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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

### Tokelau

#### Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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*Note:* The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 9 December 2019. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from <https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers>.



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### **The Territory at a glance**

*Territory:* Tokelau is a Non-Self-Governing Territory, as defined under the Charter of the United Nations, administered by New Zealand.

*Representative of administering Power:* Administrator Ross Ardern

*Geography:* Tokelau comprises three small atolls: Atafu, Fakaofu and Nukunonu. Each atoll comprises strips of land up to 200 m wide and not more than 5 m above sea level. Samoa, located 480 km to the south, is the nearest sizeable neighbour and the principal point of contact for Tokelau with the outside world. Access is possible only by ship, with an average of 30 hours' sailing from Samoa. There is no air service.

*Land area:* 12.2 km<sup>2</sup>

*Exclusive economic zone:* 318,990 km<sup>2</sup>

*Population:* 1,499 (October 2016 census), distributed as follows: Atafu: 519; Fakaofu: 448; Nukunonu: 448; and Samoa: 48 (Tokelau Public Service employees and their immediate families). There are 7,176 Tokelauans living in New Zealand (2013 census). As New Zealand citizens, Tokelauans may also reside in Australia.

*Life expectancy at birth:* 69.1 years (women: 70.4 years; men: 67.8 years (2010–2015 estimates))

*Ethnic composition:* Tokelauans are Polynesians with linguistic, familial and cultural links with Samoa.

*Languages:* Tokelauan. English and Samoan are also widely used.

*Capital:* None. Each atoll has its own administrative centre.

*Head of territorial Government:* Ulu-o-Tokelau. The position of titular head of Tokelau rotates annually among the *faipule* of the atolls.

*Main political parties:* None

*Elections:* Held in January every third year. The most recent election was held on 23 January 2020.

*Legislature:* The unicameral General Fono

*Economy:* The principal sources of revenue are fees from fisheries licences and assistance provided by New Zealand through budget support and project funding.

*Monetary unit:* New Zealand dollar (\$NZ)

*Gross domestic product per capita:* \$US 6,275 (2015/16 financial year, Tokelau National Statistics Office)

*Brief history:* Originally inhabited by Polynesians from surrounding islands, Tokelau became a British protectorate in 1889, and administration was transferred to New Zealand in 1925. By the Tokelau Act 1948, sovereignty over Tokelau was transferred to New Zealand.

## I. Constitutional and political developments

### A. Local self-governance

1. As previously reported, the current process of constitutional development stems from the 1998 decision of the General Fono (the national representative body) to endorse a comprehensive report entitled “Modern house of Tokelau”, which addressed the core issue that faced Tokelau in creating a constitutional framework that suited an atoll- or village-based self-governing community that respected traditional decision-making customs.

2. In accordance with the terms of that report, General Fono delegates are now elected on the basis of proportional village representation, with a system of universal village suffrage, rather than one of equal village representation with delegates appointed by the respective *taupulega* (village councils), as was previously the case. In 2017, 21 delegates were elected to the General Fono: seven from each of the three villages, including one representative of each village’s *fatupaepae* (women’s committee). In 2004, further decisions were made on the method of appointment of the Chair of the General Fono and on the role and responsibilities of the six-person Council for the Ongoing Government, which is the executive Government when the General Fono is not in session. The Council consists of three *faipule* (representatives of each village) and one General Fono delegate from each village, designated by the *taupulega*. The position of Ulu-o-Tokelau, or Head of Government, rotates annually among the three *faipule*. In March 2019, the *faipule* of Atafu took over as Ulu-o-Tokelau. In March 2020, the *faipule* of Fakaofu is expected to rotate into the position. In the elections held on 23 January 2020, 22 General Fono delegates, including four women, were elected for the next parliamentary term of 2020–2022.

3. In 2004, the three village councils took full responsibility for all village public services. That decision emanated from the “Modern house of Tokelau” approach, whereby the traditional Council of Elders on each atoll serves as the foundation for any future governance structure. Under that arrangement, the councils delegate authority to the General Fono for activities that need to be handled at the national level (see [A/AC.109/2005/3](#)).

4. The New Zealand official with the principal responsibility for maintaining the relationship with Tokelau is the Administrator of Tokelau, who is appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand. The current Administrator is Ross Ardern, who was formerly the High Commissioner to Niue and assumed the role of Administrator in May 2018. The Office of the Administrator draws on advice and support from the Ministry, including the Pacific Development Group.

### B. Referendum process

5. In 2003, the General Fono took a formal decision, with the support of all three village councils, to endorse self-government in free association with New Zealand as the choice to be actively explored with the Government of New Zealand. In August 2005, the General Fono approved a draft constitution, as the basis for the proposed act of self-determination, and the text of a draft treaty of free association. In November 2005, the Cabinet of New Zealand gave its formal approval. The referendum package, consisting of the draft treaty and the draft constitution, was to form the basis of the referendum on self-determination. In line with a decision by the General Fono, an overall majority of two thirds of the valid votes cast was required for a change to the status of Tokelau.

6. The first referendum on self-determination was held sequentially in Apia and on the three atolls from 11 to 15 February 2006 (see [A/AC.109/2006/20](#)). The outcome fell short of the required two-thirds majority, with 60 per cent of valid Tokelauan votes cast in favour of self-government in free association with New Zealand. The United Nations, which formally monitored the referendum, deemed the process credible and reflective of the will of the people of Tokelau. A representative of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, accompanied by a Political Affairs Officer of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, also observed the referendum process.

7. In August 2006, the General Fono voted to hold a second referendum on Tokelauan self-determination in late 2007. The proposed constitution and the draft treaty, commonly referred to as the self-determination package, were to be the same, and the legal threshold for acceptance of the proposal would remain at a two-thirds majority.

8. The second referendum was held from 20 to 24 October 2007. The result, with 64.4 per cent in favour, was again below the two-thirds threshold, thereby leaving the status of the Territory unchanged (see [A/AC.109/2007/19](#)). As with the first referendum, the United Nations formally monitored the voting, with representatives of the Special Committee and the Department of Political Affairs present as observers.

9. Following the results of the second referendum, the General Fono requested the Government of New Zealand to keep the entire self-determination package on the table. The Council for the Ongoing Government noted that Tokelau could in the future change the two-thirds majority threshold for the referendum but should put in place measures to ensure that a threshold would be supported by a clear majority in each village, to guarantee unity. The Council also noted the Territory's strong commitment to self-determination and its wish to have a constitution, albeit one that did not encompass the provisions for free association and self-government.

10. The outcomes of the referendums, neither of which reached the threshold of support set by the General Fono for a change of status, have been acknowledged and accepted by New Zealand. As a follow-up to the result of the referendum held in 2007, the then Prime Minister of New Zealand met the leaders of Tokelau in February 2008 to discuss the next steps in the development of the New Zealand-Tokelau relationship. It was agreed that a "pause" should be taken in the self-determination efforts of Tokelau and that, in the meantime, Tokelau would focus on meeting its basic needs. That remains the situation.

## **II. Economic conditions**

### **A. General economic overview**

11. Tokelau faces major constraints to its economic growth, including such natural disadvantages as small size, isolation, distances between the atolls, lack of natural resources and natural disasters. The economic stability of the Territory has been made possible by the high levels of assistance provided by the administering Power until the recent significant increases in revenue from fisheries licences. With the continued assistance of New Zealand, the Council for the Ongoing Government has maintained a focus on improving the delivery of core public services, such as education and health; completing key infrastructure projects, such as renewable energy, telecommunications and transport; adapting to climate change; and strengthening the Council and the Tokelau Public Service.

12. As part of a new fisheries policy aimed at maximizing the economic benefits from the sustainable use of its exclusive economic zone, Tokelau joined the Vessel Day Scheme in 2012. This mechanism allows vessel owners to purchase and trade days fishing at sea in places subject to the Nauru Agreement concerning Cooperation in the Management of Fisheries of Common Interest. The scheme is used to sustainably manage catches of target tuna species and increase the rate of return from fishing activities through access fees paid by distant water fishing nations. In October 2015, the General Fono approved fisheries reforms intended to further improve the administration and management of the Territory's offshore and inshore fisheries. The implementation of the reform programme continues and is guided by a fisheries reform steering group comprising representatives of Tokelau, the Office of the Administrator and the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries, which provides technical advice to the Administrator and the Tokelau Fisheries Management Agency.

13. Traditional and communal values and practices play a key role in contributing to a state of general well-being in the Territory, as evidenced by the *inati* system and the importance attached to upholding the concepts of family and/or extended family. The tradition of *inati* requires the deposit at a central location of food and produce, which are then apportioned by the distributors on the basis of "share groups". The principle provides for a secure distribution system that addresses the needs of every member of the community, including older persons, widows, single parents and children.

14. The first economic summit for Tokelau, organized by the Department of Economic Development, Natural Resources and Environment of the Government of Tokelau, was held in April 2018 under the theme "Small is sustainable".

## **B. Assistance to Tokelau by the administering Power**

15. Customized assistance is provided through budget support, projects and regional programmes. In 2018/19, New Zealand spent \$NZ 26 million on development assistance to Tokelau, including \$NZ 12.5 million in general budget support. Forecast expenditure for 2019/20 is \$NZ 42 million because of major infrastructure projects, including the submarine Internet cable, the four wharves and work on further strengthening governance and management of fisheries, human resources and financial management, new climate change adaptation initiatives and a wide range of other activities in Tokelau.

16. The Tokelau International Trust Fund, formally established in November 2004, was designed to provide intergenerational security and an independent source of income to Tokelau in the future. Its balance as at 30 June 2018 was \$NZ 90.3 million.

## **C. Transport and communications**

17. Transportation needs in Tokelau are met by regular passenger and cargo shipping services from Apia. In 2016, the Government of New Zealand gave Tokelau the *Mataliki*, a purpose-built vessel that carries up to 60 passengers and essential cargo on international voyages. Transportation links were further improved in 2018 with the launch of the *Kalopaga* in March. This cargo vessel, which can carry eight passengers, was funded and procured by Tokelau. In late 2018 New Zealand gave Tokelau a search and rescue vessel, *Fetu o te Moana*, which also provides general transportation between the atolls. With the completion of all four wharves and reef passages in 2019, shipping services to Tokelau have been substantially upgraded.

18. During her visit to Tokelau in July 2019, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, indicated that New Zealand was committed to working in partnership with Tokelau on the development of air services to the territory. This was on the conditions that Tokelau decide on which one of the three atolls the runway should be constructed; that it would be a joint project with co-financing from Tokelau; that a suitable site on the atoll could be found; and that the engineering and financial assessments proved viable. In October 2019, the General Fono decided that the atoll of Nukunonu would host the Territory's first runway with the specific location subject to engineering assessments.

19. Telecommunications services in Tokelau are provided by the Tokelau Telecommunications Corporation (Teletok). The investment in connecting Tokelau to an undersea Internet cable was confirmed in 2019 and the cable is now being manufactured. New Zealand is contributing \$NZ 22.2 million and the Government of Tokelau is contributing \$NZ 7 million towards the total estimated cost of \$NZ 29.2 million. The undersea Internet cable will provide high-speed Internet service, enabling better communication, administration, governance and improved health and education services.

#### **D. Power supply**

20. As a Pacific island affected by climate change, Tokelau has made a commitment to renewable energy that can be considered an example for others. In 2012, Tokelau became the first area in the world to draw electrical power primarily from solar sources, following the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project, funded by the Governments of Tokelau and New Zealand. The initiative involved the installation of solar photovoltaic systems on the three atolls.

21. The demand for electricity has grown significantly since 2012. As a result, in 2016 the Government of Tokelau funded a small expansion of photovoltaic systems and upgrades of the village distribution networks. However, demand has continued to outstrip supply. In 2019, New Zealand committed \$NZ 6 million to an expansion and renewal of Tokelau renewable energy facilities which will generate electricity for the villages, and the villages and the Government of Tokelau will contribute \$NZ 3 million. The installation of proven new technology that would ensure that Tokelau generates 90 per cent of its electricity from renewable energy for at least 10 years is expected to be completed in 2020.

### **III. Social conditions**

#### **A. General**

22. On 18 October 2016, Statistics New Zealand and the Tokelau National Statistics Office conducted a census, which is carried out every five years. The official de jure usually resident population of Tokelau was 1,499, comprising the usually resident population present on the date of the census (1,197) and the usually resident subgroup of the population absent on that date (302). The overall figure represents an increase of 6.2 per cent from the previous census, conducted in 2011.

23. The first household income and expenditure survey was also completed in 2016. This survey estimated total annual household income at \$NZ 7 million, with employment accounting for 77.2 per cent, imputed rents for 10 per cent, income from transfers (including remittances, social benefits, pensions and scholarships) for 7 per cent and gifts (in kind and remittances) for 5.1 per cent. The survey estimated an average household size of 4.6 people and annual per capita income of \$NZ 6,100.

Some 40 per cent of the population of Tokelau is less than 20 years of age, with a median age of 25 years.

## **B. Education**

24. In Tokelau, early childhood, primary and secondary education is free up to year 13 and provided by three schools, one on each atoll. As an owner of the University of the South Pacific, Tokelau has access to the University's distance-learning foundation course through the University's satellite receiver and centre on each atoll. The cost of the University's local infrastructure and staff is covered by the Government of Tokelau.

25. With a significant financial commitment from New Zealand, Tokelau carried out a five-year plan to transform compulsory education, focused on primary and early childhood education, with the assistance of the Centre for Educational Development of Massey University. The Education Review Office of New Zealand visited the three villages of Tokelau in March 2018 to assess progress and consult the village councils and education committees about priorities for the coming years. The 2018 review found that the quality of early childhood and primary education had improved since the 2013 review. However, much remains to be done and particular attention needs to be given to improving the breadth and quality of secondary education which currently does not provide alternative training opportunities for students who do not want to pursue an academic pathway or who have not achieved success at school.

26. In early 2019 New Zealand supported the employment of a Tokelau Director of Education who has led the Department in effective consultations with the villages in preparation for a very successful education summit that took place in September 2019. The summit was well attended by representatives of New Zealand education agencies. In October 2019, the General Fono approved the development of formal connections between the education systems of Tokelau and New Zealand. This is a dramatic shift in the strategic direction Tokelau has taken for its education system, which will help raise the quality of secondary education in particular.

## **C. Health care**

27. The independent review of clinical health services in Tokelau and the Tokelau patient referral scheme was completed in 2019 and provided many recommendations for improving health services. The review found that while Tokelau has a financially well-resourced health system, there are substantive areas of dysfunction. It noted that strained relationships can obstruct effective delivery of health services and national coordination. For example, Nukunonu hospital has been designated as a referral hospital and the development of this hospital has been pursued by the Department of Health, which is based on Nukunonu. The review found that substandard health-care provision and a lack of trust in local clinical services in Tokelau contribute to an increased uptake of the patient referral scheme. This, along with policy and process issues, contributes to the scheme's unsustainable financial burden.

28. New Zealand is developing a package of assistance to strengthen the health system in Tokelau. This initiative will complement ongoing support to Tokelau by regional and international organizations which the Government of New Zealand supports. It will enable Tokelau to procure essential diagnostic equipment and provide an adviser to assist the Tokelau health sector to implement review recommendations that are approved by the General Fono.

29. Tokelau has low infant and maternal mortality, thanks to the early referral of mothers for maternity care. Antenatal care coverage and coverage for child immunization is 100 per cent. Tokelau also has very high rates of immunization. It has been vigilant in protecting its small population from the measles outbreak in the region, through travel restrictions and other measures.

#### **IV. Environment**

30. Tokelau is particularly susceptible to climate change impacts such as sea level rise, extreme climate events and related hazards. In July 2016, the General Fono included climate change among its national priorities under the Tokelau development framework for 2016–2020. In April 2017, Tokelau officially launched its climate change strategy, entitled “Living with change: an integrated national strategy for enhancing the resilience of Tokelau to climate change and related hazards, 2017–2030”. The strategy identifies three interrelated strategic investment pathways: mitigation (decarbonization development), adaptation (stronger integrated risk reduction and adaptation to enhance resilience in the face of climate change and disasters) and human development (capacity-building, education, training, public awareness and outreach). The corresponding implementation plan, which was also launched in April 2017, provides an overview for the first five years of the strategy, from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2022.

31. New Zealand has recognized its unique obligation to Tokelau to assist with climate change adaptation efforts because as territory of New Zealand, Tokelau cannot access global climate change funds. In 2019, New Zealand contracted environmental engineering experts to prepare a coastal hazards study. They are currently working on an implementation plan for improving coastal resilience. They also developed concept designs for multipurpose evacuation centres after a final workshop with Tokelau village representatives agreed that “no regrets” investment to protect lives is consistent with the priorities of Tokelau for enhancing resilience to climate change and disasters.

32. New Zealand continues to expand a suite of activities to improve resilience to disaster and climate change impacts in Tokelau. A new water security programme is expected to begin in 2020. A multi-year programme of technical assistance and grant funding to strengthen disaster preparedness in Tokelau has been extended.

#### **V. External relations**

33. As set out in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Joint Statement of the Principles of Partnership between Tokelau and New Zealand, Tokelau, as a Non-Self-Governing Territory, does not have an international legal personality separate from that of New Zealand that would allow it to enter into formal international legal obligations as a State in its own right. In consultation with Tokelau, New Zealand is responsible for entering into any such obligations on behalf of Tokelau. Tokelau participates in regional and international organizations in its own right to the extent that such organizations allow.

34. Tokelau is seeking to increase its engagement with regional and international organizations. It is a member of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Community Coastal Fisheries Programme, the Council of the University of the South Pacific, the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. At the forty-fifth Pacific Islands Forum, held in Koror, Palau, from 29 to 31 July 2014, the participants agreed to admit Tokelau as an associate member. Tokelau is also a member of the Polynesian Leaders Group and an associate member

of WHO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In addition to New Zealand, Samoa is an important bilateral contact for Tokelau.

35. Representatives of Tokelau attended the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as part of the New Zealand delegation. A highlight at the Conference was the special screening of *Vaka*, a film dealing with the vulnerability of Tokelau to climate change.

36. At the twenty-third session, New Zealand had announced that, as requested by the Government of Tokelau, it had submitted a formal declaration to the United Nations to extend the territorial application of both the Convention and the Paris Agreement to Tokelau. The national reports of New Zealand under the Convention will now include action taken by Tokelau, which, according to the administering Power, is likely to result in increased recognition for the Territory's climate mitigation work as well as a greater focus being placed on its vulnerability to the effects of climate change. The Territory continues to seek support in gaining access to the Green Climate Fund and other adaptation and mitigation mechanisms.

## **VI. Future status of the Territory**

### **A. Position of the territorial Government**

37. At the 4th meeting of the Special Committee, on 17 June 2019, the Ulu-o-Tokelau said that self-governance was distinct from self-determination. Tokelau continued to practise self-governance and refine a governance model that was based on its own culture but that also incorporated elements of Western models.

38. Tokelau and New Zealand were working together to build greater local capacity. New Zealand had been strengthening infrastructure in Tokelau by maintaining and increasing energy capacity; constructing schools, hospitals and homes; and improving connectivity through a new inter-atoll vessel and a new telecommunications cable. Tokelau, for its part, had begun relocating senior officials in the national public service from Samoa to Tokelau, which would lead to a greater integration of traditional and modern knowledge that was characteristic of its emerging governance model.

39. Tokelau was also living the reality of climate change. Rising sea levels and sea acidification presented serious problems for Tokelau. Tokelau appreciated the opportunities provided by New Zealand, the United Nations and other countries and donors, which had given the people of Tokelau more confidence to consider self-determination in the future. However, failure to mitigate the risks would result in a loss of confidence.

### **B. Position of the administering Power**

40. The Administrator of Tokelau, Ross Ardern, delivered a statement at the 4th meeting of the Special Committee, on 17 June 2019. He said that the partnership between Tokelau and New Zealand was strong. He had visited Tokelau five times over the past 12 months and further trips were planned in the coming months. Leaders from Tokelau had visited New Zealand in September 2018 and March 2019. The nature of the relationship and questions of governance and self-determination were guided and determined by the people of Tokelau. His role was to provide support and guidance so that Tokelau could realize its vision and aspirations and provide its people with a better quality of life.

41. New Zealand had consistently sought to devolve its administrative powers to Tokelau and support the development of its own governance institutions. The current arrangements reflected the unique characteristics of the Territory and would continue to evolve. It was the role of New Zealand to support Tokelau in developing a governance model that recognized those characteristics while also drawing on other models it considered would serve it well. The growing sense of unity between the three atolls was an important aspect of the governance journey and must be nurtured. The women's organization in each village already played a vital role in their communities and every effort should be made to amplify women's voices, since their contributions would strengthen leadership and governance at the village and national levels.

42. Development assistance from New Zealand had recently been expanded and around \$NZ 86 million would be used over the next three years for the advancement of the Territory, including to strengthen the governance and management of its public services, finances and infrastructure. In response to a review carried out in 2013, New Zealand had contracted professional support for Tokelau schools and was helping the Tokelau Department of Education to build leadership capacity and improve education services. A follow-up review in 2018 noted that early childhood and primary education had improved, but secondary education required further attention.

43. Primary health care was available in every village in Tokelau while secondary and tertiary care was generally provided in Samoa and New Zealand. A new hospital was close to completion on one of the atolls. At the request of Tokelau, New Zealand had commissioned an independent review of health services and patient referrals.

44. Connectivity was a lifeline for isolated communities. The new inter-atoll vessel would enable people to receive more specialized health services. Increased Internet connectivity was on track to be delivered in the fourth quarter of 2021. New Zealand and Tokelau were contributing \$NZ 22.2 million and \$NZ 7 million, respectively, to the project, which would bring benefits for public services.

45. Climate change was a real challenge. Small places such as Tokelau, which had contributed the least to climate change, would suffer the full force of a warming planet. New Zealand was committed to supporting the Territory on the international stage, including by facilitating the attendance of its representatives at regional and international forums alongside New Zealand representatives. New Zealand was supporting the efforts of Tokelau to adapt to the changes that the atolls were already experiencing. The national climate change strategy focused on integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in village decision-making. New Zealand had increased technical assistance to incorporate climate change adaptation and disaster resilience into village planning. An international firm was developing a coastal hazard reduction plan and would help village representatives to identify and assess options for mitigating such hazards.

46. Subsequent to the Administrator's remarks, a highlight in the New Zealand-Tokelau partnership was the visit in July 2019 of the Prime Minister of New Zealand to Tokelau. This was the first visit by a New Zealand Prime Minister in 15 years. Prime Minister Ardern pledged to support air services for Tokelau, provided certain conditions were met (see para. 18), and to work with Tokelau on improving its health services.

## **VII. Consideration by the United Nations**

### **A. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples**

47. The Special Committee considered the question of Tokelau at its 4th and 7th meetings, held on 17 and 25 June 2019, respectively. At the 4th meeting, the representative of Papua New Guinea, also on behalf of Fiji, introduced draft resolution [A/AC.109/2019/L.23](#), which the Special Committee adopted without a vote.

### **B. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)**

48. At the 7th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) held on 15 October 2019, the Permanent Representative of New Zealand said that his Government and Tokelau were working together to lay the building blocks for self-governance in a manner that reflected the best of the faith, culture and identity of the Territory. The recent visit by the Prime Minister of New Zealand to the three atolls of the Territory had showcased the close cultural and community ties between Tokelau and New Zealand and the joint effort to enhance core public service governance, transport and internet connectivity, and climate change resilience and mitigation.

49. The sum that the Government of New Zealand would invest in the Territory's development over the next budget cycle had risen to \$NZ 94 million to support self-governance in the critical areas of finance, human resources and offshore fisheries, which were the only significant source of independent revenue in Tokelau. Core budget support for public service delivery was aimed at strengthening education and health services and modernizing the body of law of the Territory to ensure it reflected international norms. Furthermore, the quality, reliability and safety of shipping services between Samoa and Tokelau and between the atolls had been increased, and the cost of the services reduced.

50. A climate change mitigation project intended to expand the electricity generation capacity of Tokelau to meet forecast demand would enable the island to generate over 90 per cent of its energy through renewable energy resources by the end of 2020. Tokelau was also committed to reviewing its electricity tariffs to ensure that it could independently finance the maintenance and eventual replacement of those assets.

51. New Zealand was stepping up efforts to build disaster and climate change resistance in Tokelau, which, as a Territory, could not gain access to global climate financing. His Government remained committed to supporting Tokelau on the global stage and assisting it to be a leader on climate change mitigation and adaptation. The recent high-level engagement between the Government of New Zealand and Tokelau at the United Nations Climate Action Summit and other events attested to the determination of New Zealand to support the aspirations of the people of Tokelau. New Zealand welcomed the attention given to the issue by the Committee and would continue to provide assistance in that regard.

### C. Action taken by the General Assembly

52. On 13 December 2019, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution [74/109](#) on the question of Tokelau. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Acknowledged the decision of the General Fono in 2008 that consideration of any future act of self-determination by Tokelau would be deferred and that New Zealand and Tokelau would devote renewed effort and attention to ensuring that essential services and infrastructure on the atolls of Tokelau were enhanced and strengthened, thereby ensuring an enhanced quality of life and opportunities for the people of Tokelau;

(b) Welcomed the progress made towards the devolution of power to the three *taupulega* (village councils) since 2004, and noted that further discussion was planned on the recommendations in the report on the devolution review, compiled in 2012;

(c) Noted with appreciation that Tokelau and New Zealand remained firmly committed to the ongoing development of Tokelau for the long-term benefit of the people of Tokelau, with particular emphasis on the further development of facilities on each atoll that meet their current requirements, including investment to connect Tokelau to an undersea fibre-optic cable for faster and more reliable Internet services, improved maritime transport infrastructure and services, quality health care and education and support for the fisheries sector;

(d) Recalled the consideration by Tokelau of its National Strategic Plan for 2016–2020, which prioritized good governance, human development, infrastructure development, sustainability and climate change adaptation, and noted the completion by Tokelau of the Plan, which determined development and other priorities for the 2016–2020 period, and the Plan’s focus on infrastructure development to support service delivery, including through transport and telecommunications solutions;

(e) Acknowledged the ongoing and consistent commitment of New Zealand to meeting the social and economic requirements of the people of Tokelau, including through new shipping service assets and shipping infrastructure development, and budget support for the delivery of education services ranging from early childhood education to foundation courses for tertiary study, as well as the support and cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization;

(f) Commended the completion by Tokelau in 2013 of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project with the support of the administering Power and receipt by the Government of the Renewable Energy Award granted by the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority;

(g) Also commended Tokelau for the recent measures taken to safeguard the health of its peoples through its “Tobacco-Free Tokelau by 2020” policy, and encouraged the necessary support for its implementation from the administering Power, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders;

(h) Acknowledged the need of Tokelau for continued support from the international community and its desire to become part of the discussions on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the impacts of climate change and the protection of the environment and oceans, and in that regard encouraged, as appropriate, assistance towards the implementation of the climate change strategy of Tokelau, entitled “Living with change: an integrated national strategy for enhancing the resilience of Tokelau to climate change and related hazards, 2017–2030”, and the associated plan, also acknowledged the efforts of the administering Power to include in its national reporting to the secretariat of the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change the climate mitigation action taken by Tokelau, and noted with appreciation the launch of the Tokelau national greenhouse gas inventory report on 11 April 2019 as a milestone achievement;

(i) Recalled with satisfaction the establishment and operation of the Tokelau International Trust Fund to support the ongoing needs of Tokelau, and called upon Member States and international and regional agencies to contribute to the Fund and thereby lend practical support to Tokelau in overcoming the problems of smallness, isolation and lack of resources;

(j) Welcomed the cooperative attitude of the other States and territories in the region towards Tokelau and their support for its economic and political aspirations and its increasing participation in regional and international affairs, and in that regard noted the successful chairmanship by Tokelau of the tenth annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, held in Tokelau on 1 and 2 July 2014, the representation of the Agency by the Ulu o Tokelau at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014, and the signing by Tokelau of the Pacific Islands Development Forum Charter on 27 April 2016 so as to become the twelfth member of the Forum, and the recent participation of Tokelau, represented by the Ulu-o-Tokelau, as an associate member in the forty-ninth Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, held in Nauru in September 2018;

(k) Called upon the administering Power and United Nations agencies to continue to provide assistance to Tokelau as it further developed;

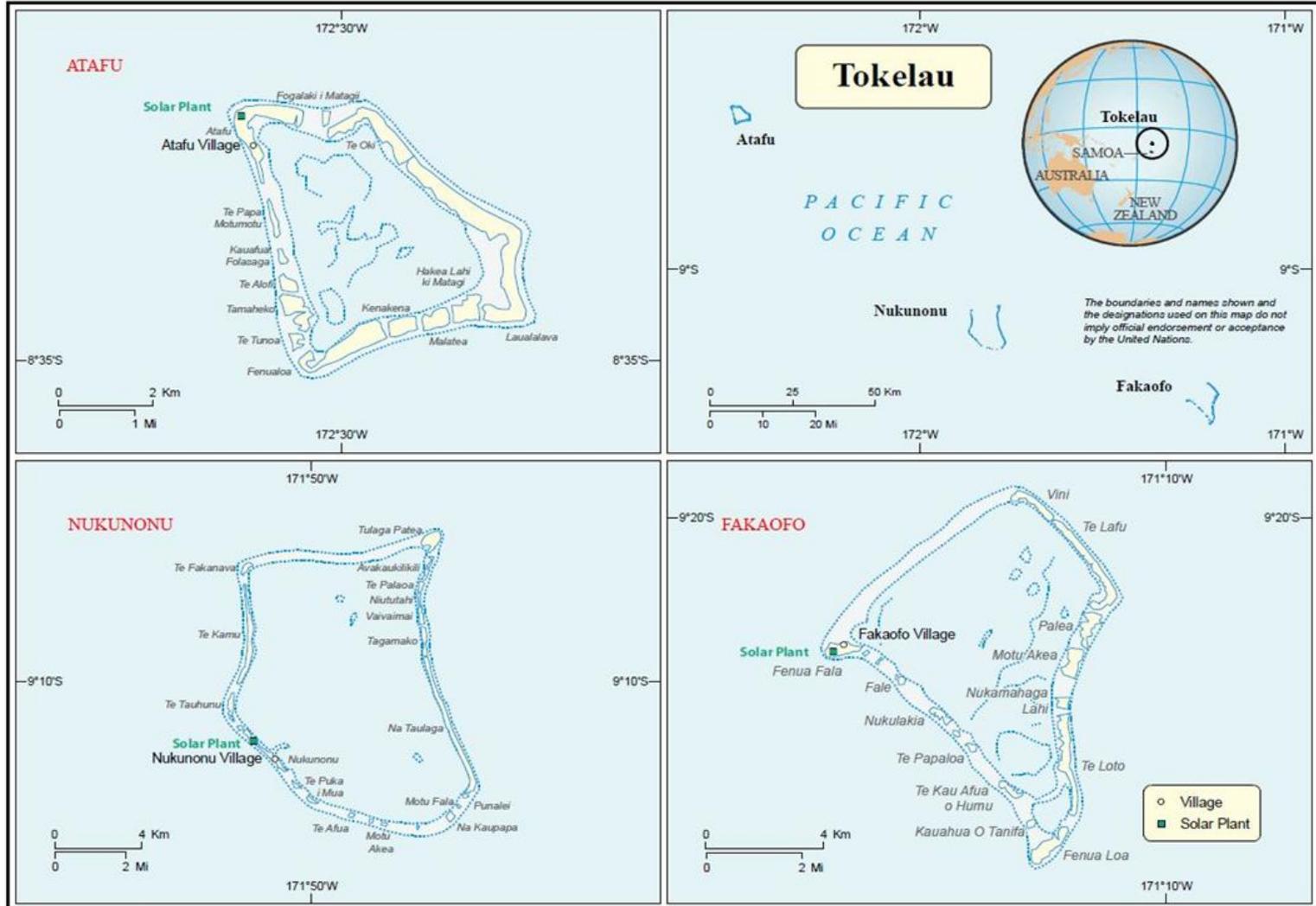
(l) Recognized the positive actions taken by the administering Power to transmit to the Secretary-General under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations information regarding the political, economic and social situation of Tokelau;

(m) Commended the renewed strong commitment of both Tokelau and New Zealand to continuing to work together in the interests of Tokelau and its people;

(n) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Tokelau and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session.

# Annex

## Map of Tokelau



Map No. 2899 Rev.5 UNITED NATIONS  
June 2017

Department of Field Support  
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)