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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

MR. ARVIND MATHUR

UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR A.I. IN TIMOR-LESTE

Remarks by the UN Resident Coordinator a.i. in Timor-Leste
Pacific Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the Fourth
International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism
Panel Discussion: The Role of the United Nations System in
Supporting the Non-Self-Governing Territories

Dili, 22 May 2025 | 3:00 PM

Honroable Chair of the Special Committee, HE Menissa Rambally,
Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia
Distinguished Members of the Special Committee,
Excellencies, colleagues, and friends,

It is a great honour to address this regional seminar on behalf of the United Nations system in Timor-Leste — a nation whose very presence in this discussion speaks for the power of perseverance, resilience, and the promise of self-determination.

The very fact that this seminar is taking place here in Dili is a strong reminder of what can be achieved when the principles of the United Nations are translated into long-term solidarity, institution-building, and respect for the aspirations of a people.

Seventeen Non-Self-Governing Territories remain on the UN list today, home to nearly two million people.

The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and the General Assembly resolutions that flow from it, are more than legal instruments. They are moral commitments that continue to guide the work of the United Nations.

Across the UN system, that commitment is reflected in both longstanding engagement and targeted technical cooperation. The recent Economic and Social Council report - E/2025/56 - demonstrates how UN entities continue to support Non-Self-Governing Territories in advancing sustainable development, building institutional resilience, and navigating the complexities of vulnerability, climate risk, and limited fiscal space in accordance with their respective mandates.

We see this support in many forms — whether it is WHO delivering vital training and supplies during the pandemic, UNDP supporting climate adaptation and governance, or ESCAP and ECLAC facilitating participation in regional policy platforms. UNODC's work to address organised crime and trafficking, and IMF's targeted capacity development in economic governance, are further examples. These are not abstract interventions; they are efforts rooted in the very real needs of communities seeking stability, dignity, and a more just future.

And yet, gaps remain. As the ECOSOC report makes clear, the limited allocation of regular budget resources, the absence of direct engagement in some contexts, and the structural constraints on participation all point to the need for a stronger, more coordinated approach. **General Assembly resolutions 79/95 and 79/96** urge the international community — including the United Nations system — to do more, and to do so with urgency.

The experience of Timor-Leste offers valuable insight in this regard. From the early days of UN engagement, through peacekeeping and institution-building, and now as a UN partner focused on the Sustainable Development Goals, Timor-Leste stands as a living example of what sustained international support can help realise. The UN system in Timor-Leste has been proud to walk alongside the Timorese people in their journey — a journey that continues to evolve, but one that is grounded in national leadership, local ownership, and global solidarity.

As we look to the future, the United Nations system reaffirms its commitment to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. We will continue to support their development aspirations and their journey — whatever path it may be — toward decolonization.

I thank you all.

