

Distr. RESTRICTED
PRS/2025/CRP.22

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: pathways to a sustainable future – advancing socioeconomic and cultural development of the Non-Self-Governing Territories

**Dili, Timor-Leste
21 to 23 May 2025**

**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Interventions by

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

At

The Pacific Regional Seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: “Pathways to a sustainable future -
advancing socioeconomic and cultural development of the Non-Self-Governing
Territories”

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Madam Chair,

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I would first like to take this opportunity to thank the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste for hosting this Pacific regional seminar and for the gracious hospitality extended to us as delegates.
- I would also like to commend you, Madame Chair, and the members of your bureau for your leadership throughout this seminar, and to assure you of Antigua and Barbuda's full support throughout the session.

Question of the British Virgin Islands

- Madam Chair, I have the honour to take the floor to speak on the matter concerning the British Virgin Islands.
- Antigua and Barbuda has been, and continues to be, a pillar of support for the British Virgin Islands in its pursuit of self-determination. Our support for the UN's visiting mission to the BVI and our subsequent participation in the mission in August 2024 underscored this.
- We reiterate our profound gratitude to the Government of the United Kingdom, as its Administering Power, and to the territorial Government of the British Virgin Islands for their cooperation during the visiting mission. Missions such as these have consistently proven to be an integral part of the committee's work and, by extension, the activities of C-24.
- It should be highlighted that the people and Government of the British Virgin Islands welcome the findings and recommendations of the United Nations (UN) report resulting from the visiting Mission and they have also welcomed the report's endorsement by the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

- Antigua and Barbuda, as a former colonial territory, conveys its strong support for the British Virgin Islands in their pursuit of self-determination.
- As the Government of the British Virgin Islands seeks to enter constitutional negotiations with the United Kingdom to establish full internal self-governance under a new pre-independence constitution, this should be seen as a crucial step toward empowering the British Virgin Islands to govern themselves more independently and sustainably.
- The British Virgin Islands has completed the most comprehensive governance reform programme in its history, further displaying its capacity for full autonomy, and therefore wishes for the United Kingdom to lift the Order in Council that can suspend the British Virgin Islands' Constitution and impose direct rule at the discretion of the British Governor over the islands.
- We acknowledge the British Virgin Islands' wish for the Government of the United Kingdom to support the British Virgin Islands' self-governance positively, and to fully respect the executive and legislative authority constitutionally devolved to the democratically elected arm of Government, that seeks to work in partnership with the United Kingdom and British Governor within their respective areas of constitutional responsibility.
- In closing, we acknowledge and support the aspirations of the people and Government of the British Virgin Islands as they work towards achieving a full measure of self-government and diligently and peacefully pursue their goal of self-determination.

Question of Montserrat

- Madam Chair, as we continue to focus on the perspectives of the Caribbean region, I take the floor once again to speak on the matter of Montserrat, a neighbour and partner of Antigua and Barbuda.

- It is worth noting that, more than 25 years after the devastating volcanic eruptions, Montserrat continues on a long and complex road to recovery—both infrastructurally and institutionally, as well as psychologically. Budgetary aid from the United Kingdom has helped to stabilise public services, but meaningful transformation remains slow.
- As with previous interventions, Antigua and Barbuda supports both the efforts of Montserrat and its Administering Power in the self-determination process, which involves effective decision-making and aligning local and UK systems with national goals.
- Antigua and Barbuda, as a neighbouring nation facing similar complexities that are unique to Small Island Developing States, we are acutely aware of Montserrat's resilience and the partnership fostered over the years. We reject the idea that decolonisation undermines partnership. We believe that a modern UK-Montserrat relationship presents an opportunity for institutional reform, which should include ongoing discussions on self-determination.
- Antigua and Barbuda supports the need for Montserrat to evolve and subscribes to the developmental aspirations of its people.

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

- Madam Chair, on the issue of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), my country has expressed, on several occasions, in various organisational meetings and fora, that we are friends of Argentina and the United Kingdom, and we do so once again.
- We urge both parties to promptly resume discussions on the Malvinas Islands, aiming for a peaceful and comprehensive resolution to the dispute. This process should align with relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX), as well as the recommendations from the Special Committee on Decolonization.

- Antigua and Barbuda wishes to reaffirm its support for the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in our collective commitment to adhere to and uphold international law, specifically under United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) dated 14th December 1960, which underscores the importance of making the Latin American and Caribbean region free from colonialism and colonies. In this, we remain steadfast and reiterate our position once again.
- Therefore, we call on our friends in Argentina and the United Kingdom to resolve this sovereignty dispute with humility so that within this fourth international decade in eradicating colonialism, this mandate can be realised.

Question of Western Sahara

- Madam Chair, I take the floor on this occasion to address the issue of Western Sahara. Antigua and Barbuda takes this opportunity to reiterate its full support for Morocco's territorial integrity and sovereignty, which includes the Sahara region.
- We continue to reinforce this support as part of the international momentum led by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in support of the Moroccan Autonomy Plan, which aims to achieve a peaceful resolution for the Sahara region while affirming Morocco's sovereignty.
- Furthermore, we continue to urge all parties involved, namely Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, and the Polisario, to remain steadfast in their efforts to find a realistic and long-lasting political solution based on compromise to this regional dispute.
- Antigua and Barbuda applauds Morocco's respect for the ceasefire in the Moroccan Sahara and calls on the other parties to return to the negotiating table to achieve a solution in an effort to maintain the region's peace and security.
- We welcome the quiet atmosphere of democracy and stability in the region and the full participation of the region's population in its development through the local elected representatives.

- In that vein, Antigua and Barbuda commends the continued involvement of the Moroccan Sahara representatives in regional seminars such as this and round-table discussions.
- Additionally, we refer to and commend the new development model in the Sahara, recently launched by the Kingdom of Morocco, which incorporates a sustainable and inclusive approach to development as a key aspect of the region's advancement, thereby addressing its socio-economic development.
- Lastly, we continue to encourage full cooperation between Morocco and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and welcome the United Nations' efforts as the exclusive framework for achieving a lasting solution to this regional dispute.