



**STATEMENT BY DR. PRASANNA KUMAR PATASANI, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
AND MEMBER OF INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 26: IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL
COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE 60TH SESSION OF
THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 10, 2005**

Mr Chairman,

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Fourth Committee ? I would also like to felicitate other members of the Bureau on their election and assure you and your team of my delegation's fullest support and cooperation in the discharge of your duties.

Mr Chairman,

It is ironical that even as we have entered a new century, we continue to grapple with the vestiges of a bygone system that is outmoded as it is anachronistic. Colonialism is contrary to the tenets of democracy, freedom, dignity, progress and human rights. In 1960, under Resolution 1514 (XV), the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples which defined full self-government as being one of three options: independence, free association with an independent state or integration with an independent state. We are presently at the midpoint in the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2001-2010) with 16 Non Self-Governing Territories in the UN's list. These Territories serve as constant reminders that the process of decolonisation is as yet incomplete and that more needs to be done if we are to move the peoples in the Territories closer to their legitimate political status options defined in the Declaration.

The way ahead must be a judicious mix of urgency and activism on the one hand, and one of sensitivity and circumscription, on the other. It must take into account, first and foremost, the needs and aspirations of the people of the Territories and their special circumstances. Appropriate timing and format should be the touchstones, as we attempt to bequeath to the Territories political and socio-economic institutions and structures of their choice. We are in agreement with the Chairman of the Special Committee of 24 on decolonisation on the need to devise tailored programmes of work for each Territory, eschewing the

temptation of a “one-size fits all approach”. Tokelau is one recent example where the UN has successfully implemented this strategy, and we would support similar efforts to develop accelerated action plans for decolonisation, in consultation with the administering Powers and the people of the Territories’ concerned, .

A critical tool is the dissemination of information on decolonisation to people in the Territories. The peoples of the Territories may often be unaware of their legitimate political status options; for real constitutional and political advancement to occur, the peoples of the Territories require sustained and unbiased information on their licit options of political equality defined under Resolution 1514(XV) of the General Assembly. A continued examination of the spectrum of options for self-determination by all parties concerned and dissemination of relevant information among the peoples of the Non-self Governing Territories are important elements in achieving the goals of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

The role played by the United Nations visiting Missions in bridging the information deficit in the Territories is important. Taking into account the constructive role played by such Missions in the past, we attach the utmost importance to visiting Missions as a means of collecting adequate and first-hand information on conditions in the Territories and for ascertaining the wishes and aspirations of the peoples concerning their future status. We are in agreement that such Missions are important in the context of furthering modalities and action plans for decolonisation and observing acts of self-determination. We welcome the fact that the administering Powers have, of late, extended their full cooperation to the Special Committee of 24 in facilitating such visiting Missions. The instances of New Zealand and UK in facilitating visits to Tokelau and Bermuda are worthy of special mention.

The modality of the Regional Seminars is no less significant. As an important activity of the plan of action of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, Regional Seminars serve as an effective forum for focussed discussion on matters of concern to the Non-self Governing Territories and afford opportunities for representatives of the peoples of the Territories to present their views and recommendations to the United Nations. There have been suggestions in the past of combining visiting Missions with Regional Seminars in order to optimise available resources; this is a worthy initiative that needs to be pursued.

The role of the administering Power is a deciding factor. A spirit of cooperation and flexibility has largely imbued their actions in recent years and we would call upon them to further build upon this, in particular, in assisting the Special Committee of 24 to devise tailored action plans for the decolonisation of certain Territories in their quest for self-determination. The support and cooperation displayed by the UK in organising a Regional Seminar in Anguilla in 2003 and their willingness to host a United Nations visiting Mission to Bermuda this year, is indeed encouraging. We hope that such examples of cooperation

and partnership will translate into formal participation by the administering Powers in the work of the Special Committee of 24, and in particular, lead to their active involvement in the work relating to the Territories under their respective administrations. We are in agreement that an interactive dialogue on the objective reality in the Territories would be to the benefit of all concerned, in particular the people of these Territories.

The role the Special Committee of 24 in furthering the incomplete process of decolonisation deserves special mention. We are in agreement with the proposal of the Chairman of the Committee that the focus should now be on implementation. We support moves to concentrate efforts into a plan of implementation for the wider United Nations system in order to organise actions already called for into concrete activities in furtherance of complete decolonisation by 2010. We are in agreement that only through such a pro-active approach, which we must carry forth into 2006, will we be able to fulfil the mandate for decolonisation by the end of this decade, We would like to assure Chairman Julian Hunte of the Committee of 24 of our full support and involvement in his efforts to move the agenda ahead and successfully complete the mandate of the Special Committee.

Mr Chairman,

As a founding member of the UN and the Special Committee, we share a particular solidarity with other erstwhile colonised peoples and nations. We rededicate ourselves to the cherished ideal of freedom, democracy, human rights, dignity and peaceful co-existence, while also reaffirming our commitment to permanently end the last vestiges of the scourge of colonialism, remnant of a bygone era.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

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