

## Tokelau: Statement to Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

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- Congratulations Madam Chair on the assumption of your role as chair of the Committee, and thanks for your gracious hosting. It is a pleasure to be here with the Committee in the Spice Isle.
- I am New Zealand's High Commissioner to Barbados and the Member States of the Caribbean Community so I am pleased to join with others from this region to welcome you here, and particularly my cousins from the Pacific Islands.
- On behalf of New Zealand and the Administrator of Tokelau, I would like to say *malo ni* and greetings to you all.
- The New Zealand Government and the Administrator of Tokelau remain absolutely committed to our relationship with Tokelau. The shape of that relationship, including questions of governance and self-determination, is guided and determined by the people of Tokelau.
- I note the suggestions made earlier by our colleague from Gibraltar regarding progressing the work of the C-24, particularly with respect to Tokelau, which I will be pleased to report back to the Administrator and the Tokelau authorities.
- The theme for this year's regional seminar resonates with us.

### **Firstly, we have renewed our commitment to Tokelau**

- In February 2018 New Zealand announced that it would be "resetting" our engagement in the Pacific. Increased focus in the region has brought a new sense of momentum in our engagement with Tokelau.
- Last year we upgraded the position of Administrator by appointing someone whose sole focus is working with and supporting Tokelau.
- New Zealand has also increased the size of our development programme and strengthened our political engagement.
- In March 2019, the Administrator was present in Tokelau for the annual transfer of the Uluship, the Titular Head of Tokelau. It was a special occasion. The new Ulu's opening remarks were effusive about the current state of Tokelau's relationship with New Zealand.

### **Secondly, pragmatic measures to support Tokelau's capacity building are integral to our development assistance**

- New Zealand and Tokelau are committed partners. To be successful, the work we undertake together must recognise Tokelau's unique circumstances. New Zealand accounts for those circumstances in the delivery of our support to Tokelau.
- As part of our broader development assistance programme, New Zealand provides general budget support to Tokelau. This approach utilises Tokelau's systems to the fullest extent. This has the effect of strengthening those systems. Continual improvement and refinement of public finance systems is vital in preparing Tokelau for self-government.
- Further, part of New Zealand's expanded development programme of around \$86 million over the next four years includes a separate activity for strengthening governance and management of Tokelau's public services, finances and infrastructure assets. This work includes technical assistance with a view to building a legacy of knowledge and experience within Tokelau's public service.
- The Tokelau National Strategic Plan (2016-2020) identifies climate change mitigation and adaptation as a national priority. MFAT is supporting Tokelau to implement practical measures to respond to this enormous challenge.
- This support is both practical and pragmatic, recognising that supporting capacity development and growing confidence in governance and management functions is critical for Tokelau's future as a self-governing nation.
- I wish to conclude by reaffirming New Zealand's resolute commitment to Tokelau, and to fulfilling our obligations as a member of the United Nations. We look forward to our continued engagement with this Committee, including next month when the Administrator and Ulu will travel together to New York.
- I wish you all the best for the remainder of the seminar, and thank you for the opportunity to address you today. In the language of te reo Māori, Tena koutou and, in Tokelauan, fakafetai.

*May 2019*