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Caribbean Regional Seminar on the implementation of the Second  
International Decade for the Eradication of  
Colonialism: next steps in decolonization

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

Caribbean Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the Second International  
Decade for the Eradication of the Colonialism, October 1982

Statement by the Argentine Delegate

Madam Chair,

First, I would like to thank the Government and People of Grenada for their warm welcome and hospitality and the Special Committee on Decolonization for the invitation extended to my Government to attend and address the Seminar on the situation in the non-self governing territories. I would like to add my heartfelt support and good wishes for the success of this Seminar and for your chairmanship of the Special Committee which will help to continue and advance the decolonisation process.

It is a pleasure to recall the successes of the United Nations and its fulfilment of its commitment to continue working towards its goal of "the achievement of a just and equitable solution to the outstanding 'Southern Islands' which affects the territorial integrity of the Argentine Republic and its sovereignty by its people.

The Argentine position on this matter is enshrined in the Argentine National Constitution which states: "The Argentine Nation ratifies its full and exclusive sovereignty over the Malvinas, South Georgias and South Sandwich Islands and the corresponding maritime and insular areas, since they are an integral part of the national territory. The recovery of those territories and the full exercise of sovereignty over them, while respecting the way of life of their inhabitants, constitutes a permanent objective of the Argentine people which is not to be renounced."

Allow me to elaborate on the meaning of this paragraph. The "Question of the Malvinas Islands" which includes the Malvinas Islands, South Georgias and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, constitutes a special and particular case as it was expressly recognized by the Resolutions of the Special Committee related to this Question. Its specificity derives from the following historical facts:

For most of the 16th century only navigators in the service of Spain travelled the maritime routes along the South American coast, advancing southwards in their search for an inter-oceanic passage. In this process the Malvinas Islands were discovered by members of Magellan's expedition in 1492. From the beginning they were shown on European maps under a variety of names and remained under effective control of Spanish authorities.

When in 1764 a French sailor established Port Louis on Soledad Island, Spain objected and France recognized Spain's sovereignty. In 1770 the British established a settlement to Spain, which renamed it Puerto Soledad. The year after the French settlement, a clandestine British expedition arrived in the archipelago and in 1766 English sailors established a fort at a place they named Port Egmont on an island to the west of Gran Malvina. Despite the secrecy of the British government, Spain became aware of it and insisted on protesting its rights. Not receiving an acceptable response, it

set out to find the illegal settlement and in 1770 expelled the settlers by force. After settling their differences with Spain for this action, Great Britain withdrew from Port Fmونت in 1774. From then on, the Spanish authorities in Puerto Soledad continued to exercise their jurisdiction and control over the whole of the archipelago.

During this time Great Britain consented the open, continuous, effective and peaceful exercise of State sovereignty by Spain first and Argentina later. During the thirty years following the British withdrawal, Spain appointed 32 governors.

As for Argentina, the first governors of the United Provinces of the River Plate, which included the territory, inherited from Spain by succession of States in accordance with the ut possidetis juris of 1810.

In 1820, Naval officer David Jewett took possession of the Malvinas Islands on behalf of the United States. He held an anniversary ceremony in Puerto Soledad which was attended by sealers and whalers of different nationalities, most of them from the United States and Great Britain, who happened to disembark on the islands in the course of their whaling operations. However, neither the United States nor Great Britain made an official recognition of their claims. Nor did Great Britain ever send a ship to the Malvinas Islands during the process of recognition of Argentina's independence, which started in 1810 and ended with the signing of the Navigation Treaty in 1823.

During the 1820s, Argentine governments continued to take legislative measures on the Malvinas Islands, including the appointment of governors, legislation on fishing resources and the granting of territorial concessions. As a result, the population of Puerto Soledad grew to a little more than one hundred fixed residents and a few more who came to the port.

On June 10, 1828, a decree of the Argentine government decided to decentralize some administrative powers from Buenos Aires and established a Delegación and a Cabildo in Puerto Soledad. The Delegación was composed of 174 British and Argentine residents, 100 of whom were British.

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On January 16, 1833, when news of the events in the Malvinas Islands reached Buenos Aires, the Argentine government demanded explanations from the British Chargé d'Affaires, who was unaware of the actions carried out by vessels of his country. On 27 January, the Minister of Foreign Affairs presented a protest to the British government official.

I would like to quote part of that first protest of 29 January, for the audience to be aware







such dispute must be reached through negotiations between both

mandated negotiations without delay for a peaceful solution and 25 of the South Atlantic Conflict, we are still faced with a new and direct attempt between the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom, taking due account of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. Unfortunately, the Argentine Government's efforts towards re-establishing negotiations according to the mandate of the General Assembly and the Special Committee, have not yet found a positive reply from the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, on this occasion, my Government reiterates its conviction on the legitimate basis of our position and its disposition to resume negotiations with the United Kingdom in order to reach a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the "Question of the Malvinas Islands".

This is the spirit of the paragraph I quoted from our National Constitution at the beginning of my statement.

Thank you, Madam Chair.