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**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**

**OPENING SUBSTANTIVE STATEMENT**

**BY THE CHAIR OF**

**THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF 24**

First meeting  
24 May 2023, 10:00 a.m.

**Special Committee on the Situation with regard  
to the Implementation of the Declaration on the  
Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries  
and Peoples**

**Pacific regional seminar 2023**

**Elements for the substantive statement by  
Her Excellency Ms. Menissa Rambally**

**Chair 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**

Bali, Indonesia, 24 May 2023

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The General Assembly has over the years referred to “the extremely fragile economies of the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories and their vulnerability to natural disasters” as well as the special challenges they face in planning and implementing sustainable development.<sup>1</sup>

Reports of the annual regional seminars have also identified a number of cross-cutting issues in the process of decolonization, including but not limited to, the effects of climate change and global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which have highlighted the importance of the economic sustainability and diversification of the economic base in the Territories.<sup>2</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic dealt a severe blow to countries and regions, including the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The impact of the pandemic on healthcare, education, and income has been far-reaching and unprecedented in the last 30 years.

It has affected people from all socioeconomic backgrounds and continues to afflict individuals and economies, causing ongoing suffering and hardship. Even for those that escaped the worst of the pandemic, including some of the Territories like Tokelau which confirmed the

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<sup>1</sup> See resolution [77/131](#) of 12 December 2022.

<sup>2</sup> See [A/77/23](#), annex II, para. 29 (g) and (j).

first cases only in December 2022. The economic aftermath has caused immense suffering, exacerbating existing inequalities and disproportionately impacting vulnerable societies.

According to a UNDP study, around 44 million people may fall into extreme poverty by 2030, and an additional 207 million could be affected under a prolonged recovery scenario.<sup>3</sup>

However, investments in sustainable development such as social protection, welfare programmes and governance, supported by international solidarity and cooperation, can halt the negative trend caused by COVID-19 and expedite progress toward achieving the SDG goals of the 2030 Agenda.

As noted by the General Assembly in its annual resolution of the question of the Implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization by the UN system and international and regional organizations, the large majority of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories are small islands Territories.

In this regard, it is important to recall that the following Non-Self-Governing Territories are included in the list of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as non-UN members/Associate members of regional commissions: American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Montserrat, New Caledonia, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands.<sup>4</sup>

The General Assembly has referred to the limited development options of the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, referring to the Territories in the Caribbean that were affected by the 2017 hurricanes, the General Assembly has reaffirmed its concern over the negative economic, social and environmental consequences resulting from such events, hampering the achievement of sustainable development in these Territories.<sup>6</sup>

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### ***Efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda***

More Territories are now integrating the SDGs in their development plans and strategies. Supporting the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in line with relevant General Assembly resolutions, in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is vital.

In this manner, it is pertinent to draw attention to the activities undertaken by various United Nations entities as well as other institutions, in supporting the Territories in the implementation of the SDGs.<sup>7</sup> Such activities take the form, among others, of technical assistance, capacity development, and participation of the Territories in regional platforms and events enabling them to make their voices heard. Both the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) have been active in this regard.

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<sup>3</sup> [Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals | SDG Integration \(undp.org\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Small Island Developing States | Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> See resolution [77/131](#) of 12 December 2022

<sup>6</sup> See resolution [77/130](#) of 12 December 2022.

<sup>7</sup> See [E/2022/51](#).

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Moving on to another area where the support given to the Territories is crucial, let's recall that the importance of data and statistics for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to monitor progress made on the SDGs is undeniable and has been emphasized in multiple instances.

A number of Territories have undertaken important work in this regard, with the support of United Nations specialized agencies, funds, and programmes. It is worth mentioning, by way of example, the work of ECLAC which, in the case of the British Virgin Islands, has focused on strengthening the capacity of the Territory in the production and dissemination of official statistics, to enhance its ability to implement and monitor the SDGs and to measure progress.

We can also mention Tokelau's participation in a regional workshop on international education statistics and monitoring Sustainable Development Goal 4, organized by UNESCO and its Institute for Statistics, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Tokelau has also been supported by the Secretariat in education data extraction and generating data related to Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its indicators.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

In echoing the General Assembly, I would like to welcome the assistance provided to the Territories by agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, while also emphasizing the need to strengthen the assistance extended, within the framework of their mandates and in accordance with relevant resolutions.

It is also worth recalling that in the concluding observations of the regional seminars, administering Powers are encouraged "to provide to the Special Committee, under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations, the status of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Non-Self-Governing Territories."<sup>8</sup>

Let us also remind ourselves that the Committee is mandated to continue to examine, among other, the economic situation in the Territories with the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system requested to provide economic, social and other assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

With these thoughts in mind, I encourage you to take advantage of the unique opportunity that the seminar presents us with, to share the experiences of the Territories in their path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.

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<sup>8</sup> See [A/77/23](#), annex II, para. 34 (bb).