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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 action

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STATEMENT

BY THE CHAIRMAN

OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF 24

**Role of the Special Committee in facilitating the
decolonisation of the Non Self-Governing Territories
within the framework of the Second International Decade
for the Eradication of Colonialism**

Role of the Special Committee in facilitating the decolonisation of the Non Self-Governing Territories within the framework of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

In addressing the role of the Special Committee in the Decolonisation process, I would begin with a short historical perspective.

The Special Committee was established in 1961 by General Assembly Resolution 1654 to examine the application of the Decolonisation Declaration (Resolution 1514 XV) which had been adopted one year earlier in 1960.

The Special Committee essentially replaced the *Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories* which had existed prior to the adoption of the *Decolonisation Declaration*, and which was ultimately dissolved in 1963. Accordingly, the Special Committee was given the additional mandate to study the information transmitted to the United Nations by the administering power on developments in the non self-governing territories. The decolonisation has two components, one informational and the other analytical.

The mandate of the Special Committee on Decolonisation is normally renewed annually by resolution of the General Assembly.

In 1991, the General Assembly adopted the first *International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism* including a plan of action which mandated specific tasks to be undertaken at the international and United Nations system levels. It also mandated actions to be undertaken by the administering powers, UN member States, specialised agencies and other organisations of the UN system, non-governmental organisations, and by the *Special Committee on Decolonisation*.

In this connection, the Special Committee was asked in the plan of action to “*prepare periodic analyses on the progress and extent of the implementation of the Decolonisation Declaration in each territory.*”

The plan of action also called for the Special Committee to report on the “*impact of the economic and social situation on the constitutional and political advancement of non self-governing territories.*”

A number of delegations expressed the concern in the general debate of the Special Committee and Fourth Committee throughout the *First International Decade* that while the annual Secretariat working papers on each territory provided useful statistical and other information, they did not provide the necessary analysis called for in the plan of action to inform member states. Alternative measures to undertake these studies were proposed during the period, but were not implemented.

In view of the fact that the first decade did not achieve the eradication of colonialism, the General Assembly in 2000 declared the period 2001-2010 as the *Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism*, with the identical plan of action of the first decade.

Delegations continued to express the concern for the absence of the analytical studies, most recently in the statement of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) before the Fourth Committee last October.

In the plan of action of both decades, the Special Committee was asked to organize the regional seminars, which it has done admirably; and to seek the full cooperation of the administering powers with respect to the dispatch of visiting missions, where some success has been achieved.

Both plans of action have also directed the Special Committee to facilitate the participation of the territories in regional and international organisations, as well as the specialised agencies of the United Nations system, the Special Committee itself, and other United Nations decolonisation bodies.

In this connection, the Special Committee has facilitated the participation of some territories through their statements to the Special Committee and *Fourth Committee*. Regarding participation in UN specialised agencies, the Special Committee has recommended language to this effect for inclusion in General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions. The actual implementation of participation of territories in UN, regional, and international institutions, however, is facilitated by the territorial governments themselves, with support from UNDP, the relevant UN regional commissions, and the international organisations concerned (*An expert paper to be presented later in this seminar will expand on this issue*).

The Special Committee continues to request that the specialised agencies report on their assistance programmes to the non self-governing territories, pursuant to relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, but the numbers of agencies reporting are far too few. Innovative methods are required to ensure that information on these programmes is transmitted, and that such programmes are initiated in those UN agencies where they do not presently exist, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions.

In the *Proposed Strategic Frameworks for 2006-07, and for 2008-09* for the *Department of Political Affairs* which services the Special Committee, reference is made to Special Committee cooperation with the *Department of Public Information (DPI)* on the wide dissemination of information on decolonisation, including publications and audio-visual programmes. Concerns have been expressed by representatives of the territories that such information has not reached the territories.

In conclusion, the informational role of the Special Committee to report the information transmitted to the United Nations on developments in the non self-governing territories is manifest in compilation of information from the administering powers,

several UN bodies, and press reports. This information is synthesised in the working papers prepared by the Secretariat.

The original mandate of the Special Committee in examining the application of the Decolonisation Declaration is not being carried out effectively. Innovative means are necessary to carry out this important component, with new resources, within existing resources provided to the Special Committee, or with external resources.

It is important to note that the mandate of the Special Committee is not to persuade or influence the people of the territories into a particular political alternative. We are aware that a popular mis-conception – propagated from some quarters - is that the Special Committee exists to force territories into immediate independence. This is not so. The Special Committee exists to provide the people of the territories with information on all of the options of political equality available to them, and to assist where it can in furtherance of the self-determination process.