality set forth in the legitimate political status options of integration, free association, or independence.

Now more than ever, I am of the view that the principles of full and absolute political equality must continue as the guiding standard in addressing the self-

determination process of the small island territories, if we are to avoid the spectre of “colonies in perpetuity” where the unilateral authority of the administering powers remains the determining factor in the decision-making process.

I anticipate serious discussion on these issues here in Canouan this week, and I look forward to our dialogue as we seek to further refine our approach to solving the decolonization dilemma held over from the twentieth century.

Appendix IV

Message from the Secretary-General

It gives me pleasure to send my greetings to all the participants in this Caribbean Regional Seminar on Decolonization, which takes place during the week of solidarity with the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The people and Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines merit our gratitude for hosting this event and for their ongoing support of the United Nations.

This gathering of representatives of the Territories, the administering Powers, and civil society provides a valuable opportunity to take stock of the progress that has been made in decolonization, and more importantly to formulate strategies for achieving the objective of eradicating colonialism before the end of this decade. I urge you to have an open, frank and constructive exchange of views.

The successes of the United Nations in decolonization should inspire and encourage us in our efforts to ensure that the people of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories can exercise their right to self-determination, in accordance with the 1960 Declaration regarding colonial countries and peoples. Toward that end, it is essential that they understand the options regarding their political status and their right to choose their future freely. It is also important that they are aware of the United Nations activities and programmes of assistance that are available to them.

As was seen in the case of Tokelau, cooperation on the part of all concerned, especially the administering Powers, is vital. The Secretariat will continue to support your efforts, and stands ready to help develop decolonization plans on a case-by-case basis with the participation of the representatives of the people of the Territories.

I commend the Special Committee for its hard work, and offer all the participants in this seminar my best wishes for success.

Appendix V

Statement by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee

First of all, this Seminar is about carrying out a review and appraisal of the implementation of the objectives of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The Plan of Action adopted by the General Assembly is very clear about what the ultimate goal of the Decade is: the full implementation of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, what we call for short, the Declaration on Decolonization, which is contained in resolution 1514 (XV).

The Plan of Action is specific as to the measures that should be taken at various levels, be it at the international level, by Member States, by the United Nations — including the Special Committee and the Secretary-General — by the administering Powers, by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and by non-governmental organizations.

That is why, we have formulated our agenda to reflect the issues highlighted in the Plan of Action. In convening this Seminar at the mid-point of the Decade, the Special Committee wished to benefit from the constructive analysis and critique by the participants at this event, in taking stock of what has been achieved thus far and specially, of what remains to be done. We look forward to your contribution in this important task.

I will refer to only a few points in the Plan of Action.

In Section II of the Plan of Action, the Assembly states that the international community, composed of member States, the United Nations system and governmental and non-governmental organizations should join to assist the Territories.

In this respect, I should like to point out that there are many instances of assistance to Territories from individual Member States as well as from the United Nations system. However, it is also increasingly apparent that whereas several Territories have benefited from such assistance, there are many other Territories have had scant or no information as to what assistance is available to them. These Seminars are one way in which the Special Committee disseminates information on decolonization and on the activities of the United Nations in favour of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The presence of representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, the Economic Commissions and specialized agencies at these meetings is particularly helpful and we wish to draw the attention to participants from the Territories that attendance to the Seminars of the Special Committee provides an opportunity for them to have direct access to these representatives. We invite participants to make suggestions as to how the dissemination of information on assistance available could be enhanced.

In this respect, I should also like to point out that some Territories have become associate members of United Nations Economic Regional Commissions and as such, they participate in the work of these Commissions and in activities of the United Nations — such as international conferences and special sessions of the General Assembly — subject to the relevant rules of procedure and decisions. The advantages of having access to forums where issues of vital concern are discussed and where policy recommendations are made are self-evident.

The Plan of Action calls for the international community to enable the peoples of the Territories to exercise their right to self-determination and decide on their future political status with complete knowledge and awareness of the full range of political options available to them. It specially calls on the United Nations in cooperation with the administering Powers to ensure that such information is available to the peoples of the Territories. This is a key issue. Resolution 1541 (XV) outlines three options — independence, integration and free association. Resolution 2625 (XXV) mentions “any other political status freely determined by a people”.

In practice, in some cases popular consultations or referendums have given the people of the Territory a choice between integration or independence (for instance, in East Timor, now Timor Leste). In others, the choice has been between free association and independence (for instance Palau and the Marshall Islands). The Special Committee recognizes that each Territory is unique and therefore the decolonization process for the Territories has to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Plan of Action also calls on the international community to ensure that all political exercises relating to self-determination are carried out in an atmosphere conducive to the open expression of the interests and aspirations of the peoples of the Territories with the United Nations playing an appropriate role. The Special Committee has reiterated these necessary conditions in its pronouncements and consultations with the administering Powers and representatives of the Territories.

This brings me to another point emphasized by the Plan of Action in Section III: that the United Nations with the administering Powers ensure that all acts of self-determination be preceded by adequate and unbiased campaigns of political education.

The Special Committee has carried these messages to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, most recently to Bermuda, during the special mission that visited the Territory last March.

As you know, the obligations of the administering Powers in promoting political, economic, social, cultural and economic advancement of the inhabitants of the Territories are established by the Charter of the United Nations as is the responsibility of the administering Powers to transmit information on the Territories.

I should like to recall that the Special Committee presented to the administering Powers in 1999 a proposal to hold informal consultations and develop, with the participation of the representatives of the Territories, a programme of work for the decolonization of the Territories on a case by case basis, taking into account the unique characteristics of each Territory. We in the Special Committee intend to follow up on this proposal and invite the administering Powers during the 2005 session of the Special Committee, to resume dialogue in this regard. We are keenly aware of the fact that for the Special Committee to make progress in fulfilling its decolonization mandate, it needs the cooperation of the administering Powers. The cooperation of New Zealand with respect to Tokelau is exemplary as it is encouraging.

In Section IV, the Plan of Action calls on the administering Powers to continue to cooperate or resume cooperation with the Special Committee and actively involve themselves in its work. The Special Committee has shown flexibility in agreeing to

informal discussions to advance the cause of decolonization. We hope that in this spirit, we can resume informal consultations with the administering Powers.

The Plan of Action also contains specific requests of the Special Committee. For instance, it states that the Special Committee should continue to seek, as a matter of priority the full cooperation of administering Powers with regard to the dispatch of visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Committee has sought such cooperation convinced of the usefulness of such activities. I mentioned earlier that a special mission visited Bermuda in March. The Mission's report has not yet been published as a document, but in informal discussions with the members of the Special Mission that visited Bermuda, it becomes evident that a great wealth of information has been gained as a result of the visit, by both the people in the Territory and the members of the Special Committee. Obviously, it would be desirable that the visiting missions or special missions could take place in the framework of a plan for the decolonization of specific Territories agreed to with the administering Power and the representatives of the Territories on a case-by case basis. The political impact of such visits is also important in that it reassures the Non Self Governing Territories of the fact that their situation is monitored and followed at the United Nations and that their cause can count on the support of the international community.

The Committee has been asked to prepare periodic analyses of the progress and extent of the implementation of the Declaration. This matter has been brought up in previous seminars and meetings of the Special Committee. The reports of the Committee, the statements of its Chairman and the recommendations it submits to the General Assembly on individual Territories and on issues such as international assistance and economic interests are parts of such analysis. The Committee relies on information received at Seminars, meetings of the Committee, reports of the Secretary-General and of the President of ECOSOC, submissions by experts and non-governmental organizations and at visiting missions, to monitor the implementation of the Declaration. In this connection, the Seminars continue to be a useful forum to review progress achieved, particularly because of the open and frank nature of the discussions that take place. The Plan of Action foresaw this important role of the Seminars when it requested the Committee to organize them during the Second Decade. Another issue on which we seek information from Seminar participants is in the review of the impact of the economic and social situation on the constitutional and political advancement of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. These issues are a permanent concern of the Committee and we encourage and welcome the input of the representatives of the Territories, Member States, experts and NGOs.

The ideas, suggestions and recommendations of participants will be given full consideration by the Special Committee and will assist in formulating its own recommendations for action with particular emphasis on the next five years of the Decade.

Appendix VI

Resolution on expression of appreciation to the Government and the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

The participants in the Caribbean regional seminar,

Having met from 17 to 19 May 2005 in Canouan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for the purpose of carrying out a midterm review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the plan of action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism,

Having heard the important statement by The Honourable Michael Browne, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines,

Taking note of the important statements by the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories,

Express their profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for providing the Special Committee with the necessary facilities for its seminar, for the outstanding contribution they have made to the success of the seminar and, in particular, for the very generous and kind hospitality and the warm and cordial reception accorded to the participants throughout their stay in Canouan.