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**Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: the future for decolonization in
the Non Self-Governing Territories: what are the prospects?**

**Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
16 to 18 May 2017**

Confidential Regional Committee on the Implementation of the Third

CONFIDENTIAL - SECURITY INFORMATION

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implementation of the directives given to it by the General Assembly. In the absence of accountability, what remains is the "repetition of process" with the adoption of resolutions without regard for their implementation.

relevant General Assembly resolutions concerning the NSGTs the relevant

The new Secretary-General **António Guterres** one year later in February 2017 commented that:

"the process was not yet finished, as 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained. "We must unite our strengths to complete this historic task," he stressed, noting that the process would require persistent and sustained engagement by the Committee the

This call for a case-by-case approach dates back decades, and has been stymied by the lack of administering power engagement. It has been pointed out that the participation of the administering power is not required for a case-by-case assessment of the territories to be undertaken. It does require the willingness to proceed, and the process can be advanced by simply removing what has become an unnecessary in the resolution requiring their participation to begin the process. Their absence is not an impediment, but an opportunity to use "innovative means" to initiate the

case-by-case approach. This would provide important clarity on the dynamic of the contemporary dependency arrangements

This is longstanding language for decades, but apart from the tripartite collaboration of the U.N. with the Government of New Zealand and the territorial government of Tokelau, it is difficult to identify other such programmes - even as many territories have been requesting such assistance over the years.

As with the case-by-case work programme, the operationalisation of a credible political education programme for the territories is being impeded by the non-cooperation of the administering Powers but their approval is unnecessary to advance an educational programme for the territories. Accordingly, reference in the resolution to the requirement for the administering Power to be a part of the process should be removed from the resolution, and *innovative means* can be employed to involve the universities, civil society, experts and the territorial governments concerned.

In the area of information, the General Assembly has routinely adopted annual resolutions over the period, most recently in December 2016,⁹ on the "*Dissemination of Information on Decolonisation.*" The resolution speaks of the continued efforts to disseminate information "*with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the*

collect, prepare and disseminate, particularly to the NSGTs, basic material on the issue of self-determination of the peoples of the Territories."

The resolution also calls for the U.N. system *"to explore further the*

_____ with the decolonisation process of

territorial Governments, particularly in the Pacific and Caribbean regions, to help to improve the exchange of information."

Aside from the presence of information through the decolonisation

these U.N. bodies. A Working Group of AMCs was created by the ECLAC

subsidiary body (Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee) in

the 1990s to further facilitate their participation in the U.N. system, although

this mechanism appears to have fallen dormant

with the United Nations Development Programme, the specialized agencies and the Special Committee, of an information leaflet on assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, which was updated for the United Nations website on decolonization, and requests its continued updating and wide

the framework of its mandate on the right to self-determination as

contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 12

Accordingly, the General Assembly:

"Reiterates its request that the Human Rights Committee collaborate with the Special Committee, within the framework of its mandate on the right to self-determination as contained in the International

peoples of the Non Self- Governing Territories to their natural

development of those resources, and requests the administering Powers to take all steps necessary to protect the property rights of the peoples of those Territories in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on decolonization"

territories in their internal struggle whilst the forces of colonial accommodation continue to point to the U.N.'s lack of implementation.

It is not surprising, thus, that many of the territories have ceased direct participation in the U.N. process. As an example, my own U.S. Virgin

Islands discontinued its direct participation in the U.N. decolonisation process after some 25 years of annual engagement with the Special Committee. The lack of implementation of the actions mandated in the territory's resolution made it extremely difficult to justify our continuation in the process. We were simply not able to resist the pressures of the inertia.

Kingdom in 2003, informed the Caribbean territories under its administration that it no longer offered free association¹⁵ - even as the U.K. routinely joins in the annual consensus on the U.N. resolution which recognizes the legitimacy of that status. In spite of this clear inconsistency,

which caused significant confusion in those territories, there was no reference to this issue in the U.N. resolutions covering the small territories. It is this lack of clarity in the territories with respect to the U.N. process, coupled with the denigration of that process often propagated by the administering Powers, which has created a sense of hesitation in the territories to engage the Special Committee.

IV. IMPLICATIONS OF INACTION

of the laws of the respective Administering Powers which govern (*directly or indirectly*) the electoral systems of these territories. This is counter to the requisite '*transfer of powers*' required by the landmark *Decolonisation Declaration* in advance of a legitimate exercise of self-determination.

~~Other factors would be the legitimacy of a referendum conducted under~~

U.N. proceeds with all deliberate speed to consider its decolonisation

agenda for the year, the lack of decolonisation implementation continues to

be the UN's "Achilles heel." It is hoped that those member States which

RECOMMENDATIONS OF DR. CARLYLE COBBIN, EXPERT

The Special Committee should exercise close collaboration with the

specialised agencies and other organisations of the United Nations (U.N.);
and with the relevant human rights mechanisms such as the Human Rights
Council, the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of

- The Special Committee should commission independent self-government assessments of each of the small island territories not subject

use of the diagnostic tool of Self-Governance Indicators (SGIs) to identify the self-governance deficiencies in the existing colonial arrangements, and to make appropriate recommendations to bring the territories to a full

measure of self-government