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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 29 June 1999, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. DONIGI

(Papua New Guinea)

CONTENTS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

QUESTIONS OF AMERICAN SAMOA, ANGUILLA, BERMUDA, THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS,
THE CAYMAN ISLANDS, GUAM, MONTSERRAT, PITCAIRN, ST. HELENA, TOKELAU,
THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS AND THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

Hearing of representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories and
administering Powers

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

REQUESTS FOR HEARINGS

2. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to three communications concerning requests for hearings relating to Guam and Tokelau. He took it that the Committee wished to grant those requests.
3. It was so decided.

QUESTIONS OF AMERICAN SAMOA, ANGUILLA, BERMUDA, THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS, THE CAYMAN ISLANDS, GUAM, MONTserrat, PITCAIRN, ST. HELENA, TOKELAU, THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS AND THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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administering Powers

Question of Guam (A/AC.109/1999/14)

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Gutierrez (Governor of Guam) and Mr. Rivera (Vice-Chairman, Guam Commission on Decolonization) took places at the table.

5. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that, the Special Committee's intercession at the previous year's hearings had enabled representatives from Guam to be heard along with those of the administering Power and a more balanced and sustainable approach had been achieved. Consultations with the people of Non-Self-Governing Territories were vital to ensuring that the decolonization process was equitable.

6. In his view, full self-government could only be achieved if the people of the Territories became equal with their administering Powers, or equal within the political system of their administering Powers. Independence was not the only form of self-government that established an equal status. The full integration of a Territory into the political system of an administering Power was also a form of full self-government. Somewhere between independence and integration was the equal status of shared sovereignty or free association. The laws of Guam recognized those three types of status as legitimate forms of full self-government. Guam's current status could not be described as self-governing.

7. He urged the Committee to allow the people of the Territories wider access to the instruments of international law and the United Nations system. For example, direct access to the International Court of Justice by the Territories would provide the Special Committee with expert legal opinions on the decolonization process. The people of the Territories looked to the United Nations to keep the playing field level between the world's largest nations and

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the world's smallest jurisdictions, since the agreements reached on a level playing field would be stronger and more likely to be lasting. Finally, he reiterated his Government's invitation to the Special Committee to hold its year 2000 Regional Seminar in Guam. That would allow the Committee to visit the island and to gather information on the wishes of the people.

8. Mr. TANOI-BOUTCHOUÉ (Côte d'Ivoire) said that there was a contradiction between the statement of the Governor and that of the administering Power. While the former had noted that the Territory did not have real autonomy, the latter had informed the Committee that the political status of the Territory did not need to be changed. That confirmed the Committee's belief that any information received from administering Powers needed to be cross-checked by directly contacting the population concerned. He wondered whether the administering Power was aware of and endorsed the invitation issued by the Guam Government.

9. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam), noting that it was probably the first time that the administering Power was hearing of the invitation, expressed confidence that the United States Government would not object to such a visit.

10. Mr. OVIA (Papua New Guinea) said that administering Powers often told the Committee that the people of a particular Territory were self-governing and that such Territory should be de-listed. However, the Committee had just heard from the representative of the people of Guam that there were still things that needed to be accomplished before Guam completed the decolonization process. In that regard, he hoped that the invitation for the Committee to hold its seminar for the year 2000 in Guam would be taken seriously and approved by the administering Power, as that would enable delegations to visit the Territory and gather information from ordinary people as well as from non-governmental organizations.

11. Mr. MANONGI (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the Governor of Guam had expressed the desire for the Territory to be granted access to the International Court of Justice. Since only States could petition the Court, he wondered whether the Territory was seeking the status of statehood and total independence.

12. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that the people had not yet expressed their views on what direction they would take in the self-determination process. In past referendums the people had indicated that they would like to be involved in the Government of the Territory. Access to the International Court of Justice would be a means of last resort, should the administering Power and the Special Committee be unable to satisfy the people's wishes.

13. Mr. TANOI-BOUTCHOUÉ (Côte d'Ivoire), referring to paragraph 2 of the Secretariat's working paper (A/AC.109/1999/14), asked about the current situation of the indigenous people of Guam, the Chamorro people; the Committee had been told that the administering Power's immigration policy tended to reduce the proportion of the Chamorro population.

14. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that, three months previously, over 600 Chinese immigrants seeking United States citizenship had been allowed to

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enter Guam, thereby lowering the percentage of the Chamorro people to about 46 per cent. A dialogue had been initiated with the administering Power designed to set a different immigration policy for small Territories with finite resources, such as Guam. He hoped that that process would eventually minimize the negative impact of immigration on Guam's native population.

15. Mr. EGUIGUREN (Chile), asked about the steps that needed to be taken to achieve the decolonization of Guam.

16. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that the Chamorro people were defined as those people who were in Guam prior to 1950, regardless of their ethnic origin. They were the ones who would be authorized to take part in the voting scheduled for December of the current year to decide on the direction of self-determination efforts.

17. Mr. OVIA (Papua New Guinea) wondered about progress in the dual process in the United States Congress with respect to Guam's free-association status with the United States of America.

18. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that his Government was continuing its dialogue with the United States to address concerns that had an immediate impact on the Territory. However, the issue of self-determination still needed to be addressed by the people of Guam.

19. Mr. TANOH-BOUTCHOUÉ (Côte d'Ivoire), referring to paragraph 61 of the working paper, expressed surprise at the use of the term "Chamorro", since the administering Power appeared to prefer that the inhabitants should be called Guamanians.

20. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that the Chamorro people were those defined by the Organic Act of Guam and mentioned in United Nations resolutions as those being present in Guam prior to 1950, when so-called self-government had been granted by the administering Power.

21. Mr. MANONGI (United Republic of Tanzania) asked about the extent of the problem of land ownership and the measures that had been taken to return land to the original owners.

22. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that the people of Guam had lost about one third of the island for military purposes during the Second World War. While the Territory had been pleased to offer its land to help win the war, too much land had been taken. Although the process for the return of that land was in place, it was taking much too long. Immigration had had a considerable adverse impact on the island's finite resources.

23. Mr. TANOH-BOUTCHOUÉ (Côte d'Ivoire), referring to paragraph 66 of the Secretariat's working paper, said that the administering Power referred to self-determination and self-government for all the people of Guam, whereas the Governor had stated that self-determination would be for people of Chamorro descent. He wondered whether the Governor could shed some light on that apparent contradiction.

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24. The CHAIRMAN said that the definition of the term "the Chamorro people" was directly relevant to the right of self-determination. The Governor had said that the other inhabitants should have no right to vote on self-determination; did he also believe that they should leave the island?

25. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that while there was certainly no intention of expelling immigrants, the right of self-determination was clearly reserved to the colonial peoples, in this case the Chamorro people. According to paragraph 8 of the annex to the Plan of Action for the Full Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly resolution 35/118), Member States should adopt the necessary measures to discourage or prevent the systematic influx of outside immigrants and settlers into colonial Territories. Such an influx had occurred in Guam; it had created an impasse, since the administering Power was insisting that the Constitution of the United States was applicable to the case, and hence that all the people of Guam should be entitled to vote on self-determination.

26. The CHAIRMAN asked the Governor for more information on the new immigrants to Guam and in particular on whether they were economic or political refugees.

27. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that since Guam was considered part of the United States immigration system, prospective immigrants knew that they could apply for asylum by coming to Guam, where they were held at considerable expense to Guam during the processing of their application.

28. Mr. MEKDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) said the immigration into Guam ran counter to international instruments on the subject of decolonization. In view of Guam's small population, the influx would inevitably alter the composition of the population and hence the results of each future referendum. Similar situations were occurring in the Western Sahara and in East Timor. His delegation would be happy to attend a seminar in Guam.

29. Mr. RIVERA (Vice-Chairman, Guam Commission on Decolonization) said that experience had shown that, in the absence of full integration into the United States constitutional system, Guam remained the colonial property of the United States, subject to its laws but without the benefits of citizenship or true self-government. The legislature and judiciary of the administering Power viewed Guam as belonging to, but not part of, the United States.

30. Despite the claims of the administering Power that Guam's concerns were an "internal" affair, those concerns about many of the colonial policies were clearly reflected in various resolutions which stated inter alia that the right to decolonization was vested in the people colonized; that immigration into Territories under colonial rule should be limited; that the appropriation of land and marine resources by an administering Power was a breach of its responsibility; and that participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories in regional and international organizations was to be encouraged. It was critical that the Special Committee should challenge the administering Power's attempts to make decolonization an exclusively internal matter.

31. Despite repeated attempts by Guam's legislature and Chief Executive to raise the issue, the administering Power had yet to agree on a process that

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would lead to decolonization. Indeed, the situation was worse now than it had been a decade earlier. In November 1998, the United States courts had challenged the Governor's re-election, thereby calling into question the ability of the people of Guam to elect their chief executive.

32. Over the past two decades, United States immigration laws had produced dramatic demographic changes in Guam. More than 40,000 new immigrants - equal to nearly one third of Guam's 1990 census population - had been permitted to enter Guam. The administering Power was clearly following an assimilationist policy with respect to the colonized people of Guam. The escalating impact of the migrants had unnaturally increased Guam's population growth rate, while significantly diminishing the social, economic, cultural and political institutions of the colonized people. Moreover, the administering Power's policies on legal immigration had given rise to a serious problem of asylum seekers and trafficking in illegal immigrants by transnational criminal syndicates, a problem which was straining the island's social and law enforcement infrastructure. Overall, the application of the administering Power's laws and constitutional system was undermining self-government and obstructing the path to self-determination.

33. It was the hope of the Guam Commission that the consensus language of the Special Committee's 1998 resolution would be retained, and that the Committee would support new measures to encourage a process of self-determination, decolonization and full self-government. He called on the Special Committee to do more to encourage administering Powers to live up to their responsibilities under the Charter, noting that relevant suggestions had been made at the Special Committee's Caribbean Regional Seminar held recently in Castries, Saint Lucia.

34. Mr. TANOHO-BOUTCHOUE (Côte d'Ivoire) said that Mr. Rivera had raised an important point, namely, the absolute equality that should exist between the citizens of the home country and those of the integrated or associated Territory. Often administering Powers sought to give the Special Committee the impression that laws were in place providing for the rights and legal status of the inhabitants of the Territory. It was clear from paragraphs 3 and 4 of document A/AC.109/1999/14 that not all provisions of the United States Constitution applied to the island. In drafting its report, the Special Committee should look very closely at the reassurances of the administering Power, particularly when it appeared that the Territory would opt for integrated or associated status rather than sovereignty to make sure that the legal equality of citizens was complete.

35. Mr. OVIA (Papua New Guinea) expressed the hope that the process taking place in Washington, D.C., working from the starting point of the draft Commonwealth Act, would reach a solution that would satisfy both parties. While the Special Committee could assist, it was up to the administering Power to move the matter forward.

36. Mr. DAUSA CESPEDES (Cuba) said that he would appreciate further information regarding any new initiatives in the United States Congress concerning the status of Guam and the positions of the Republican and Democratic parties.

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37. Mr. RIVERA (Vice-Chairman, Guam Commission on Decolonization) said that for 12 years, the draft Guam Commonwealth Act, which would have defined an interim relationship and allowed a process of self-determination to take place gradually, had been spurned by both Executive and Congress: the administering Power appeared to believe that any changes in Guam must be measured against the yardstick of its own interests there. Thus, while people in Guam were trying to make fundamental changes in their relationship with that Power, it on the other hand showed no interest in fundamental issues of governance.

38. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that while he and his compatriots in Guam were nationals of the United States of America, they could not vote for the President nor were they represented in the Congress, which made the legislation that governed their lives. The people of Guam did not have a Constitution of their own making, instead they had as their Constitution a Federal law, the Guam Organic Act, which was administered from Washington. They could elect a Governor, but the administering Power could remove him. To say that Guam was self-governing was therefore nonsense.

39. The Guam Commission on Decolonization had been given a mandate to undertake a process of education and public information with the ultimate aim of holding a plebiscite on the three choices of political status consistent with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The referendum had originally been planned for 12 December 1999, but it was probable that the vote would be postponed until some time in 2000 to give time for those campaigns to achieve their goals. Thus, Guam was moving forward with its decolonization process in the hope that once again the people of Guam, particularly the Chamorros could express their will.

40. The definition of a Chamorro person used for the purposes of the plebiscite was the same as the definition used by the Congress of the United States of America in the Guam Commonwealth Act. The administering Power now appeared to want to define the Chamorros as a racial group so as to make it appear as if other "ethnic" groups were being discriminated against; the group was, in fact, defined politically in the Treaty of Paris of 1898 and in the Guam Organic Act.

41. Mr. MANONGI (United Republic of Tanzania) asked how Mr. Rivera viewed the changing demographic pattern of Guam and enquired whether he had confidence in the integrity of the Chamorro Registry as a basis for the plebiscite.

42. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) replied that he had the highest confidence in the integrity of the Chamorro Registry. In the registration process, a person was required to provide documentary proof either of birth in Guam before 1950 or, for younger persons, proof of descent from such a person. Great vigilance was being exercised to exclude possible errors because so much was at stake.

43. Mr. OVIA (Papua New Guinea) enquired whether the administering Power was in agreement with the plebiscite process and whether the Committee would be able to observe the process so that there could be no doubt as to whether the Chamorros had chosen independence, integration or free association.

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44. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) expressed the hope that the administering Power would indeed invite the Special Committee to witness the plebiscite process: similar invitations had been extended on previous occasions.

45. Mr. TANOH-BOUTCHOUÉ (Côte d'Ivoire) also enquired how the Republican Party and the Democratic Party in the United States of America viewed the question of decolonization or autonomy for Guam; what the Governor's official status was since his election had been successfully challenged in court; and, in connection with the immigration issue, whether Guam had received any refugees from Kosovo.

46. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that while the President of the United States of America had been most forthcoming in trying to ensure that true representative democracy was practised, Guam was administered through the Department of the Interior; the Cabinet position associated with that Department was not the highest in the administering Power's system of government. Thus, Guam was run, in effect, by mid-level bureaucrats who viewed Guam only in terms of what it was needed for and remained blind to the political issues.

47. The Federal law which had overturned the last election, at which he had been the incumbent Governor, stated also that the Governor should remain in office until such time as someone else was certified to have won. He was therefore officially in office with the same powers and authority as before the election.

48. Guam had been considered as a place to which Kosovar refugees might be sent but in the end none had been sent.

49. Mr. EGUIGUREN (Chile) asked how non-Chamorros in Guam fitted into the decolonization process and whether Chamorros were in the majority there. He wondered if non-Chamorros, who were not to vote in the plebiscite, were permitted to vote on other matters. He enquired whether the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in Guam were close to their counterparts in the United States of America, whether either party or both parties represented the Chamorros, if either or both parties spoke for the non-Chamorros and whether there was a pro-independence party.

50. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) replied that the legislation in Guam which had established the decolonization process mandated that only Chamorros as described in the Treaty of Paris of 1898 and in the Guam Organic Act of 1950 could be certified to vote in the plebiscite on the decolonization process. Indeed, the purpose of the education project was to make sure that people knew who could vote and what they were voting for. The administering Power, however, believed that non-Chamorros should also be permitted to vote in the plebiscite.

51. Both the Democratic Party of Guam and the Republican Party of Guam were affiliated with their counterparts in the United States of America.

52. The Chamorros made up the majority of those who exercised the right to vote in any election in Guam; however, everybody was entitled to participate. There was no clear trend in party allegiances, which varied amongst all Guam's citizens, Chamorro and non-Chamorro.

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53. Mr. DAUSA CESPEDES (Cuba) asked whether closures of military facilities were having a negative effect on Guam's economy and, if so, what was being done to counter such effects.

54. Mr. GUTIERREZ (Governor of Guam) said that Guam had indeed been seriously hit by two rounds of closures, in 1993 and 1995. Most of the shipyards in the port of Guam, had been closed with a resulting loss of 2,500 civilian jobs, some 10 per cent of the workforce. Guam was now working to diversify its economy through tourism and projecting itself as a telecommunication and financial hub and a natural bridge between Asia and the West.

55. Mr. Gutierrez and Mr. Rivera withdrew.

Question of Tokelau (A/AC.109/1999/17; A/AC.109/1999/L.7)

56. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Tuia (Ulu of Tokelau) took a place at the table.

57. Mr. TUIA (Ulu of Tokelau) said that 1993 had opened a new chapter in the life of Tokelau, when its people had embarked on national self-government and had progressively been given functions and powers previously exercised by the Government of New Zealand on their behalf. The momentum was building and with it the confidence of their traditional leaders to join in creating new structures to meet the needs of village and nation. In 1999, Tokelau's third national Government, all of whose members had been elected, had assumed power for a three-year term. Also in 1999, the New Zealand Government had agreed to terminate its control of Tokelau's national public service in the year 2000, thus returning to the rightful owners the authority to manage and adjudicate village affairs; and the requisite national and village systems were being established. The year also marked the beginning of a long-term financial plan agreed with the Government of New Zealand, a major element of which was the creation of a trust fund to foster self-reliance. With the valuable assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Tokelau Government would be engaging in economic activities that would in the long term lead to sustainable livelihood; and it would soon launch a UNDP-funded project on good governance. Tokelau's leaders would be refocusing on a constitution as they began to set up further national governmental structures embodying the concept of the village as the foundation of the nation, as outlined in the "Modern House of Tokelau" report.

58. The path of decolonization was a new one for Tokelau, for which its tradition had not prepared it, yet it had entered into it out of the desire to keep alive its identity, vitality, dignity and integrity. Without the concerted action of the three partners in the process - the Territory, the United Nations and the Government of New Zealand - full internal self-government would be harder to achieve and self-determination would be beyond reach. In the new, more demanding phase of decolonization, Tokelau needed the continuing assistance of the United Nations and New Zealand, which, however, had to be guided by the wishes of the elders and the people of Tokelau with respect to emphasis, timing and perceptions.

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59. The Territory had to be able to guide the direction of the process and its pace, and indeed, the administering Power had always shown its willingness to respect that prerogative. In 1994, Tokelau had expressed a preference for a status of free association with New Zealand but since then its major focus had been on issues of government rather than political status. That did not mean, however, that Tokelau might not eventually decide to pursue another option - particularly that of integration - and it wished to be more fully informed by the administering Power of the different possibilities of the two courses.

60. Fearful of the future, Tokelau sought shelter in the protection of the United Nations and in the vital dialogue with New Zealand and the outside world. It was also essential for New Zealand and the international community, which had been so generous thus far, to continue to provide the necessary resources for decolonization.

61. Tokelau could not overstate the value it placed on its relationship with the Government of New Zealand. The Administrator of Tokelau had been an inspiration and Tokelau had achieved much under his tutelage.

62. At the Invitation of the Chairman Mr. Watt (Administrator of Tokelau) took a place at the table.

63. Mr. WATT (Administrator of Tokelau) observed that Tokelau provided a helpful reminder of how the United Nations, a Territory and an administering Power could join hands in the decolonization of a colony that had once seemed destined to be one in perpetuity. The Ulu had provided the Committee with a clear and compelling picture of the situation within Tokelau. The Territory was unique in that the shift of national power to external agents during the century or so of colonialism had had little practical impact on everyday life, for the political and cultural reality that everyone knew and understood was the village. That was Tokelau's heart and foundation. Cognizant of that reality, not once in its 73 years of administrative responsibility had New Zealand maintained a resident administrative presence in Tokelau.

64. Tokelau's special features made any judgement about political advancement in the usual sense very difficult. For example, self-government and self-determination could only have meaning for Tokelau if there was a viable local authority able to make decisions on its behalf, rather than a central administration controlling the power of its component parts. Thus, those terms - even hard to translate into Tokelauan - tended to be seen as belonging to the outside world and not relevant to the Territory's traditional leaders.

65. Although Tokelau should quite rightly be seen as a case of successful decolonization in progress, the usual process culminating in a final transfer of powers had never been one that by itself could work in Tokelau. The Territory could recognize the world's goals only when they made local sense, only once there had been an internal process that the Territory itself had completed. As Administrator, he was especially conscious of the overriding importance of ensuring that the path to decolonization was suited to such a distinctive context. Tokelau, with its conscious emphasis on the quality of the decolonization process encapsulated in its own very small way the essence of the challenge before the United Nations as it sought to discharge its mandate in the

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17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The strategic need to narrow the gap between the local perceptions in Tokelau and the international political necessity had coloured the way in which New Zealand's administrative responsibility had been discharged in the past decade.

66. From its perspective as the administering Power, New Zealand's core message was that Tokelau was on track to exercise self-determination, but that the special features in its situation could mean that for its own entirely explicable reasons it might not be ready to do so in the near future. It was on track because a century or more of contact with the outside world had given it a new set of modern needs that could not be satisfied by traditional ways and codes; but it was not yet ready because a village-focused approach was now required as well if people were to have the incentive to recover their earlier self-reliant spirit.

67. Hence the need for new arrangements for governing: executive and legislative powers had devolved to Tokelau as national government structures were developed and as, concomitantly, the three traditional village-level administrations were modernized. Further, in response to the expressed wish for greater autonomy, New Zealand would be transferring responsibility for the Tokelau Public Service to Tokelau at the earliest feasible date, by mid-2000. In addition, the effective participation by the people of Tokelau in their Government required an appropriate electoral system, and in 1999 a new political era had begun when a democratically elected national representative body, the General Fono, had replaced a system of appointment of delegates by each village.

68. Although the concept of self-determination had in 1994 gained the support of the Faipule who were then assuming new national roles as village representatives, it would be fair to say that the Faipule had not yet convinced traditional leaders as to the correctness and necessity of the contemporary constitutional journey. Consequently, the Committee must heed tradition, for a different combination of circumstances could prompt traditional leaders, who remained the ultimate arbiters and must necessarily play a central role in future governance, to call a halt. New Zealand was seeking to help Tokelau to stay its current course, having set out an official development cooperation plan in October 1998 to meet new medium-term development and political needs.

69. The Ulu knew that the outcome depended ultimately on the extent to which all Tokelauans had confidence in their ability to make a success of self-government, a prime factor in the equation being the support of the United Nations. Tokelau was avoiding the simpler course of borrowing extensively from the constitutional practices of others, intent rather on shaping political arrangements and a constitution according to its own needs and tradition while also seeking a good balance between the traditional and the imported. It was a home-grown and directed approach, novel to post-war decolonization. Tokelau stood to provide one instructive answer to the problem of small State governance.

70. Only 1,500 of the estimated 8,000 Tokelauans still lived on the atolls, the others having left for reasons of education, health and economic opportunity. The Ulu and his colleagues in the Council of Faipule wanted to make Tokelau once more a vital community, which would have a positive impact on Tokelauans

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everywhere, who continued to be drawn to the homeland. The notion of the oneness of all Tokelauans was central to the Council's thinking about how a future free association relationship might be structured with New Zealand.

71. Mr. TANOH-BOUTCHOUÉ (Côte d'Ivoire) observed that the Ulu had touched on a central issue of decolonization, the need for prior, gradual political education of the people of a dependent Territory. In the case of Tokelau, both parties had decided that they would go forward together, harmoniously, at the local pace, and the United Nations must not push for arrangements that the people did not want. However, since the Territory had had a century-old history of colonization during which there had been no political preparation for self-government, he would like assurances that the three options had been fully explained to the people of Tokelau.

72. Mr. TUIA (Ulu of Tokelau) said that, under New Zealand, his people had never felt that any change was needed. The United Nations visiting missions had begun to promote the new idea of self-government and had at the time given full information on the three options. His people did have an understanding of them, but they wanted to go very slowly through the process, understanding and testing all aspects of the unfamiliar possibilities. Building on the current experiences of governing, they would later investigate other options. They wanted to be very careful, for mistakes could not be reversed.

73. Mr. MEKDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the experience of Tokelau was a success story, given the outstanding cooperation between the local leaders and the administering Power. Democracy was not a prescriptive matter; it needed to be developed in a framework that was in accord with the history of a people. New Zealand was to be commended for its understanding of the entire process. Its example could well be emulated by other administering Powers. He asked the Ulu what more the Committee could do to assist the people of Tokelau.

74. Mr. TUIA (Ulu of Tokelau) said that at the start, feeling unequal in dealing alone with an administering Power, Tokelau had asked the United Nations to stand ready to provide advice and support when needed. UNDP had always been there for Tokelau; and the interested presence of the Committee would also be very important in guiding the process to a conclusion.

75. Mr. RABUKA (Fiji) said that the close partnership between Tokelau and New Zealand in administering the island was an example to be followed. The lessons learned from Tokelau would advance understanding of how self-determination under the Charter could be realized.

76. Mr. SALAMANCA (Bolivia), noting that the Ulu had provided a lesson in humility and New Zealand a lesson in civilization, said that he joined Fiji in applauding the progress towards self-determination in Tokelau. His own country, with its complex, multi-ethnic society, had had experience with the need to respect small, isolated cultures.

77. The term colonization as it applied to Tokelau could not be defined as exploitation, occupation for advantage or superimposition of an alien culture. In Tokelau, it had to be defined rather as the administration of a culture. No one possessed political truth that could be imposed. The United Nations had to

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learn from the example of Tokelau and New Zealand, for it was applicable to many other Territories.

78. Mr. OVIA (Papua New Guinea) said that the fine example of cooperation between the administering Power and the people of Tokelau was a lesson for all, even in the Committee, and especially for other administering Powers.

79. Mr. EGUIGUREN (Chile) said that the very particular case of a tiny, isolated island with a small population had been handled most worthily.

80. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the text of a draft resolution, relating to the question of Tokelau (A/AC.109/1999/L.7). Although the draft resolution had been circulated only that morning, he took it that the Special Committee wished to waive the 24-hour requirement for submission of proposals stipulated by rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

81. It was so decided.

82. Mr. OVIA (Papua New Guinea), introducing the draft resolution, noted that all issues had been satisfactorily resolved; he suggested that the Special Committee should adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

83. Draft resolution A/AC.109/1999/L.7 was adopted.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.