

Distr. RESTRICTED

PRS/2023/CRP.10

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

FORTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

**Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:
innovative steps to ensure the attainment of the Sustainable Development
Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories**

**Bali, Indonesia
24 to 26 May 2023**

**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF

PAPUA NEW GUINEA**



Statement by

**Mr. Fred Sarufa
Deputy Permanent Representative
of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations and
Head of Delegation**

at the

**2023 Pacific Regional Seminar of the Special
Committee on the Situation with regard to the
Implementation of the Declaration on the
Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries
and Peoples: "Innovative steps to ensure the
attainment of the SDGs in the Non-Self-
Governing Territories"**

24 May 2023,

Bali, Indonesia

"Check against delivery"

Distinguished Madam Chair, Excellency's and fellow participants,

In my national capacity and on my delegation's behalf, it is indeed an honour and privilege for us to, once again, join you all for the annual Regional Seminar of the Special Committee on Decolonization, particularly on this "Island of the gods - Bali", whose allure and charm could not be resisted, in my case, that is, and perhaps so too, for other participants, by the looks of the attendance at our meeting.

More importantly, however, the ambience and unifying spirit of this venue, I believe, will help reinvigorate us to do better by ensuring that the Regional Seminars are not deemed as mere Talkshop but rather seen to be making a real difference in the lives and livelihoods of the peoples of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, and also hasten, on a case-by-case basis, the delivery of our UN Charter mandate on decolonization.

Madam Chair, in this spirit, may I, at the outset, extend Papua New Guinea's hearty congratulations and profound appreciation to the people and Government of the Republic of Indonesia, our close neighbour and friend, for the excellent arrangements, warm hospitality and for being a generous host, and for timely message from Her Excellency Retno Marsudi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

A special word of thanks is due also to our dear UN Ambassadorial colleague from Indonesia His Excellency Ambassador Armanatha Nasir and his team for the commendable work that has enabled us, not only to be here this week but also importantly, returned the Regional Seminar to the Pacific region after nine years of hiatus. Terima kasih banyak, Yang Hormat!¹

Let me also recognize Madam Chair Her Excellency Ambassador Menissa Rambally of Saint Lucia and her distinguished delegation for the able leadership since assuming the post earlier this year, subsequent to the exceptional last Regional Seminar the Chair's delegation hosted in Castries, Saint Lucia. My delegation's continuing support for the Chair's stewardship of our work is assured.

Madam Chair and fellow participants;

We are heartened by the excellent level of participation for this Seminar, which continues the impressive trend this past few years. We welcome and further encourage it.

¹ Thank you indeed Your Excellency!

Noteworthy also, is that the tenets of democracy exercised in the Non-Self-Governing Territories territorial government remains functional, as attested by the recent role reversal in French Polynesia, following their elections, and whose representatives are with us this week.

Madam Chair, Papua New Guinea is honoured and pleased to, once again, assume, now under your leadership, the important role of Rapporteur for this Pacific Regional Seminar. This will indeed be the second consecutive year and the third occasion since 2018 for my delegation to take up this mandate. This is a role my delegation takes seriously, as a Committee member.

We also value and appreciate the confidence and trust shown for my delegation in the Rapporteur's role and pledge to work in a spirit of constructive partnership with all participants for a successful conclusion to our work this week and beyond.

For us, on a case-by-case basis, each and every Non-Self-Governing Territory and participant and stakeholders, with respect to the decolonization agenda, have an important role to play and deserves to be heard, and in accordance with existing arrangements of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on Decolonisation, in particular and also the context of relevant provisions under the UN Security Council.

In this spirit, may I also take this opportunity, Madam Chair, to recognize and warmly welcome my fellow countryman, mentor and distinguished Director-General for the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, Mr. Leonard Louma, in his inaugural participation today in the Pacific Regional Seminar since assuming office. We look forward to work in constructive partnership with him and his team on the decolonization agenda, in general, and on The Question of New Caledonia, in particular.

The onus is on the Special Committee members, including my own, to ensure that we better harness the narratives brought before the Committee and leverage them in as such a way as to benefit the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Madam Chair, turning to this Seminar's theme: "Innovative steps to ensure the attainment of the SDGs in the Non-Self-Governing Territories", it is indeed an important one, deserving our focused attention.

For my delegation, there is, however, semblances of this Seminar's theme to last year's theme and therefore my delegation will not repeat what we shared then, which remain valid in the context of this year's theme.

Nonetheless, we have identified six possible areas that in our view could be helpful to deliver the SDGs to Non-Self-Governing Territories. These include:

1. Understanding the current status of SDGs implementation;
2. Better leverage the ongoing UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting processes for focused attention on the Non-Self-Governing Territories issues, including SDGs;
3. Proposal for a Special UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the Decolonisation Agenda;
4. Call for an SDGs Implementation Matrix or scorecard from administering Powers as integral part of the UN Charter Article 73e information submission;
5. Better empowerment of Non-Self-Governing Territories; and
6. Special Measures.

Madam Chair and dear friends, now let me elaborate briefly on these six areas.

First, our starting base point must be to understand that currently the SDGs, globally, are largely offtrack. Thanks, in part, to the global COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing geopolitical tensions and conflicts, including the Ukraine War compounded by the adverse impacts of climate change and ecosystems destruction by human activities.

The Secretary-General's special edition progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Global Sustainable Development Report are clear and instructive on this issue. Similarly, this is also reflected in the SDGs Summit Zero Draft Political Declaration, which is now being negotiated in the General Assembly.

This therefore likely means that the Non-Self-Governing Territories are not faring any better in the SDGs implementation or attainment.

We need to better understand the root causes of the SDGs regression or stagnation. Innovative ways may not necessarily work if the root causes are unknown or poorly understood and inadequately addressed.

Madam Chair, additionally, the General Assembly is currently working on multiple processes leading to various High-Level Meetings in September this year and next year and in 2025 the Social Summit. All basically relate to the SDGs implementation. These include the SDGs Summit, The Summit of the Future; the High-Level Meeting on Financing for Development; the Universal Health Coverage; the High-Level Meeting on TB; the High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Preparedness, Prevention and Resilience; and the UN Secretary-General's Climate Ambition Summit.

Though the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development is very clear and unequivocal on leaving no-one-behind but when considering the various ongoing General Assembly processes now, how many of them speak in depth to the decolonisation agenda? The brief references to self-determination and “vulnerable communities”, in those negotiation draft texts, in our view, does not address it sufficiently.

We therefore suggest that clear textual language proposals need to be included in the various political declarations now being negotiated to include and address the SDGs in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Madam Chair, another possible option that could be considered is to propose a UN General Assembly resolution for a Special High-Level Meeting on Decolonisation issues to give new lease of life to the decolonization agenda. This is with the view to bring this issue to an end in view of the continuous status quo and the often-repeated (4 times spanning over 30 years heading to the 40th year) designation of the new International Decade to Eradicate Colonialism, which has been done 4 times already, spanning over 30 years.

In the UN at 75 Political Declaration, we called for a new lease of life for the UN and its work. The decolonization agenda is one area deserving of renewed vigour to end this unacceptable scourge to all of humanity.

Relatedly, we need to ask ourselves while trying to figure out possible innovative ways to help deliver the SDGs to Non-Self-Governing-Territories is, do we have a reliable SDGs scorecard for all 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories to understand the state of play and how best we consider lending specific support, as necessary, in close cooperation with the administering Powers?

We would venture the suggestion that a SDGs-specific implementation matrix providing a scorecard on SDGs implementation in Non-Self-Governing Territories be provide by administering Powers as part and parcel of the UN Charter Article 73e on transmission of information on developments in NSGTs.

Madam Chair, an additional possible way to deliver the SDGs for NSGTs is to have the people empowered through special measures such as targeted human and institutional capacity building for local ownership and leadership on the SDGs agenda.

This must involve the full realization of the transfer of competencies and decision-making powers from the metropolitan authorities to the territories and build trust and confidence in the abilities and capabilities of the people of the NSGTs to shape their own future destiny. In the case of New Caledonia, not all competencies have been transferred to the Territory and this is a concern for the people of the territory.