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Chair: Mr. Kemayah, Sr. (Liberia)
later: Mr. Goldea (Vice-Chair) (Hungary)

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* Reissued for technical reasons on 1 February 2019.

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

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly on the work of the Committee

1. **Ms. Espinosa Garcés** (Ecuador), President of the General Assembly, said that the work of the Fourth Committee was perhaps the most disparate, all-encompassing and dynamic of any of the Committees, and the issues that it addressed had been central to the work of the United Nations since its foundation. In particular, she wished to acknowledge the heartbreaking sacrifice of those who had stood on the front lines of peacekeeping missions. Far too many peacekeepers had paid the ultimate price while working to protect those who could not protect themselves.

2. The decolonization agenda remained incomplete, and the commitment to ensure the full independence of all colonial countries and peoples must be implemented, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Not achieving that objective went against the ideals to which the international community aspired, jeopardized peace and security and hampered achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for those who would be left behind, including vulnerable and marginalized groups.

3. The world bore witness to the despair and suffering that continued as a result of the stalled process to address the Palestinian question. While the entire international community had a responsibility to ensure the resumption of peace talks under the relevant United Nations resolutions, other steps could be taken to help bring relief to those suffering and create conditions for their well-being. The financial gap facing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was a source of concern. Countries had stepped in quickly to fill the immediate need and enable children to return to school, but long-term solutions were needed in order to avoid social, economic and security consequences.

4. Peacekeeping efforts must focus on prevention, peacebuilding and addressing the root causes of conflict before they erupted. Empowering youth in peace and security was a key priority for her tenure and she was working with the Committee to develop mechanisms to leverage the inherent strengths and capacities of youth. The ever-changing landscape of peacekeeping operations required States to be ever more vigilant in safeguarding the lives of peacekeepers, particularly by investing in the intelligence, equipment and skills needed to achieve success safely.

5. It was critical that States recognized the potential for peaceful collaboration in outer space. Discussions on

the prevention of an arms race in outer space were not premature and Member States should maintain the positive momentum and continue dialogue on that issue with mutual respect. The third joint meeting of the First and Fourth Committees, to be held in 2019, would provide an opportunity for greater cooperation in addressing peace, security and outer space.

6. She welcomed the Committee's agreement to update the 2013 report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/68/46) on the levels and effects of radiation due to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster.

Agenda item 59: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations (A/73/23 (chaps. V and XIII) and A/73/64)

Agenda item 60: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/73/23 (chaps. VI and XIII))

Agenda item 61: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/73/23 (chaps. VII and XIII) and A/73/70)

Agenda item 62: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/73/73)

Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (A/73/23 (chaps. VIII, IX, X, XI, XII and XIII), A/73/70 and A/73/219)

7. **The Chair** said that the decolonization agenda was one of the most important achievements of the United Nations and remained a priority. The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee on decolonization) had played a crucial role in upholding the principle of self-determination, which was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and had continued its tireless efforts to advance the decolonization process in accordance with its mandate.

8. In 2018, the Special Committee had dispatched a visiting mission to New Caledonia to support the Territory as it prepared for the referendum on self-determination scheduled to take place on 4 November

2018. The activities carried out by the Special Committee were a testament to its abiding and firm commitment to the decolonization process. However, its work was not yet complete and 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remained on the United Nations list. As the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism came to an end, he urged all Member States to redouble their efforts to achieve progress in the area of decolonization.

9. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Special Committee on decolonization, introducing the report of the Special Committee on its work in 2018 (A/73/23), said that chapter I provided a general account of the Special Committee's activities during its 2018 session and its plans for future work. Chapters II to XII focused on specific themes and on the individual situations in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, while chapter XIII contained the Special Committee's recommendations to the General Assembly in the form of draft resolutions.

10. In 2018, the Special Committee had continued to discharge its responsibilities and analyse developments in the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories and Puerto Rico, guided by the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions. At the Pacific regional seminar held in St. George, Grenada, in May 2018, the Special Committee had focused on the Sustainable Development Goals and social, economic and environmental challenges in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. At its June session, all resolutions and decisions had been adopted by consensus.

11. On 4 November 2018, New Caledonia would hold a referendum on self-determination, in accordance with the Nouméa Accord of 1998. In March 2018, the Special Committee had dispatched a visiting mission to the Territory to assess the implementation of the Nouméa Accord, including the preparations for the forthcoming referendum. It was necessary to sustain the decolonization efforts in New Caledonia and in all other Territories under consideration. Advancing the decolonization agenda was a collective responsibility shared by all Member States.

12. **Mr. Webson** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking as the Chair of the Special Committee on decolonization, said that, in fulfilment of its mandate, the Special Committee had held its substantive session in June 2018, organized its regional seminar hosted by the Government of Grenada and undertaken a visiting mission to New Caledonia with the cooperation and assistance of France. The participation of representatives and petitioners from the Non-Self-Governing Territories

at both the regional seminar and the formal session had provided the Special Committee with valuable information.

13. Discussions at the 2018 regional seminar had focused on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, with particular attention paid to the social, economic and environmental dimensions. Participants had stressed the importance of addressing the various challenges facing the Territories on account of their vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental degradation.

14. The visiting mission to New Caledonia dispatched in March 2018 had built on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous mission dispatched in 2014 and had been aimed at supporting the Territory in its preparations for the referendum on self-determination scheduled for 4 November 2018. The Special Committee remained fully committed to supporting New Caledonia in the implementation of the Nouméa Accord.

15. Progress towards decolonization required engagement from all relevant actors, especially the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories. States needed to work together to make palpable progress in implementing the Declaration on decolonization in the light of all relevant resolutions and on a case-by-case basis. As the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism came to a close, it was increasingly important to find more effective ways to advance the decolonization agenda. There should be regular interaction and dialogue with the administering Powers and other relevant actors involved in the decolonization process. He thanked Fourth Committee members for their steady support for the work of the Special Committee and the various relevant United Nations Secretariat departments for their dedication and commitment during the Special Committee's 2018 session.

16. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that all peoples should be able to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. CELAC remained fully committed to the goal of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and called on the administering Powers to cooperate with the Special Committee and to adopt the measures necessary to attain the rapid decolonization of each of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, some of which were in the CELAC region, while taking the individual situations of the Territories into account, including the

fact that some of them were “special and particular” colonial situations involving sovereignty disputes. The administering Powers should regularly communicate accurate information on each of the Territories under their administration. At the January 2017 CELAC Summit, the Heads of State and Government of the Community had renewed their commitment to continue working to make Latin America and the Caribbean a region free of colonialism.

17. CELAC supported the work of the Department of Public Information, including the use of the six official languages on the decolonization website, but stressed the importance of ensuring that content was regularly updated in all languages. It appreciated the measures taken to provide coverage of Special Committee meetings on United Nations Web TV in 2018 and urged the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information to ensure the widest dissemination of information on decolonization, including the coverage of all meetings of the Special Committee.

18. CELAC strongly supported the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. At the 2017 CELAC Summit, the States members of the Community had reaffirmed their abiding interest in the resumption of negotiations by the Governments of the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom in order to find, as soon as possible, a peaceful and definitive solution to the dispute, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. They had also called on the Secretary-General of the United Nations, once again, to renew his efforts to fulfil the mission of good offices entrusted to him by the General Assembly with a view to the resumption of negotiations, and to report on the progress made. CELAC further reiterated the importance of observing General Assembly resolution 31/49 calling on both parties to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation, and highlighted the full willingness of the Argentine Government to set in place arrangements for the resumption of dialogue aimed at reaching a peaceful and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute.

19. With regard to the Special Committee’s 37 resolutions and decisions on Puerto Rico reaffirming the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence, the Heads of State and Government of CELAC had highlighted the Latin American and Caribbean character of Puerto Rico at the 2017 Summit and had recalled the Havana Declaration

of 2014 calling for progress on the question of Puerto Rico.

20. CELAC stood in solidarity with the Territories in the Latin American and Caribbean region that had suffered the consequences of natural disasters and called on the United Nations system and regional organizations to provide all assistance needed, support the recovery and reconstruction efforts and improve emergency preparedness and risk-reduction capacities, particularly in the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

21. Continued efforts were needed to facilitate the sustained and balanced growth of the fragile economies of the small island Territories of the Caribbean and the Pacific. Those Territories should be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination and the administering Powers should not thwart the will of those peoples.

22. CELAC endorsed all resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council regarding Western Sahara, including General Assembly resolution 70/98, and reiterated its strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara to reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution leading to the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

23. **Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and associated States, said that, since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) in 1965, the General Assembly and the Special Committee had recognized that the question of the Malvinas Islands involved a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom, and that the way to put an end to that special and particular colonial situation was the peaceful and negotiated settlement of the dispute between the two parties.

24. In the joint communiqué adopted in June 2018, the Presidents of the MERCOSUR member States and associated States had reiterated the terms of the 1996 Declaration of Potrero de los Funes on the Malvinas Islands and had reaffirmed their support for the legitimate rights of Argentina in the sovereignty dispute. In July 2017, they had also reiterated that the adoption of unilateral measures was incompatible with United Nations resolutions and recalled that it would be in the interests of the region if the protracted sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were resolved as soon as possible in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the

declarations of the Organization of American States and other regional and multilateral forums. The Argentine Government had shown complete willingness to create a climate conducive to renewed dialogue and greater cooperation with the United Kingdom that would allow for the resumption of negotiations with a view to finding a definitive solution to the dispute.

25. Speaking in his national capacity, he said that his Government strongly supported the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination and hoped that a referendum would be held on the future of their Territory, in accordance with international law and in response to the legitimate expectations of the Sahrawi people. Uruguay recognized the proactive role of the African Union and Secretary-General António Guterres and his Personal Envoy, Mr. Köhler, in supporting that process.

26. His Government welcomed the resumption of talks between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), and it urged the parties to ensure that the dialogue took place in good faith and with a view to achieving a just and lasting solution that provided for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

27. Uruguay fully supported the legitimate sovereignty rights of Argentina over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. Such claims were geographically, historically and legally justified. While self-determination was the just way to decolonize those Territories that were inhabited by peoples subjected to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation, that principle did not apply to the case of the Malvinas, where there was a transplanted population that did not meet the criteria of being under subjugation as established by General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The situation was therefore one of a colonial territory without a colonized population. He called on the international community to heed the call to bring to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

28. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that the Special Committee played a central role in the decolonization process and his Government fully supported the efforts to complete that process, which had resulted in the independence of more than 80 former colonies and the resolution of other special and particular colonial situations on a case-by-case basis, in

accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

29. Argentina would continue to defend the right to self-determination in all cases in which that right was applicable. However, like any principle, the right to self-determination was not absolute. Under international law, as recognized by the General Assembly in its resolution 1514 (XV), self-determination should not be used as a pretext to disrupt the territorial integrity of existing States. It was in that context that the Committee should understand the special and particular colonial situation referred to as “the question of the Malvinas Islands”, which involved a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

30. The dispute dated back to 1833, when the United Kingdom had forcibly occupied the Malvinas Islands and expelled the Argentine authorities and population. It had then implanted its settlers and strictly controlled migration policies, with which it continued to determine the composition of the territory’s population in its own interests. Argentina had never consented to the occupation. Recognizing that the population of the islands was not a people subjected to colonialism, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 2065 (XX), in which it recognized the existence of the sovereignty dispute and pointed out that the only way to resolve it was through negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom, taking into account the interests of the inhabitants of the islands.

31. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) and for nearly two decades, Argentina and the United Kingdom had engaged in substantive negotiations and considered several proposals for settling the dispute; documents had even been drafted attesting to the agreement of the United Kingdom to recognize Argentine sovereignty over the islands. During the negotiations, Argentina and the United Kingdom had cooperated on practical matters related to the welfare of the inhabitants of the islands and Argentina had provided assistance in the areas of health, education, agriculture and technology. The bilateral nature of the dispute did not in any way entail a disregard for the interests of the inhabitants of the islands; on the contrary, the Constitution of Argentina provided that all Argentines must respect the way of life of the inhabitants of the islands.

32. The 1982 conflict, which had taken place while Argentina had been governed by a military dictatorship, had not changed the legal nature of the dispute, let alone resolved it. That had been understood by the General

Assembly; hence it had adopted resolution 37/9 and subsequent resolutions requesting the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations and the Secretary-General to undertake a renewed mission of good offices in order to assist the parties in reaching a peaceful settlement to the sovereignty dispute. Since then, the United Kingdom had ignored the international community's repeated calls for a resumption of negotiations. In that regard, his Government was grateful for the broad support from the Organization of American States, the Group of 77 and China, CELAC, MERCOSUR and other regional and biregional forums.

33. Since taking office in December 2015, Argentine President Mauricio Macri had embarked on a new chapter in bilateral relations with the United Kingdom, which were based on mutual trust and positive dialogue. The two Governments were considering proposals for greater connectivity between the Argentine mainland and the Malvinas Islands, meetings of the Scientific Subcommittee of the South Atlantic Fisheries Commission had resumed, and the Red Cross had assisted the two Governments in identifying the remains of 100 Argentine soldiers on the Malvinas Islands.

34. In order to deepen the bilateral relationship, Argentina called on the United Kingdom to end unilateral measures in the disputed area, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/49. Argentina reaffirmed its legitimate and imprescriptible sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. It reiterated its support for the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes and expressed its complete confidence that the new climate in its relationship with the United Kingdom would contribute to creating the conditions for the Governments to come to the negotiating table in order to settle the prolonged sovereignty dispute.

35. **Mr. Benard Estrada** (Guatemala) said that, through numerous resolutions over the course of more than fifty years, the General Assembly had recognized the sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas as a "special and particular" colonial situation, because of its distinctive characteristics. The territorial integrity of Argentina had been violated in 1833 through the forced occupation of part of its territory and the displacement of the population. Since then, Argentine settlement in the Malvinas Islands had been prevented, and the occupying Power had transferred some of its own population to that part of Argentine soil. The case thus involved a

colonized territory, not a colonized people. In keeping with paragraph 6 of the Declaration on decolonization, the United Nations had therefore specifically ruled out the possibility of applying the right to self-determination to the question of the Malvinas Islands. That year marked the fifty-third anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX). Argentina had already indicated its willingness to resolve the situation through dialogue and negotiation, and the United Kingdom should play its part to find a just, peaceful and lasting solution that would benefit both parties to the dispute.

36. On the question of Western Sahara, Guatemala supported the political process under way under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to help the parties negotiate a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the regional dispute. His delegation urged the parties to continue to show political will and establish a climate conducive to dialogue, in order to enter into a more substantive phase of negotiations. It welcomed the invitation extended to Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania to participate in a round table to be held in December 2018, which was being organized by the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy. A solution to the question was necessary, not only for the people of Western Sahara, but also for the stability, security and integration of the Maghreb region.

37. **The Chair** drew attention to 155 requests for hearings under agenda item 58, 27 relating to French Polynesia (A/C.4/73/2), one relating to Gibraltar (A/C.4/73/3), 10 relating to Guam (A/C.4/73/4), four relating to New Caledonia (A/C.4/73/5), one relating to the Turks and Caicos Islands (A/C.4/73/6) and 112 relating to Western Sahara (A/C.4/73/7).

38. **Mr. Tommo Monthe** (Cameroon) said that his delegation had serious reservations about two requests for hearing on the question of Western Sahara, namely those received from Mr. Samuel Ikome Sako, representing Africa Solidarity for Sahrawi, and Mr. Martin Ayong Ayim, representing Living Stories and Memories, which were listed as numbers 60 and 61 in document (A/C.4/73/7). It requested continued discussion on those two requests.

39. **The Chair** took it that the Committee wished to grant those requests, with the exception of items 60 and 61.

40. *It was so decided.*

41. **Mr. Zambrano Ortiz** (Ecuador) said that his Government would continue to support the quest of peoples under colonial rule to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in

accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Colonialism hindered social, economic and cultural development and undermined the Organization's ideal of universal peace, hence the need to promote dialogue between the administering Powers and the territories under their control and to redouble efforts to implement the relevant international instruments, taking into account the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination and assessing the situation of each territory on a case-by-case basis.

42. He hailed the resumption of negotiations between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) at the invitation of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General and hoped that the process would yield the desired results. With regard to the question of the Malvinas Islands, his Government had not wavered in its conviction that the only way to resolve that special and particular colonial situation was through the resumption of bilateral negotiations between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom, in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions. His Government also supported the Puerto Rican people in their struggle to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

43. **Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer** (Brazil) said that his Government maintained its long-standing support for the legitimate rights of Argentina in relation to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. As the "special and particular" colonial situation in question was a sovereignty dispute that had lasted for nearly 200 years, the principle of self-determination was not applicable. In that regard, it was important to recall that the British population on the Islands had been implanted during an illegal occupation. Furthermore, since the Malvinas formed part of the territory of Argentina, the principle of territorial integrity was applicable. Brazil therefore called on both parties to resume negotiations. Resolution of the dispute depended on dialogue between the two parties and the completion of the Secretary-General's good offices mission as mandated by the General Assembly in resolution 37/9. In that regard, Brazil acknowledged the constructive efforts of Argentina and the United Kingdom to strengthen bilateral relations and reach practical agreements under the formula on sovereignty in relation to the South Atlantic. Improvements in the bilateral relationship would help to establish the conditions necessary to resume negotiations with a view to

returning full sovereignty over the Islands to Argentina, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

44. His Government was concerned at the violations of General Assembly resolution 31/49 and urged the United Kingdom to cease its unilateral exploration and exploitation of natural resources in the disputed area. Furthermore, in a spirit of solidarity with Argentina, and in accordance with that resolution, Brazil did not authorize the use of its ports or airports by vessels or aircraft heading to the Malvinas Islands unless they complied with that resolution.

45. The South Atlantic was a zone of peace and cooperation, free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and dedicated to the harmony and peaceful settlement of disputes that characterized Latin America, the Caribbean and the African countries of the South Atlantic. The desire for a negotiated solution was shared not only throughout Latin America but by all developing countries. The resumption of negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom was the only viable way to resolve the question of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

46. **Mr. Matjila** (South Africa) said that it was unacceptable that, at a time when much of the world was grappling with modern-day issues, 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories continued to face the primary challenge of exercising their right to self-determination. The situation in Western Sahara remained a painful thorn in the side of an African continent striving to promote unification in order to overcome the legacy of colonialism. Unable to exercise their right to self-determination, the Sahrawi people were being robbed of the opportunity to prosper and realize their full potential. South Africa condemned the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Sahrawi people and welcomed judgments by the Court of Justice of the European Union and the High Court of South Africa that had upheld the sovereignty of Western Sahara and its ownership of domestic resources, including in its territorial waters. He hoped that the international legal precedent would deter foreign entities from further illegal exploitation, thereby contributing to resolving the impasse.

47. Sincere and uninhibited negotiations must be conducted without preconditions and in good faith, under United Nations auspices and with African Union support. To that end, the African Union had recently

established the African Union Troika to lend support to United Nations efforts. Those efforts must ultimately pave the way for a free and fair referendum to enable the Sahrawi people to express their will in a legitimate, democratic manner.

48. He commended the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, as well as the African Union Special Envoy, for their efforts to bring about a political solution to the situation in Western Sahara and expressed the hope that the return of Morocco to the African Union as a member would open new avenues to that end. In the interim, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum on Western Sahara (MINURSO) must remain in place with a secure mandate. His delegation therefore urged the Security Council to extend the Mission's mandate and to expand its role in ensuring respect for human rights in Western Sahara.

49. *Mr. Goldea (Hungary), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

50. **Mr. Gumende** (Mozambique) said that the lack of progress towards resolving the questions of Palestine and Western Sahara illustrated the need to take a dynamic approach to upholding the principles of self-determination and independence, which had a significant impact on efforts to achieve peace and prosperity. The international community should renew its commitment to help bring about a resumption of negotiations between the Palestinian authorities and Israel in order to reach a peaceful agreement that could lead to a sustainable, durable and fair political solution to the question of Palestine, based on the two-State solution. His delegation welcomed initiatives by the United Nations and other international bodies to that end. It also commended the Secretary-General's engagement with the two main stakeholders in dialogue, with a view to defusing regional tensions and ending the long-standing conflict.

51. Regrettably, three decades since the adoption of Security Council resolution 690 (1991), which had established MINURSO, minimal progress had been made towards enabling the people of Western Sahara to cast their vote in a referendum on self-determination. The international community should therefore intensify efforts to promote the exercise of that universally accepted right by implementing the relevant United Nations resolutions. Mozambique supported the diplomatic efforts of the African Union, the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, and the Committee's deliberations towards a sustainable political settlement.

52. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Paraguay) said that the principle of the self-determination of peoples, as a pillar of the modern system of international relations, provided the basis for peaceful and friendly ties among

States. Paraguay remained committed to the decolonization process, which had allowed a number of countries to join the United Nations. Nonetheless, colonialism lived on, as attested to by the existence of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, many of which were in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

53. General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) were the most useful and transparent instruments for guaranteeing the full exercise of sovereignty, integration or autonomy. While Paraguay understood the difficulty of balancing the interests of the original population, the population implanted by colonization and the administering Power, the United Nations must act in line with its doctrine, which clearly gave precedence to the rights of indigenous populations. In order to achieve progress towards decolonization, the political will to decolonize must transcend the efforts of any particular Government.

54. His delegation reiterated its support for the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom should resume negotiations as soon as possible in order to find a lasting and peaceful solution to the controversy. His delegation commended the continued willingness of the Argentine Government to explore all avenues towards a peaceful solution to the dispute, as well as its constructive attitude in favour of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands.

55. **Mr. Skoknic Tapia** (Chile) said that the administering Powers should take the measures necessary to ensure that the decolonization process could be completed for the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories and should transmit adequate information on the Territories under their control in accordance with Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations.

56. The question of the Malvinas Islands was a special and particular situation that involved a sovereignty dispute between two States. He reaffirmed his Government's support for the legitimate rights of Argentina over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, and urged Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations with a view to reaching a solution as soon as possible.

57. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) was of particular importance to Chile, and his delegation called on the Secretary-General to continue his mission of good offices with a view to

bringing about the resumption of negotiations directed towards a peaceful settlement of the dispute and to communicate the progress made thus far. It commended the willingness of Argentina to negotiate a peaceful and lasting solution. Lastly, his delegation praised the Department of Public Information for its efforts to disseminate the work of the Special Committee, inter alia by keeping the United Nations decolonization website updated in all six official languages.

58. **Mr. Budhu** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that, by adopting resolution 1514 (XV), the General Assembly had recognized the inalienable human right to self-determination and laid the foundation for territories across the world to achieve their independence and take responsibility for their own destinies. The Organization's active support and vigilance through the Fourth Committee had been instrumental in his country's self-determination and that of many others. However, in 2018, the work of the United Nations on the decolonization process remained in a state of virtual inertia, with little progress having been made towards recognizing the legitimate political status options of the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories. Furthermore, six of them were located in the Caribbean, impeding regional integration.

59. His Government maintained its long-standing support for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. It welcomed the Security Council's call, in resolution 2414 (2018), for continued negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations without preconditions and in good faith. Trinidad and Tobago encouraged the parties to continue negotiating in a spirit of compromise and sincere commitment with the goal of achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. It would be impossible to create a world in which no one was left behind if colonialism was allowed to perpetuate its legacy of inequality and injustice.

60. **Mr. Zambrana Torrelío** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that his country was fully committed to the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization and rejected any act that sought to silence the liberating voice of the peoples in their struggle for a world free from colonialism. Their freedom must be achieved through multilateral mechanisms with the participation of the international community and through horizontal political dialogue with a view to safeguarding international peace and security. His delegation called on the administering and occupying Powers to initiate the decolonization process with a view to the total elimination of colonialism in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/119 and in order to reach fair,

definitive and consensual solutions for the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories.

61. His delegation supported the aspirations of the people of Puerto Rico to become a free State and demanded immediate implementation of the process leading to its independence from United States colonialism, to ensure the full, effective exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in conformity with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

62. The United Kingdom had complied with none of the more than 40 resolutions relating to the question of the Malvinas Islands adopted since 1965 by the United Nations. That country had the obligation to engage promptly, formally and in good faith in negotiations within the framework of international law in order to return the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas to Argentine sovereignty.

63. In accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 2334 (2016) and other relevant Security Council resolutions, Israel should withdraw its armed forces from the Occupied Palestinian Territories and put an end to practices of intimidation and terror and its expansionist, colonial policy. His delegation supported the self-determination of the Palestinian people and their right to a free, sovereign and independent State with pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

64. Lastly, his delegation was firmly committed to supporting a just, lasting and mutually-acceptable political solution that would lead, through a negotiated process, to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, in accordance with the principles and purposes set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. It supported the proposal by the Secretary-General to relaunch negotiating efforts with a new dynamic and a new spirit, in the interest of a referendum that would allow the Sahrawi people to exercise their right to independence and self-determination.

65. **Mr. Khamis** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that it was regrettable that the peoples of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories continued to struggle to exercise their right to self-determination. His Government reaffirmed its support for that struggle, as the continued existence of colonialism in any form contravened the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The administering Powers should demonstrate the requisite

political will and take measures to decolonize, in line with the Declaration on decolonization.

66. With the return of Morocco to the African Union and its membership in the Peace and Security Council, the United Nations and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General would have a renewed opportunity to address the question of Western Sahara by engaging with the recently established African Union Troika mechanism, an initiative his country supported.

67. **Ms. McGuire** (Grenada) said that her country recognized the extraordinary significance of the Committee's work, having gone through the decolonization process itself. Her delegation called for good will and dialogue in order to bring that process to fruition in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. Although much remained to be done, notable progress had been made, and important initiatives were under way, such as the referendum on self-determination to be held in New Caledonia the following month.

68. Grenada supported the political process led by the Security Council since 2007 aimed at achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the Western Sahara dispute. In that regard, it endorsed the Moroccan autonomy initiative presented to the Security Council in 2007 and welcomed development efforts in the territory across various sectors, which had provided the local people with services and gainful employment.

69. Her delegation congratulated the Secretary-General on reinvigorating the political process and supported the work of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara. Bringing together all parties and neighbouring States would be key in finding a just and lasting solution to the dispute; in that context, the invitation extended to Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco to the round table scheduled for December of that year was a welcome development, as was the inaugural participation of two vice-presidents of two regions of Western Sahara at the regional seminar of the Special Committee on decolonization held in her country earlier that year. In closing, she stressed that registering refugees in the Tindouf refugee camps was critical in ensuring that their human rights were protected.

70. *Mr. Kemayah, Sr. (Liberia) resumed the Chair.*

71. **Mr. Camara** (Guinea) said that the question of Western Sahara should be resolved through a constructive, consensual solution in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2414 (2018). Guinea supported the relaunching of the negotiation process as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/277) and Security Council resolution 2414 (2018) with a view to reaching

a mutually acceptable political solution based on realism and a spirit of compromise. The initiatives of the Secretary-General and the efforts of his Personal Envoy would facilitate the achievement of a peaceful settlement based on the indispensable cooperation of the parties involved in the political process. The fifth round of negotiations and the preparatory meeting to be led by the United Nations in December 2018 would be valuable in that regard.

72. The Moroccan autonomy initiative was an ideal framework for negotiations, transcending traditional positions and meeting international norms through the delegation of authority to local populations. His delegation urged the parties concerned to establish a climate conducive to dialogue and to safeguard and strengthen the gains made in order to ensure stability in the region. Guinea would spare no effort in its contribution to building sustainable peace.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

73. **Mr. Sylvester** (United Kingdom) said that his country had no doubt regarding its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas of both Territories, or regarding the right of the Falkland Islanders to self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the two International Covenants on human rights, in order freely to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development. None of the regional statements of diplomatic support for sovereignty negotiations invoked by Argentina modified or diluted the obligation of nations to respect the legally binding principle of self-determination. Therefore, no dialogue on sovereignty was possible unless the Falkland Islanders so wished.

74. The 2013 referendum, in which 99.8 per cent of those who voted wanted to maintain their current status as an Overseas Territory of the United Kingdom, had sent a clear message that the people of the Islands did not want a dialogue on sovereignty. Argentina should respect those wishes. His Government's relationship with the Falkland Islands, as with all of its Overseas Territories, was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to determine their own future. Argentina continued to deny that such fundamental human rights applied to the people of the Falkland Islands, and also to act in ways that went against the principles of the Charter.

75. The United Kingdom was also clear that no civilian population had been expelled from the Falkland

Islands in 1833. An Argentine military garrison had been sent there earlier in an attempt to impose Argentine sovereignty over British sovereign territory, but the United Kingdom had expelled that military garrison, and the civilian population that had previously sought British permission to remain had been encouraged to do so. The territorial borders of the Argentine Republic in 1833 had not included the southern half of its current form or any territory in the Falkland Islands, Antarctica or South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. The province of Tierra del Fuego, to which Argentina claimed the disputed Territories belonged, had only become part of Argentina circa 1883, whereas British sovereignty over the Falkland Islands dated back to 1765, some years before the Argentine Republic had even existed. The United Kingdom had never implanted any civilian population; all civilians had been born there or had migrated voluntarily from various countries, including Argentina, during the nineteenth century. The Argentine claim to the Islands, based on the principle of disruption of its territorial integrity, was without foundation, as the Islands had never legitimately been administered by or formed part of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Argentina.

76. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that his delegation reaffirmed the statements made by the President of Argentina at the current session of the General Assembly and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina before the Special Committee in June 2018. The Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were an integral part of the national territory of Argentina. The Islands had been illegally occupied by the United Kingdom and were therefore the subject of a sovereignty dispute that was recognized by a number of international organizations and by successive General Assembly resolutions calling on the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations in order to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the dispute as soon as possible. That position had also repeatedly been endorsed by the Special Committee and the Organization of American States.

77. Argentina regretted the attempts by Great Britain to justify its illegal occupation through an erroneous interpretation of the events of 1833, which had been repeatedly protested by Argentina. He reiterated his invitation to the United Kingdom to resume negotiations with Argentina without delay to find a just and definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute, in compliance with General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) and successive General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions.

78. The principle of self-determination, which the United Kingdom used as the basis for its refusal to resume negotiations on sovereignty, was manifestly inapplicable to the dispute in question, as affirmed by the General Assembly and the Special Committee. The illegitimate vote in the Malvinas Islands was yet another unilateral action undertaken by the United Kingdom that did not change the essence of the question of the Malvinas or resolve the sovereignty dispute, nor did it affect the legitimate rights of Argentina. Proof of that could be seen in the fact that the so-called referendum had done nothing to change the meetings held in the Special Committee since that date, where resolutions on the question of the Malvinas Islands continued to be approved by consensus in the usual terms. The solution to the sovereignty dispute was not dependent on the results of a so-called referendum in which British subjects had been asked whether they wished to remain British. Allowing the British inhabitants of the Islands to arbitrate in a sovereignty dispute to which their own country was a party distorted the right to self-determination of peoples, given that the people of the Malvinas were not a people within the meaning of international law. The interests of the inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands were adequately addressed by resolutions of the General Assembly and by the Constitution of Argentina. Lastly, Argentina reiterated its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which formed an integral part of its national territory.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.