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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 7th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 24 June 2021, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. McGuire (Grenada)

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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

(continued) (A/AC.109/2021/6; A/AC.109/2021/L.8)

1. **Mr. Blanco Conde** (Observer for the Dominican Republic) said that his delegation supported Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The Dominican Republic had maintained its solidarity with the people and Government of Argentina and recognized that a peaceful and negotiated solution to the dispute was the right course of action, as established in numerous General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 31/49.

2. In the light of the just claims and willingness of Argentina to resolve the dispute, the only way to end the current situation was through a negotiated agreement between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom. His delegation fully supported the mission of good offices of the Secretary-General and called for all resources from the repeated General Assembly resolutions to be drawn upon so that negotiations could be resumed and a peaceful and definitive settlement reached.

3. In the special communiqué adopted at the twenty-seventh Ibero-American Summit, held in Andorra on 21 April 2021, the Heads of State and Government of the Ibero-American countries had reaffirmed that the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom should resume negotiations as soon as possible with a view to finding a peaceful solution to the sovereignty dispute; reiterated the calls upon the parties to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation of the Islands; noted the strengthened military presence in the disputed area, which was incompatible with the policy of consistently seeking a peaceful settlement of the dispute; and highlighted the constructive approach taken by Argentina and its willingness to reach a definitive solution to that special and particular colonial situation through negotiations.

4. **Mr. Costa Filho** (Observer for Brazil) said that his Government reiterated its firm support for the legitimate rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The question of the Malvinas Islands was a special and particular colonial situation that had lasted for nearly two centuries. The principle of self-determination did not apply because the inhabitants of the Islands were descended from a British population introduced as part of an illegal occupation. Negotiations on the question

should instead be based on the principle of territorial integrity.

5. In the Montevideo Declaration signed in 2013 at the seventh Ministerial Meeting of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic – a zone created pursuant to General Assembly resolution 41/11, at the initiative of Brazil – the Ministers of the States members of the zone had called for the resumption of negotiations between the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) and other relevant resolutions of the Assembly on the question of the Malvinas Islands with a view to finding, as soon as possible, a peaceful, just and durable solution to the sovereignty dispute.

6. Brazil welcomed the efforts of Argentina and the United Kingdom to strengthen bilateral relations and reach practical understandings under the formula on sovereignty relating to the South Atlantic. Initiatives such as the identification of the unknown Argentine soldiers buried in Darwin cemetery led to improvements in the bilateral relationship, which would help to establish the conditions necessary for the resumption of negotiations with a view to returning full sovereignty over the Islands to Argentina, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

7. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/49, his Government urged the United Kingdom to cease its exploration and exploitation of natural resources and refrain from carrying out military exercises in the disputed area. In solidarity with Argentina and in support of the principle of that resolution, Brazil did not allow any use of its airports and ports by aircraft and ships bound for the Malvinas Islands that could imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation. The South Atlantic was a zone of peace and cooperation, free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, dedicated to the harmony and peaceful settlement of disputes that characterized Latin America, the Caribbean and the African countries of the South Atlantic.

8. The desire for a negotiated solution was shared not only throughout Latin America but by all developing countries. His delegation supported the mission of good offices entrusted to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly. The resumption of negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom was the only viable way to resolve the dispute in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the various relevant General Assembly resolutions.

9. **Ms. Concepción Jaramillo** (Observer for Panama) said that her country reiterated its support for the legitimate sovereignty rights of the Argentine Republic over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX), the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom should resume the dialogue that at one time had led to constructive understandings.

10. Situations that seemed insurmountable could be resolved through sustained dialogue. Following many years of discussions and continued support from the international community, the Torrijos-Carter Treaties had been signed, by which Panama had regained full sovereignty over part of its territory and been granted control of the Panama Canal. It was only through dialogue and cooperation that solutions could be found to disputes between States, which were subjects of international law.

Question of New Caledonia (*continued*)
(A/AC.109/2021/11; A/AC.109/2021/L.22)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2021/L.22: Question of New Caledonia

11. **Mr. Sarufa** (Papua New Guinea), speaking also on behalf of Fiji and introducing the draft resolution, said that an important development since the adoption of the previous resolution on New Caledonia was the decision of the administering Power, France, to schedule a self-determination referendum for New Caledonia on 12 December 2021. Among the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, New Caledonia held the record for the highest number of self-determination referendums, and the scheduled referendum would be the third to be held under the Nouméa Accord within a period of four years. The Committee must not only monitor the preparatory stages, the conduct of the referendum and the post-referendum phase, but also work with the people of New Caledonia and the administering Power in accordance with the wishes of the people of the Territory regarding their future status. The importance of ensuring a fair, just and transparent referendum in an atmosphere of peace and stability could not be overstated in the context of the timeline set for the referendum. In the light of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the Territory, the Committee should also support efforts to protect the health and safety of the people of New Caledonia.

12. Additional proposals to amend the draft resolution had been submitted by the administering Power with a view to adding value and further strengthening the text.

The proposed amendments to the twenty-fifth preambular paragraph were for the inclusion of additional factual references regarding the invitation from the administering Power to the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to dispatch electoral expert missions to New Caledonia. The amended paragraph would read: "Recalling the invitations from the administering Power to the Electoral Assistance Division of the former Department of Political Affairs and the current Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the Secretariat to dispatch electoral expert missions to New Caledonia in May 2016 and in subsequent years to observe the work of the special administrative commissions and the advisory committee of experts for the establishment and revision of the special electoral list, including, in particular, for the self-determination referendums in New Caledonia on 4 November 2018 and 4 October 2020, consistent with the Nouméa Accord,". The proposed amendment to the twenty-seventh preambular paragraph related to the importance of the educational awareness to be provided by the administering Power and the Government of the Territory to the people of New Caledonia concerning the outcome of the self-determination referendum, which was an issue that had been highlighted to the two visiting missions to New Caledonia in 2014 and 2018. It was proposed that the phrase "and the relevant measures to this end taken since 2018 by the administering Power" be added at the end of the paragraph. His delegation, and that of Fiji, hoped that the oral amendments and the draft resolution as a whole would be adopted by consensus.

13. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2021/L.22, as orally amended, was adopted.*

Question of American Samoa (A/AC.109/2021/1; A/AC.109/2021/L.10)

14. **The Chair** drew attention to the working paper prepared by the Secretariat on American Samoa (A/AC.109/2021/1).

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2021/L.10: Question of American Samoa

15. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2021/L.10 was adopted.*

Question of Tokelau (*continued*) (A/AC.109/2021/14; A/AC.109/2021/L.23)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2021/L.23: Question of Tokelau

16. **Mr. Sarufa** (Papua New Guinea), introducing the draft resolution, said that the text was the result of the collective work of the Committee members, with constructive input from the administering Power, New Zealand, and the Government of Tokelau.

17. The Government of Tokelau had requested the inclusion of a reference to its national strategic plan for 2021–2026, which was to be adopted in July 2021. It had not been possible to include such a reference, however, because references to documents or plans that had yet to be adopted were not permitted in draft resolutions of the General Assembly.

18. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.23](#) was adopted.

Question of Anguilla (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/2](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.11](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.11](#): Question of Anguilla

19. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.11](#) was adopted.

Question of Bermuda (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/3](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.12](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.12](#): Question of Bermuda

20. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.12](#) was adopted.

Question of the British Virgin Islands (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/4](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.14](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.14](#): Question of the British Virgin Islands

21. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.14](#) was adopted.

Question of the Cayman Islands (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/5](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.15](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.15](#): Question of the Cayman Islands

22. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.15](#) was adopted.

Question of French Polynesia (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/7](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.24](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.24](#): Question of French Polynesia

23. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.24](#) was adopted.

Question of Guam (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/9](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.16](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.16](#): Question of Guam

24. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.16](#) was adopted.

Question of Montserrat (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/10](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.17](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.17](#): Question of Montserrat

25. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.17](#) was adopted.

Question of Pitcairn (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/12](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.18](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.18](#): Question of Pitcairn

26. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.18](#) was adopted.

Question of Saint Helena (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/13](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.19](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.19](#): Question of Saint Helena

27. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.19](#) was adopted.

Question of the Turks and Caicos Islands (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/15](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.20](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.20](#): Question of the Turks and Caicos Islands

28. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.20](#) was adopted.

Question of the United States Virgin Islands (continued) ([A/AC.109/2021/16](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.21](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.21](#): Question of the United States Virgin Islands

29. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.21](#) was adopted.

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations ([A/76/68](#); [E/2021/8](#); [A/AC.109/2021/L.9](#))

Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.9](#): Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

30. Draft resolution [A/AC.109/2021/L.9](#) was adopted.

Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.109/2021/L.6)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2021/L.6: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories

31. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2021/L.6 was adopted.*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/AC.109/2021/L.25)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2021/L.25: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

32. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2021/L.25 was adopted.*

Organization of the 2021 Caribbean regional seminar (continued)

33. **The Chair**, recalling that, in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee had decided on 7 May 2021 to postpone the Caribbean regional seminar until 25 to 27 August 2021, so that the Secretariat could carry out the required risk assessment and travel clearance procedures, said that, on 16 June 2021, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support had responded to Dominica, stating that the Secretariat would conduct a desk review risk assessment of the venue of the seminar, which would be sufficient to allow clearance of staff travelling to the seminar and provide a broad overview of the risks and the mitigation measures available to organizers. The Chair and the Bureau, together with Dominica, were in the process of obtaining the final risk assessment.

Other matters

34. **The Chair** suggested that the Committee should authorize the Rapporteur to prepare the report of the Special Committee to the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly. Once the report had been completed and approved by the Bureau, the Committee should authorize the Rapporteur to submit it directly to the Assembly in accordance with established practice.

35. *It was so decided.*

Closure of the session

36. **The Chair**, recalling that it had not been possible to hold the substantive session in 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, said that, although challenges had persisted into the 2021 session, the Committee had adapted and worked flexibly. She was grateful to the

representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories and petitioners who had travelled to speak before the Committee despite the current circumstances, and to the Territories for designating representatives to deliver statements when travel had not been possible.

37. After the customary expression of thanks to the Committee members and Secretariat staff, she declared the session closed.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.