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## Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

### Summary record of the 6th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 13 October 2014, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Bhattarai. . . . . (Nepal)

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\* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Agenda item 55: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations** (*continued*) (A/69/23 (chaps. VII and XIII) and A/69/69)

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**Agenda item 59: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples** (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*) (A/69/23 (chaps. VIII-XI and XIII) and A/69/189)

1. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that rising instability and insecurity in the Sahel and its surroundings warranted an urgent solution to the enduring conflict in Western Sahara that continued to divide the international community and stall integration in the Maghreb. The risk that increased terrorism, trafficking and transnational organized crime might be exported to other regions of Africa was evident and there was therefore an unprecedented need for international cooperation to avoid having terrorism spill over into other countries or regions with weak institutional capacity to control borders.

2. For the parties to the Western Sahara conflict to engage in real negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General, each must accept the fact that all their demands would not be met and that they must seek a mutually acceptable political solution through bilateral discussions based on realism and a spirit of compromise. Furthermore, it was of the utmost importance to adopt a regional approach to the conflict because, as stated in Security Council resolution 2152 (2014), enhanced cooperation between the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union would contribute to stability and

security in the Sahel region. In addition, regional integration would yield economic and social benefits, which, in turn, would help to build trust and create an environment for a peaceful and political solution to the conflict. To that end, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara should encourage regional involvement by meeting with more neighbouring countries and subregional organizations.

3. It was also incumbent on both sides to protect human rights and address reported problems so as to promote a culture of human rights. His delegation welcomed Morocco's cooperation with and standing invitation to United Nations Human Rights Council special procedures, as well as its recent incorporation into domestic law of the recommendation by its National Human Rights Council that civilians should not be tried before military courts. The confidence-building measures, especially the expansion of the reciprocal family-visit programme, were also encouraging.

4. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) continued to play a vital peacekeeping role and its continued presence was necessary, as it was both guarantor of the stability of the ceasefire and testimony to the international community's commitment to resolving the conflict. In that regard, the realistic and viable autonomy plan presented by Morocco was the best option for arriving at a balanced and mutually acceptable political solution. Burundi welcomed the parties' readiness to continue their dialogue, and hailed the remarkable work being done by the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy.

5. **Ms. García López** (Honduras) said that Territories that did not exercise their right to self-determination held up the decolonization process, which should be completed through constant dialogue among the administering Powers, the Special Committee on decolonization and the peoples themselves.

6. Her Government joined those which affirmed that Argentina had a legitimate right to the currently occupied Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. That claim had been repeatedly endorsed by the whole of Latin America, again as recently as during the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

7. Honduras, as a contributor of personnel to MINURSO, stressed the need for a just solution also to the conflict in Western Sahara, one acceptable to both

parties as they resolved their differences in collaboration with the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General. In the meantime, there should be continued protection of the Saharan refugees and of their human rights.

8. **Mr. Vu Van Mien** (Viet Nam) said that while his delegation commended the work done by the Special Committee on decolonization since its establishment, there were still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories on its agenda. It must develop more effective interaction with administering Powers, and ensure the active participation of the peoples of the Territories in determining their own future. Administering Powers in turn should cooperate fully with the Special Committee; and they should continue to engage in constructive dialogue with the Territories to reach arrangements that best served the fundamental interests of both sides, solving any problems by peaceful means in keeping with the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

9. He urged the Organization to ensure that the activities carried out by administering Powers did not adversely affect the interests of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories but rather promoted economic, cultural and social development and laid the foundation for their legitimate exercise of self-determination.

10. **Mr. Seck** (Senegal) said that it must be recognized that since the proclamation of the First International Decade for Decolonization, little progress had been made in ending colonialism in all its manifestations, undoubtedly owing largely to a lack of political will on the part of certain administering Powers that employed delaying tactics to hinder the march towards self-determination of dependent peoples. It was therefore important for the Committee to demand that administering Powers respect their obligations.

11. Even as the move towards African integration gathered momentum, the question of Western Sahara continued to weigh heavily on the Maghreb, which played an important role in the African and international arenas. The conflict could provide a fertile breeding ground for serious threats to international peace and security at a time when the Sahelo-Saharan region faced rising danger from transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism. Senegal therefore reaffirmed its conviction that a firmer approach was needed to consolidating fraternal relations among all the countries of the

Maghreb. In the process, any destruction of the vulnerable region's social fabric must be discouraged.

12. His delegation once again expressed support for the 2007 Moroccan proposal, which offered a large degree of autonomy to Western Sahara while respecting Morocco's sovereignty. If implemented, the realistic and reasonable proposal could be decisive in ending the conflict because it offered the best chances for a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution.

13. **Mr. Mwinyi** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his Government reaffirmed its support for the desire of peoples still under colonial rule to exercise their right to self-determination, including the option of independence, in accordance with the relevant United Nations decolonization provisions. Collective and consistent commitment, political will and partnership were required to end colonialism. Enhanced interaction and cooperation between the Special Committee and the administering Powers remained crucial to the implementation of the United Nations decolonization mandate and would benefit all. Such cooperation could be summed up by a saying in Kiswahili to the effect that when building the same house, there was no need to fight for the building materials.

14. On the question of Western Sahara, the last remaining colony in Africa, his Government reiterated its unwavering support for the self-determination of the Sahrawi people. It commended the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy as well as other initiatives undertaken by the African Union to resolve a conflict that had lasted much too long. All parties should continue negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which would provide for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

15. **Mr. Taula** (New Zealand) said that in line with the Charter obligations of administering Powers, New Zealand's relationship with Tokelau was strong and underpinned by mutual respect. In essence, his Government was committed to simple but fundamental actions: listening to the needs determined by Tokelau and helping it to achieve those aspirations as far as possible. New Zealand would continue that approach, working closely with the people and the leadership of Tokelau.

16. Following the outcome of the self-determination referendums in 2006 and 2007, there had been mutual agreement to defer any further act of self-determination. Tokelau's focus since then had been on development and on the delivery of more core services to the people on all its atolls, thus building the foundation for subsequent consideration of wider political questions. Tokelau's many challenges — stemming from geographic isolation and a small population — must shape its development path. To that end, a dedicated, jointly managed team from both Governments had been established and would deliver a five-year plan for improving essential public services and strengthening resilience on Tokelau. Transport was a particular consideration: with the Territory's only physical access to the outside world being a 500-km, 29-hour voyage by boat to Samoa, New Zealand was supporting the construction of a new vessel to service Tokelau, expected early in 2015. It was also assisting Tokelau to make education more available to children on the atolls.

17. Tokelau was working to maximize opportunities for sustainable economic development by making the most of available resources, especially in the exclusive-economic-zone fisheries — its largest source of self-generated revenue. Tokelau had been able to take a leading policy role in regional fisheries management in the Pacific, through various agencies, ministerial meetings and conferences. It had also achieved significant progress in developing renewable energy, without which sustainable economic development on the islands was impossible: with 93 per cent of its energy now derived from renewable sources, it was no longer fully dependent on fossil fuels.

18. **Mr. Zabavy** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that his Government was concerned by the sensitive question of Western Sahara in more ways than one, because it was an African issue and because Côte d'Ivoire had excellent relations with the parties involved. He therefore called on them to explore all avenues to a just, peaceful, lasting and mutually acceptable solution, through open dialogue and a willingness to compromise, in the spirit of the relevant United Nations resolutions. Although the crisis in Mali had been resolved, somewhat reducing tensions, the threat from the Sahel region persisted and the spectre of violence had not been dispelled. Greater vigilance was therefore necessary, and a settlement in Western Sahara had become more pressing. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the efforts by the Secretary-

General and his Personal Envoy to develop a new approach based on confidential discussions with the parties. Côte d'Ivoire remained committed to strengthening fraternal relations among all the peoples of Africa and urged the parties to spare no effort to resolve the situation for the benefit of the region.

19. **Mr. Camara** (Guinea) said that his nation, which had actively striven for the emancipation of peoples in Africa and throughout the world and defended the inalienable right to self-determination, hoped that the international community's efforts and the ongoing negotiations between the various parties would bring an end to the enduring conflict in Western Sahara. Morocco's autonomy proposal offered the basis for a just settlement of the dispute. Respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Morocco, it was the fruit of an inclusive nationwide consultation and had the approval of many in the international community and within the United Nations. To implement that proposal, all parties must extend the reciprocal confidence-building measures applied and do more to accelerate negotiations. However, it was impossible to create a climate conducive to a resumption of dialogue and to dispel regional security threats where there was distrust and discord. Compromise must be explored, with regional involvement and due attention to human rights. Such an approach, under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, could be successful and introduce stability.

20. **Mr. Maope** (Lesotho) said that Member States should aim to ensure that the right to self-determination was exercised by all people under colonial domination. Only when people were free to determine their own destiny would there be less conflict and more economic growth and development. In moving testimonies, representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories and scores of petitioners had once again informed the Committee of the anguish of the innocent victims of colonization.

21. Given that enduring colonization could destroy a people's cultural identity, his delegation deeply regretted the continued denial of the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara — the only remaining colony on the African continent — and was disturbed by the reports of human rights violations and exploitation of natural resources there, all contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The interests of Non-Self-Governing Territories had to be recognized

and their well-being promoted. Needless to say, the failure to assign MINURSO a human rights mandate was a great injustice to the Sahrawi people. African history would not be complete until the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic was free from colonial bondage.

22. The indispensable involvement of the United Nations in the decolonization process could not be overstated. Lesotho supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to find a lasting, peaceful settlement to the Western Sahara conflict and it called for good-faith, direct negotiations between the parties. It was difficult to comprehend that, almost 70 years after its founding, the Organization was still grappling with decolonization. Before the end of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, Member States must take collective action to give Territories still under colonial occupation the opportunity to determine their own destiny.

23. **Mr. Mamabolo** (South Africa) said that the people of Western Sahara, under the leadership of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, had long been struggling for self-determination, the sacred principle on which a democratic South Africa had also been founded. In the light of the many resolutions on the question of Western Sahara, the continuous colonial occupation by Morocco constituted a challenge to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Organization's authority and credibility, and also to the position of the African Union. No regional or international organization, no other country, had recognized Morocco's claims of sovereignty over Western Sahara, which had been rejected by advisory opinions of both the International Court of Justice and the Legal Department of the United Nations. The 2013 African Union Summit outcomes had called for renewed efforts to overcome the continued alarming impasse between the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic — a founding member of the African Union and a member of the Organization of African Unity before it — and the Kingdom of Morocco, also a friendly African country. All parties must support the criteria identified by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for a mutually acceptable political solution and self-determination for the Sahrawi people. Instead, Morocco had been trying to impose an autonomy proposal that sought to deny the people of Western Sahara the right to choose, via referendum, its destiny, were it independence, integration or even autonomy.

24. South Africa reiterated its call for an end to the illegal exploitation of mineral resources in the

occupied Territories of Western Sahara. It was also crucial for the United Nations to deal, as it did elsewhere, with the alarming human rights abuses reported there, including the recent death of a well-known Sahrawi political prisoner and human rights activist as a result of medical negligence by the Moroccan occupying security forces. That was why the MINURSO mandate, like that of all other peacekeeping missions, should include the monitoring of human rights. Furthermore, Morocco's media blackout that served to cover up the daily suffering of the Sahrawi people must be lifted, and more humanitarian aid should be given to the Sahrawi refugees still living in harsh desert conditions. His delegation supported the Algerian-sponsored draft resolution on Western Sahara that was before the Committee.

25. His Government would continue as well to support the struggle for freedom and self-determination of the people of Palestine, who were experiencing a different form of occupation and colonialism.

26. **Ms. Kasese-Bota** (Zambia) said that, as a former colony, Zambia had since its independence championed the cause of liberation from colonization on the African continent and elsewhere in the world, and would continue to support the principle of self-determination as the legal and political basis of the decolonization process.

27. The recent events leading to a bloody conflict in Gaza remained a source of serious concern, and renewed negotiations must pave the way for lasting peace in that region. Her delegation reaffirmed its support for all efforts to find a lasting, comprehensive and peaceful settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, just as it supported Palestine's legitimate rights to self-determination and independence on the basis of a two-State solution that took into account the security concerns of both parties. The Palestinian people were entitled to a viable State of Palestine. Despite the fact that there had been little progress in resolving the issue in recent years, the Committee's common resolve to see it settled had been consistently clear, and she was certain that its current deliberations would deliver the same message.

28. The recent process that had restored the ability of the people of Somalia to determine their destiny as a nation through the expansion of the national Government and the rule of law deserved to be highlighted. That commendable development would contribute to a return

to stability in that region, and it was hoped that peace would be restored throughout the country.

29. **Mr. Shava** (Zimbabwe) said that it was disheartening to note that 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories still remained, including Western Sahara, the last colonial vestige in Africa. The continuous foreign occupation of Western Sahara constituted a violation of Charter principles and General Assembly resolutions on decolonization, and undermined the Organization's authority and credibility. For Zimbabwe, the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, for which they were rightly struggling, was a prerequisite for peace, security and stability on the African continent. The advisory opinion of The International Court of Justice had given credence to the African Union's longstanding position that the issue of their self-determination and independence was not negotiable. The Secretary-General's efforts should be complemented by those of the African Union, which was committed to a negotiated settlement and had a moral obligation to support the Sahrawi struggle.

30. The continuation of direct negotiations between the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Sagüa el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario) and the Kingdom of Morocco was essential to expedite the holding of the long-awaited referendum. His delegation was, however, concerned that despite the several meetings held between the parties, no meaningful progress had been made. If all Member States supported the mission of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, that would surely give new impetus to the process. Also of concern were the frequent reports of violations of the human rights of the Sahrawi people, despite their peaceful observance a ceasefire for 22 years. The United Nations had an obligation to protect them by giving MINURSO a human rights mandate.

31. In the case of the long-standing struggle of the Palestinian people against Israeli occupation and callous brutality, lasting peace in the Middle East could be achieved only through a two-State solution based on the June 1967 borders. Any other measures to change demographic realities through settlements or use of force would only prolong the conflict and the suffering of the Palestinians. The struggle of all Non-Self-Governing Territories was a common struggle, and their victory would be a victory for humanity.

32. **Mr. Al-Zayani** (Bahrain) said that since its inception the United Nations had fought unrelentingly

for the independence of colonial countries and peoples and for the recognition of their inalienable rights. In that process, the Special Committee on decolonization had played an acknowledged part. Highlighting the importance of the Declaration on decolonization, which set out the basic principles in the matter and had given renewed impetus to United Nations action, he reviewed the programmes, plans of action, resolutions and declarations the Organization had adopted over the years to achieve the objectives of the Declaration. His Government supported the efforts made by the United Nations and the Kingdom of Morocco to address the situation in Western Sahara.

33. As the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism progressed, it offered an opportunity to reflect on the thrust of international provisions aimed at the speedy eradication of colonialism in all its forms, while safeguarding the interests of all nations and taking into account the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on decolonization. As stipulated by the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, for instance, States must work both individually and collectively to put an end to colonialism as well as apartheid and racial discrimination.

34. **Ms. Bibalou** (Gabon) said that despite significant progress in decolonization, particularly in Africa, her country was concerned about the fate of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Organization must increase its efforts to provide information and training to those Territories to boost their economic and social advancement, and the administering Powers must take the necessary measures to decolonize the Territories under their control, with due regard for the specific characteristics of each case.

35. Her Government supported the efforts undertaken exclusively under the auspices of the United Nations to reach a lasting and mutually acceptable settlement of the regional dispute over Western Sahara, pursuant to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council. It welcomed the tireless endeavours of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to reach a trust-based political solution to the dispute, but a more dynamic approach to the negotiations was needed because the conflict risked exacerbating other security problems in the region, notably those relating to Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram. His delegation therefore supported Morocco's

autonomy proposal which, as acknowledged by the Secretary-General in 2007, stood a credible chance of breaking the current deadlock and reaching a lasting agreement. Gabon also welcomed the measures Morocco was taking to improve the observance of human rights and the humanitarian, political, and economic situation in the Sahara region.

36. All the parties to the conflict should take part in substantive negotiations in a spirit of genuine compromise. Furthermore, the countries of the entire region should work together to promote stability, security and social and economic progress, thus countering terrorist activities in the Sahel-Sahara region.

37. **Mr. Beck** (Solomon Islands) said that all parties, including the administering Powers, the Special Committee on decolonization and any interested regional and subregional bodies, must cooperate to achieve decolonization. His country, as part of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, was closely following developments in New Caledonia and shared the concerns of the Special Committee's recent visiting mission to the Territory relating to the still-disputed electoral arrangements for the eventual referendum. At its 3rd meeting, the Committee had heard the representative of the Front de libération nationale kanak et socialiste (FLNKS) call for United Nations mediation between his Territorial Government and the administering Power to get the voter-eligibility rules right, as agreed by all parties to the Noumea Accord. To ensure that the referendum would be carried out in full compliance with General Assembly resolutions and with the Accord, the Special Committee must be involved in the mediation; and it should be empowered to be more active in settling issues unresolved for decades, if need be by modifying the draft resolution on New Caledonia.

38. His Government supported the inalienable right of the people of French Polynesia to self-determination and hoped that the Special Committee would soon visit that Territory with the consent of the administering Power. Regrettably, France had failed to transmit information from French Polynesia under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Another matter of particular concern was the inexplicably late publication by the Secretariat of a report on the implications of nuclear testing in the Territory, which had prevented the Special Committee from studying it; moreover, the report in question had failed to take into account the most up-to-date scientific findings available on the subject.

39. There was a human element to the Committee's work, and its members had a responsibility to do more for the people of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

40. **Mr. Emvula** (Namibia) said that the Kingdom of Morocco, an African country, must end its contemptible subjugation of the people of Western Sahara and exploitation of the Territory's natural resources. The United Nations must focus its attention on the forgotten plight of the people. A way must be found to monitor the human rights violations so broadly documented by the United Nations itself and by other governmental and non-governmental sources, none of which had access to the occupied Territory. His delegation rejected all attempts by Morocco to associate the struggle for self-determination of the Sahrawi people or their Frente Polisario leaders with terrorist organizations.

41. Namibia called on the international community to exert political and diplomatic pressure on the Moroccan Government, which had long frustrated efforts to implement the United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara, to comply with United Nations resolutions and allow the people of Western Sahara to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination by holding an immediate referendum. Morocco must also be made to cooperate with the United Nations-mandated entities in the Territory.

42. While urgently addressing the plight also of the Sahrawis living in refugee camps, the United Nations had a responsibility to lead the way in helping the people of Western Sahara to attain their independence. In order to bring to an end that sad chapter in African history, his Government called on the Security Council to include a human rights component in the mandate of MINURSO, and encouraged the United Nations to cooperate with the recently appointed African Union Special Envoy to Western Sahara. Namibia stood in solidarity with the Sahrawi people under the leadership of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and condemned all forms of colonialism.

43. **Ms. Ally** (Guyana) said that the established right of peoples to self-determination, freedom and sovereignty must be respected in accordance with international law and emphasized the need bring a speedy and unconditional end to colonialism. Since the establishment of the United Nations, over 850 former colonies, including her country, had gained independence from colonial rule. Notwithstanding,

much remained to be done to complete the decolonization process, particularly in view of the recent re-listing of French Polynesia as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. Efforts must be redoubled to help the Territories to achieve self-determination, through dialogue between the administering Powers, the Special Committee on decolonization and the peoples themselves.

44. At recent meetings, the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), always at the forefront of the decolonization struggle, had expressed grave concern over the political situation in the Turks and Caicos Islands, one of a number of remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in her region, and had declared their support for the full restoration of democracy in the Territory on terms driven by the people. CARICOM had submitted a mission report on that matter to the United Kingdom and was awaiting its response.

45. As the last remaining colony in Africa, Western Sahara deserved particular attention. Her delegation supported the long-recognized right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination and independence and commended the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution based on self-determination. She encouraged the parties to work towards a solution within the framework of the United Nations, and endorsed the consultations of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy with the parties and neighbouring States. Her Government had an unwavering commitment to the right to self-governance and urged an end to all forms of colonialism.

46. **Ms. Richards** (Jamaica) said that the international community should not be complacent on the issue of decolonisation, given that 17 peoples remained unable to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. The administering Powers must facilitate the decolonization of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, taking into account their specific situations, and the United Nations must ensure that consistent progress was made towards the total elimination of colonialism worldwide. The Plan of Implementation of the Decolonization Mandate 2006-2007 should be reviewed and a Special Rapporteur on decolonization appointed. His delegation appreciated the work of United Nations bodies in providing capacity-building and other support to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. It commended the efforts of the Secretary-

General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara to achieve self-determination for the people of that Territory and called for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. A referendum was crucial to allow the people of Western Sahara to exercise full control over the Territory, and it would pave the way for a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution.

47. Jamaica would continue to monitor the worrying political crisis in the Turks and Caicos Islands. It welcomed the establishment by the Territory of a committee to review its constitutional order and make recommendations to the Administering Power for internal reforms. The people of the Turks and Caicos Islands must be allowed to decide their own future if they were to achieve democracy and economic stability. Renewed commitment was needed to help all the Non-Self-Governing Territories to attain self-determination and self-government.

48. **Ms. Lois Young** (Belize), recognizing the pivotal importance of the Special Committee on decolonization and the vital support provided by United Nations specialized agencies, said that despite the commendable work done by the United Nations to achieve decolonization, including in her own country, it must accelerate efforts to raise public awareness of the challenges of self-determination in a global context and more actively review the workings of the decolonization mechanisms. The Fourth Committee must focus on breaking down colonial structures and eliminating suppression and discrimination. It was unacceptable for the same resolutions to be adopted every year with little or no follow-up; instead, ways should be found to implement them in accordance with the aspirations of the aggrieved groups. Belize supported the appointment of a Special Rapporteur for decolonization and the revitalization of the initiatives outlined in the Plan of Implementation of the Decolonization Mandate 2006-2007, and it acknowledged the work done by the Secretary-General's personal or special envoys to settle conflicts.

49. The Sahrawi people must be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination in a free, fair and democratic manner. Continued efforts must also be made to ensure that the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands participated in the efforts to secure their economic and political future. In addition, a definitive solution must be reached to the conflict over the



Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands.

50. Considering that the principle of self-determination was pivotal to the promotion of a peaceful, stable and humane world, her Government supported international efforts to bring about the complete and speedy eradication of colonialism by 2020.

*The meeting was suspended at 12.15 p.m. and resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

51. **Mr. Ferreira** (Cabo Verde) said that his Government supported the ongoing efforts under United Nations auspices to achieve a negotiated and mutually acceptable solution, based on realism and a spirit of compromise, to the dispute over Western Sahara, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2152 (2014) and other relevant resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly. A combination of political will, steadfast commitment and willingness to compromise would be necessary to solve the dispute. His delegation supported the efforts of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to Western Sahara to find a compromise solution.

52. The situation in the Sahel region remained a source of great concern for neighbouring States already faced with various terrorist and separatist threats. A political solution to the long-standing dispute in Western Sahara, in addition to enhanced cooperation between Member States of the Arab Maghreb Union, would contribute to stability and security in the Sahel.

53. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that efforts must be redoubled to implement General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and bring an end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. In that connection, the new dynamism in the Special Committee on decolonization had led it to adopt various worthwhile initiatives.

54. The Argentine Republic unquestionably held legitimate sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which had been usurped by force by the United Kingdom in 1833. Argentina had never ceased to denounce that action, and it was unacceptable that the United Kingdom should continue to ignore repeated calls by the entire international community — in United Nations resolutions as well as in multilateral and regional

forums — to resume negotiations with Argentina, which had consistently reaffirmed its willingness to negotiate a peaceful and lasting settlement that would end the military occupation of its national territory by the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom should show the same goodwill.

55. The people of the Malvinas Islands were not a subjugated, exploited population but were citizens of Great Britain, one of the parties to the dispute; the General Assembly had therefore recognized that the issue was a special and particular one to which the principle of self-determination did not apply. Despite repeated objections by his Government and many others in various international forums, the United Kingdom continued to explore and exploit the natural resources in the occupied area, thus unilaterally modifying its situation, in contravention of General Assembly resolution 31/49. The United Kingdom's growing militarization of the Islands, moreover, went in flagrant opposition to the wishes of his region, which had been declared a zone of peace by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. He called on the United Kingdom to reach a peaceful solution to the dispute under the terms defined by the General Assembly and the Special Committee on decolonization.

56. Puerto Rico, a colonized Caribbean nation, should be enabled to take sovereign decisions to address its urgent social and economic needs. Over 33 resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee had reaffirmed the inalienable right of its people to self-determination and independence. The Fourth Committee and the General Assembly should carefully examine the colonial situation in Puerto Rico and the colonial Power must allow the Territory's 8 million inhabitants to fully exercise their right to self-determination as a matter of urgency, especially given the recent economic and financial crisis there.

57. The Puerto Rican people supported the release of Oscar López Rivera, a Puerto Rican political prisoner who had been in jail in the United States for over 33 years, as demonstrated by a recent visit paid to him by the Governor of Puerto Rico. The United States must respond to international humanitarian demands and release him immediately and unconditionally.

58. It was unacceptable that the people of Western Sahara as well remained unable to exercise their right to self-determination and independence, despite

repeated calls by the international community for over 40 years; a solution to the situation was long overdue. His delegation commended the appointment by the African Union of a Special Envoy for Western Sahara, as befitted the important role it had played in the Territory. Nicaragua remained committed to the Sahrawi people's struggle for independence and hoped that the negotiations between the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Morocco would be restarted without preconditions to enable the people to exercise their right to self-determination.

59. By the end of the Third International Decade for the Elimination of Colonialism, all Non-Self-Governing peoples and Territories must be granted self-determination and independence so that they could join the community of nations and thus fully participate in global efforts to tackle the scourges besetting humanity.

60. **Mr. Arancibia Fernández** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that confrontation was not the way to solve disputes and urged colonial Powers to put an end to their archaic domination by immediately initiating action to fully eliminate colonialism in line with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and other pronouncements on decolonization. The work of the Committee would not be finished until just and lasting solutions were found to the situations of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories.

61. His Government supported the sovereignty of Puerto Rico, especially in view of the ongoing economic crisis in the Territory. The United States must take action as soon as possible to allow the Puerto Rican people to exercise their right to self-determination. His Government further demanded the immediate release of Oscar López Rivera, a Puerto Rican political prisoner who had spent over 33 years in jail in the United States without any of proof of his alleged crimes.

62. There must also be a negotiated settlement to the special and particular colonial situation in the Malvinas Islands, where Argentina's sovereignty was being challenged. His delegation condemned the United Kingdom's failure to comply with over 40 United Nations resolutions on the matter and expressed concern over its unilateral exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of the occupied area, which were despoiling the South Atlantic. Such actions were in violation of international law and of an express

prohibition by the General Assembly, and had been explicitly condemned in several international forums.

63. His Government denounced the increasing militarization of the South Atlantic by the United Kingdom, which had deployed warships and warplanes in the area and launched missiles from the Malvinas Islands, a matter of international concern. His nation, together with many other States, called on the United Kingdom to engage in bilateral talks with Argentina, rather than continuing to serve its own neocolonial economic interests, in order to resolve the dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

64. **Mr. Gumende** (Mozambique) said that self-determination was an inalienable right that should not be questioned by any foreign Power, and it was shameful that the colonization of Non-Self-Governing Territories persisted in the twenty-first century. His country, itself a former colony, deplored the continued occupation of Western Sahara for so many years. It was unfortunate that the tireless efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and others to facilitate a settlement between the Frente Polisario and the Kingdom of Morocco enabling the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination and independence had thus far been unsuccessful. A free, fair and democratic referendum must be held in Western Sahara, under the supervision of the United Nations and the African Union, to foster long-term peace and stability not only in that Territory but also in the region and the world. The Security Council and the General Assembly, taking responsibility for implementing their resolutions relating to self-determination and the right to freedom, must support the African Union and its Special Envoy to Western Sahara.

65. No occupying Power could indefinitely hold a people hostage; the solution to such crises must always be found through dialogue and a spirit of openness.

*The meeting rose at 1.03 p.m.*