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SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Pacific Regional Seminar on the implementation of the Second
International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:
Initiation for the remainder of the Decade

Bandung, Indonesia
14 to 16 May 2008

STATEMENT

BY

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF NEW ZEALAND

INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

ADMINISTRATOR OF TOKELAU

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STATEMENT AT THE PACIFIC REGIONAL SEMINAR

OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DECOLONIZATION

*"Implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of
Colonialism: priorities for remainder of the Decade"*

Bandung, Indonesia: 14-16 May 2008

In my capacity as Administrator of Tokelau, I am grateful for the opportunity to make this statement to your Committee. In person, I hope that you will understand that other demands, in significant part relating to my ongoing programme in Tokelau, have prevented this from being possible. I wish all participants in this Seminar success as you address the challenges associated with colonialism and the central issue of self-determination.

Tokelau remains an active issue on the agenda of the Special Committee and New Zealand, as administering power for Tokelau, remains pleased to cooperate closely with the Committee to ensure that its commitment to Tokelau and to the principle of self-determination is well understood. This past year has been a busy one for Tokelau. In their first hold-on act of self-determination in February 2006, the people of Tokelau, through a decision of their General Fono, participated in a second self-determination act in October last year. The outcome of that event is well known to members of the Special Committee and the wider international community, thanks in no small part to the excellent

work of the Special Committee.

1965 and Niue in 1974. I do wish however to place on record my assessment that the preparation of the Tokelau electorate for this referendum by the prepared to take an informed decision than the people of the three atolls of Tokelau. It is also very important to record here that this preparatory process was process but throughout it remained a Tokelau-led process.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express New Zealand's appreciation for the determination. The presence during the referendum of Ambassador Aisi of Papua New Guinea, together with representatives of the UN Secretariat, demonstrated the ongoing commitment of the wider international community to the principle of self-determination.

I have stressed that the decision to hold a second referendum and the conduct of it was a Tokelau-driven process. I also wish to make clear that in the aftermath of referendum Tokelau's leaders set the tone and direction of referendum was announced in Atafu on 24 October, the Ulu of Tokelau spoke by telephone with the New Zealand Prime Minister, Prime Minister Helen Clark, and also to the Ulu that New Zealand would fully respect the Referendum result. She also invited Tokelau's leaders to visit Wellington after the January 2002 result, so that New Zealand and Tokelau together could look at the path ahead for Tokelau.

In February that visit took place, it provided an opportunity for an open and discussion about why a significant minority within the Tokelau electorate remains unconvinced that a change of status to one of self-government was appropriate at this time. It also provided a helpful opportunity for both parties to look at how the ongoing needs of the people of Tokelau's atolls can best be met. The outcome of these discussions was agreement that while self-determination remains an important facet of Tokelau's aspirations, in the coming years increased attention should be devoted to improving the living standards of the people. It was agreed that particular attention would be given to upgrading and strengthening infrastructure and services in the key sectors of health, education and administration. There was also agreement that work to deliver to Tokelau an assured, quality long-term shipping service should continue and be enhanced.

The months since that meeting in February have seen major progress in a number of key areas. A major multi-million dollar infrastructure programme, spanning several years and geared to ensuring maximum involvement by each atoll's population, is well under way. Its first

decisions are expected next month on the specific vessel that will service Tokelau's needs in the coming 25 years. Much is being done to ensure that the people of Tokelau who choose to remain on their home atolls have a quality of sustainable communities on each of the three atolls.

any provision of this information because this is information that is not to be made available to the public. It is the policy of the Government of New Zealand to ensure that information of this kind is not made available to the public.

Tokelau to decide their future path and direction but also to ensuring that, whatever Tokelau's status, meeting the needs of the people on those distant atolls remains of paramount importance to New Zealand.

These are challenging times for many countries, not least the small island and vulnerable. We know that change is afoot in the world, and that change is impacting on the lives and wellbeing of an increasing number of people. Costs of basic needs such as food and energy are rising. Tokelau is no exception and, unlike some, it has few, if any, options to reduce the growing economic pressures it is facing. In such circumstances it is vital that the international community does

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remain to the unique circumstances of the many group of people, living such an exposed, vulnerable existence in the midst of the vastness of the Pacific Ocean.

New Zealand is committed to standing with Tokelau and its people. They may be very small in number, their atolls may be tiny and isolated but their expectations and needs are as relevant as any others. It is my hope that this Seminar will find it possible to look at Tokelau not only as a non self-governing territory whose people deserve the right to self-determination but also as a living, dynamic community that has far wider hopes and expectations.