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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

Summary record of the 6th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 18 June 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Sumah (Vice-Chair) (Sierra Leone)
later: Ms. Rodríguez Camejo (Vice-Chair) (Cuba)

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In the absence of Mr. Webson (Antigua and Barbuda), Mr. Sumah (Sierra Leone), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Special Committee decision of 19 June 2017 concerning Puerto Rico (*continued*)
([A/AC.109/2018/L.7](#) and [A/AC.109/2018/L.13](#))

1. **Mr. Suárez Moreno** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the people of Puerto Rico had the right to self-determination and independence, on the basis of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), and the Movement called for the prompt implementation of the related resolutions, many of which had been adopted by consensus within the Special Committee. It hoped that, as in previous years, the Committee would adopt by consensus another resolution on the question of Puerto Rico that took into account the Movement's position.

2. The Movement remained concerned at the imposition of a financial oversight board on the Government of Puerto Rico, which would encroach upon its already limited power over its budget. The political subordination of the Puerto Rican people impeded their sovereign capacity to take decisions to address their economic and social problems, including the current fiscal crisis, the insolvency of the Government of Puerto Rico and the need to restructure the public debt. It was also hampering their ability to respond to the humanitarian crisis triggered by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which had exacerbated existing economic and social problems and caused poverty levels to rise from 45 to 60 per cent, leading to mass migration and undermining efforts to achieve sustainable economic development.

3. The United States Government must assume its responsibility for expediting the process that would allow the Puerto Rican people to fully exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence. It must also return to them the occupied land and facilities of Vieques Island and the Roosevelt Road Naval Station.

4. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (Observer for El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the importance of the Latin American and Caribbean character of Puerto Rico had been highlighted at the highest level at the CELAC Summit held in January 2017. The Community had, moreover, noted the Committee's decisions on the subject and had reiterated that it was a matter of interest to it. CELAC member countries were committed to

continuing to work in accordance with international law, particularly General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), to make the Latin American and Caribbean region an area free of colonialism.

5. **Ms. Rodríguez Camejo** (Cuba) said that, since the imposition of commonwealth status more than 60 years earlier, under the misnomer of an *Estado Libre Asociado* ("Free Associated State"), the so-called freedom of the island of Puerto Rico had been subject to the full authority of the United States Congress, including in matters of defence, international relations, foreign trade and monetary policy. Its status was a masquerade, maintained by the United States Government for the purpose of colonial domination, and had been laid bare by the United States Supreme Court, Congress and even the Administration itself, upon its being clearly established that Puerto Rico did not enjoy sovereignty and that it was a colonial territory entirely subject to the rule of Washington.

6. Notwithstanding the rejection by the bulk of the population in November 2012 of its current position of political subordination, the colonial situation of Puerto Rico remained unchanged. The 2017 referendum had been one more sham, rejected by the different political parties, as evidenced by the low voter turnout. It had not been a legitimate exercise in self-determination as it had not been designed to promote decolonization in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

7. Since the Committee's previous discussion, economic and social conditions in Puerto Rico had worsened considerably. With a depressed economy and a public debt of over \$72 billion, it had been forced by the financial oversight board imposed by the United States Government to submit to draconian cuts in basic public services. Hurricanes Irma and Maria had exacerbated the economic situation and caused mass migration and rocketing poverty levels. The lack of public funds and the slow response of the United States Government had aggravated the crisis, yet the people and Government of Cuba had been prevented from helping Puerto Rico by the very colonial power that ruled over the island. The political subordination of Puerto Rico impeded its sovereign capacity to take decisions to address the crisis.

8. Cuba reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), and the applicability to the question of Puerto Rico of the fundamental principles set out therein. The final determination of the fate of Puerto Rico was not a domestic matter for the United States of America; it rested with the Special Committee on decolonization

and the entire international community. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States had reiterated the Latin American and Caribbean character of Puerto Rico, while the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had reaffirmed the Puerto Rican people's right to self-determination and independence and had urged that all aspects of the case of Puerto Rico should be considered by the General Assembly.

9. The colonial situation of Puerto Rico must be resolved as a matter of urgency in accordance with the mandate of the United Nations. Cuba was historically committed to the self-determination and independence of the Puerto Rican people. Their respective struggles for independence had started almost simultaneously and many Puerto Ricans had lost their lives fighting for Cuban independence. The national hero of Cuba, José Martí, had founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party to achieve the independence of Cuba and to foster that of Puerto Rico. The fact that 120 years of colonial rule could not suffice to divest the people of Puerto Rico of their culture, identity, language and feeling was evidence of their deep-rooted desire for independence.

10. **Mr. Arancibia Fernández** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), emphasizing the Latin American and Caribbean character of Puerto Rico, said that the United States Government must assume its responsibility to expedite a process that would enable the Puerto Rican people to fully exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee, and to take decisions, in a sovereign manner, to address their urgent economic and social needs. Furthermore, the United States Government must complete the return of all occupied lands, including the installations on Vieques Island and in Ceiba, to the people of Puerto Rico; respect the human rights of residents, including the right to health and economic development; and clean up and decontaminate the areas used in military exercises to protect the health of the inhabitants of Vieques Island and the environment.

11. The colonial status of Puerto Rico impeded it from repairing the damage caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which had destroyed much of the island's infrastructure and left many without running water, power and access to food and medical treatment. Colonialism hampered international economic cooperation, the social, cultural and economic development of dependent peoples, and world peace. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/119, the administering Powers should cooperate fully with the Committee to develop a constructive programme of work on a case-by-case basis for the Non-Self-Governing Territories to facilitate the

implementation of the Committee's mandate and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on decolonization, including resolutions on specific Territories.

12. **Mr. Zambrano Ortiz** (Ecuador) said that the appointment by the United States Congress of a financial oversight board to oversee the repayment of the public debt of Puerto Rico was evidence that colonial control over the island had intensified. Hurricanes Irma and Maria had caused significant damage and exacerbated the economic and social crisis, but the island's status as a so-called Commonwealth (*Estado Libre Asociado*) had not allowed it to address the crisis either through the management of its public affairs or through a process of self-determination and self-governance. As a result, poverty levels had risen, which had caused mass migration and seriously affected efforts to achieve sustainable economic development. Ecuador would stand shoulder to shoulder with Puerto Rico during the reconstruction process.

13. The people of Puerto Rico constituted a Latin American and Caribbean nation that had its own distinct national identity. The United States Government must allow the Puerto Rican people to fully exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, protect their human rights and return all occupied lands, including the installations on Vieques Island and in Ceiba. His delegation welcomed the release of Oscar López Rivera, who had rejoined the island's struggle for independence as a free citizen. Ecuador would continue to work with the international community on the issue of Puerto Rican independence and urged the administering Power to meet its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations.

14. **Mr. Escoto González** (Nicaragua) said that the petitioners' statements describing the dire economic situation of Puerto Rico were further evidence of the collapse of its colonial status. Nicaragua, which had fought for its own independence for years, supported the liberation efforts of dependent peoples. Over half of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were in Latin America and the Caribbean and they included the special case of Puerto Rico.

15. The economic crisis in Puerto Rico had been exacerbated by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The humanitarian response remained inadequate, with many people struggling to get back on their feet and thousands still without power. In the three-month period following Hurricane Maria, over 4,600 people had died as a result of a lack of basic services. The absence of any real options for addressing the grave social and economic situation, the debt crisis and the damage caused by the

hurricanes testified to the urgent need to decolonize Puerto Rico. The Committee's long-standing request to the General Assembly to consider more comprehensively all aspects of the colonial situation of Puerto Rico should be pursued with increased energy, with a view to encouraging the United States to expedite a process that would allow the Puerto Rican people to fully exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

16. **Mr. Mounzer** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, over the previous 40 years, the Committee had adopted numerous resolutions on the question of Puerto Rico. Those resolutions had affirmed that Puerto Rico was part of Latin America and the Caribbean and urged the United States Government to fulfil its obligation to expedite the process of allowing the Puerto Rican people to exercise their right to self-determination, which was enshrined in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). His delegation hoped that the current draft resolution would be adopted by consensus, as in previous years, attesting to the importance of international legitimacy.

17. **Mr. Song Li** (China) said that his delegation supported the draft resolution, which it hoped the Committee would adopt by consensus.

Hearing of petitioners (continued)

18. **The Chair** said that, in line with the Committee's usual practice, petitioners would be invited to take a place at the petitioners' table and would withdraw after making their statements.

19. **Mr. Rivera** (Puertorriqueños Unidos en Acción) said that, over the previous year, Puerto Rico had been struck by three hurricanes. The first, Hurricane Irma, had caused flooding and heavy rainfall, damaging crops and the national economy. The second, Hurricane Maria, had destroyed the island's economic infrastructure and resulted in over 4,000 deaths. The third and most catastrophic "hurricane" had been the imposition by the United States Government of a financial oversight board composed of unelected executives to govern Puerto Rico. Just like a hurricane, the board continued to hit Puerto Rico with austerity measures intended to devastate its economy, drive up poverty and cause mass migration. The only purpose of the board was to safeguard the interests of Wall Street.

20. Some of the austerity measures imposed included the repeal of Act No. 80 on unfair dismissal, leaving workers with no guarantee of stable, permanent employment; cuts to pensions for retired public sector workers, including teachers; increases in excise tax,

water and electricity rates and university tuition fees; and the closure of public schools. The situation of the Puerto Rican people was inconsistent with international law and the principles of the United Nations. The United States Government was hampering the efforts of the people and Government of Puerto Rico to exercise their sovereign rights. Independence activists would not be content with a few reforms and a stimulus package; the only way forward was the total decolonization of Puerto Rico.

21. **Ms. Vega Otero** (Colegio de profesionales del trabajo social de Puerto Rico) said that the catastrophic financial and social situation of Puerto Rico could not be attributed solely to natural disasters. Even before Hurricanes Irma and Maria, close to half of the population had already been living below the poverty line. The island's financial crisis and burgeoning debt, and the subsequent imposition of austerity measures, had had a negative effect on basic rights such as health care, food, education, housing and social security. The situation in Puerto Rico was the result of 120 years of colonial rule by the United States and bordered on human, social and cultural genocide. Puerto Rico ranked almost bottom in the world in terms of social inequalities.

22. The establishment of a financial oversight board highlighted the colonial status of Puerto Rico. The austerity measures imposed by the board's well-paid members were exacerbating poverty and social inequalities. The board intended to close 286 public schools, slash the budget of the University of Puerto Rico, triple university tuition fees and repeal Act No. 80 on unfair dismissal, thereby putting the working class at risk to benefit the economy. It was hardly surprising that thousands of residents were leaving Puerto Rico annually. In an apparent attempt to annihilate Puerto Rican culture, the board also planned to shut down numerous cultural institutions, including the performing arts centre, the public broadcasting corporation, the music conservatory and the school of art.

23. The situation of Puerto Rico was far from the world envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where democracy, good governance and the rule of law, as well as an enabling national and international environment, were deemed essential for sustainable development. She wondered how many times her organization would have to appear before the Committee and how serious the situation of her people would have to become before the question of Puerto Rico was taken up by the General Assembly. Her country's fundamental problem was that it lacked the political power to implement its own solutions to the problems affecting it. The Committee should request the

Assembly to consider the question of Puerto Rico and should urge the United States Government to facilitate a genuine decolonization process on the basis of international law.

24. **Mr. Camacho** (Latino Law Student Association, University of the District of Columbia) said that Puerto Rico was under terrorist attack. Terrorism was defined as an attack on human life with the intention to intimidate or coerce a civilian population or to affect the conduct of its Government. The president of the financial oversight board, established by the United States Government to affect the conduct of the Government of Puerto Rico, earned over \$500,000, which was money taken from the Puerto Rican people in an act of economic terrorism. The board had coerced the Puerto Rican Government into closing schools, increasing taxes and manipulating the law. Instead of working for its people, the Puerto Rican Government had become an instrument of the United States Government.

25. Colonialism was an abhorration. Under its Constitution, the United States had the power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States, including, therefore, Puerto Rico. In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, the people of Puerto Rico had been completely overlooked by the United States Government. Its actions were a way of removing the Puerto Rican people from their homeland and destroying their culture, and it must be held accountable. For the United States Government, Puerto Rico and its people did not exist. He wondered whether the people of Puerto Rico should continue appealing to the United Nations and the colonial regime, or whether they should take matters into their own hands. Recalling that the United Nations had a history of ignoring genocides and ethnocides, he urged the Organization not to allow the situation in Puerto Rico to spiral out of control.

26. *Ms. Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

27. **Mr. Studer** (Socialist Workers Party) said that Hurricane Maria was not primarily a natural disaster, but rather a social catastrophe wrought by colonial domination and capitalist rule. Working people in Puerto Rico faced never-ending attacks from the financial management and oversight board imposed by the United States and the colonial government, whose priority was paying wealthy United States bondholders on the \$74 billion-dollar debt, at the expense of the clear majority. Jobs and pensions had been slashed, schools had been closed, education costs had increased and labour protections had been eroded.

28. Since its establishment in 1938, the Socialist Workers Party had fought for the right of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence. It was in the direct interests of the working people in the United States to support the independence of Puerto Rico, as both shared a common enemy: the capitalist ruling class. In the United States, employers were attacking wages, jobs, health care, pensions and unions, while working people were killed and maimed in imperialist wars. Residents of the United States, especially small farmers, college students, workers and the elderly, faced their own version of debt bondage. In response to those worsening conditions, a wave of revolt was moving across the United States, marked by growing distrust for both the Democratic and the Republican political parties that represented the capitalist ruling class.

29. Workers and farmers in the United States could identify with the backlash in Puerto Rico against the brutal cuts imposed by the financial oversight board; in fact, some were convinced that workers in the United States could not be free so long as Washington maintained its colonial bondage over Puerto Rico. The Cuban socialist revolution had shown that workers and farmers could wrest State power away from the capitalist minority; it marked the way forward for working people both in Puerto Rico and the United States. Genuine independence would never be given to Puerto Rico — it must be taken.

30. **Mr. Ramos-Santiago** (Consejo Amplio Unitario de Solidaridad y Acción) said that his organization worked to build capacity and develop community resources to achieve better living conditions for Puerto Rican residents. For more than 40 years, distinguished Puerto Ricans had come before the Committee to condemn the crimes and genocide committed through the imposition of an illegal colonial regime over the nation of Puerto Rico. The Committee had enough historical data proving the existence of genocide and the violation of the fundamental human rights of Puerto Ricans.

31. The imperialist United States denied Puerto Rico the right to sovereignty, defining it as a territory under its jurisdiction, but which did not form part of the United States. Armed with that illegal claim, which ran counter to the principles governing relations between civilized nations, the United States wielded full sovereignty over Puerto Rico and its inhabitants, controlling down to the most basic elements of their lives. Puerto Ricans had been exploited in all kinds of military interventions conducted in other Latin American and Caribbean countries. Puerto Rican patriots had been persecuted, imprisoned, tortured and assassinated. The crimes perpetuated against the Puerto Rican people had provoked massive emigration, a tactic used to depopulate the island.

32. Many people did not understand how Puerto Rico could have incurred such an enormous debt. However, neither the United States Government nor its middlemen in Puerto Rico would consent to a transparent audit of the debt, instead imposing arbitrary and dictatorial measures through the financial oversight board. Such measures slashed pensions and cut access to essential services while infrastructure continued to deteriorate.

33. The structural and colonial crisis in Borinken had a viable solution: the Committee should submit a resolution to the General Assembly supporting the request of the National Sovereign State of Borinken for full membership of the United Nations. His organization also called for the immediate release of the Puerto Ricans Ana Belén Montes and Nina Droz.

34. **Ms. Pagán-Gomez** (Vidas Viequenses Valen) said that Vieques was the colony of a colony, a separate island in the archipelago that had been devastated and completely cut off from the rest of the world following Hurricane Maria. The hurricane had wrought chaos, fear, and apprehension at a time when despair was already infecting a community in the throes of economic strife and a health crisis caused by more than 50 years of abuse as a United States military bombing range and testing ground. Nine months after the hurricane had caused hospitals to close, only emergency medical services were being provided, in a tent located in a parking lot. Some 75 residents had perished due to the lack of medical services, and the island's population of 9,000 was dwindling as the death toll in Puerto Rico as a whole had risen to 4,695. The United Nations must audit the mounting deaths related to Hurricane Maria.

35. The miserably inadequate disaster response of the federal Government had resulted in an exodus where victims of that American tragedy were fleeing from a condemned paradise, carrying with them the stigma of second-class citizens. The scourge of the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act ("the PROMESA Act"), coupled with such natural disasters, had spurred the island's lame-duck Government to privatize all services and utilities, sell what was left of the land and decimate the school system. The rights of Puerto Ricans were trampled as politicians kowtowed to the United States capitalists and invading carpetbaggers contaminated by greed, corruption and moral turpitude.

36. The rights of Puerto Ricans had also been criminally disregarded by the United States Navy during the clean-up of the Super Fund site. The practice of open burning and detonation of unexploded ordnance continued to contaminate the people and the environment; the fact that the United Nations Navy used state-of-the-art

technology on the mainland but subjected Puerto Ricans to noxious contamination was evidence of environmental and possibly racial injustice. The case of Puerto Rico must be taken before the General Assembly.

37. **Ms. Lúgaro** (Junta de Mujeres), speaking as a former independent candidate for governor of Puerto Rico and a representative of the women's political alliance Junta de Mujeres, said that for 72 years, countless world leaders had reiterated the colonial reality of Puerto Rico and pointed out the social and economic repercussions of that reality. She came before the Committee to ask whether it was true that the United States controlled the United Nations, thus explaining why none of the treaties and resolutions signed and ratified within the Organization seemed to apply to the United States. Although 36 resolutions concerning Puerto Rico had been adopted, the General Assembly had not asked the United States to begin the decolonization process. While it was conceivable that, at the beginning of the 1950s, the General Assembly — like Puerto Rico itself — had been tricked into believing that the island had been granted sufficient autonomy, such a belief was impossible in 2018, as it had become apparent that Puerto Rico was the most flagrant example of colonial abuse. Time and time again, all three branches of the United States Government had reiterated that Puerto Rico was under the control of the United States Congress and now of the financial oversight board, composed of seven individuals appointed by the President of the United States. Some of those very individuals had contributed to the financial crisis currently experienced by Puerto Rico. Austerity measures limiting access to medical services, schools and universities were being imposed while Puerto Ricans were denied the right to audit the debt.

38. Over the previous two years, 445 public schools had been closed in Puerto Rico. It was not surprising that the priority of the financial oversight board was slashing education, as history had shown that ignorant populations were easy to control. Only an ignorant and easily manipulated population could accept that seven anonymous individuals who had not been democratically selected could strip them of their basic rights. The General Assembly must act once and for all and fulfil its obligations in virtue of resolution 1514 (XV) — or it must speak honestly and admit that it did not wish to confront the United States.

39. **Ms. Nogales-Molinelli** (Partido del Pueblo Trabajador) said that Puerto Rico was entering a new neoliberal chapter of its colonial existence, one that threatened to destroy the very fabric of Puerto Rican society. The imposition of the financial oversight board and the Supreme Court ruling in *Commonwealth of*

Puerto Rico v. Sánchez Valle had both confirmed the colonial nature of Puerto Rico, a reality that had been masked by its Commonwealth status as a “Free Associated State”. The imposition of the financial oversight board was proof that the United States Congress had ultimate power over Puerto Rico. In clear violation of international public law, the Charter of the United Nations, the various resolutions adopted by the Committee and basic human dignity, the despotic board intervened directly in budgetary, labour, environment, educational and economic matters on the island.

40. The people of Puerto Rico were paying for austerity policies with their lives, in part due to the privatization of the health-care system, which had been followed by new measures to eliminate diagnostic and treatment centres from the budget and to cut needs-based care for the poor. Pension cuts would increase poverty rates, especially as those receiving pensions were often already the main providers for other family members. The financial oversight board’s neoliberal policies mean that it insisted on the debt being paid before ensuring basic minimum living conditions for the people of Puerto Rico.

41. The current Government of Puerto Rico had been elected by less than 40 per cent of the population and was characterized by unprecedented corruption. In late 2017, legislation had been enacted that greatly limited labour rights for employees. Schools had been arbitrarily shut down, while the University of Puerto Rico was being strangled by debt. By eliminating investment in education, the financial oversight board was threatening the country’s development. Similarly, the dismantling and privatization of all forms of infrastructure made it increasingly difficult for Puerto Ricans to have access to potable drinking water, electricity and other essential services.

42. **Mr. Torres** (Brigada Guarionex) said that Borinken had for centuries been inhabited and governed by its ancestral owners, the indigenous Taíno. However, first Spain and then the United States had invaded the territory and stolen the land, to which consequently neither country had any right. The colonial system imposed by the island’s commonwealth status was not a legitimate government. Colonialism was prohibited; it was considered a crime in all its forms under General Assembly resolution 2621 (XXV). He wondered how the United States could be committing such a crime in the twenty-first century. By any definition, the imposition of an oversight board, a foreign President and a Congress which Puerto Ricans could not elect amounted to a dictatorship. United States control had resulted in a terrible debt and economic collapse. In a free Puerto

Rico, that debt would be regarded as illegitimate and would be cancelled.

43. Paying that debt was unacceptable, given that schools, teachers and rights were being eliminated and the country was being destroyed. In the wake of the natural disaster suffered by the island, it was inconceivable that United States ships and airplanes, which had served to send so many Puerto Ricans to their deaths in wartime, could not be used to transport the necessary goods to get the country back on its feet. The United States had even prevented other countries from helping Puerto Rico following the disaster, which was a crime against humanity.

44. Borinken must be free; such was its inalienable right, as recognized in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Its independence would thereby be exercised immediately, by law. The Borinken nation had the right to exercise full sovereignty under a sovereign government, with a seat in the United Nations General Assembly. His organization called on the Committee to act on behalf of Borinken and to seek the abolition of the colonial and illegal government currently imposed by the current status of Puerto Rico, as well as the transfer to the Borinken nation of the sovereign powers usurped by the United States.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.7: Decision of the Special Committee of 19 June 2017 concerning Puerto Rico

45. **The Chair**, speaking as the representative of Cuba and introducing draft resolution [A/AC.109/2018/L.7](#) on behalf of the sponsors, said that it was incumbent upon the international community to fulfil the Puerto Rican people’s hope of achieving the lasting resolution of its colonial situation, a pressing task on the Committee’s agenda.

46. The draft resolution noted that the Supreme Court of the United States had ruled in the case of *Puerto Rico v. Sánchez Valle* that the original and ultimate source of governmental power in Puerto Rico lay in the United States Congress, and that any limited concession of self-government to Puerto Rico might be unilaterally revoked by the United States Congress. The text expressed concern at the imposition of a financial oversight and management board by the United States. It also expressed concern that the political subordination of the Puerto Rican people impeded sovereign decision-making regarding the humanitarian crisis caused by the effects of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The natural disasters had exacerbated the already serious economic and social problems, resulting in increased levels of poverty in Puerto Rico from 45 per cent to around 60 per cent of the population, which had caused mass migration and

seriously affected efforts to achieve sustainable economic development. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

47. **The Chair** said that Antigua and Barbuda had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

48. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.7 was adopted.*

49. **The Chair**, speaking as the representative of Cuba, said that the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus demonstrated the breadth of support for the Puerto Rican cause. Her delegation welcomed the important contributions made by petitioners, Committee members and other States, including the declaration made by the 120 States comprising the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the statement delivered by the 33 States comprising the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. In the future, more time should be allotted for the hearing of petitioners.

50. The resolution paid tribute to the Puerto Rican people's patriotic spirit and the struggle of such independence heroes as Filiberto Ojeda Ríos. Her country would stand with the Puerto Rican people in defence of their right to self-determination and independence until the final victory was attained.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.