



STATEMENTS BY MR. NILOTPAL BASU, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 20: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE 59<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 7 2004

Mr. Chairman,

We congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Fourth Committee. I should also like to felicitate other members of the Bureau on their election and would like to assure you of my delegation's cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities.

Mr Chairman,

Even as we have entered a new century, we continue to grapple with the vestiges of a bygone system that runs contrary to the fundamental principles of this Organisation. Colonialism is anachronistic as it is outmoded, going against the tenets of democracy, freedom, dignity, progress and human rights. While the UN has notched remarkable progress in the past by removing over 80 countries from its list, there are yet 16 Non-Self Governing Territories [NSGTs]. They serve to remind us that the process of decolonisation is incomplete and that more needs to be done. We are into the fourth year of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism [2001-2010] and unless we intensify our work to implement the various resolutions and recommendations to eradicate colonialism, the Special Committee of 24 may have to call for more decades to complete its work.

The way ahead must be a judicious mix of urgency and activism on the one hand, and on the other, one of sensitivity and circumscription, that takes into account, first and foremost, the needs of the people of the Territories and their special circumstances. Appropriate format and timing for the completion of decolonisation in each territory need to be found. Ascertaining the political aspirations of the people in each of these Territories, and taking into account the stages of development and advancement of each Territory are critical in making decisions that enable them to bequeath to themselves political and socio-economic institutions and structures of their choice. The importance of eschewing a "one size fits all" approach cannot be overstated; the focus should instead be on a case-by-case approach, with a view to making real progress in each Territory.

Dissemination of relevant information regarding options that may be available to the people in the Territories is crucial. All too often, the peoples of the Territories may be unaware of their legitimate political status options; for real constitutional and political advancement to occur, the peoples of the Territory require sustained and unbiased information on their licit options of political equality, namely, independence, free association with an independent state or integration with an independent state, as clearly defined under Resolution 1541 [XV] of the General Assembly.

Two other important tools which could serve to bridge this information deficit in decolonisation, are the visits of UN Missions to the Non Self-Governing Territories and the conduct of Regional Seminars by the Special Committee of 24 on Decolonisation. The instrumentality of visiting Missions is useful in collecting adequate and first-hand information on conditions in the Territories and for ascertaining the wishes and aspirations of the peoples concerning their future status. We are in agreement that such missions are important in the context of furthering modalities and action plans for decolonisation and observing acts of self-determination. We hope that the administering Powers would extend their full cooperation to the Special Committee in facilitating such visiting missions. Similarly, we favour the holding of Regional Seminars by the Special Committee, in an effort to mobilize world opinion to support and assist the peoples of the Territories in bringing about a speedy end to colonialism. The idea of combining visiting Missions to certain Territories with seminars in order to optimize available resources is a worthy one, and needs to be pursued.

The role of the administering Powers is a determining factor. A spirit of cooperation and flexibility has largely imbued their actions in recent years and we would call upon them to further build upon this, in particular, in assisting the Special Committee to devise accelerated action plans for the decolonisation of certain Territories in their quest for self-determination. The visit of a UN Mission to Tokelau took place in 2002 with the active support of the Government of New Zealand. Since then, that Territory has made considerable progress along the path to self-determination. The support and cooperation displayed by the UK in organizing a Regional Seminar in Anguilla last year - the first in a Territory - is another example of the kind of cooperation needed if we are to move ahead in our common quest to liquidate colonialism. The formal participation by a representative from the UK on that occasion, and the continuing involvement of the UK again this year at the Pacific Regional Seminar held at Madang, Papua Guinea, is indeed encouraging. We hope that this spirit of cooperation and partnership displayed by New Zealand and the UK will eventually lead to the formal participation by the administering Powers in the work of the Special Committee, and in particular, lead to their active involvement in the work relating to the Territories under their respective administrations.

We should like to express our appreciation for the work of the Special Committee. We are in agreement with the proposal of the Chairman of the Committee of 24 that a midterm review of the implementation of the Second International Decade, in an attempt to move the process forward. We endorse the idea that the Committee should develop a mechanism to systematically review, on an annual basis, the

implementation of the specific recommendations on decolonisation with a focus on implementing the mandate as contained in General Assembly resolutions and the plan of action of the Second International Decade. We should like to assure Chairman Robert Guba Aisi of the Committee of 24 of our full support and involvement in his efforts to move the agenda ahead and successfully complete the mandate of the Special Committee.

Mr Chairman,

As a founding member of the UN and the Special Committee of 24 on Decolonisation, we share a particular solidarity with other erstwhile-colonized peoples and nations. We re-dedicate ourselves to the cherished ideals of freedom, democracy, human rights, dignity and peaceful co-existence, while also reaffirming our commitment to achieve the goal of decolonisation to which, we as member of the UN family, have subscribed.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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