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Distr. RESTRICTED
CRS/2009/CRP.5

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Second International Decade
for the Eradication of Colonialism: challenges and opportunities in the process of
decolonization in today's world

Frigate Bay, Saint Kitts and Nevis
12 to 14 May 2009

Opening remarks by the Chairman

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Special Committee on the
Situation with regard to the
Implementation of the Declaration
on the Granting of Independence
to Colonial Countries and Peoples

2009 Caribbean Regional Seminar

Frigate Bay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, 12-14 May 2009

Opening of the seminar by

**H.E. R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa,
Permanent Representative of Indonesia,
Chairman of the Special Committee**

H.E. Mrs. Astona Browne, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of National Security, Immigration and Foreign Affairs of St Kitts and Nevis,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome all participants to the 2009 United Nations Caribbean Regional Seminar on Decolonization in Frigate Bay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, convened under the auspices of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

On behalf of the Special Committee, I would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the Government and the people of Saint Kitts and Nevis for hosting the Seminar.

We are delighted that this year's seminar is taking place in a country and region that have undertaken tireless efforts to eradicate colonialism, with a good measure of success.

Our host country, St. Kitts and Nevis, along with other Caribbean States, has always played an active and much-appreciated role in the work of the Special Committee.

The seminar is an essential part of the work of the Special Committee as well as the implementation of the Second International Decade. It has a strong symbolic significance as it is held in the month during which the Special Committee observes the week of solidarity with the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. It has a clear deliberative value, as a forum where views are exchanged in an informal and interactive manner on how to make progress in the area of decolonization.

As we are approaching the very end of the Second Decade, this seminar has a further fundamental importance for the Special Committee to seek fresh and innovative ideas and recommendations to implement the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

This year's theme topic, "Challenges and opportunities in the process of decolonization in today's world", bears an important message, that we need to contemplate on how to meet contemporary challenges, consistent with the United Nations' and C-24's core principles and resolutions on decolonization.

This theme was chosen as a logical follow-up to last year's seminar.

Last year, at the 2008 Pacific Regional Seminar in Bandung, Indonesia, in addition to the topical focus on the decolonization process in the Pacific region, we sought to find ways and means to improve cooperation with administering Powers, provide better information to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories about their status, and identify practical steps to implement the United Nations decolonization mandate on a case-by-case basis.

This year, in addition to taking a closer look at the decolonization process in the Caribbean region, we aim to seek ways to enhance the Special Committee's relevance to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, within the dynamics of a changing world.

We look forward to hear your views on how current global challenges, such as climate change, global economic crisis, and global food crisis, may have affected the path towards decolonization.

We are keen to hear your views about how improved access to education and information technology, as well as improved understanding on constitutional rights, may have brought up new opportunities in the process of decolonization.

We are delighted to see a big number of turn-out at this year's seminar. On behalf of the Special Committee, I would like to welcome the representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, administering Powers, other United Nations member States, as well as experts and representatives of civil society, at this seminar. We look forward to having fruitful and constructive discussions with all of you.

This is where the Seminar has an essential, deliberative role: the more creative and innovative we are in the next few days, the more the Seminar's deliberations hold promise to identify opportunities for the effective implementation of the United Nations decolonization mandate. This includes improved cooperation of administering Powers in the work of the Special Committee; and the promotion of tangible support and assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories to help them face the numerous challenges in today's world.

In this spirit, let us deliberate, even debate, and work together towards a fruitful outcome of the seminar.

It is therefore a great honour for me to declare the 2009 Caribbean Regional Seminar on decolonization open.

Thank you.
