

**General Assembly
75th session
Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee)**

**Statement by H.E. Ms. Keisha McGuire
Chair of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the
Implementation of the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to
Colonial Countries and Peoples**

New York, 9 October 2020

Mr. Chairperson,

- At the outset, I would like to extend to you, as well as the other members of the Bureau, my sincere congratulations on the assumption of your duties. I shall like to express our full confidence that under your able stewardship the work of the Committee will be productive and successful.
- It is indeed a great honour to me, as Chair of the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24), to have this opportunity to address the Fourth Committee on the subject of decolonization.

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,

- Seventy-five years after its founding, the United Nations continues to have a unique and pivotal role in decolonization. The progress made in the field of decolonization since the founding of the organization, encourages us to continue, with renewed commitment, the work to achieve the complete eradication of colonialism in line with the guiding principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions.
- In light of the unprecedented situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the C-24, as did other organs of the Organization, adapted its work methods pursuant to relevant decisions of the General Assembly. The Rapporteur of the C-24 has just traced the course of the adoption of the C-24 report as well as its content.

- In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the C-24 for their support, cooperation and spirit of consensus that, in line with its longstanding tradition, prevailed throughout the 2020 session.
- The Special Committee, in an effort to improve its working methods, had adjusted its 2020 programme of work to hear the Territories first and then to review the related resolutions. Unfortunately, given the extraordinary circumstances created by the pandemic, the C-24 was not able to carry out all its activities envisaged in its 2020 session, in particular, unable to hear first-hand the voice of the Territories under its purview.
- This situation, however, has not diminished in any way the commitment and resolve of the C-24 in the fulfillment of its mandate.
- We must insist that the already special challenges facing the Territories, compounded by the multifaceted impact of the COVID-19 crisis on their fragile economies, reinforce the need to ensure that no one is left behind. Our thoughts and solidarity are with all those affected by the pandemic in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Mr. Chairperson,

- We note with satisfaction the conduct of the second self-determination referendum in New Caledonia on 4 October 2020, in accordance with the 1998 Nouméa Accord. The Special Committee is committed to continuing to support the Nouméa Accord process in order to help the people of New Caledonia exercise their right to self-determination in accordance with the Charter and relevant resolutions.
- In fulfillment of its mandate, in December 2019, the C-24 dispatched a visiting mission to Montserrat that included also meetings in Antigua and Barbuda. Allow me to take this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation to the United Kingdom and the people and Government of Montserrat for the cooperation and assistance extended to the mission. Our gratitude goes also to the Government of Antigua and Barbuda for the assistance and courtesy extended. The mission's conclusions and recommendations, as contained in the report of the mission, document A/AC.109/2020/20 issued on 11 February 2020, have informed the draft resolution on Montserrat included in the report before you.

- I would like to highlight that this year the C-24 continued to engage with the administering Powers and relevant stakeholders through annual informal dialogues on the Territories under our purview. The C-24 attaches great importance to reinforcing dialogue and cooperation with all concerned.
- As you are aware, the Economic and Social Council was unable to take action at its 2020 session on the draft resolution regarding the support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations. Subsequently, at the first in-person meeting of the 2021 session, held on 14 September 2020, the Council adopted the draft resubmitted under the same agenda item. I would like to thank the Council for its cooperation and support.

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,

- As the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism draws to an end, the whole membership of the United Nations must remain committed to bringing about the complete eradication of colonialism as a matter of urgency.
- As noted by the Secretary-General in his report on the Third Decade (A/75/220/Rev.1), “upholding the collective duty to enable the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to exercise their right to self-determination, according to their particular circumstances, requires strengthening action-oriented dialogue and identifying concrete and implementable steps to generate further momentum in the implementation of the decolonization mandate”.
- It bears repeating, the implementation of the United Nation’s decolonization mandate requires a collaborative effort by the international community, the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories.
- The C-24, mandated to promote the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples as well as all other relevant resolutions, reaffirms its readiness to engage all interested parties to help advance the decolonization agenda on a case-by-case basis.
- As I stated at the opening session of the C-24 on 21 February, by strengthening dialogue and cooperation among all stakeholders, in particular between the

Territories and the administering Powers, and by continuing to devise creative and practical proposals, the C-24 could achieve concrete outcomes.

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,

- In closing, I should like to encourage the Fourth Committee to make every effort to help assert the United Nations' decolonization mandate and advance the decolonization process. I also urge the members of the Fourth Committee to consider positively the recommendations submitted by the C-24.
- Let me also take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Decolonization Unit in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), the Secretary of the C-24 and his team in the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM), as well as various offices in the Department of Global Communications (DGC) for their invaluable contribution, dedication and commitment to support the implementation of this Organization's decolonization mandate.

I thank you.