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Agenda item 61

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 2020

[on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee) (A/75/420, para. 27)]

75/118. Question of Tokelau

The General Assembly,

Having considered the question of Tokelau,

Taking note of the report 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 for 2020,¹

Recalling its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and all resolutions and decisions of the United Nations relating to Non-Self-Governing Territories, in particular General Assembly resolution 74/109 of 13 December 2019,

Noting with appreciation the continuing exemplary cooperation of New Zealand as the administering Power with regard to the work of the Special Committee relating to Tokelau and its readiness to permit access by United Nations visiting missions to the Territory,

Noting with appreciation also the collaborative contribution to the development of Tokelau by New Zealand and the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Bearing in mind that, as a small island Territory, Tokelau exemplifies the situation of most remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories and that, as a case study pointing to successful cooperation for decolonization, Tokelau has wider significance for the United Nations as it seeks to complete its work in decolonization,

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-fifth Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/75/23).



Recalling the status of Tokelau as an associate member of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and of the Pacific Islands Forum,

Acknowledging the World No Tobacco Day Award for the western Pacific region granted to Tokelau in 2017 by the World Health Organization for its policy entitled “Tobacco-Free Tokelau by 2020”, and expressing hope that this could contribute to the well-being of the Territory and its peoples,

Cognizant that New Zealand and Tokelau signed, on 21 November 2003, a document entitled “Joint statement of the principles of partnership”, which sets out the rights and responsibilities of the two partners,

Bearing in mind the decision of the General Fono at its meeting in November 2003, following extensive consultations undertaken in all three villages, to explore formally with New Zealand the option of self-government in free association, its decision in August 2005 to hold in February 2006 a referendum on self-determination on the basis of a draft constitution for Tokelau and a draft treaty of free association with New Zealand, and its subsequent decision to hold a further referendum in October 2007, and bearing in mind also that the two referendums did not produce the two-thirds majority of valid votes cast required by the General Fono to change the status of Tokelau from that of a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the administration of New Zealand,

Noting the holding of free and fair elections in the Territory on 23 January 2020, and noting also the most recent change of the Ulu-o-Tokelau during the General Fono, on 9 March 2020,

Recalling the 2013 constitutional consultations, to be further considered by the Constitution Committee, which were driven by the people of Tokelau and which aimed at developing a model of government structure that is culturally appropriate and sensitive to their current situation, culminating in the approval and ratification of the national symbol of the Territory, along with the constitution, national anthem and national flag,

Cognizant of the statement made by the Ulu-o-Tokelau at the Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, held in Nadi, Fiji, from 21 to 23 May 2014, and also of the written statement for the Pacific regional seminar held in Saint George’s from 9 to 11 May 2018 that the self-determination process of the Territory could not be addressed in isolation from the threat of climate change, the rise in sea level and the challenges to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,² and bearing in mind the intention of Tokelau to articulate its development and other priorities in the National Strategic Plan for 2016–2020, including consideration of the issue of self-determination and how it would prepare for a possible referendum on self-determination in cooperation with the administering Power,

Recalling the official launch in April 2017 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 implementation plan for the first five years of the strategy, from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2022, and welcoming the launch of the Tokelau national greenhouse gas inventory report on 11 April 2019,

Recalling also the announcement of the administering Power that, as requested by the Government of Tokelau, it had submitted a formal declaration to the United

² Resolution [70/1](#).

Nations to extend the territorial application of both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change³ and the Paris Agreement⁴ to Tokelau,

Recalling further the statements made by the representatives of the Government of New Zealand, as the administering Power, on 22 June 2018, at a session of the Special Committee, and at the Caribbean regional seminar held in Grand Anse, Grenada, in May 2019, which underlined the shared vision with Tokelau of building stronger governance and more effective management of public services, finances and infrastructure assets, with emphasis on quality health care and education, enhancing inter-atoll connectivity, including the vessel to support search and rescue missions, medical evacuations and general transport between the atolls, which entered into service in April 2019,

Recalling its resolutions [74/270](#) of 2 April 2020, entitled “Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)”, and [74/274](#) of 20 April 2020, entitled “International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19”,

1. *Acknowledges* the decision of the General Fono in 2008 that consideration of any future act of self-determination by Tokelau will be deferred and that New Zealand and Tokelau will devote renewed effort and attention to ensuring that essential services and infrastructure on the atolls of Tokelau are enhanced and strengthened, thereby ensuring an enhanced quality of life and opportunities for the people of Tokelau;

2. *Welcomes* the progress made towards the devolution of power to the three taupulega (village councils) since 2004, and notes that further discussion is planned on the recommendations in the report on the devolution review, compiled in 2012;

3. *Notes with satisfaction* the democratic elections in Tokelau held on 23 January 2020 for the tenth General Fono and the subsequent swearing-in of the Ulu-o-Tokelau on 9 March 2020;

4. *Notes with appreciation* that Tokelau and New Zealand remain 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;

5. *Recalls* the consideration by Tokelau of its National Strategic Plan for 2016–2020, which prioritizes good governance, human development, infrastructure development, sustainability and climate change adaptation, and notes the completion by Tokelau of the Plan, which determines 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;

6. *Acknowledges* 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;

7. *Commends* the completion by Tokelau in 2013 of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project with the support of the administering Power and the receipt by the

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

⁴ See [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21, annex.

Government of the Renewable Energy Award granted by the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority;

8. *Also commends* Tokelau for the recent measures taken to safeguard the health of its peoples through its “Tobacco-Free Tokelau by 2020” policy, and encourages the necessary support for its implementation from the administering Power, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders;

9. *Acknowledges* 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 this regard encourages, 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 acknowledges 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 notes with appreciation the launch of the Tokelau national greenhouse gas inventory report on 11 April 2019 as a milestone achievement;

10. *Recalls with satisfaction* the establishment and operation of the Tokelau International Trust Fund to support the ongoing needs of Tokelau, and calls 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;

11. *Welcomes* 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 this regard notes 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;

12. *Calls upon* the administering Power and United Nations agencies to continue to provide assistance to Tokelau as it further develops;

13. *Recognizes* 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;

14. *Commends* the renewed strong commitment of both Tokelau and New Zealand to continuing to work together in the interests of Tokelau and its people;

15. *Requests* the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples 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-sixth session.

*41st plenary meeting
10 December 2020*