



PERMANENT MISSION OF  
JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF  
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)



ON

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DECOLONISATION AGENDA ITEMS

TO THE

SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONISATION COMMITTEE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
NEW YORK

THURSDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2011

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Madame Chair

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the fourteen Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We congratulate you and your colleague members of the bureau on your election to lead the work of this Committee. CARICOM offers you our full support in this respect.

CARICOM associates itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

CARICOM expresses its gratitude to the Government and People of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for their successful hosting of the Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the eradication of colonialism, held in Kingstown from 31<sup>st</sup> May – 2<sup>nd</sup> June of this year.

Madame Chair

CARICOM wishes to underscore the inalienable human right of all peoples to self determination. The continued existence of colonialism in any form is an impediment to the social, cultural, political and economic development of dependent peoples and militates against the United Nations ideal of universal peace and human rights for all.

Decolonisation remains an important area of the UN's activity which should be given greater prominence. Decolonisation is part of the UN's unfinished agenda. The many achievements of the Organisation over the past years cannot truly be considered global, while people continue to live under the yoke of colonial rule. The UN and its Member States have a responsibility to these Territories and their Peoples, a responsibility from which we cannot hide.

As States that gained their independence from colonial rule not so long ago, we are not prepared to celebrate our independence without due regard for the peoples and countries that remain colonized. Six of these territories are in the Caribbean, and are full or associate members of CARICOM and its affiliated institutions. The issue, therefore, is of special importance to us as their status as non-self-governing territories continues to impede our regional integration.

Madame Chair

We have now embarked on the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. For CARICOM the designation of a Third International Decade is not cause for celebration, as it demonstrates that the work of the United Nations on the contemporary decolonisation process remains in a state of virtual inertia. Decolonisation has moved from the 'unfinished agenda' of the United Nations to the 'un-attended agenda.' Working together, the UN and its Member States can prevent this from becoming another lost decade for the decolonisation process.

CARICOM has in the past, consistently highlighted a number of challenges compounding the achievement of the goal of eradication of decolonisation, including the information deficit on decolonisation which is compounded by the lack of analysis on the constitutional, political and economic situation in the non-self-governing territories; and a deficit of high-level focus and attention paid to the decolonisation agenda. These deficiencies must be corrected.

CARICOM underscores the important role played by the Special Committee on the situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, C24. To this end, CARICOM welcomes the conclusions and recommendations emanating from the 2011 Caribbean regional seminar, in particular, the call for the Special Committee to take stock of current challenges and develop a pragmatic plan of action for the Third International Decade with a view to advancing the decolonisation process. We also look forward to greater engagement by the specialized agencies in the work of the Special Committee. We believe that this will play a crucial role in realizing the development needs of the peoples of these Territories. The full and effective implementation these recommendations can lead to significant advancement on the decolonisation agenda.

Our actions must go beyond a mere reaffirmation of support for the principles of self-determination and decolonisation in our statements, and the annual adoption of resolutions on this issue. We must unequivocally demonstrate that we are committed to implementing the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter governing self-determination and decolonization.

Madame Chair

CARICOM fully recognizes that it is only the peoples of the non-self-governing territories that can determine their future between the options of independence; free association or continuation of the status quo. In this respect, we welcome the progress that has been made in a number of non-self-governing territories.

While we take note of the statement delivered by the UK on the first day of our General Debate, CARICOM continues to express its concern at the situation with respect to the Caribbean territory of the Turks and Caicos Islands, in which the Administering power dissolved the Government and legislature of the territory, as well as suspended the right to trial by jury, and replaced the elected government with direct rule, in direct violation of the principle of self-determination. The continued postponement of elections is also a cause for concern. CARICOM Leaders earlier this year, reiterated previous calls for direct rule to be replaced by self rule and for a return to democratic and representative governance for the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

We remain convinced that the best means of resolving the situation in the Turks and Caicos is through the involvement of the people of the territory through their elected representatives. Good governance and socio-economic stability cannot be achieved without the input and involvement of the governed.

Madame Chair

CARICOM maintains its principled support for the right of the people of Western Sahara, as with all peoples in non-self-governing territories, to self-determination. We commend the efforts being undertaken by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, which has resulted in the re-establishment of mutual respect and dialogue between the main parties. We welcome the resumption of family visits by air and urge the commencement of family visits by land which will further serve as an important confidence-building measure between the parties.

CARICOM expresses its support for the ongoing informal talks between the parties, and in this context supports the call in made Security Council resolution 1979 for the continuation of negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations without preconditions and in good faith, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We encourage the parties to negotiate in a spirit of compromise and sincere commitment. We hope that the upcoming informal talks will pave the way to more substantive negotiations between all the parties with the objective of reaching a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to this protracted conflict.

Madame Chair

In closing, let me take this opportunity to urge all Member States to work toward achieving the long outstanding goal of the eradication of colonialism. Let us extend ourselves beyond the academic exercise of receiving petitioners and adopting resolutions on the various aspects of the decolonization agenda.

It is often the case that the price of staying the same is far greater than the price of change. We cannot afford to continue to pay the price of constant repetition without concrete results in treating with the decolonisation process. Let us challenge ourselves to ensure that the third international decade for the elimination of colonialism is a successful one for the colonized countries and peoples.

Thank you, Madame Chair

