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SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean Regional Seminar on the implementation of the Second

International Decade for the Eradication of

St. George's, Grenada
22 to 24 May 2007

Statement by H.E. Margaret Hughes Ferreri

Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the

Grenadines to the United Nations

Chair of the Special Committee

Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to
the United Nations, Chair of the Special Committee

Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are delighted and honoured to have the United Nations 2007 Caribbean Regional
Seminar hosted by Grenada, one of the steadfast and independent nations of the
region and the world at large. Appropriately, the Seminar is taking place during the
Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the
Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. I
again extend our sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Grenada for their
hospitality.

Chair, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Saint Lucia is still fresh in our
minds, the Special Committee exists to provide the people of the Territories with
information on all of the options available to them and to assist where it can in

the years into several notable features: informal aspects, analytical scrutiny and
of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
(resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960) and subsequent relevant General
Assembly resolutions, as well as the pertinent provisions of the United Nations
Charter.

With only two-and-a-half years left of the Second International Decade for the
Eradication of Colonialism, it is essential that we focus the next steps in decolonisation
application of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

There is some good news to report. For instance, with regard to Tokelau, it is hoped
that positive developments towards decolonisation and subsequent "de-listing" by the
Special Committee and the General Assembly can be expected after the second
referendum that will be held in November 2007. The referendum this year is likely to

Statement by H.E. Margaret Hughes Ferrar,
Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to
the United Nations, Chair of the Special Committee

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Seminar hosted by Grenada, one of the steadfast supporters of decolonisation in the
Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the
Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. I
hospitality.

Six months ago the Special Committee convened its last regional seminar in the
Group of Caribbean Territories. Representatives of Saint Lucia, Nevis and Antigua
minds: the Special Committee exists to provide the people of the Territories with
information on all of the options available to them and to assist where it can in
furtherance of the self-determination process. Today and during the next two days

The process of decolonisation promoted by the Special Committee has evolved over

of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
(resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960) and subsequent relevant General
Assembly resolutions as well as the pertinent provisions of the United Nations
Charter.

With only two and a half years left of the Second International Decade for the
Eradication of Colonialism, it is essential that we focus the next steps in decolonisation
on tangible results for all concerned. Only such concrete steps towards the
realisation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence can be considered as

There is some good news to report. For instance, with regard to Tokelau, it is hoped

be considered as a legitimate, genuine and conclusive act of self-determination. If, as expected, Tokelau is indeed delisted, a "lessons learned" briefing to the Special Committee on this important act of self-determination might be useful. Such a briefing could help all parties concerned with Non-Self-Governing Territories to share active-oriented and results-based strategies, on a case-by-case basis.

end of the decade in British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands and possibly Anguilla and Cayman Islands, all of which, as you know, are administered by the United Kingdom. We are also optimistic that there will be progressive developments

the United States. The opportunity is there for the parties concerned to build on ongoing or recently concluded internal constitutional or status exercises.

How do we envisage that progress can be achieved? It can only happen through the recognition of the free-will of the people in light of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In this connection, I repeat what the former Chair said at the last regional

Committee is not to persuade or influence the people of the Territories about a particular political alternative." (End of quote)

As we all know, the ongoing or recently concluded internal constitutional or status review exercises in the aforementioned United Kingdom and United States

involving the current relationship between the Territories and their administering Power. Important constitutional and political, status-related

in view of this reality, the Special Committee, and upon its recommendations, the

has to be completely convinced that the people of the Territories are freely expressing internationally recognised self-determination.

In order to ensure progress on this, the Special Committee intends to place greater weight to the need to appreciate fully the fairness and authenticity of decisions

It is important that we measure political progress astutely and clearly so that we are able to recognise an act of self-determination when we see one. We must not limit

in some of the Territories, and moving forward in a creative way. Instead of

automatically discounting the so-called "status quo" situation in its entirety, we would be better advised, where appropriate, to think creatively of its possibilities.

Clearly the recently concluded "modernisation" and "study" exercises in a number of Territories fall short of an internationally acceptable change of, or verdict on, the Territory's status. At the same time, however, these exercises could provide the Special Committee with an opportunity to follow up and put the self-determination issue to the voters in a clear and simple fashion.

Exploratory discussions on a results-oriented strategy for the Special Committee might involve the following elements in four key areas:

(1) With regard to the administering Powers concerned, the Bureau will coordinate the United Kingdom and United States exercises in each Territory - American Samoa, British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands and possibly Anguilla, Cayman Islands and United States Virgin Islands.

(2) Moreover, the Committee will explore ways to enhance information exchange between territorial Governments, the administering Powers and the United Nations. Territorial Governments could designate an international 24-hour point, while being completely transparent down to the local level of administration. Such a total point would simply facilitate the Special Committee's working level contact with elected territorial Governments. It would also facilitate the open exploration and informal identification of appropriate modalities (general election, plebiscite, question, referendum, etc.) that could help ascertain the independent but representative wishes of the Territories. Such a point would be established in consultation with the relevant administering Power and the territorial government concerned.

(3) In this connection, further efforts should be made to field in close cooperation with the administering Powers, and to inform their people about political situations in Non-Self-Governing Territories and inform their people about political

(4) At the sixty-second General Assembly, the Special Committee would express its appreciation to the administering Powers for their cooperation in the process of the study exercises and the realization of the principles of "independence and self-determination".

Assembly would recognise the continued importance of relevant resolutions such as 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960 and 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, addressing political status options freely determined, - support providing the people of the Territories with information on all of the options available to them.

Clearly, the recently concluded "modernisation" and "study" exercises in a number of Territories fall short of an internationally acceptable change of, or verdict on, the Territory's status. At the same time, however, these exercises could provide the Special Committee with an opportunity to follow up and put the self-determination issue to the voters in a clear and simple fashion.

Further discussions on a small island State, such as the British Overseas Territory, should involve the following elements in four key areas:

(1) With regard to the administering Powers concerned, the Bureau will contact the United Kingdom and United States to explore how to build on the internal constitutional and political status-related exercises in each Territory - American Samoa, British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands and possibly Anguilla, Cayman Islands and United States Virgin Islands.

(2) Moreover, the Committee will explore ways to enhance information exchange between territorial Governments, the administering Powers and the United Nations. One proposal that could be considered is that, in consultation with the administering Powers, territorial Governments could designate an informational "C.O.P. focal point" line of communication. Such a focal point would simply help facilitate the Special

Committee to facilitate the open exploration and informal identification of appropriate modalities (general election, plebiscite question, referendum, etc.) that could help ascertain in a preliminary but representative fashion the will of the people in a given Territory. For example the use of public opinion polls could be considered by the Committee, in full consultation with the relevant administering Power and the territorial government concerned.

(3) In this connection, further efforts should be made to field, in close cooperation with the relevant administering Power, visiting missions to learn first-hand about the situation in Non-Self-Governing Territories and inform their people about political status issues and the decolonisation work of the Special Committee.

reflect the current approach that has been elaborated in the course of our recent seminars and the meetings of the Special Committee. In particular, the General

and constructive collaboration among the administering Powers, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the Special Committee; and – build an internal constitutional order and status every exercise with a view to the early realising of some of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

We all know that, for different reasons, the prospects for decolonisation are confined to a few Non-Self-Governing Territories (with the exception of Tokelau). However, the current situation in a few Non-Self-Governing Territories stands to benefit from a creative approach, if only

decolonisation can muster the required political will. It is the responsibility, and the obligation – of all of us in the Special Committee to focus our attention and energy on those Territories where progress is at least conceivable. "No action" can no longer be the preferred option for the international community.

The Special Committee has to find new ways of going about its business. To me, this would entail "vigilant cooperation" with the administering Powers; proactive efforts that could lead to the early identification of the proposed final status of the Non-Self-Governing territorial Governments; and a carefully designed initiative at the upcoming General Assembly along the lines just proposed.

I look forward to the next few days. It is my hope that we can achieve positive results from our deliberations and spell out the action- and goal-oriented details of our strategy for the "next steps in decolonisation".

Thank you.