



Malaysia ⁸

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

STATEMENT BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR RASTAM MOHD ISA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

AGENDA ITEM 20: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE
TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES

AT

THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE 59TH SESSION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK

TUESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2004

(Please check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

I should like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Fourth Committee for the 59th Session of the General Assembly. My delegation assures you and the members of the Bureau of our fullest cooperation in carrying out the tasks before you. We are confident that you will discharge them effectively.

2. I should also like to compliment Mr. Enrique Loedel of Uruguay and to the other members of the outgoing Bureau for the exemplary manner in which they conducted the proceedings of the Committee during the 58th session.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Decolonization has been perhaps one of the greatest success stories of the United Nations. Since the creation of the United Nations, more than 80 former colonies have been decolonized and have gained their independence. Among them, all eleven Trust Territories have achieved self-determination through independence or free association with an independent State. However, there are 16 Non Self-Governing Territories remaining today that serve as a constant reminder to us that the matter of decolonization is still incomplete.

4. As we approach the mid-point of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2001-2010), mandated by the General Assembly at its 55th Session in December 2000, we must now re-double our efforts in order to ensure that this chapter is finally relegated to the pages of history. The international community has a duty to bring the process of decolonization to a successful conclusion.

5. In this regard, I should like to congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Robert Guba Aisi, the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations and the Government of Papua New Guinea for successfully hosting the Pacific Regional Seminar on Decolonization in May this year. I should also like to express my appreciation to the Special Committee on Decolonization for its important contributions towards the convening of the seminar. The seminar, conducted within the framework of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, continues to be an effective forum for focused discussion on matters of concern to the Non-Self Governing Territories. It also provided an opportunity for representatives of the peoples of the Territories to present their views and recommendations to the Committee.

6. These valuable inputs should be garnered and utilized as tools to serve the needs of the people of the Territories themselves. Many of these Territories have made considerable progress in their political, constitutional, economic and social development and have gone a long way towards self-government. The question is one of finding the appropriate format and timing for the completion of decolonization in each Territory. The role of the Special Committee, and indeed the UN as a whole, is crucial. The process itself is delicate: ascertaining the political aspirations of the people in each of these territories and taking into account the stages of development and advancement of each territory, so that they are able to acquire for themselves political and socio-economic institutions and structures of their choice.

7. The administering powers too have an important role to play. The importance of their participation in the work of the Special Committee can hardly be over-emphasized. Malaysia calls upon them to approach the task at hand in a spirit of cooperation, understanding, political realism and flexibility. We encourage more visits by UN Missions to the Territories as a means of collecting adequate and first-hand information on conditions in the Territories as well as on the wishes and aspirations of the peoples concerning their future status. We look forward to more seminars being hosted in the Territories within the context of assessing, receiving and disseminating information on the situation in the Non-Self Governing Territories. In this regard, we are encouraged by the positive outcome of the initial contacts between the Special Committee on Decolonization, the Government of the United Kingdom and Bermuda concerning the possibility of holding a similar seminar in Bermuda in 2005.

Mr. Chairman,

8. As the current Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Malaysia wishes to emphasize that NAM has played a significant role in addressing the issue of decolonization and the right of self-determination. The Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, at their XIII Conference held in Kuala Lumpur in February 2003, reaffirmed the inalienable right of peoples of the Non-Self Governing Territories to self-determination and independence in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, regardless of the territory's size, geographical location, population and limited natural resources. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement remains committed to hastening the complete elimination of colonialism and supports the effective implementation of the Plan of Action of the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. NAM had welcomed General Assembly Resolution 55/146, which declared the Second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism from 2001 to 2010.

9. The Non-Aligned Movement has also reaffirmed the right of all peoples who were or are still subjected to colonial rule or occupation to receive fair compensation for the human and material losses they suffered as a result of colonial rule or occupation. Colonialist countries should shoulder the responsibility and pay full compensation for the economic, social and cultural consequences of their occupation.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Malaysia continues to support the right of territories to self-determination and independence. The principle of self-determination should be implemented in accordance with the wishes of the people, consistent with the General Assembly resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations. Malaysia also supports the continued existence of the Special Committee on Decolonization, which should continue to receive both adequate human and financial resources for its work. The Special Committee deserves mention for its significant efforts to complete the unfinished business of decolonization. We shall continue to maintain solidarity with the people of the Non-Self Governing Territories and cooperate with the Bureau of the Committee on the way forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman