

RESTRICTED

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Regional Seminar on the implementation of the Second

International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

Randana, Indonesia

STATEMENT

BY

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF TOKELAU

OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DECOLONIZATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF

THE OLD TOKELAU

FAIRFULLY TO YOU

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STATEMENT AT THE PACIFIC REGIONAL SEMINAR
OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DECOLONIZATION

*Second International Decade for the Eradication of
Colonialism: priorities for remainder of the decade*

Bandung, Indonesia: 14-16 May 2008

"Implementation of the Second international Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: priorities for remainder of the Decade"

Chairperson,
Rapporteur,

Dear Members of this Seminar,

I convey warm greetings from the Council of Tokelau, the General Fono³, and the Council for the Ongoing Government and the people of Tokelau⁵.

I also convey my sincere apologies for not being able to make it in person to this Seminar as I am in New Zealand. I pray that God will continue to give the Special Committee through its strength and guidance in this very important work.

The theme of this Seminar is timely as all those who are taking a stocktake of the activities of the Special Committee and tracing these against the Committee's objectives for the last several decades. It is useful that we continue to remind ourselves of what has been achieved as we continue to discuss the priorities for the remainder of the decade.

From the outset I would like to register Tokelau's appreciation and gratitude for the last several years of the Special Committee's determination. The ability of the Special Committee to closely monitor and provide support for Tokelau has enabled our people, through our leaders, to convey our dreams and aspirations on how we would like to see ourselves. Tokelau will continue to work with the Special Committee and its members with regard to the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

As the members of the Seminar are aware, the latest referendum in Tokelau was held from 20-24 October 2007. There have been some comments written on this important event but I do not wish to belabour the issue in this statement. However it would be useful to elaborate on some of the sentiments from the February 2006 and October 2007 Referenda. The proposal at both referenda was that Tokelau should choose self government in free association with New Zealand and retain its dependency status.⁶

¹ Commonly referred to as the *Taupulega*.

² The 3 villages are Fakaofu, Nukunonu and Atafu.

³ The General Fono is the governing body for Tokelau.

⁴ A 6 member Executive Government of Tokelau covers 49 square kilometers, the population of Tokelau.

⁵ Approximately 1500 people of Polynesian origin spread over 3 atolls of a landmass of 12 square kilometers.

⁶ UN Report: *Implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism*, 1997, para. 10.

The relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand is described and captured in the Joint Principles of Partnership 7

commitment is fulfilled, they nevertheless set a benchmark in terms of the process and engagement from all stakeholders in allowing the people of Tokelau to decide their political future.

The work on self-determination has brought the relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand to a new level. We can be truly proud – we are partners. The Government of New Zealand has been supportive of Tokelau's decision of an act of self-determination and has indicated through the Prime Minister's statement

mission to guide and demonstrate Tokelau's willingness to restore the political framework to manage its own affairs.

In discussions between Tokelau and New Zealand in February 2011, the leaders of both countries agreed on the need to focus on strengthening local capacity and infrastructure development for the people of Tokelau. Following these discussions, the General Fono resolved in February 2011 that there is a lot of work that needs to be done in strengthening local capacity and, while work on self-determination will continue, it will be several years before the issue of another referendum on self-government is considered again by the General Fono.

The challenge for the leaders of Tokelau is to strengthen our institutions and unite all our people. This includes those who supported the proposal for self-determination and those who rejected the proposal. My intention as a leader is to unite our people in a very real way. It is important that Tokelau's decisions, policies and priorities reflect the needs and priorities of all our people, those who were in favor of the package of free association and those who were not. In realizing our vision and in uniting our people, we will realize the goals of self-government as a people and this will continue to encourage us towards an act of self-determination.

Tokelau continues to highlight the fact that we are a small island with limited geographical attributes and we are working closely with New Zealand to direct key resources towards priority areas identified by Tokelau. Tokelau is looking towards areas to enhance viability. Tokelau remains committed to the future of this community in the future. One aspect of this viability issue is the Tokelau International Trust Fund which currently sits

at approximately NZ\$25 million. The inter-generational characteristic of this fund is to pass on assets of the present generation to our children in the future in the meantime. Tokelau and New Zealand under the Principles of Partnerships and the Economic Support Arrangement (ESA) will focus on:

• **Infrastructure:** NZ\$4 million has been targeted to build a new Administration building in Atafu, Hospital in Fakaofu, and a school in Nukunonu. The three Villages have started the process of building the new schools and hospital. This will be followed by building a new Administration building in Atafu, Hospital in Fakaofu, and a school in Nukunonu. The three Villages have started the process of building the new schools and hospital within the current ESA period (2007/08-2009/10).

• **Transportation Systems:** Tokelau's transportation system remains the primary mode of transport for our people. Involving the people in the development of an efficient transportation system, the Government of New Zealand is working on providing a "state of the art" transportation system that will meet the needs and the concerns of our people. This work is progressing well and we hope to see a new ship for Tokelau in 2009/2010.

• **Capacity Building:** Acknowledging the level and amount of work that needs to be done, we as leaders have encouraged capacity building in all institutions of the government. This call is directed at the Tokelau Public Service (TPS), all the village Councils, the General Fono, the Council for the Ongoing Government, and Community based Sectors (Women and Youth).

• **Strengthening the Pillars of Government:** In furtherance of the capacity building issue is the strengthening of the 3 pillars of a government – the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary. The Law Commissioners have had annual training sessions since 2004 and the current decision of the Government to build supporting infrastructure has seen the "face of justice" being acknowledged in the villages.

The work on Tokelau's capacity development has been closely supported by the UNDP Office in Samoa. I would like to acknowledge the continuous support provided by the UNDP Office which has supported the Tokelau Self-Determination Project in 2006 and 2007. Further resources for capacity building have been made available following the visit to Tokelau of 5 regional bodies (SBO, NCF, SREFA, SREER, CODAO) and 5 UN organizations (UNDP, UN Small Grants Programme, UNICEF, WHO, UNIFEM, UNESCO). The visit was partners active in the region.

Currently, assistance from the regional and international organizations has seen Tokelau get teachers to support the introduction of years 12 and 13 in all our village schools, community consultations on non-communicable diseases, bilateral arrangements⁹ on waste management, gender development – in the areas of elimination of any sorts of violence against women and our young people, and efforts in many other areas to improve the living conditions in our environment.

Mr. Chair

Finally but certainly not the least of matters in my agenda is Tokelau's currently working towards an energy policy that will allow the small atolls to

will cost approximately NZ\$7 million to put together this system. We will continue to look for funds in this area but I wish to convey our commitment and responsibility in the area of global warming and climate change. Tokelau makes a plea to this Seminar to convey this very important issue as a development concern in Tokelau's move towards greater self-reliance.

understanding and appreciation of Tokelau's progress with self determination. Tokelau will continue to move towards self determination by enhancing its capacity to manage its own affairs and to be able to sustain its development. We ensure that Tokelau continues to be visible and "in the picture" in the future. Tokelau will continue to look at the Committee for its independence, and support with regard to the implementation of the second international decade for the eradication of colonialism.

I convey best wishes to the Special Committee and Distinguished Guests to this seminar in all your deliberations. May our Almighty God continue to guide you throughout this seminar and that you return safely to your home.

Thank you for the invitation and the opportunity given to Tokelau to address the Seminar.

Ke fakamanuia e te Atua te Komiti ma ke ola ia Tokelau

⁹ An MOU was signed between Tokelau and Samoa in 2007 on waste management.

¹⁰ In addition to other sustainable environment issues such as waste management policies which allows some of Tokelau's waste to be taken to Samoa.