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GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS TEXTS ON ITEMS RANGING FROM SELF- DETERMINATION TO PEACE

IN SOUTH ATLANTIC; SUPPORTS EXTENSION OF IMPUNITY COMMISSION IN GUATEMALA

The General Assembly, working through its busy agenda, today adopted five resolutions and one decision on a wide range of items, including on the self-determination of French Polynesia and on peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic.

By the terms of the text on French Polynesia, tabled by Nauru, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, the Assembly requested the Government of France, as the administering Power, to intensify its dialogue with the Non-Self-Governing Territory to facilitate rapid progress towards a fair and effective self-determination process. The Assembly asked the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples — the Special Committee on Decolonization — to consider that matter at its next session and to report to the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

Introducing the text, the representative of Solomon Islands said that French Polynesia was “historically” inscribed by the administering Power on the original United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. However, for decades, the Assembly had not been furnished with information on French Polynesia. Furthermore, a subsequent list published in 1963 curiously omitted it. He was concerned that the de facto removal of French Polynesia and New Caledonia from United Nations oversight had occurred without adoption of a General Assembly resolution.

Today’s draft resolution, adopted without a vote, was based on the principle that it was up to the Non-Self Governing Territory of French Polynesia to choose its future destiny, in a just and fair process, he said, adding that “the matter of decolonization remains an unfinished business of the United Nations”.

Speaking in explanation of position after action, the representative of the Netherlands was among some who disassociated themselves from consensus. He said that, although he supported the principle of the inalienable right to self-determination, the Assembly must hear from the people of French Polynesia before adopting a resolution that determined their future.

Also acting without a vote, the Assembly adopted a draft resolution on promoting peace and cooperation in the South Atlantic, by which the 193-nation body called on States to cooperate in the promotion of peace and cooperation — objectives established in resolution 41/11 and reiterated in the Montevideo Declaration and the Plan of Action.

Following that action, the representative of the United Kingdom said his delegation strongly disagreed with certain elements of the Montevideo Declaration, notably the false

claim that his country was violating General Assembly resolution 31/49 by developing “illegitimate” hydrocarbon activities in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)^[7], South Georgia Islands, South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, and reinforcing its military assets in the South Atlantic.

In exercise of the right of reply, the delegate of Argentina recalled that the country’s President had stated at the United Nations on two occasions last year that the Malvinas Islands were Argentina’s national territories “illegally occupied” by the United Kingdom. Many resolutions recognized the existence of a sovereignty dispute, she said, calling on the United Kingdom to agree to resume negotiations towards a peaceful and lasting solution.

Also adopted was a draft resolution on the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, by which the Assembly noted the request of the Guatemalan Government to extend the Commission’s mandate for a final two years, until 3 September 2015. At the same time, the Assembly called on the Government to continue providing all the support necessary to consolidate the achievements and overcome the challenges facing the Commission as well as to redouble its efforts to strengthen rule of law and respect for human rights in the country.

Prior to action on that text, several delegations expressed their support for the Commission’s extension, including a representative of the European Union Delegation, who added, however, that despite the Union’s support of that body, this should be the final extension. The representative of Costa Rica acknowledged the work of the Commission, whose contribution transcended borders and impacted all of Central America, having been instrumental in investigating and prosecuting several criminal cases. His counterpart from Germany agreed, noting that the overwhelming majority of denunciations had previously gone unimplemented, but the Commission and Government had dramatically changed that.

Noting that stable, efficient and reliable energy transportation was a key factor of sustainable development and in the interest of the entire international community, the Assembly, in another resolution, recognized the need for extensive international cooperation for promoting the reliable transportation of energy to international markets through pipelines and other transportation systems. In a related provision, it welcomed the proposal of the Government of Turkmenistan to host an international meeting of experts early in 2014 to follow up on the high-level conference held on the topic on 23 April 2009.

A wide-ranging draft resolution on the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), submitted by Djibouti on behalf of the organization’s States members, welcomed the cooperation between it and the United Nations in the fields of peacemaking, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and noted also the close cooperation between the two organizations in reconstruction and development in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

A draft decision adopted today determined that the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States would be held in Samoa’s capital, Apia, from 1 to 4 September 2014.

Also today, the Assembly held a debate on the central role of the United Nations system in global governance, in which representatives of Chile and the European Union delegation participated.

Representatives of the United Kingdom, Germany, United States, Mexico and Indonesia also spoke in explanation of position on the resolution concerning French Polynesia. Solomon Islands spoke in exercise of the right of reply.

Also speaking on the text concerning the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala were the representatives of Argentina and the United States.

Additional statements in right of reply were made by the representatives of Argentina and the United Kingdom.

Background

The General Assembly met today to consider a range of draft texts.

Action on Drafts

The representative of Turkmenistan, introducing a draft resolution on reliable and stable transit of energy and its role in ensuring sustainable development and international cooperation (document A/67/L.65), said that access to energy was central to job creation, security, climate change mitigation, food production, poverty eradication and improved living standards. Turkmenistan, a leading supplier of energy and home to the world's fourth largest hydrocarbon reserves, believed there was a need for consensus decisions to serve as a basis for global cooperation to ensure the reliable and stable transit of energy. Indeed, unpredictable, erratic energy prices were the main culprit for instability in the global energy supply chain.

Since 2008, said the delegate, energy experts had set forth proposals at various energy forums to strengthen global cooperation in that field and to balance the interests of producers, transit countries and consumers. To follow up the High-Level Conference on Reliable and Stable Transit of Energy, held in Ashgabat in 2009, the Turkmen Government had proposed hosting and financing a meeting of experts in the Turkmen capital in the first half of 2014 on the issues. He was confident that the meeting would promote a common approach to ensure a reliable and stable global energy supply.

Adoption of the present resolution would undoubtedly be an important step towards that goal, and thus, help to eliminate an acute obstacle to sustainable development.

The Assembly then adopted that text without a vote.

Next, the Assembly adopted, also without a vote, a draft decision on the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (document A/67/L.66). Under its terms, the Assembly decided to host the Conference in Samoa's capital, Apia, from 1 to 4 September 2014, to be preceded by activities related to the Conference from 28 to 30 August 2014, also in Apia.

Next, the representative of Djibouti and Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) introduced the draft resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (document A/67/L.29). He noted that it had been tabled in early December 2012, but later withdrawn upon the request of a Group that sought further discussion.

He said that the draft's operative paragraphs underscored the shared common goals of the United Nations and OIC in promoting and facilitating the Middle East peace process, leading to establishment of a just, comprehensive peace in the region. Among its other provisions, it welcomed cooperation between the two organizations to combat intolerance and stigmatization of persons based on their religion or belief; recognized the strong need for global awareness about religious intolerance; condemned any advocacy or religious hatred that constituted incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence; and welcomed cooperation towards addressing those issues urgently. He called on all delegates to adopt it.

The Assembly then adopted that text without a vote.

The delegate of Solomon Islands, introducing a draft resolution on Self-determination of French Polynesia (document A/67/L.56/Rev.1), said that, historically, French Polynesia was inscribed by the administering Power on the original United Nations list, which, in line with obligations under the Charter's Chapter XI, required the administering

Power to provide the Assembly with information on developments towards a full measure of self-government in those territories. However, as of 1947, the Assembly was no longer furnished with information on French Polynesia. Furthermore, a subsequent list of non-governing territories published in 1963 curiously omitted that territory. He was concerned that the de facto removal of French Polynesia and New Caledonia from United Nations oversight had occurred without adoption of a General Assembly resolution.

Discussions on the current resolution had been “around the corridors of the United Nations for a while”, he went on. However, the administering Power, France, had delayed action because of its own national elections. While there was “no organic link” between the national elections of an administering Power and the exercise of the inalienable right to self-determination of the people of a territory, agreement to postpone consideration had been honoured in the interest of flexibility. Today’s draft resolution was based on the principle that it was up to the Non-Self Governing Territory of French Polynesia to choose its future destiny, in a just and fair process. The resolution also sent a simple message of peace and hope to the population. “The matter of decolonization remains an unfinished business of the United Nations,” he said.

The representative of the Secretariat explained certain financial implications of the text, following which the Assembly adopted it without a vote.

Speaking in the explanation of position after the adoption, the representative of the United Kingdom, disassociating herself from the consensus, regretted that the Decolonization Committee continued with its “outdated approach”. She said that it was not for the General Assembly to determine in any particular case that an obligation existed for a State to submit information under Article 73e of the Charter.

The representative of the Netherlands, also disassociating the delegation from consensus, said that, although he supported the principle of the inalienable right to self-determination, the Assembly must hear from the people of French Polynesia before adopting a resolution that determined their future.

The representative of Germany also took to the floor to say that he, too, disassociated himself from consensus.

The representative of the United States strongly affirmed the principle of self-determination as one of the fundamental values of the Organization. However, “the facts are clear”: the people of French Polynesia had made clear that they did not support that particular resolution — it ignored the autonomy and will of the people it claimed to represent. He disassociated himself from consensus.

The representative of Mexico, also recognizing the inalienable right of people to self-determination, believed that in that particular case, “we must guarantee the rights of all interested parties to be recognized”. Mexico preferred that the Assembly would have responded positively to the request of French Polynesia, whose authorities were taking power today, to postpone action. Mexico expressed reservations about the manner in which the resolution was being adopted.

The representative of Argentina considered that the United Nations Decolonization Committee was the appropriate forum to address the issue. The French Polynesian people could express their views via that means.

The representative of Indonesia said that today’s adoption was solely based on a specific historical context and should not be misinterpreted as precedence by other territories whose cases were pending with the Decolonization Committee. He encouraged the French Government to continue engaging in constructive dialogue with French Polynesia in a manner that would best serve the interests of the people of Polynesia.

Exercising his right of reply, the representative of Solomon Islands said he looked forward to seeing the administering Power, France, and French Polynesia continue cooperation within the appropriate body.

Next, the representative of Uruguay introduced a draft resolution on zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic (document A/67/L.64). He said the text had been based on the previous two resolutions on the topic adopted by consensus in 2007 and 2011. The current draft took note of the recently published report of the Secretary-General on the item and stressed the role of the South Atlantic zone of peace and cooperation as a forum for increased interaction and support among its member States.

Taking note of the adoption of the Montevideo Declaration and the Plan of Action at a ministerial meeting held in his country, the draft called on States to cooperate in the promotion of the objectives set forth in those instruments, he said. He welcomed interest expressed by a number of countries to cooperate in such areas as combating transnational organized crimes and protection of marine biodiversity, which had been indentified in the Plan of Action. His delegation was committed to revitalize the zone under its chairmanship of the forum.

The representative of Argentina stressed the importance of the countries in the region and their determination to uphold the ideas of cooperation and to overcome the legacy of the cold war. Now was the time to take advantage of the impetus created at the Montevideo meeting. Its Declaration included a sensitive issue related to the need to combat colonialism in all its forms and manifestations and to the sovereignty of certain Member States. The zone of peace, she added, aimed to be free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. She hailed the Montevideo action plan for its recognition of the potential of South-South cooperation and for identifying areas of cooperation, including conservation of marine environment and respect for defence and security needs.

The delegate of Brazil said the founding principles of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic were as important today as when the Assembly set up the zone in 1986. She lauded the 16 January convening of the Seventh Ministerial Meeting in Montevideo. As the participation of South America and Africa in world dynamics grew, the South Atlantic would increase in relevance as a busy commercial route and a reservoir of valuable natural and mineral resources, as well as a committed partner in socioeconomic development.

She called on the international community to strengthen all aspects of the zone and on its members to strengthen cooperation in the rational use of energy and marine resources, trade and investment, sustainable coastal management, and scientific research and education. The 2013 Montevideo Declaration and Plan of Action served as valuable guidelines for future cooperation initiatives in those and other areas and, to effectively implement it, member States were focused on concrete steps. For example, Brazil offered a programme of professional and technical training for nationals from zone members for capacity-building and exchange of experiences and good practices.

The Assembly then adopted the text, as orally revised, without a vote.

Speaking after action, the representative of the United Kingdom said his delegation strongly disagreed with certain elements of the Montevideo Declaration. That included the false claim that the United Kingdom was violating United Nations General Assembly resolution 31/49 through the development of “illegitimate” hydrocarbon activities in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), South Georgia Islands, South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas and the “reinforcement” of its military assets in the South Atlantic. The United Kingdom noted that operative paragraph 2 of this resolution “takes note of the adoption of the Montevideo Declaration”, and that it does not, therefore, express the General Assembly’s approval of the context of that Declaration.

The United Kingdom, he said, had no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas of those territories, he said. The principle of self-determination, enshrined in the United Nations Charter, underlined the position of the United Kingdom on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. The islanders had the right of self-determination and the right to develop their economy, including developing their natural resources for their own economic benefit. His Government unequivocally supported that right. The islanders had made their views clear in the recent referendum when they had voted overwhelmingly in support of retaining their constitutional links with the United Kingdom.

Using the right of reply, the delegate of Argentina said that her nation's President had stated — on 14 June 2012 in the Decolonization Committee and on 25 September 2012 at the General Assembly — that the Malvinas Islands were Argentina's national territories "illegally occupied" by the United Kingdom. Many resolutions recognized the existence of a sovereignty dispute, she said, calling on the United Kingdom to agree to resume negotiations towards a peaceful and lasting solution.

She said her delegation noted with regret that the Government of the United Kingdom had attempted to delay a solution. That tactic was a clear demonstration of a lack of certainty about what the United Kingdom considered as their territories. The so-called "referendum" by the inhabitants on the dispute islands was not legitimate and did not put an end to the dispute and unquestionable rights of Argentina. She also rejected unilateral actions, citing hydrocarbon exploration and military activities of the United Kingdom. Lastly, she reaffirmed Argentina's sovereignty over those islands and the surrounding maritime territories.

Also speaking in right of reply, the representative of the United Kingdom stressed the importance of respecting the fundamental human rights of the islanders, including the right to determine their future. There would be no negotiation unless the islanders so wished. His country had administered the islands for 180 years peacefully and could trace inhabitants nine generations back. His delegation wished to have a friendly relationship with Argentina as a neighbour. But the United Kingdom did not intend to do anything against the islanders' will and behind their back.

In exercise of the second right of reply, Argentina's speaker expressed regret over the comment made by the United Kingdom's delegate. She said that Argentina, as a country committed to defending human rights, respected the right of self-determination of peoples in accordance with pertinent United Nations resolutions, and no resolution on the Malvinas issue had included that principle as it involved a sovereignty dispute.

The Assembly next turned to a draft resolution on the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, (document [A/67/L.60](#)). It was introduced by Guatemala's representative, who said that the Commission, created under Guatemalan legislation under the Secretary-General's auspices, had strengthened national institutions in the justice and security sectors. Its activities, financed through contributions of the Government, as well as from the international donor community, had fortified the country's legal framework through the provision of technical assistance and a subsidiary role to Guatemalan entities involved in criminal prosecution.

A dramatic example, he said, was the sentencing of a former Head of State on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity, allegedly committed in 1982. The draft before the Assembly sought to give continuity to resolution 65/181, and acknowledged the note of the Secretary-General recommending an extension of the Commission's mandate for another two years until September 2015. He strongly reaffirmed that extending the "life of the Commission" would improve the ability of the Guatemalan State to meet its responsibility.

Before action, a representative of the European Union Delegation said that at every stage thus far, the Union had provided support to structural reform processes of the justice and security sectors in Guatemala in its fight against impunity. The Union had played a critical

role in supporting the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala, both politically and financially — €11 million so far had been allocated from the European Union budget.

While fully aware of the need to extend the Commission's mandate until September 2015, he said the Union expected that to be the final period. Still, he expressed concern about continuing violence and cases of impunity. He underlined the need to provide Guatemala with sufficient resources to build State capacity to continue to perform the tasks it had undertaken over the past years.

The representative of Costa Rica, speaking in his capacity as Pro Tempore President of the Central American Integration System, said he supported L.60 and expressed solidarity with Guatemala's efforts to strengthen the rule of law and fight impunity. He acknowledged the work of the International Commission, whose contribution transcended borders and impacted all of Central America. The success it had already achieved, as well as its potential impact on the fight against transnational organized crime, would be critical for the future of Guatemala and the whole region.

He said the Commission's work had been crucial in investigating and prosecuting several criminal cases, and, therefore, in implementing justice. However, an even more important contribution had been its development of critical judiciary and institutional reforms and the strengthening of law enforcement institutions, as well as of the Attorney General's Office and the national courts. He highly welcomed the recommendation to extend its mandate and he urged the international community to continue supporting the country and the Commission.

Similarly, the representative of Argentina reiterated the country's support for the Commission for its substantive, transformative and "emancipatory" work. When a Government and an entire society decided to end impunity it was opting to uphold fundamental human rights. A country from "our region" had set an example to reject all forms of violence and corruption, and to uphold justice and due process and combat impunity. The task carried out by the Commission, including in the area of prosecuting organized criminal groups, was a "course that needs to be repeated" by others.

Argentina, from its own history, was aware of the importance of ending impunity and upholding rights, she said. Coming to terms with the truth of the past was useful in mending "the pain of the victims when they have to cope with the denial of their rights by corrupt and cruel Powers". Argentina would not only continue cooperating by providing support to Guatemala through backing an extension of the Commission's mandate, but also with an expression of solidarity. That was an "ethical commitment based on conviction", she said, adding that democracy was only possible when human rights were upheld.

The representative of Germany said he believed that the Commission was a vital mechanism to deal with corruption and impunity, both of which had been devastating to Guatemala. In the past, an overwhelming majority of denunciations had gone unimplemented, but the Commission and Government had changed that drastically. The Attorney General and representatives of civil society also had played a significant role in helping institutions with their legislative work and, in particular, with professionalizing the police force and judicial system. Combating impunity in all sectors remained challenging for Guatemala, and for that reason, he supported an extension of Commission's mandate.

The representative of the United States, similarly expressing support for extending the mandate, welcomed the progress made to investigate and prosecute criminals and end impunity. He also noted steps taken to strengthen domestic security and justice institutions and encouraged enhanced focus in the area of providing security to judges, prosecutors and witnesses. In an effort to sustain those processes after the conclusion of the Commission's mandate, the development of benchmarks would provide measurable targets and enhance the joint work of the Government of Guatemala and Commission towards a smooth transition.

Then, acting without a vote, the Assembly adopted the draft resolution on International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (document [A/67/L.60](#)).

Global Governance

Lastly, the Assembly turned its attention to the Secretary-General's report on Global economic governance and development (document [A/67/769](#)), which describes recent international developments and their implications for global economic governance and development. Those include deliberations regarding the growing role of the Group of 20 (G-20) in economic and financial policy coordination and its engagement with the United Nations in pursuit of internationally agreed development goals, the reform of the international financial and trade institutions and the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, known as Rio+20, as well as developments pertaining to other relevant United Nations processes, such as the formulation of a post-2015 development agenda. The report puts forward further recommendations on how to strengthen the international framework for global economic cooperation in support of development.

According to the report, the highest priority is the implementation of the recommendations emanating from Rio+20, which seek to address broad governance challenges in moving towards a green economy in the context of sustainable development. Also critical was strengthening the Organization's principal organs, namely the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, and encouraging the active participation of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, the G-20, non-State actors, civil society and the private sector in development dialogue and activities. Broadening the involvement of developing countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting is also recommended.

OCTAVIO ERRÁZURIZ ([Chile](#)) said that, in a world transformed by globalization, "the agenda of all our countries" included challenges of a global nature. In view of their urgency, "inclusive multilateralism" was needed today more than ever. The goal was to find ways of redoubling efforts to reform and revitalize the United Nations, as a world in which it did not play a central governance role would be an inequitable one without legitimate collective authority.

Summarizing the Secretary-General report, he said it sought to clarify the relevance of the smooth functioning of the international financial, monetary and commercial systems for development processes. Indeed, the United Nations must address the phenomenon of "complex multilateralism", with various levels, players and capacities. He was pleased to see special reference given to the G-20 and stressed the need for complementarity of efforts and for the G-20 to respect, rather than oppose, the decision-making structures of the United Nations. Furthermore, the report stressed the deficit of certain important bodies for collective action in global economic matters because developing countries were not involved or only marginally so.

IOANNIS VRILAS, Deputy Head of the [European Union](#) Delegation, said the Union was a "staunch" promoter of multilateralism. In an increasingly interdependent world, it was becoming obvious that "no nation can solve its challenges alone". For that reason, he welcomed today's discussion, as it provided an opportunity to deepen the Organization's participation in global affairs. Effective multilateralism was at the very core of the United Nations and an essential element for its ability to achieve its work. As mentioned in the report, the implementation of the recommendations of the Rio+20 outcome document would enhance the Organization's central role.

Indeed, he continued, the active participation of Member States strengthened United Nations' relevance, coherence, accountability and credibility. Furthermore, the role of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank fostered the dynamic voice of emerging markets, especially during the current global financial crisis. Other multilateral institutions, as well as civil society and the private sector, played complementary roles. More coherence and cooperation, as well as "making best use of comparative advantages", also were essential.

The global financial crisis served as a “watershed” to global leadership, requiring a renewed and coordinated response and a new forum to bring together advanced economies and emerging markets. The G-20 had proven to be an effective forum for such a response. The key issue was to “strike the right balance” between legitimacy and effectiveness.

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^[1] A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

For information media • not an official record