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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

Letter dated 29 July 1981 from the Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to address you on the subject of the Malvinas Islands.

In that connexion, and in accordance with the instructions received, I am pleased to inform you that the Argentine Government issued the following Declaration to the press on 27 July 1981:

"The Argentine Government has invited the Government of the United Kingdom to expedite resolutely the formal negotiating process aimed at settling once and for all our country's claim to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.

"That invitation was transmitted in a note sent today to the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Buenos Aires, Mr. Anthony Williams, by the Minister for External Relations and Worship, Dr. Oscar Camilion.

"In that regard, the discussions which have taken place since the negotiating process resumed in 1977 have made it possible to become acquainted with the general outline of the respective points of view. Clearly, however, no substantial progress has been made since negotiations were undertaken pursuant to resolution 2065 (XX) of the United Nations General Assembly, on the clearly defined subject of the dispute concerning sovereignty over those archipelagos.

* A/36/150.

"At the same time, the system of opening up communications, initiated following the Joint Declaration of 1971, has been maintained and expanded by the Argentine Republic within the limits of its possibilities. It should be emphasized that although this system has undoubtedly achieved the objective of improving the living conditions of the population to a highly significant extent, has not achieved the success hoped for with regard to its basic goals of contributing to mutual knowledge and understanding and promoting the success of the negotiations.

"Because of the isolation in which the islanders live, they are largely ignorant of the nature of the Argentine Republic and what occurs in the continental part of its territory. That ignorance has become an obstacle to the progress of the negotiating process, in that the wishes - but not the interests - of the inhabitants of the Malvinas can be invoked as a permanent argument to impede progress. With due respect for the interests of the islanders, Argentina naturally maintains that the discussion concerning sovereignty is the bilateral responsibility of its Government and that of Great Britain, as recognized by the United Nations. In practice, there are no alternatives other than effective Argentine sovereignty over that part of its territory which is currently occupied by the United Kingdom and the maintenance of the present situation, that is, British control of the islands as a colonial dependency.

"In 1981 the latter situation constitutes an anachronism which is as unacceptable as it is indefensible. Furthermore, its continuation constitutes a decisive obstacle to the development of the natural resources of the islands. The economy of the islands is continually deteriorating. The population, which currently consists of about 1,800 inhabitants, is constantly declining, with no possibility of a natural reversal.

"This unjust situation creates a feeling of political and moral frustration among the Argentine people and also leads to an incongruous failure to develop the resources of the islands, which are essential in a world which needs energy and food. The whole situation is highly irrational and no one can seriously contend that the status quo can continue much longer.

"The Argentine Government therefore considers that it has become an unpostponable priority of its foreign policy to expedite resolutely the negotiations on the Malvinas Islands, which should focus on specific objectives.

"The note sent to the United Kingdom stresses the urgent need to solve this problem, which is complex and requires a comprehensive approach in which all aspects must be considered simultaneously. In that regard, the Argentine Government takes the following basic positions:

- "1. It reaffirms the traditional position of our country that any realistic negotiations concerning the Malvinas Islands, South

Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands must be based on the assumption that the essential feature of any solution is recognition of the sovereignty of Argentina over those archipelagos;

- "2. The Argentine Government reiterates its promise to respect the interest of the islanders;
- "3. The protection of those interests should take into account the islanders' way of life and traditions;
- "4. Within the context of acceptable negotiations, Argentina will continue to provide the islanders with the services it is now supplying, which were initiated in 1971. These services, which are currently provided in various areas of activity and can be expanded, require some sign of British political will to make constructive progress, so that they do not become a sterile exercise as far as a final solution is concerned;
- "5. Since these negotiations have been carried out within the framework of United Nations resolutions, the Argentine Republic is prepared to agree that the Organization should provide any guarantees that may be considered desirable in order to provide reliable safeguards for the islanders' interests, should such safeguards be necessary in addition to all those offered by the Argentine legal system and any special statutes that may be negotiated;
- "6. With regard to the resources of the islands, Argentina is prepared to devise practical formulas that take into account the interests of those who can benefit from the development of such resources.

"The Argentine Government is determined to continue the negotiations in an extremely realistic spirit and with full confidence that reasonable and feasible solutions can be found. In the same realistic spirit and with the same confidence, the Argentine Government considers that the time has come for these negotiations to become effective. It feels that it cannot continue waiting indefinitely for a solution while there is a failure to negotiate with due seriousness and firm determination to reach an agreement.

"Concerning the national attitude to this matter, on the one hand there is a readiness to negotiate, but on the other there is a conviction that consideration of this question, which affects the territorial integrity and dignity of the nation, cannot be postponed."

I should be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as a document of the General Assembly under item 19 of the provisional agenda and brought to the attention of the Special Committee on Decolonization.

(Signed) Juan Carlos BELTRAMINO
Permanent Representative of the Argentine
Republic to the United Nations