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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 THE REPRESENTATIVE OF

BELIZE

Belize Statement on British Virgin Islands at C24 Regional Seminar in Timor Leste 2025

Madam Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

At the outset I wish to congratulate the Government and people of Timor Leste on the occasion of the 23rd anniversary of the restoration of their independence. Thank you for inviting us to share in the celebration of this momentous event. I also wish to thank the government and people of Timor Leste for hosting the C24 Regional Seminar this week. I congratulate them on the excellent logistical arrangements made for the conduct of this seminar and wish to extend my appreciation for the warmth and hospitality they have extended to us since our arrival on Monday.

Madam Chair,

I wish to commend you for the very disciplined but fair manner in which you have been conducting the seminar. This has enabled a frank exchange of views and has resulted in a most informative and enriching event.

Madam Chair,

This seminar occurs as we are preparing to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations and as we commence the process to examine our institution and make it fit for purpose in this 21st century. One thing we know that will not change is one of our founding principles: that all people have the right to self-determination and territorial integrity. These were the guiding principles on which the people of Belize relied upon. Through the good offices of the United Nations, we were heard; we achieved independence 43 years ago, and we were welcomed into the family of the United Nations.

Therefore, I wish to join my CARICOM colleagues who expressed support to the legitimate elected government and the people of the British Virgin Islands for their right to self-rule. We maintain that any action to impose direct rule from London would be inconsistent with the UN Declaration of Human Rights. We would like to remind the United Kingdom of its international obligations under UN Resolution 1514 of 1960 – the United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. I join the Special Envoy of the Premier of the BVI in thanking the C24 Special Committee on its mission to the British Virgin Islands last year to hear directly from its people and see firsthand the developments in the territory. We welcome the report of the Committee and in particular its conclusions that the United Kingdom should grant full self-government to the British Virgin Islands leading to independence thereafter, a process with which Belize is very familiar.

In conclusion, Madam Chair, I wish to thank the delegation of Nicaragua for offering to host the Seminar in the Caribbean next year and wish to extend Belize's support for this offer.