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THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade
for the Eradication of Colonialism: goals and expected accomplishments

Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
31 May to 2 June 2011

STATEMENT

BY

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(Tokelau)

*Re-issued for technical reasons

**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES**

'QUESTION OF TOKELAU'

FAIPULE KELIHIANO KALOLO

**STATEMENT TO THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SEMINAR
OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DECOLONISATION**

***"Implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of
Colonialism: goals and expected accomplishments"***

**SAINT VINCENT AND GRENADINES
KINGSTOWN**

31 MAY – 2 JUNE 2011

Chairperson – Excellency Francisco Carrión-Mena
Rapporteur and distinguished Members of this Seminar,

I convey warm greetings on behalf of the people and the Government of Tokelau.

Through you Mr Chairman I would like to convey our appreciation to the Government and people of St Vincent and Grenadines for hosting us in their beautiful home – *Malo ma fakafetai!*

I believe that the theme to guide the deliberations for this Seminar is – what would be the goals and expected accomplishments for this Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism?

Mr Chair, you will note that during the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, Tokelau had carried out two (2) referendums which the New Zealand Government provided its full support and commitment.

Mr Chairman and members of the Seminar Tokelau remains on the 'Decolonization List'. Tokelau is very conscious of its right to self-determination. We value that right and aspire to revisit this with the intention to exercise it again at some time in the future.

Tokelau has a substantial degree of autonomy in the management of its affairs and for this we acknowledge with gratitude the ongoing support of the Government of New Zealand. However, having substantial autonomy is not the same as "being ourselves" and being fully answerable to ourselves for our government. The aspirations for self-determination remain; and a future status in free association with New Zealand is still the preferred option as decided by Tokelau's Parliament

For the time being, self-determination considerations must take second place to our pressing infrastructure and development needs.

Our infrastructure is inadequate to enhance the vision that Tokelau aspires for the future. Tokelau knows of the economic pressures that are being experienced around the world as a result of countries trying to rebuild their economies following the recession and the effects of natural disasters. Those pressures have impacted on New Zealand's fiscal policies and therefore on the delivery of services to Tokelau. We are working with the Government of New Zealand to ensure the maintenance of support to Tokelau in the key areas of Transport, Health, Education, Fisheries and Village Development.

The building of classrooms, better island health care facilities and a transport package to address our unique needs have all been on the agenda for some time and are now very urgent.

Dialogue with the Government of New Zealand has continued to ensure that New Zealand is aware of our needs.

The work on self-government and Tokelau's future aspirations has brought the relationship between Tokelau as a Territory, and New Zealand as the administering country to a level that Tokelau is proud of –being partners.

During bilateral discussions between Tokelau and New Zealand in February 2008, the leaders of both countries recognized the need to focus on strengthening local capacity and infrastructure development for the people of Tokelau. Following the discussions, the National Assembly resolved in February that year that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done in strengthening local capacity and infrastructure. 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 National Assembly. The National Assembly has tasked the Constitution Committee to meet and formalise the roles and responsibilities of the governance bodies to enhance good governance at all levels.

Mr Chairman, the Tokelau National Strategic Plan 2010-2015 provides the blue-print of Tokelau's development framework for 5 (five) years. For the first time in our country's development path we have put together a consolidated and comprehensive plan.. This sets the priorities for Tokelau to work towards over the next 3-4 years.

The Plan also highlights the fact that Tokelau is vulnerable given its size and geographical attributes and we are working closely with New Zealand to direct key resources towards priority areas identified by Tokelau.

Tokelau's vision is to build a healthy and viable community with opportunities for all our people and through this to improve the standard of living.

The last three years have been very challenging for Tokelau particularly for infrastructural development. Resolving our transportation issues in terms of procuring a safe, regular and reliable shipping service for our people is one of the most perplexing of these issues and is the top priority for the Government and the people of Tokelau.

Currently Tokelau and New Zealand are working towards identifying joint commitments in priority areas identified under the National Strategic Plan. New Zealand and Tokelau will then agree on how these priority development areas will be addressed by each of the partners and set targets that will determine the success towards meeting these commitments.

The Joint Commitment for Development between Tokelau and New Zealand 2011-2015 will focus on:

- A viable Transportation Arrangement: Tokelau transportation system remains the lifeline for our people. A long-term transport solution package has been put forward by New Zealand. Tokelau is currently considering this package before further talks with New Zealand to negotiate a best-fit solution to meet the needs for our people in this very important area.
- Infrastructure development: A substantial amount of funds has been allocated to build new schools on two of our atolls; and a new hospital for the other. I am

pleased to share with you after a long delay, construction has commenced and these buildings will be completed by early 2012. These new constructions will add value to the delivery of the key areas of health and education.

- **Human Resource Capacity:** As with all developing nations, Tokelau has a shortage of skills and capacity in the higher levels of management and administration. This shortage permeates throughout the public service and within the community sectors also. The leaders of Tokelau acknowledge the importance of having the right knowledge as well as the capacity that will allow us to implement the aspirations of our people as stated in the Tokelau National Strategic Plan.
- **Strengthening Governance:** The key institutions or 3 pillars of government, that of the National Assembly (Parliament), the Council for the Ongoing Government (Executive) and the Law Commissioners (Judiciary) also play a major role in ensuring that the vision of Tokelau is achieved. These three pillars are tasked to make good decisions based on the principles of good governance and taking into account the results achieved. The priority outcome area of Good Governance is therefore an area which is woven into all institutions of government including the public service.

Apart from our main partner of New Zealand, Tokelau is also very grateful of the support from other organisations, particularly those of the UN. 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 through the community driven projects commonly referred to as Community Centered Sustainable Development Programmes (CCSDP). Tokelau is also closely supported WHO, UNICEF, UN Women, UNESCO, and others. Tokelau would like to work more closely with the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Council and is therefore proposing to submit an application for associate member status at the end of this month.

Tokelau would like to voice through this Seminar that it wishes the UNC24 to be more active in supporting territories, such as Tokelau to be able to access resources for key development issues from international organizations. The highest point on Tokelau is only 5 (five) metres above sea level. The impact of climate change on Tokelau is a very real issue. It threatens our environment, our food supply and our existence and yet we cannot tap into Global Funding Facility (GEF) resources that support adaptation and mitigations efforts that address the effects of climate change.

The explanation Tokelau has been given is that we are not eligible for GEF resources because of its political status. Mr. Chairman, I leave Tokelau's request in your capable hands and I hope that UN organizations will be more willing to investigate how the needs of territories can be addressed and resources be more accessible for them. Political status does not make Tokelau any less vulnerable to the impact that climate change has on our survival.

While I am still on this issue, please note that Tokelau will also be applying for membership status in the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) in preparation for

the COP17 and I look towards the support of current AOSIS members in this Seminar to assist Tokelau in her efforts.

Mr. Chair,

Finally and certainly not the least of matters in my agenda is Tokelau's commitment to the question of global warming and climate change.

Tokelau is currently working towards an energy policy that will allow our small atolls to operate 100% renewable energy. The project to put together this system will be very expensive. Tokelau is grateful for the current support from the Government of New Zealand but we continue to look for funds to assist us to see this important venture come to fruition. I would hope that this conveys strongly 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 self-government.

Tokelau hopes that this Seminar has gained a better understanding and appreciation of Tokelau's progress – our goals and expected accomplishments for *the Third International Decade for the Eradication of colonialism*. Tokelau continues to move towards self determination by enhancing its infrastructures, health, education and transportation systems and having robust public services to ensure that Tokelau continues to be a viable and living community now and in the future. Mr Chair, and through this Seminar Tokelau will continue to look at the Committee for its independent role and support with regard to the implementation of the second international decade for the eradication of colonialism.

Strengthening the local capacity and infrastructure together with strong encouragement for economic development is currently the strategy for the Government of Tokelau's plan for the long-term.

Mr Chair, as you may be aware that Tokelau is seeking your indulgence for my delegations to leave the meeting early in time to travel to Tokelau for its Parliamentary session. It will take us longer to travel by boat from Samoa to Tokelau than it does for us to fly from Kingstown to Samoa. These are challenges and the reason why transport is so high up on our list of priorities³³³⁺

I wish the workshop all the best in its deliberations. May the Almighty continue to give you guidance and be with you during this Seminar.

On behalf of my people, thank you once again for the opportunity given to Tokelau to address the Seminar on Tokelau's status regarding self-determination.

Ke alofa te Atua fakamanuia na talanoaga a te Komiti Fakapitoa ma ke ola foki ia Tokelau.