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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

Tokelau

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
The Territory at a glance	3
I. Constitutional and political developments	4
A. Local self-governance	4
B. Referendum process	4
II. Economic conditions	5
A. General economic overview	5
B. Assistance to Tokelau by the administering Power	6
C. Transport and communications	7
D. Power supply	7
III. Social conditions	7
A. General	7
B. Education	8
C. Health care	8
IV. Environment	9

Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 7 December 2018. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.



V.	External relations	9
VI.	Future status of the Territory	10
A.	Position of the territorial Government.	10
B.	Position of the administering Power	11
VII.	Consideration by the United Nations.	11
A.	Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.	11
B.	Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).	12
C.	Action taken by the General Assembly	12
Annex		
	Map of Tokelau	15

The Territory at a glance

Territory: Tokelau is a Non-Self-Governing Territory, as defined under the Charter of the United Nations, administered by New Zealand.

Representative of administering Power: Administrator Ross Ardern

Geography: Tokelau comprises three small atolls: Fakaofu, Nukunonu and Atafu. Each atoll comprises strips of land up to 200 m wide and not more than 5 m above sea level. Samoa, located 480 km to the south, is the nearest sizeable neighbour and the principal point of contact for Tokelau with the outside world. Access is possible only by ship, with an average of 30 hours' sailing from Samoa. There is no air service.

Land area: 12.2 km²

Exclusive economic zone: 318,990 km²

Population: 1,499 (October 2016 census), distributed as follows: Atafu: 519; Fakaofu: 448; Nukunonu: 448; and Samoa: 48 (Tokelau Public Service employees and their immediate families). There are 7,176 Tokelauans living in New Zealand (2013 census). As New Zealand citizens, Tokelauans may also reside in Australia.

Life expectancy at birth: 69.1 years (women: 70.4 years; men: 67.8 years (2010–2015 estimates))

Ethnic composition: Tokelauans are Polynesians with linguistic, familial and cultural links with Samoa.

Languages: Tokelauan. English and Samoan are also widely used.

Capital: None. Each atoll has its own administrative centre.

Head of territorial Government: Ulu-o-Tokelau. The position of titular head of Tokelau rotates annually among the *faipule* of the atolls.

Main political parties: None

Elections: Held in January every third year. The most recent election was held in January 2017.

Legislature: The unicameral General Fono

Economy: The principal sources of revenue are fees from fisheries licences and assistance provided by New Zealand through budget support and project funding.

Monetary unit: New Zealand dollar (\$NZ)

Gross domestic product per capita: \$US 6,275 (2015/16 financial year, Tokelau National Statistics Office)

Brief history: Originally inhabited by Polynesians from surrounding islands, Tokelau became a British protectorate in 1889, and administration was transferred to New Zealand in 1925. By the Tokelau Act 1948, sovereignty over Tokelau was transferred to New Zealand.

I. Constitutional and political developments

A. Local self-governance

1. As previously reported, the current process of constitutional development stems from the 1998 decision of the General Fono (the national representative body) to endorse a comprehensive report entitled “Modern house of Tokelau”, which addressed the core issue that faced Tokelau in creating a constitutional framework that suited an atoll- or village-based self-governing community that respected traditional decision-making customs.

2. In accordance with the terms of that report, General Fono delegates are now elected on the basis of proportional village representation, with a system of universal village suffrage, rather than one of equal village representation with delegates appointed by the respective *taupulega* (village councils), as was previously the case. In 2017, 21 delegates were elected to the General Fono: seven from each of the three villages, including one representative of each village’s *fatupaepae* (women’s committee). In 2004, further decisions were made on the method of appointment of the Chair of the General Fono and on the role and responsibilities of the six-person Council for the Ongoing Government, which is the executive Government when the General Fono is not in session. The Council consists of three *faipule* (representatives of each village) and one General Fono delegate from each village, designated by the *taupulega*. The position of Ulu-o-Tokelau, or Head of Government, rotates annually among the three *faipule*. In February 2018, the *faipule* of Fakaofo took over as Ulu-o-Tokelau. In February 2019, the *faipule* of Atafu is expected to rotate into the position.

3. In 2004, the three village councils took full responsibility for all village public services. That decision emanated from the “Modern house of Tokelau” approach, whereby the traditional Council of Elders on each atoll serves as the foundation for any future governance structure. Under that arrangement, the councils delegate authority to the General Fono for activities that need to be handled at the national level (see [A/AC.109/2005/3](#)).

4. The New Zealand official with the principal responsibility for maintaining the relationship with Tokelau is the Administrator of Tokelau, who is appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand. The current Administrator is Ross Ardern, who was formerly the High Commissioner to Niue and assumed the role of Administrator in May 2018. The Office of the Administrator draws on advice and support from the Ministry, including the Pacific and Development Group.

B. Referendum process

5. In 2003, the General Fono took a formal decision, with the support of all three village councils, to endorse self-government in free association with New Zealand as the choice to be actively explored with the Government of New Zealand. In August 2005, the General Fono approved a draft constitution, as the basis for the proposed act of self-determination, and the text of a draft treaty of free association. In November 2005, the Cabinet of New Zealand gave its formal approval. The referendum package, consisting of the draft treaty and the draft constitution, was to form the basis of the referendum on self-determination. In line with a decision by the General Fono, an overall majority of two thirds of the valid votes cast was required for a change to the status of Tokelau.

6. The first referendum on self-determination was held sequentially in Apia and on the three atolls from 11 to 15 February 2006 (see [A/AC.109/2006/20](#)). The outcome fell short of the required two-thirds majority, with 60 per cent of valid Tokelauan

votes cast in favour of self-government in free association with New Zealand. The United Nations, which formally monitored the referendum, deemed the process credible and reflective of the will of the people of Tokelau. A representative of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, accompanied by a Political Affairs Officer of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, also observed the referendum process.

7. In August 2006, the General Fono voted to hold a second referendum on Tokelauan self-determination in late 2007. The proposed constitution and the draft treaty, commonly referred to as the self-determination package, were to be the same, and the legal threshold for acceptance of the proposal would remain at a two-thirds majority.

8. The second referendum was held from 20 to 24 October 2007. The result, with 64.4 per cent in favour, was again below the two-thirds threshold, thereby leaving the status of the Territory unchanged (see [A/AC.109/2007/19](#)). As with the first referendum, the United Nations formally monitored the voting, with representatives of the Special Committee and the Department of Political Affairs present as observers.

9. Following the results of the second referendum, the General Fono requested the Government of New Zealand to keep the entire self-determination package on the table. The Council for the Ongoing Government noted that Tokelau could in the future change the two-thirds majority threshold for the referendum but should put in place measures to ensure that a threshold would be supported by a clear majority in each village, to guarantee unity. The Council also noted the Territory's strong commitment to self-determination and its wish to have a constitution, albeit one that did not encompass the provisions for free association and self-government.

10. The outcomes of the referendums, neither of which reached the threshold of support set by the General Fono for a change of status, have been acknowledged and accepted by New Zealand. As a follow-up to the result of the referendum held in 2007, the then Prime Minister of New Zealand met the leaders of Tokelau in February 2008 to discuss the next steps in the development of the New Zealand-Tokelau relationship. It was agreed that a "pause" should be taken in the self-determination efforts of Tokelau and that, in the meantime, Tokelau would focus on meeting its basic needs. That remains the situation.

II. Economic conditions

A. General economic overview

11. Tokelau faces major constraints to its economic growth, including such natural disadvantages as small size, isolation, distances between the atolls, lack of natural resources and natural disasters. The economic stability of the Territory has been made possible by the high levels of assistance provided by the administering Power until the recent significant increases in revenue from fisheries licences. With the continued assistance of New Zealand, the Council for the Ongoing Government intends to maintain its focus on improving the delivery of core public services, such as education, health and policing; completing key infrastructure projects, such as schools, hospitals, renewable energy, telecommunications and transport; adapting to climate change; and strengthening the Council and the Tokelau Public Service.

12. As part of a new fisheries policy aimed at maximizing the economic benefits from the sustainable use of its exclusive economic zone, Tokelau joined the Vessel Day Scheme in 2012. This mechanism allows vessel owners to purchase and trade

days fishing at sea in places subject to the Nauru Agreement concerning Cooperation in the Management of Fisheries of Common Interest. The scheme is used to sustainably manage catches of target tuna species and increase the rate of return from fishing activities through access fees paid by distant water fishing nations. In October 2015, the General Fono approved fisheries reforms intended to further improve the administration and management of the Territory's offshore and inshore fisheries. The implementation of the reform programme continues and is guided by a fisheries reform steering group comprising representatives of Tokelau, the Office of the Administrator and the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries, which provides technical advice to the Administrator.

13. Traditional and communal values and practices play a key role in contributing to a state of general well-being in the Territory, as evidenced by the *inati* system and the importance attached to upholding the concepts of family and/or extended family. The tradition of *inati* requires the deposit at a central location of food and produce, which are then apportioned by the distributors on the basis of "share groups". The principle provides for a secure distribution system that addresses the needs of every member of the community, including older persons, widows, single parents and children.

14. The first economic summit for Tokelau, organized by the Department of Economic Development, Natural Resources and Environment of the Government of Tokelau, was held in April 2018 under the theme "Small is sustainable".

B. Assistance to Tokelau by the administering Power

15. Customized assistance is provided through budget support, specific projects and regional programmes. In 2018/19, New Zealand will provide \$NZ 11 million in general budget support and \$NZ 2.5 million in budget support for critical infrastructure upgrades. Forecast expenditure on ongoing major infrastructure projects in 2018/19 is \$NZ 15 million. About \$NZ 4 million will be spent on mutual priorities such as education, strengthening fisheries and financial management, climate change adaptation and a range of other activities, including maritime safety, an inter-atoll vessel, disaster preparedness, policing, scholarships and environmental management initiatives.

16. New Zealand announced two major investments in the infrastructure of Tokelau in 2017:

(a) \$NZ 15.8 million to upgrade the reef channels and wharves at four locations in order to make ship-to-shore transfers of people and cargo safer and more efficient and to enable an inter-atoll vessel to operate. The Government of Tokelau is contributing \$NZ 3 million;

(b) \$NZ 22.2 million to connect the atolls to an undersea Internet cable that will provide much faster Internet access, enabling better communication, administration and governance and improved health and education services. The Government of Tokelau is contributing \$NZ 7 million towards the total estimated cost of \$29.2 million.

17. The Tokelau International Trust Fund, formally established in November 2004, was designed to provide intergenerational security and an independent source of income to Tokelau in the future. Its balance as at 30 June 2018 was \$NZ 90.3 million.

C. Transport and communications

18. Tokelau has no airstrips. Its transportation needs are met by regular passenger and cargo shipping services from Apia. In 2016, the Government of New Zealand gave Tokelau the *Mataliki*, a purpose-built vessel that carries up to 60 passengers and essential cargo. New Zealand is also improving the transfer of passengers and cargo from ship to shore by upgrading wharves and reef channels (see para. 16 (a) above). Transportation links were further improved in 2018 with the launch of the *Kalopaga* in March. This cargo vessel, which can carry eight passengers, was funded and procured by Tokelau.

19. Telecommunications services in Tokelau are provided by the Tokelau Telecommunications Corporation (Teletok). In June 2017, Teletok installed 4G cellular towers, which have enabled it to establish mobile phone service across the three atolls. New Zealand investment in connecting Tokelau to an undersea Internet cable will also ensure that the atolls have high-speed Internet access (see para. 16 (b) above).

D. Power supply

20. As a Pacific island affected by climate change, Tokelau has made a commitment to renewable energy that can be considered an example for others. In 2012, Tokelau became the first area in the world to draw electrical power primarily from solar sources, following the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project, funded by the Governments of Tokelau and New Zealand. The initiative involved the installation of solar photovoltaic systems on the three atolls.

21. The demand for electricity has grown significantly since 2012. As a result, in 2016 the Government of Tokelau funded an expansion of photovoltaic systems and upgrades of the village distribution networks. However, demand continued to outstrip supply. The Governments of Tokelau and New Zealand are currently considering a major expansion and renewal of the solar energy systems using new technology that would ensure that Tokelau generates at least 90 per cent of its electricity from renewable energy for at least 15 years.

III. Social conditions

A. General

22. On 18 October 2016, Statistics New Zealand and the Tokelau National Statistics Office conducted a census, which is carried out every five years. The official *de jure* usually resident population of Tokelau was 1,499, comprising the usually resident population present on the date of the census (1,197) and the usually resident subgroup of the population absent on that date (302). The overall figure represents an increase of 6.2 per cent from the previous census, conducted in 2011.

23. The first household income and expenditure survey was also completed in 2016. This survey estimated total annual household income at \$NZ 7 million, with employment accounting for 77.2 per cent, imputed rents for 10 per cent, income from transfers (including remittances, social benefits, pensions and scholarships) for 7 per cent and gifts (in kind and remittances) for 5.1 per cent. The survey estimated an average household size of 4.6 people and annual per capita income of \$NZ 6,100. Some 40 per cent of the population of Tokelau is less than 20 years of age, with a median age of 25 years.

B. Education

24. In Tokelau, early childhood, primary and secondary education are free up to year 13 and provided by three schools, one on each atoll. As an owner of the University of the South Pacific, Tokelau has access to the University's distance-learning foundation course through the University's satellite receiver and centre on each atoll. The cost of the University's local infrastructure and staff is covered by the Government of Tokelau. According to the administering Power, the Government of Tokelau is investing significantly in its scholarship scheme, which prioritizes study at the University.

25. With a significant financial commitment from New Zealand, Tokelau is carrying out a long-term plan to transform compulsory education with the assistance of the Centre for Educational Development of Massey University. Assistance has been focused on the strengthening of school governance and leadership, the professional development of teachers and principals and the improvement of learning outcomes for students. The Education Review Office of New Zealand visited the three villages of Tokelau in March 2018 to assess progress and consult the village councils and education committees about priorities for the coming years. The 2018 review found that the quality of early childhood and primary education had improved since the 2013 review. However, much remains to be done and particular attention needs to be given to improving the provision of secondary education. A plan for further support for the education sector is expected to be developed in 2019.

26. New schools were completed on Atafu and Fakaofu in 2013 with funding from New Zealand. The Government of Tokelau provided the funding for a new school building on Nukunonu, which was completed in 2017.

C. Health care

27. According to the administering Power, the provision of adequate health services on three dispersed atolls remains a major challenge. The Department of Health of Tokelau has been staffing and equipping the new hospital on Nukunonu to serve as a base hospital, which will provide more emergency services to Tokelau. However, according to the administering Power, the village councils of Atafu and Fakaofu have not supported this plan because of concern that their communities would receive inferior service. On 7 December 2018, New Zealand officially gifted an inter-atoll vessel to Tokelau to serve as a small passenger ferry between the atolls. The vessel will provide search and rescue, sea ambulance and general transport services between the villages. In addition, the investments in high-speed Internet access will broaden the range of service provision options.

28. Tools and protocols are in place for the early detection of non-communicable diseases and risk factors in all hospitals so that patients receive early support and management services. The Government of New Zealand supports regional organizations in providing technical assistance to reduce risk factors for non-communicable diseases, such as those resulting from tobacco use, and to provide better primary care for such diseases. It also supports immunization programmes and sexual and reproductive health services. In 2017, Tokelau, among other awardees in the Western Pacific region, won the World No Tobacco Day Award, conferred by the World Health Organization (WHO), for its "tobacco-free Tokelau 2020" policy.

29. Tokelau has low infant and maternal mortality, thanks to the early referral of mothers for maternity care. Antenatal care coverage and coverage for child immunization is 100 per cent.

30. A review of the clinical provision of health services in Tokelau and the Tokelau patient referral scheme is planned for 2019, so as to improve the delivery of health services.

IV. Environment

31. Tokelau is particularly susceptible to climate change impacts such as sea level rise, extreme climate events and related hazards. In July 2016, the General Fono included climate change among its national priorities under the Tokelau development framework for 2016–2020. In April 2017, Tokelau officially launched its climate change strategy, entitled “Living with change: an integrated national strategy for enhancing the resilience of Tokelau to climate change and related hazards, 2017–2030”. The strategy identifies three interrelated strategic investment pathways: mitigation (decarbonization development), adaptation (stronger integrated risk reduction and adaptation to enhance resilience in the face of climate change and disasters) and human development (capacity-building, education, training, public awareness and outreach). The corresponding implementation plan, which was also launched in April 2017, provides an overview for the first five years of the strategy, from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2022.

32. According to the administering Power, concerns in Tokelau about the Territory’s inability to gain access to global climate change funds, given its constitutional status, have been communicated. New Zealand has recognized its unique obligation to Tokelau to assist with climate change adaptation efforts. New Zealand is funding climate change-related data collection and the development of a coastal risk mitigation plan to support climate change resilience efforts.

V. External relations

33. As set out in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Joint Statement of the Principles of Partnership between Tokelau and New Zealand, Tokelau, as a Non-Self-Governing Territory, does not have an international legal personality separate from that of New Zealand that would allow it to enter into formal international legal obligations as a State in its own right. In consultation with Tokelau, New Zealand is responsible for entering into any such obligations on behalf of Tokelau. Tokelau participates in regional and international organizations in its own right to the extent that such organizations allow.

34. Tokelau is seeking to increase its engagement with regional and international organizations. It is a member of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Community Coastal Fisheries Programme, the Council of the University of the South Pacific, the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. At the forty-fifth Pacific Islands Forum, held in Koror, Palau, from 29 to 31 July 2014, the participants agreed to admit Tokelau as an associate member. Tokelau is also a member of the Polynesian Leaders Group and an associate member of WHO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In addition to New Zealand, Samoa is an important bilateral contact for Tokelau.

35. Representatives of Tokelau attended the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as part of the New Zealand delegation. At the twenty-third session, New Zealand announced that, as requested by the Government of Tokelau, it had submitted a formal declaration to the United Nations to extend the territorial application of both the Convention and the Paris Agreement to Tokelau. The national reports of New

Zealand under the Convention will now include action taken by Tokelau, which, according to the administering Power, is likely to result in increased recognition for the Territory's climate mitigation work as well as a greater focus being placed on its vulnerability to the effects of climate change. The Territory continues to seek support in gaining access to the Green Climate Fund and other adaptation and mitigation mechanisms.

VI. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

36. At the 10th meeting of the Special Committee, on 22 June 2018, the Ulu-o-Tokelau, Afega Gaulofa, said that the three Tokelau village councils had recently met representatives of United Nations agencies and the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific, as well as the new Administrator of Tokelau. Both meetings had been productive, and he looked forward to a close working relationship with the Administrator. Meanwhile, it was critical for the interests of the people of Tokelau to remain at the heart of all efforts to achieve the goal of self-government. Furthermore, although Tokelau and New Zealand continued to work together to promote the well-being of the people of Tokelau, he requested the Committee's assistance in ensuring that, as a Territory, Tokelau was not excluded from access to global financial assistance, including climate finance, which was particularly important as a group of remote, low-lying atolls.

37. The Ulu-o-Tokelau said that, following the referendums, Tokelau had strengthened its governance systems with respect to decision-making and the management of public services. While the Territory remained committed to self-determination, the General Fono had decided not to consider another referendum until more could be done to develop its capacities, infrastructure and economy. In the meantime, Tokelau would continue to look to the Committee for support and guidance. As the Ulu-o-Tokelau, he was confident that the National Strategic Plan for 2016–2020 would lay the groundwork for self-government. Despite the difficult financial climate, Tokelau continued to budget for the Plan priorities.

38. The warm relationship between Tokelau and New Zealand was evidenced by the Joint Statement of the Principles of Partnership and the latter's economic support arrangement. In view of its growing development needs, Tokelau would continue to look to New Zealand and its development partners for support. It was working closely with New Zealand to direct resources to key areas. The Council for the Ongoing Government was looking forward to its first meeting with the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

39. Rising sea waters had encroached on the atolls and contaminated their water. While other Pacific nations had access to significant funding from the Special Climate Change Fund and other environmental funds and programmes, Tokelau was included under the allocation for New Zealand and did not have access in its own right. Thanks to financial support from the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Tokelau had made progress on climate adaptation and food security projects. With the support of regional and international agencies, it would be launching projects to produce biogas to supplement household cooking fuels. Tokelau was addressing climate change through its "Living with change" strategy and its commitment to nationally determined contributions in the context of the Paris Agreement.

40. He concluded by noting that, to ensure more sustainable development, the National Strategic Plan was focused on good governance, infrastructure and transport

and communications. In the latter area, Tokelau was operating a fleet of two vessels that provided passenger and cargo service, and was working with New Zealand to widen the reef channels and improve the infrastructure around wharves, to identify options for implementing air service and to connect to an undersea Internet cable. Its public services had been under local control for almost 20 years.

B. Position of the administering Power

41. The Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations, Craig John Hawke, delivered a statement on behalf of the Administrator of Tokelau, Ross Ardern, at the 10th meeting of the Special Committee, held on 22 June 2018. He said that, in response to the request of Tokelau, in 2017 New Zealand had decided to appoint an administrator for Tokelau who did not have other responsibilities. Its increased focus on the Pacific region had resulted in a sense of momentum in its Pacific relationships, and it was confident that its relationship with Tokelau would continue to deliver tangible benefits to the people of Tokelau.

42. Over the previous three decades, New Zealand had progressively devolved its administrative powers to Tokelau and had supported the development of its institutions. Tokelau had its own court system, made its own laws, ran its own public services and exercised local administrative authority. While the 2006 and 2007 referendums had narrowly missed the two-thirds majority required for a change of status, the close results reflected considerable desire for greater self-governance. New Zealand was committed to helping Tokelau to develop its capacity and confidence in self-governance and improve quality of life. In December 2017, it had announced the allocation of almost \$NZ 40 million for upgrading the channels around the three atolls and connecting Tokelau to undersea fibre-optic cables, and it had been working closely with the territorial Government to improve the administration and management of its fisheries.

43. In view of the overwhelming impact of climate change on weather patterns and the coastal environment of Tokelau, including the acidification of its lagoons, New Zealand was supporting the Territory's adaptation efforts through a project to reduce the risk of coastal flooding. Furthermore, Tokelau regularly joined the New Zealand delegations to international climate change negotiations, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2017. New Zealand was committed to improving the quality of life of its most remote citizens and welcomed the Committee's ongoing interest in Tokelau.

VII. Consideration by the United Nations

A. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

44. The Special Committee considered the question of Tokelau at its 10th meeting, held on 22 June 2018. At that meeting, the representative of Papua New Guinea, also on behalf of Fiji, Indonesia and Sierra Leone, introduced draft resolution [A/AC.109/2018/L.23](#), which the Special Committee adopted without a vote. The representative of Fiji made a statement (see [A/AC.109/2018/SR.10](#)).

B. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

45. At the 6th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), held on 12 October 2018, the Permanent Representative of New Zealand, on behalf of the administering Power and the Administrator of Tokelau, said that the recent developments in the relationship between his Government and Tokelau reflected the new approach that the Government had adopted to that important issue, through which it hoped to build stronger partnerships with its Pacific neighbours.

46. He said that, over the coming four years, New Zealand planned to invest \$NZ 86 million in Tokelau to improve the health and education systems; reduce the travel time between the atolls; provide faster and more reliable Internet service; improve governance, transparency and democratic practices; strengthen the public financial management capacity; and sustainably maximize revenue from fishing. It was also helping to build resilience to climate change, in particular by reducing the risks of coastal inundation and constructing a weather station; such efforts were all the more important given that Tokelau, as a Territory, could not gain access to sources of global climate finance available to many countries. Tokelau also regularly played a role in international climate negotiations, and it was covered by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. New Zealand remained committed to building the capacity and confidence of Tokelau to self-govern. It welcomed the attention given to the issue by the Committee and would continue to provide assistance in that regard.

47. At the same meeting, the representative of Papua New Guinea, speaking in his national capacity on the question of Tokelau, commended both parties for engaging constructively with regard to the self-determination process, which served as a positive example for other Non-Self-Governing Territories.

48. At its 9th meeting, on 17 October 2018, the Fourth Committee adopted without a vote draft resolution XV (see [A/73/23](#), chap. XIII) on the question of Tokelau.

C. Action taken by the General Assembly

49. At its 48th plenary meeting, on 7 December 2018, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution [73/118](#) on the question of Tokelau. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Acknowledged the decision of the General Fono in 2008 that consideration of any future act of self-determination by Tokelau would be deferred and that New Zealand and Tokelau would devote renewed effort and attention to ensuring that essential services and infrastructure on the atolls of Tokelau were enhanced and strengthened, thereby ensuring an enhanced quality of life and opportunities for the people of Tokelau;

(b) Welcomed the progress made towards the devolution of power to the three *taupulega* (village councils) since 2004, and noted that further discussion was planned on the recommendations in the report on the devolution review, compiled in 2012;

(c) Noted with appreciation that Tokelau and New Zealand remained firmly committed to the ongoing development of Tokelau for the long-term benefit of the people of Tokelau, with particular emphasis on the further development of facilities on each atoll that met their current requirements, including investment to connect Tokelau to an undersea cable for faster and more reliable Internet services;

(d) Recalled the consideration by Tokelau of its National Strategic Plan for 2016–2020, which prioritized good governance, human development, infrastructure development, sustainability and climate change adaptation, and noted the completion by Tokelau of the Plan, which determined development and other priorities for the 2016–2020 period, and the Plan’s focus on infrastructure development to support service delivery, including through transport and telecommunications solutions;

(e) Acknowledged the ongoing and consistent commitment of New Zealand to meeting the social and economic requirements of the people of Tokelau, including through new shipping service assets and shipping infrastructure development, and budget support for the delivery of education services ranging from early childhood education to foundation courses for tertiary study, as well as the support and cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme and WHO;

(f) Commended the completion by Tokelau in 2013 of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project with the support of the administering Power and receipt by the Government of the Renewable Energy Award granted by the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority;

(g) Also commended Tokelau for the recent measures taken to safeguard the health of its peoples through its “Tobacco-Free Tokelau by 2020” policy, and encouraged the necessary support for its implementation from the administering Power, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders;

(h) Acknowledged the need of Tokelau for continued support from the international community and its desire to become part of the discussions on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the impacts of climate change and the protection of the environment and oceans, and in that regard encouraged, as appropriate, assistance towards the implementation of the climate change strategy of Tokelau, entitled “Living with change: an integrated national strategy for enhancing the resilience of Tokelau to climate change and related hazards, 2017–2030”, and the associated plan, and also acknowledged the efforts of the administering Power to include in its national reporting to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change the climate mitigation action taken by Tokelau;

(i) Recalled with satisfaction the establishment and operation of the Tokelau International Trust Fund to support the ongoing needs of Tokelau, and called upon Member States and international and regional agencies to contribute to the Fund and thereby lend practical support to Tokelau in overcoming the problems of smallness, isolation and lack of resources;

(j) Welcomed the cooperative attitude of the other States and territories in the region towards Tokelau and their support for its economic and political aspirations and its increasing participation in regional and international affairs, and in that regard noted the successful chairmanship by Tokelau of the tenth annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, held in Tokelau on 1 and 2 July 2014, the representation of the Agency by the Ulu-o-Tokelau at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014, and the signing by Tokelau of the Pacific Islands Development Forum Charter on 27 April 2016 so as to become the twelfth member of the Forum;

(k) Called upon the administering Power and United Nations agencies to continue to provide assistance to Tokelau as it further developed;

(l) Recognized the positive actions taken by the administering Power to transmit to the Secretary-General under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations information regarding the political, economic and social situation of Tokelau;

(m) Commended the commitment of both Tokelau and New Zealand to continuing to work together in the interests of Tokelau and its people;

(n) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Tokelau and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session.

Map of Tokelau

