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SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Pacific Regional Seminar on the implementation of the Second  
International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:  
priorities for the remainder of the Decade

Bandung, Indonesia  
14 to 16 May 2008

STATEMENT

BY

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF TOKELAU

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

**THE ULU O TOKELAU  
FAIPULE PIO TUIA**

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

***“Implementation of the 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 Elders<sup>1</sup> of each of the 3 villages<sup>2</sup> of Tokelau, the General Fono<sup>3</sup>, and the Council for the Ongoing Government<sup>4</sup> and the people of Tokelau<sup>5</sup>.

I also convey my sincere apologies for not being able to make it in person to this seminar as Tokelau is preparing for its General Fono for 19-20 May 2008. I pray that God will continue to give the Special Committee through this Seminar His strength and guidance in this very important work.

The theme of this Seminar is timely as all those committed to the cause of self-determination undertake a stocktake of the activities of the Special Committee and tracing these against the Committee's objectives which have guided its work 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 and more recently in the last two years during the two referenda on Tokelau's self-determination. The ability of the Special Committee to closely monitor and provide support for Tokelau has enabled our people, through we as leaders, to convey our dreams and aspirations on how we would like to govern ourselves. Tokelau will continue to look towards the Special Committee for its commitment and guidance 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 comprehensive reports<sup>6</sup> written on this important event so 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 whether Tokelau should choose self government in free association with New Zealand and retain its dependency status..

<sup>1</sup> Commonly referred to as the *Taupulega*.

<sup>2</sup> The 3 villages are Fakaofu, Nukunonu and Atafu.

<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary body for Tokelau.

<sup>4</sup> A 6 member Executive Government of Tokelau

<sup>5</sup> Approximately 1500 people of Polynesian origin spread over 3 atolls of a landmass of 12 square kilometers. No point in all the atolls is above 5metres from the sea level.

<sup>6</sup> UN Report Reference A/AC.109/2006/10

The relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand is described and captured in the Joint Principles of Partnership<sup>7</sup> and the Economic Support Arrangement<sup>8</sup> respectively. Both documents demonstrate the Government of New Zealand's commitment in fulfilling its responsibilities to Tokelau. While out two referenda did not result in a move to self government, they nevertheless set a bench mark 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 as a territory, and New Zealand as the administering country to a level that Tokelau 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 and Minister of Foreign Affairs, that it will continue to support whatever Tokelau decides on this issue. The referenda question in 2006 and 2007 demonstrates Tokelau's willingness to retain the warmth of its relationship with New Zealand together with its desire to manage its own affairs.

In discussions between Tokelau and New Zealand in February this year, the leaders of both countries recognized 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 that there is still 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 by uniting all our people. This includes those who supported the proposal for self government 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 development plans and policies reflect the needs and priorities of all our people (the 64.4% who were in favor of the package of free association and also the 35.6% who were not in favor). It is my hope and vision that in uniting our people we will all 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 it 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 is looking towards areas to enhance a viable Tokelau community in the future. One aspect of this viability issue is the Tokelau International Trust Fund which currently sits

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<sup>7</sup> Signed in November 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Periods 2004/05-2006/07 & 2007/08 – 2009/10.

at approximately NZ\$35million. The inter-generational characteristic of this fund guarantees assistance 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 development: Approximately NZ\$4million has been targeted to build new schools in Atafu and Fakaofu; and a new hospital for Nukunonu. 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. Tokelau hopes to achieve all these infrastructure development within the current ESA period (2007/08-2009/10).
- Transportation Systems: Tokelau's transportation system remains the lifeline for our people. In voicing the people's request for a reliable and 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: In acknowledging the level and amount of work that needs to be done, we as leaders have called for capacity building on 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 General Fono (Parliament); the Council for the Ongoing Government (Executive); and Law Commissioners (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 (SPC, USP, SPBEA, SPREP, SOPAC) and 5 UN organizations (UNDP (incl. Small Grants Programme), UNICEF, WHO, UNIFEM, UNESCO). The visit was aimed at an integrated framework of support to Tokelau by all development 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 arrangements<sup>9</sup> on waste management, gender development – in the areas of elimination of any sorts of violence against women and our young people, and strengthening projects that minimize the degradation of our fragile environment.

Mr. Chair

Finally but 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 the small atolls to operate on 100% renewable energy<sup>10</sup>. This project will be very expensive as it will cost approximately NZ\$7million 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.

Tokelau hopes that this Seminar will allow its participants to gain a better understanding and appreciation of Tokelau's progress with self determination. Tokelau will continue to move towards self determination by enhancing its infrastructures, transportation systems and having robust public services to ensure that Tokelau continues to be a viable and living community now and in the future. 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.

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....*

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<sup>9</sup> An MOU was signed between Tokelau and Samoa in 2007 on waste management.

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