

**STATEMENT BY MR. V.K. NAMBIAR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE ON
AGENDA ITEM 19: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION OF THE
GRANTING OF THE INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES
AT THE SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONISATION COMMITTEE (FOURTH
COMMITTEE) OF THE 58TH SESSION OF THE UNGA ON OCTOBER 7, 2003**

Mr. Chairman,

May I begin by congratulating you on your election as Chairman of the Fourth Committee? We offer you and other members of the Bureau our congratulations and our fullest cooperation in carrying out the tasks before you. We are confident that you will discharge them effectively.

We compliment Mr. Graham Maitland of South Africa and other members of the outgoing Bureau for the exemplary manner in which they conducted the proceedings of the Committee during the 57th session.

In 1960, under Resolution 1514, the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and under Resolution 1541 (XV) further defined full self government as being one of three options: independence; free association with an independent state; or integration into an independent state.

In 1961, the Special Committee of 24 on decolonisation was established to examine the application of the Declaration and to make recommendations on its implementation. The Special Committee was also empowered to recommend to the General Assembly the removal of those non-self governing territories (NSGTs) from the UN's list which, had exercised the right to self-determination and achieved full self- government. The Committee has since come a long way. More than 80 million people living in 60 former territories have been decolonised and today there are only 16 territories on the UN list. Decolonisation has been perhaps the greatest success story of the United Nations.

The General Assembly mandated a second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2001-2010) at its 55th regular session in December 2000. The 16 NSGTs in the UN list serve as constant reminders to us that the "business" of decolonisation is not complete. We must now re-double our efforts in order to ensure that this chapter is finally relegated to the pages of history, to use the words of Secretary General Kofi Annan.

In doing so, special attention must be paid to the following: first, the needs of the people of the Territories themselves. Many of the Territories have made considerable progress in their political, constitutional, economic and social development and have gone a long way towards self- government. The question is one of finding the appropriate format and timing for the completion of decolonisation in each Territory. The role of the Special Committee and indeed of the UN as a whole here is crucial as it is

delicate: 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, so that they are enabled to acquire for themselves political and socio-economic institutions and structures of their choice.

Second, the role of the administering powers. The importance of their participation in the work of the Special Committee can hardly be over- emphasised. We call upon them to approach the task at hand in a spirit of cooperation, understanding, political realism and flexibility. We are happy to note that this spirit has largely imbued their actions in recent years. The visit of a UN Mission to Tokelau last year took place with the cooperation of the Government of New Zealand. Similarly, the support and cooperation of the UK in organizing the Caribbean Regional Seminar in Anguilla this year – the first in a NSGT – is another example of the kind of cooperation needed if we are to move ahead in the common quest to liquidate colonialism. Particularly noteworthy was the presence of a senior level representative from the UK during the course of the entire seminar. We encourage more visits of UN Missions to the Territories as a means of collecting adequate and first-hand information on conditions in the Territories and on the wishes and aspirations of the peoples concerning their future status. We look forward to more seminars being hosted in the Territories within the context of assessing, receiving and disseminating information on the situation in the NSGTs. The lead taken by the UK should encourage some of the other powers to follow the same route. We hope that the spirit of cooperation that has imbued recent talks with administering powers will eventually lead to their formal participation in the work of the Special Committee.

Finally, the work of the Special Committee deserves mention in its efforts to complete the unfinished business of decolonisation. We shall continue to display solidarity with the people of the NSGTs and to cooperate with the Bureau of the Committee on the way forward.

As a founding member of the UN and the Special Committee, India has been in the vanguard of the struggle against colonialism. We are privileged to have been a co-sponsor of the Declaration on Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Today, we re-dedicate ourselves to the noble ideals enshrined in the Declaration while also re-affirming our commitment to achieve the goal of decolonisation to which we, as members of the UN family, have all subscribed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)