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# DECOLONIZATION



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REGIONAL SEMINARS ORGANIZED BY THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON  
DECOLONIZATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR  
THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

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## INTRODUCTION

In 1960, the admission of 16 newly independent African States to membership in the United Nations represented another step towards universality in the world organization, and gave added impetus to the growing demand to eradicate colonialism. Reflecting this trend, the General Assembly, at its fifteenth session, adopted by a large majority the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (resolution 1514 (XV)), in which it solemnly proclaimed the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations and declared that inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence. A year later, the Assembly established the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to oversee the transition of Non-Self-Governing Territories from dependency to a political status of their own choosing.

From 1960 to 1989, the attention of the Special Committee was focused primarily on the larger Non-Self-Governing Territories; on Territories whose populations were oppressed by the administering Powers; and on Territories whose populations expressed a strong desire for independence. By 1990, when Namibia attained independence in elections supervised by the United Nations, all but 18 Territories had exercised the right to self-determination embodied in the Declaration, almost all of them choosing, in elections observed by the United Nations, to become independent.

Of the 18 Territories for which the Special Committee continues to be responsible, seven are island Territories in the Pacific and seven are island Territories in the Caribbean. These island Territories, the large majority of which have small populations and are without sufficient economic resources to be self-sustaining in the foreseeable future, present the Committee with a unique situation. It has become apparent that the Committee will have to demonstrate great flexibility, within the framework of the Declaration, in dealing with the problems posed by these Territories.

In 1988, in view of the steady progress in the field of decolonization, and in anticipation of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration, the General Assembly, by its resolution 43/47, declared the period 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its forty-fourth session a report that would enable it to consider and adopt a

plan of action aimed at ushering in, in the twenty-first century, a world free from colonialism.

At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly, by its resolution 46/181, adopted the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, aimed at ushering in, in the twenty-first century, a world free from colonialism. The Assembly, under the Plan of Action, mandated the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to organize during the Decade seminars in the Caribbean and Pacific regions alternately, as well as at United Nations Headquarters, to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the Plan of Action, with the participation of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, their elected representatives, the administering Powers, Member States, regional organizations, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and experts.

In accordance with its mandate, the Special Committee convened two seminars during 1992-1993, one at St. George's, Grenada, from 17 to 19 June 1992, and the other at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, from 8 to 10 June 1993.

The primary objective of the Seminars was to address the economic and social conditions in the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the Caribbean and Pacific regions and to identify areas in which the international community could increase and enhance its participation in programmes of assistance and development and adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensure the viable and sustainable development of the Territories concerned.

The topics considered by the Seminars assisted the Special Committee in focusing its attention on the specific concerns of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Seminars gave expression to a broad range of views of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. They also secured the participation of special guests, particularly personalities actively involved in the economic, social and political development of the region, and of organizations and institutions that focus on such development; of selected non-governmental organizations with long and established experience in island Territories; and of specialized agencies of the United Nations system, which have a special role to play in assisting the Special Committee in its future consideration of the remaining Territories.

Discussion at both seminars focused on the following themes:

Political questions

(a) Application of the principle of self-determination to small island Territories;

(b) Heightening the awareness of options available to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories under General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) of 14 and 15 December 1960, respectively, concerning their future political status (emergence as a sovereign independent State; free association with an independent State; integration with an independent State);

(c) Importance of dissemination of information to and from the Non-Self-Governing Territories on the process of self-determination.

Economic and social questions

(a) Economic and social development in the small Territories and their impact on the exercise of the right of the peoples of those Territories to self-determination;

(b) Problems of small, structurally open economies: heavy dependence on imports, limited number of commodities and highly restricted internal markets;

(c) Food production: development of small-scale agricultural activities and of fisheries;

(d) Development of tourism: its impact on the economic and social sectors and on the environment;

(e) Addressing the issue of drug trafficking and money laundering;

(f) Development of financial management expertise and of skills necessary to negotiate and manage foreign investments; gaining access to adequate information systems;

(g) Development of industries and indigenous technological capacities, and manufacturing for export;

(h) Human resources development and the consequences of emigration and immigration;

(i) Role of the specialized agencies and international and regional organizations in the economic and social development of the Territories;

(j) Access of Non-Self-Governing Territories of the region to programmes and activities of the United Nations system with the aim of identifying areas in which technical and other assistance could be provided;

(k) Particular areas in which regional cooperation requires strengthening by both the Territories concerned and international agencies: preservation and protection of marine resources from over-exploitation; sea and air transport; disaster preparedness and relief; higher education; research and development; and regional pooling arrangements for sharing special skills and expertise;

(l) Enhancement of the role of women in the development of Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(m) Access to information and expertise in the development of small-scale industries in small Territories;

(n) Development of offshore financial centres in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: positive and negative aspects.

Questions of environment and development

(a) Implications for the island Territories of issues pertaining to the environment and to development, such as global warming, rising sea level, sustainable development and Agenda 21;

(b) Local efforts in national disaster preparedness: institutionalization and coordination of disaster relief, financing of public works projects, and training for disaster prevention;

(c) International and regional cooperation in order to mitigate the effects of natural disasters: provision of assistance and coordination of relief preparedness and prevention;

(d) Questions relating to the law of the sea and the Non-Self-Governing Territories of the region.

I. SEMINAR HELD AT ST. GEORGE'S, GRENADA,  
FROM 17 TO 19 JUNE 1992

The Seminar held at St. George's, Grenada, from 17 to 19 June 1992, was attended by 44 participants, including representatives of United Nations bodies, representatives of Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands; representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; special guests and experts; and a delegation from the host country, Grenada.

The delegation of the Special Committee, which was led by its Chairman, Mr. Renagi Renagi Lohia, Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations, comprised representatives of Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Fiji, Mali, Trinidad and Tobago and Tunisia. Argentina was represented by an observer.

In his opening address, Senator the Honourable Tillman Thomas, Minister in the Ministry of Finance of Grenada, stated that the orientation of the Seminar envisaged consideration of the special development needs of island Territories, which was most opportune and should provide the basis for very stimulating discussions, particularly in seeking to relate the current forces of globalization to the objective of the eradication of colonialism.

He emphasized that the objectives of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism could not be viewed in isolation from the emerging global trends and their impact on the conditions of life in the island developing Territories. The perennial problems of small States could benefit from the pooling of sovereignties and resources to enhance the conditions of life in those Territories.

In the next few years, Mr. Thomas said, the international tolerance of micro-States would be severely tested. Consequently, the decolonization process in the non-independent Territories might, conceivably, produce innovative constitutional forms as the peoples of those Territories considered and decided on their future political status while, at the same time, identifying viable trade, commercial and technological niches.

He concluded by stating that the challenges were enormous; island territories must be prepared to move forward in their own interest, resources must be allocated for the modernization of their education systems, and human resources development must be high on the list of development priorities, but the goals of social equity and justice, freedom and democracy, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms must not be compromised.

The Chairman of the Special Committee, Mr. Lohia, noted that the process of decolonization had entered a new and complex phase and there was a need for innovative approaches to challenges facing the remaining dependent Territories. He recalled that, during the two Seminars organized by the Special Committee in 1990, some ministers of dependent Territories had called for the refocusing of the energies of the Committee, and had asked it to urge the administering Powers to create conditions that could ensure the economic and social development of the Territories.

He noted that while a number of Territories in the Caribbean region had made remarkable progress towards self-reliance and enjoyed a high standard of living, others continued to suffer handicaps arising from such factors as their size, remoteness, vulnerability to natural disasters, the fragility of their ecosystems, heavy dependence on imports and a small number of commodities, weak indigenous technological capacities and a lack of skilled personnel.

In order to alleviate their situation, the Chairman stated, the international community, along with the administering Powers, should continue to be involved in the development effort. He noted with satisfaction the increased emphasis placed by the General Assembly on the responsibilities of the specialized agencies in the development process of those Territories.

During the ensuing discussion, representatives of six of the Territories of the region - Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands - articulated the aspirations and needs of their peoples.

Summary of statements made by representatives of  
Non-Self-Governing Territories

Anguilla

Mrs. Phyllis Fleming-Banks, representative of the National Council of Women of Anguilla, said that the Seminar was being held at the same time that Anguilla was celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of its revolution, or Anguilla's bid for self-determination.

Anguilla's rebellion from associated statehood with Saint Kitts and Nevis in 1967 had not been an impulsive act; it had been the culmination of more than a century of protests and objections to annexation to Saint Kitts.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, she said, had always been unconcerned about the needs of Anguillans. Anguilla was ignored because it was not an economically viable colony. In fact, the United Kingdom had

attempted to relocate Anguillans in the nineteenth century rather than provide assistance during periods of famine and drought. Anguillans had defied the British then and were prepared to defy the forced union again in 1967.

Anguilla's quest for self-determination was a unifying force. Many were prepared to lay down their lives, and Anguilla had pleaded its case before the United Nations for two years. The United Nations, although sympathetic, had no answers at that time, even after Anguilla declared itself a republic and begged for United Nations protection.

A quarter of a century later, Anguilla's struggle for self-determination had taken it back into colonialism and dependent capitalist development; Anguillans were now "experiencing the trappings of direct colonialism".

She said that the administering Power claimed that it took very seriously its obligations for social and economic development of the island. The United Kingdom had told the Committee that Anguilla was an internally self-governing Territory and that Her Majesty's Government retained responsibilities only in respect of law, order, defence and international relations, including offshore finance. The Constitution, the United Kingdom said, had advanced as far as it reasonably could and any further changes must include independence. Her Majesty's Government had made it absolutely clear that it would help the people of Anguilla to become independent when and if that was their constitutionally expressed wish.

From that statement, Anguillans were to assume that the United Kingdom was preparing them to assume eventually overall responsibility for their country. Yet the United Kingdom had decided since 1986 not to take part in the work of the Special Committee for reasons it would not divulge to the Territories. How, she asked, could the persistent refusal to participate in the work of the Special Committee prepare Anguillans for self-government; she wondered how Anguillans were supposed to be prepared for independence if key positions were increasingly being turned over to expatriate British officials.

Following rapid economic and social growth, Anguilla was now ready for political education, Mrs. Fleming-Banks said. In 1984, Anguillans had told the Committee they did not want independence unless there was some deliberate effort to expose them to the aims of the Committee, so that they could make informed choices regarding self-determination. The Decade would end with Anguillans still being fearful about the isolation of independence; they would settle for British colonialism and increasing alienation of their country until another eruption took place.



For the goals of the Special Committee to have some meaning or relevance to the people in a Territory like Anguilla, the Committee must find a way to develop a relationship and communicate with the people. She called for the removal of the structural impediments to full participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the technical work of the United Nations and other international bodies.

On the role of women, she appreciated the Committee's efforts to involve women in its work. "When you touch the women", she said, "you strike the rock, you unleash a boulder, with which all ignorance and fears can be crushed".

### Bermuda

Mr. Nelson B. A. Bascome, Jr., Member of Parliament of Bermuda, said that he represented the Progressive Labour Party, the official Opposition and the "Government-in-waiting".

He said that today we were witnessing "a more subtle approach of colonialism ... the destruction of segments of our communities is now indirect, so that victims can be led to participate in, and then blamed for, their own destruction".

Illegal drugs continued to frustrate and depress the situation even more, he continued. The illusion of many that drugs were a vehicle to provide a better lifestyle was also destroying certain communities.

Mr. Bascome stated that human resources development and education should be a priority. The continued existence of institutions created by colonialism should be investigated. It would give the Committee an understanding as to why several countries still remained Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Also of interest to Bermuda would be the position of the United Kingdom after Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997. Bermuda would then become the largest colony in terms of population. The United Kingdom currently seemed concerned with establishing itself as a major institution in the European financial community, and did not have as a priority the needs of its colonies.

Another concern was that administering Powers could still dictate terms to former colonies, he said. For example, with the independence of Namibia, South Africa maintained control of a vital port.

Finally, Mr. Bascome said that a Bermuda Progressive Labour Party Government would actively educate the population of Bermuda on the ramifications and responsibilities of national independence, with a view to preparing for that eventuality, to

be decided by the electorate at a future general election. He said: "It is independence for which we strive, but interdependence on which we survive".

Mr. Walton Brown, Chairman of the Committee for the Independence of Bermuda, spoke about the development of indigenous human resources in Bermuda. He said that Bermuda had enjoyed a comparatively high level of social and economic development and stability over the past 25 years, the reasons for which were unrelated to Bermuda's umbilical link to the administering Power. The United Kingdom provided no financial assistance to Bermuda, since it needed none. The island had been a self-governing colony since 1684, and had introduced universal suffrage and cabinet-style government in the 1960s. He said that it was thus "a vulgar Orwellian twist to cite Bermuda as a British dependent Territory".

Despite the many positive aspects of Bermuda today there were a number of both symbolic and practical reasons why Bermuda must move forward constitutionally and take its place among sovereign States.

Like many small Territories, Bermuda did not have readily available locally all the skills required to fill the many positions generated by the economy. Bermuda's expatriate workforce approximated some 23 per cent of the total workforce, and their occupations ranged from chief executive officers of international companies to nannies, waiters and office cleaners. More than half of the White population was not born in the island. Foreign-born Blacks accounted for about 10 per cent of the Black population.

One of the economic consequences of the existing immigration policy was that there was a widespread perception among Bermudians that insufficient opportunities were made available for them in key administrative and managerial posts that were held by foreign workers. Anxiety was heightened when long-term contract workers were granted "Bermuda Status" and were thus able to continue to hold their positions.

Many Bermudians believed that foreign workers, especially White executives, cared less about promoting Bermudians in key positions than they did about holding on to their own and, as a consequence, the hope that companies would take on a Bermudian understudy was blind faith. At the same time a "colonial mentality" prevailed, which validated contributions of outsiders and denigrated the product of local effort. That psychology of dependence was a logical outgrowth of the colonial condition from which Bermuda had yet to free itself.

Mr. Brown suggested that an annual limit on the number of work permits granted in any job category could provide an

incentive to companies to search out local resources and, where necessary, provide relevant and adequate training. He also suggested that greater legal protection was needed for immigrant workers in low-paying, unskilled jobs and recommended the establishment of a formal policy to ensure that the immigrant population better reflected the racial characteristics of the local population.

In terms of developing human resources skills in Bermuda, he said that problems arose when job opportunities for which students had trained locally and overseas did not materialize. In general, though, there was a genuine commitment to higher economic research on the island. Both the Government and the private sector should be encouraged to devote greater resources to research and development.

Developing a regional pool of expertise, he continued, was critical. The sharing with other countries of persons with different areas of knowledge and expertise would help in an appreciation of the talent already present in the region and allow the possibility of addressing many issues from within. Regional cooperation at that level could assist in a closer political union of the Caribbean and thus strengthen the unit. Some consideration should be given to the physical infrastructure needed to establish a regional pool of experts.

#### British Virgin Islands

Mr. Ralph T. O'Neal, Deputy Chief Minister of the British Virgin Islands, stated that he was heartened to read in a communication from the United Kingdom Government to the Special Committee that Her Majesty's Government took very seriously its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations towards the remaining dependent Territories and that its aid commitment to them would continue. That was especially heartening because the British Virgin Islands had been told in no uncertain terms that after 1993 the United Kingdom Government intended to cut off capital aid.

His Government held the United Kingdom Government responsible for the social and economic development of the Territory, a responsibility that Her Majesty's Government had been fulfilling to some degree.

Mr. O'Neal said that a serious problem was the transshipment of illegal drugs through the British Virgin Islands owing to its proximity to the United States of America, where it seemed "there was an appetite for drugs like the grave had for the dead". All the manpower and money of the United States had not been able to stem the flow of drugs to that country. The fight against drug trafficking had caused a serious drain on the resources of the

British Virgin Islands, which could have been used for development projects.

The United Kingdom did provide financial and technical assistance in the fight against illegal drugs, he acknowledged. However, there were difficulties in obtaining funds for other projects. For example, funds for a community college that were to have come from the United Kingdom Government were being held up pending a study to determine whether the college was indeed a "reasonable development need".

He urged the Committee to continue applying pressure on the administering Powers to assist in the social and economic development projects in their dependent Territories. Although the United Kingdom had assisted to some degree in the development plans of the British Virgin Islands, much more could still be done since the Territory was far behind.

### Montserrat

Ms. Ruby Wade-Bramble, Independent Member of the Legislative Council of Montserrat, expressed the hope that influential nations with an interest in the Caribbean region would be able to persuade the United Kingdom to resume its participation in the work of the Special Committee. She stated that it was a pity that the United Nations had no effective mechanism for monitoring developments in dependent Territories. For instance, Montserrat had been forced to change its Passports and Immigration Ordinance to bring it into line with the United Kingdom's New Nationality Act, and the status of the people had been downgraded from "Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies" to "British Dependent Territories Citizen".

She further stated that, given the present state of the world, one needed to be realistic. A national flag, a national anthem and a constitutional instrument which indicated that the administering Power had agreed at last to cede control to the people of a Territory could create only short-lived emotional uplift if those developments were not linked to an economic development programme.

Mrs. Adelina Tuitt, Public Relations Officer of the Government of Montserrat, said that Montserrat was a very small country. Bearing in mind its size and position, she believed that leaning towards closer association with its Caribbean partners, and being a part of all regional and international organizations, such as the Organization of American States, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and possibly the United Nations, would be essential ingredients in the preparation for independence.

The economy of Montserrat had been based on tourism and to a large extent the construction industry. Owing to the low profitability of tourism, however, the economy needed to be diversified.

The need to become self-sufficient was foremost in the minds of the people of Montserrat since for any nation to progress the people must be able to feed themselves. Self-sufficiency was a prerequisite for achieving any future status, be it statehood in association with the United Kingdom, or independence.

Montserrat welcomed any assistance which the Special Committee could give to ensure economic growth.

### Turks and Caicos Islands

Mr. Robert Hall, Minister for Health, Education, Welfare and Social Services of the Turks and Caicos Islands, commenting on the issue of independence, said that the manifesto of the ruling party stated that the Constitution must be amended to reflect the wishes of the people and that their elected representatives should be allowed to govern on their behalf. He stated categorically, however, that it was not their intention to seek independence but rather a greater degree of self-government. He said that they believed in "progress through partnership".

He did not think that the United Kingdom Government or anyone else should dictate the course that the Turks and Caicos Islands should take. However, he did hold that Government to its commitment under the Charter of the United Nations to ensure the social and economic development of the remaining Territories under its jurisdiction.

Mr. Hall stated that, in the past, he had been extremely critical of the attitude of the United Kingdom Government towards the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the apparent neglect of the Territory. He said that over the years he had "felt the piercing of their darts". That had resulted, actually, in a greater degree of understanding, and even mutual respect. He said that it would appear that the administering Power was now more willing to lend a sympathetic ear to the wishes of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

He said that the \$43 million aid package recently negotiated for the Turks and Caicos Islands was indicative of the desire of the administering Power to live up to its responsibilities. Regrettably, he said, there was no change in the United Kingdom's position on full internal self-government for the Territory. The United Kingdom Government wished to link the granting of full self-government to a formal schedule for independence. That was a condition that the Territory was not willing to accept. The Turks and Caicos Islands would like to move to full internal

self-government but did not wish to be tied to a timetable for independence after that.

Mr. Hall said that the specialized agencies could help to train and prepare the peoples of the dependent Territories for leadership positions, self-government and independence. Participation in the activities of the agencies was essential, and adequate financing should be provided to allow for participation. There was a feeling that more was said than done in the United Nations system, but he was hopeful that in the coming years more would be done than said.

The Minister concluded by stating that, although the Turks and Caicos Islands was not in the international limelight, it needed the assistance of the international community to develop to its fullest potential in the social, economic and political fields.

Mr. Wendal Swann, Member of the Legislative Council of the Turks and Caicos Islands, said that the Special Committee had every reason to be proud of its successes, but must reacquaint itself with its original purpose. In that respect, he welcomed the current ongoing reform process in the United Nations. He pointed out that, although the administering Power had ceased to cooperate with the Special Committee, its mandate remained unchanged. He emphasized that the Chairman had a duty to restore the credibility and effectiveness of the Special Committee at a time when the administering Powers were tightening their grip on the Non-Self-Governing Territories. He made the observation that the administering Power was not fulfilling its obligations under the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations. Mr. Swann also raised the issue of the control of the economies of Non-Self-Governing Territories by foreigners.

Mr. Swann criticized the Special Committee's approach and pointed out that it produced working papers that were often erroneous. He stated that the Committee needed to sharpen its focus on the peoples of the Territories. It also needed to improve its capacity to disseminate information to the Territories and to obtain relevant information from those dependencies. Ways must be found to circumvent the current problem of protocol.

Mr. Swann stated that the Non-Self-Governing Territories must be fully informed of the economic, social and other development assistance available from the United Nations and its associated agencies. He further suggested that the next seminar organized by the Special Committee should discuss issues submitted by the Territories themselves and be hosted by one of the dependencies.

United States Virgin Islands

Mr. Carlyle Corbin, representative for External Affairs of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands, said that the direct linkage between the decolonization process and the participation of non-independent Territories in the United Nations system had been well recognized by the United Nations. The General Assembly had called for special provisions in the terms of reference of specialized agencies and regional commissions to make possible the admission of Non-Self-Governing Territories as associate members or observers, and for the increasing participation of those Territories in the work of the technical bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

The peoples of the Territories themselves had also endorsed their direct involvement in programmes and activities of the United Nations system at regional decolonization seminars. A number of specialized agencies had taken steps to increase the participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories but others had not proceeded as quickly.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had been most active in fostering the participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories and associated Territories in the work of the United Nations system. ECLAC, and its associated subregional body, the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC), had been studying the question of increased participation of non-independent countries in the United Nations system since 1985. CDCC had discovered that many United Nations institutions were not aware of their mandate to facilitate the participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories in their work programmes. In order to intensify activity in that area, CDCC had created a Working Group of Non-Independent Caribbean Countries to focus on the problems of access of those countries to programmes and activities of the United Nations system.

Mr. Corbin said that it continued to be of concern to some Non-Self-Governing Territories within the ECLAC system that the work programme of the Commission did not always allow for their participation, and resources were often used to include some but not all Commission members in certain Commission programmes.

Membership in the many United Nations technical bodies was usually limited to States Members of the United Nations. Accordingly, associate membership was not available. Even when the General Assembly directed those bodies to assist the Non-Self-Governing Territories, most were slow to comply, if at all.

For example, after the devastation caused by Hurricane Hugo in 1989, the General Assembly directed the relevant bodies of the

United Nations system to assist the United States Virgin Islands in reconstruction efforts. However, the organization concerned, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), believed that it had no mandate to assist the Territory, irrespective of the relevant resolutions.

Mr. Corbin suggested that the Special Committee should establish a procedure to ensure that in its resolutions it called upon the Secretary-General to inform United Nations bodies and agencies of their mandates regarding the Non-Self-Governing Territories. He believed that the Committee should request the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of its resolutions at a subsequent session of the Assembly. He also recommended that representatives of elected governments of Non-Self-Governing Territories be allowed to participate in the meetings of the Special Committee and its subcommittee in an official observer capacity in order to present their views to the Committee. Participation in that capacity should also be encouraged in technical conferences of the Organization, as well as in the General Assembly.

He was of the opinion that many of the structural impediments to full participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the technical work of the United Nations would be alleviated if the Territories had official observer status in the General Assembly, in recognition of the increasing level of self-government enjoyed by many of those countries.

Ms. Judith L. Bourne, representative of the United Nations Association of the Virgin Islands, made a statement on some aspects of the impact of immigration and emigration on the current activity with regard to self-determination in the United States Virgin Islands.

She said that for the United States Virgin Islands, which was planning an electoral poll on available status options in mid-1993, migration patterns were likely to affect the results of the poll appreciably. Insufficient exposure of the political representatives of the population to the norms of international law with regard to self-determination was another concern.

According to official United States census figures, the population of the United States Virgin Islands grew by 20 per cent between 1950 and 1960, by almost 95 per cent between 1960 and 1970, and by another 55 per cent between 1970 and 1980. Those substantial changes in the population were clearly not the result of a natural increase. The 1990 census showed that only about 45 per cent of the population was born in the Territory.

The requirements for voting in the electoral poll, or non-binding referendum, were United States citizenship, residence



in the United States Virgin Islands for at least 90 days and registration.

Ms. Bourne stated that, while there had been suggestions that a longer period of residence should be required for a poll that would define the direction of the self-determination process, such initiatives had been speedily smothered by elected political leaders who cited domestic United States law concerning residence requirements for periodic local elections. Effectively that would give more weight to the 12.3 per cent of the population that was born in the United States than to the 29.3 per cent born in other West Indian islands. Of the latter, only one quarter were United States citizens, although many had resided in the United States Virgin Islands for more than 25 years.

She said that, to date, the status of the United States Virgin Islands, and the basic structure of its Government, had always been determined by a force other than the people of the United States Virgin Islands.

The free immigration between the United States and the Territory forced young local graduates to compete with immigrants from the United States for openings in an environment in which business interests were dominated by persons who were themselves from the administering Power. That resulted in the emigration of those islanders to the United States in search of opportunity. Those economic emigrants also lost their eligibility to participate in self-determination decisions.

The United Nations must assist in educating the peoples of the United States Virgin Islands and other Territories about their right to participate in acts of self-determination and to negotiate with the administering Power on eligibility requirements.

## II. SEMINAR HELD AT PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, FROM 8 TO 10 JUNE 1993

The Seminar held at Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, from 8 to 10 June 1993, was attended by 56 participants, including representatives of United Nations bodies; representatives of American Samoa, Guam, New Caledonia, Tokelau and the Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories; representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; special guests; and a delegation from the host country, Papua New Guinea.

The delegation of the Special Committee, which was led by its Chairman, Mr. Renagi Renagi Lohia, Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations, comprised representatives of Chile, the Czech Republic, Fiji, Grenada,

Indonesia, Mali, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia. In addition, representatives of two administering Powers, New Zealand and Portugal, took part in the proceedings.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Papua New Guinea, Mr. John R. Kaputin, stated in an opening address that the Government of Papua New Guinea looked forward to a time when the Special Committee's purposes would have been achieved. He noted that United Nations concern with the rights of the people of dependent Territories was firmly founded in the Charter of the United Nations. Articles 1 and 55 referred to the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples; Articles 73 and 74 contained the declaration regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories; and Articles 75 to 91 provided for the international trusteeship system. The widest and most specific commitments were however contained in Article 73.

Although Article 73 referred specifically to Members of the United Nations "which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government", the principles it embodied clearly applied to all Members. Those principles included recognition that "the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount", and that the obligation to promote their well-being to the utmost was a "sacred trust". He stressed particularly that furthering the well-being of the inhabitants of dependent Territories was not just a commitment or even a binding obligation but a "sacred trust".

Membership of the United Nations had become an almost unvarying accompaniment and symbol of independence, and changes in the membership of the United Nations had led to changes in the objectives of the General Assembly. The strength and urgency of the majority's determination to bring colonialism to a complete and early end had increased dramatically as a result. Thus the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples stated, without qualification: "... all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory".

The Foreign Minister stated that, like the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration recognized and committed the United Nations to support for the right of self-determination. It was, moreover, quite explicit in affirming that the right should be exercised by nations and that independence should be the outcome. The determination of the United Nations to give effect to the Declaration was displayed in the agreement in 1961 to establish a special committee for the purpose, and in the decision reached one year later to expand the Special Committee's membership from 17 to 24.

He further stated that United Nations flexibility and realism concerning what had, in practice, been possible in particular cases was evident in its Members' willingness to accept that self-determination need not always be followed by independence. Nowhere was that willingness more clearly evident than in the South Pacific.

Thus, more than 70 years after the establishment of the League of Nations, almost 50 years after the Charter of the United Nations was concluded, and 30 years after the Declaration that colonial countries and peoples should be granted independence without delay, those present found themselves in a decade dedicated to the eradication of colonialism, attending a seminar concerned with the remaining dependencies in the South Pacific.

The Minister noted that colonialism had a much longer history than formal colonial rule. Colonial attitudes, behaviour and even institutions were quite widespread well before the major nineteenth- and twentieth-century European empires were established, and had often managed to outlast them. Thus, decolonization ought, in many respects, to be regarded as an objective rather than an achievement.

Overall, the process of eradicating colonialism from the South Pacific had been slow and progress uneven. Where decolonization had taken place, outcomes had varied quite widely. The last vestiges of colonialism had yet to be completely eliminated from the South Pacific. Partly in spite and partly because of its persistence, colonialism had an unusual feature: it tended to be self-destructive. The oppressive structures and practices integral to colonialism, and on which colonialism relied for its own survival, helped to stimulate public awareness of justice, rights and obligations which had been denied. Colonialism often gave rise to its own most vehement opponents.

The Foreign Minister concluded by noting that colonialism might not be listed as a major issue in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "An Agenda for Peace", but its lingering effects and the need for an ongoing process of decolonization deserved not only urgent attention but prompt and decisive action.

The Chairman of the Special Committee said that the Committee had been instrumental in bringing about the greatest political transition in human history: the decolonization of many nations.

Decolonization under United Nations guidance had entered the final phase of completion. The General Assembly had proclaimed the years 1990 to 2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Emphasis was being placed on

acceleration of the decolonization process in order to usher in, in the twenty-first century, a world free from colonialism.

In keeping with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV), the people of a Non-Self-Governing Territory might decide to opt for independence, for a form of free association or for integration with an independent State. The Committee recognized the importance of eliciting the views of the peoples of the Territories and that it had a leading role to play in those endeavours.

During the course of the regional seminars held in the Pacific and Caribbean regions, the Committee had become particularly sensitized to the fact that the process of decolonization had entered a new and complex phase, which demanded innovative approaches to challenges facing the remaining dependent Territories.

He noted that the Committee was fully aware that some Territories had made remarkable progress towards self-reliance and enjoyed a high standard of living, while others continued to suffer handicaps arising from such factors as size, remoteness, vulnerability to natural disasters, the fragility of their ecosystems, heavy dependence on imports and a small number of commodities, weak indigenous technological capacities and a lack of skilled personnel. In order to alleviate those difficulties, the international community, together with the administering Powers, should continue to be involved in assisting with progress in development.

In conclusion, the Chairman said that, over the years, the Committee had continued to reiterate the importance of on-the-spot information which could only be obtained by visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In that context, it continued to stress the importance of such missions to the dependent Territories and again renewed its call to administering Powers to invite the Special Committee to send such visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

The Seminar heard statements by representatives of four Non-Self-Governing Territories - American Samoa, Guam, New Caledonia and Tokelau - and the representative of the group of Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Summary of statements made by representatives of  
Non-Self-Governing Territories

American Samoa

Mr. Tauese Pita Sunia, Lieutenant-Governor of American Samoa, stated that American Samoans had their own Constitution, which they reviewed every five years. They elected their

Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, members of the House of Representatives and their Congressman to represent them in the United States Congress. The judiciary comprised local jurists appointed by the Secretary of the Interior and the Governor, with legislative endorsement. American Samoans were by all means self-governing. The United States Secretary of the Interior reviewed any changes in their Constitution and appointed their Chief Justice and Associate Justice. The federal share of the operating costs of the territorial Government was submitted under the budget of the Department of the Interior. American Samoans applied for the rest of their federal aid directly to each federal funding agency, just like any state of the United States. They spent their local funds as they pleased.

With regard to the economic status of the Territory, Mr. Sunia said that the Territory was economically stable. About 70 per cent of the workforce employed in the tuna canneries was imported labour, which gave an indication of the available job opportunities. A new garment manufacturer was starting operations with the promise of 800 new jobs. Financial problems, such as the territorial Government's deficit, were caused by mismanagement and were irrelevant to political affiliation.

Mr. Sunia said that illiteracy did not exist in American Samoa; free compulsory education with free school transportation and free hot lunches and breakfast, free school books and equipment, and scholarships for on-island and overseas colleges made their educational system a beacon to many small independent nations. American Samoans had the most doctorate degrees, in proportion to population, in the South Pacific. Their college students attending United States colleges and universities were all eligible for student financial aid just like any other United States students.

Mr. Sunia also said that in American Samoa there was free universal medical care - practically free hospitalization and totally free medication. Cases which required specialized treatment or the use of equipment not available in American Samoa were referred to Hawaii at the Government's expense.

Mr. Sunia indicated that probably most important to American Samoans was the preservation of their social system. Their culture, which was the fa'a samoa, or "Samoan way of life" which their ancestors had developed for them, was a unique social system that allowed them to live with each other on limited space with the least conflict.

On the question of land, Mr. Sunia said that true self-government could be achieved only if property was controlled. American Samoans owned and controlled their own land. The United States had kept its promise and protected their land. What little land had been bought by the United States Navy

for its naval base had been turned over to the territorial Government when the Navy had left in 1950.

In conclusion, Mr. Sunia stated that American Samoa preferred to remain a Territory of the United States. American Samoans had had political status commissions and plebiscites, and it was the clearly stated wish of the people that they remain American Samoans.

#### Guam

Ms. Lourdes T. Pangelinan and Mr. Leland Bettis, representatives of the Guam Government, noted that Guam's colonial status was a sad truth that they hoped to change before the century drew to a close. They were eager to continue to work closely with the Special Committee, as they endeavoured to end their Territory's colonial status. Further, they noted that their direct participation represented a strong belief that international standards with respect to decolonization were inherently important and appropriate to Guam's proposal for developing its political status and ending its own colonial condition.

The representatives noted that the people of the Territory had proposed changes in their relationship with the administering Power. The process of decolonization had begun without full knowledge and appreciation of the international conventions and customs that guided it. As the people of Guam gained an awareness of the international process, it became clear that their proposals fitted well within international conventions. The representatives cited in particular the areas of resource control, immigration, land use and self-determination, where their proposal for status development mirrored international standards. They also noted that although there were differences between the activities of administering Powers, and differences in the particular circumstances affecting the status of Non-Self-Governing Territories, the problems associated with colonialism were universal in nature, and the solutions to those problems were universal in application. They said that continued and sharper focus on decolonization was vital for Guam because the process of decolonization had already taken too long. In that regard, they noted that Guam's recent political status proposal to the administering Power was the first real attempt fundamentally to change the island's political status, and that it was a proposal that had been driven exclusively by Guam.

The representatives noted that, in its 1982 plebiscite, Guam had chosen to seek a new political status, that of commonwealth. That new status would recognize the right of Guam's native people, the Chamorros, to determine the island's ultimate political future. They noted that, if adopted, the draft Commonwealth Act would establish a process of

decolonization for Guam, through self-determination of the Chamorros. Given the impact of immigration, they said it was necessary to define self-determination for Guam. They noted that the Chamorros had been colonized and that it would be the Chamorro people who would be empowered to decolonize Guam.

They noted that the status of commonwealth was not an immediate proposal for outright independence for Guam, nor was it a petition for incorporation into the United States. Rather, it accomplished a measure of self-government for Guam by endowing the Government of the people of Guam with powers of internal self-government while establishing a framework for decolonization through self-determination of the Chamorro people.

The commonwealth status sought by Guam was not a final one. One day, Guam and its indigenous people would exercise that final determination. The representatives said that, in the future, if the administering Power desired, Guam might seek full incorporation into the administering Power as a state of the union, with full and equal rights. Or, if the administering Power was willing, Guam might seek some other form of association between sovereign States. It was equally possible that one day the indigenous people of Guam would exercise their right to be fully independent. It was clearly stated, however, that the key was Guam's ability to make a decision about its decolonized status as an act of indigenous self-determination. The representatives said that, until such time as that decision was made by the Chamorro people of Guam, the people of Guam should at least have a measure of internal self-government and control over their resources.

The representatives noted that, economically, Guam continued to prosper. Fuelled by the continued growth of the tourist sector and the construction industry, the island's economic self-sufficiency had become a reality. Guam's economic development and economic stability would be further bolstered by the people of Guam's commonwealth proposal, which provided new opportunities for Guam, in particular in the areas of commerce, diversification of the economy and control over natural resources.

The representatives also noted that Guam's economic progress over the past decade had not been without an impact on the island's social environment. While tension underlay the economic progress (with crime of all types, traffic and related accidents, and a marked rise in Chamorro activism regarding Guam property held by the administering Power), advances were also noteworthy. Individual and household income had dramatically increased, as well as government revenues, during the period from 1982 to 1993. Additionally, over US\$ 850 million in locally floated bonds had been made available in the past four years for educational, infrastructure and airport improvements.

Tokelau

The Ulu-O-Tokelau (titular head of Tokelau), Mr. Salesio Lui, said that Tokelau must be given the freedom to arrive at an appropriate act of self-determination rather than achieving it by responding to an external set of criteria.

He said that, since 1990, Tokelau had undergone the following major political changes:

- (a) The Council of Faipule (elected representatives) had been formed to provide ongoing government when the General Fono (Council) was not in session, and to appoint from the three faipule a titular head to be known as "Ulu-O-Tokelau";
- (b) The General Fono had asked New Zealand to formalize the present informal delegation, a function currently exercised by the Administrator to the General Fono and the Council of Faipule;
- (c) In recognition of the changes in the political institutions of Tokelau, and the increased responsibilities being placed on them, the General Fono had called for a review of the Tokelau public service in order to identify changes necessary to enable the service properly to support the new political institutions; and for the heads of departments to be located on Tokelau soil;
- (d) As a result of the general elections held in January 1993, Tokelau had found itself with a new, younger team of political leaders, to assume new and increased responsibilities.

The Ulu-O-Tokelau said that the Council of Faipule's discussions with the Government of New Zealand in May 1993 had confirmed that it was necessary for Tokelau to take a step-by-step approach using the present form of the Council of Faipule, whose term of office is from 1993 to 1995, as a period of consolidation; the period was needed for the people of Tokelau to understand the process of engaging in the business of governing; the changes must be in accordance with the wishes of Tokelau; and it was Tokelau's wish that its relationship with the Government and people of New Zealand would continue.

The Ulu-O-Tokelau said that without the proper infrastructural support it would be difficult for Tokelau to exercise self-government to a great extent. Transport needed to be improved and a more efficient form of telecommunications was needed. Tokelau was also seeking to establish radio services in the near future.

The Ulu-O-Tokelau said that the limited resources available determined how Tokelau could shoulder the new responsibilities. There was much dependence on the annual grant-in-aid from New



Zealand. The exclusive economic zone provided funds through the Pacific Islands/United States tuna treaty. Funds from extrabudgetary sources such as the United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO, the World Health Organization and other United Nations and Commonwealth agencies were the second-highest sources of revenue.

He continued by stating that Tokelau needed protection of its greatest resource, the sea. The exclusive economic zone needed protection from pollution, since it was a major source of livelihood for the people. An environment of small low-lying islands such as Tokelau's was vulnerable to pollution and to natural disasters. Tokelau was concerned if global warming, changing weather patterns and sea level rise were not naturally occurring phenomena but rather had been brought to Tokelau by human actions.

He said that the people of Tokelau looked forward to welcoming a United Nations mission to its shores in 1994.

#### New Caledonia

Mr. Paul Neaoutyine, President of the Front de libération nationale kanake socialiste (FLNKS), reaffirmed the extreme importance of General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) and the Special Committee for the Kanak people, the colonial people of New Caledonia.

For the Kanak people and minority groups, the continuing reaffirmation by the United Nations of the right of peoples to self-determination and independence meant the possibility of escaping from colonial domination, and hence the right to dignity, sovereignty and independence.

For the Kanak people, French colonialism had a long history, already marked by conflicts between the indigenous people and colonial settlers, and characterized by factors which still constituted today's reality, such as the plundering of the land, the confinement of indigenous people on reservations, a special status for Kanaks and a religious education for Kanaks.

Jacobinism, or Parisian centralism, had been a constant factor in the statutory history of Kanaky. Following the traditional colonial statute applied from 1853 to 1946, the dozen or so overseas Territory statutes which had been applied thereafter conformed to the same principle and reserved the main powers for France; all had been adopted by the French Parliament.

There had been only four opportunities for an evolution towards decolonization. The first had arisen with the country's initial routine inclusion in the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, and had disappeared in 1946. The second had emerged