



General Assembly

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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

Summary record of the 9th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 21 June 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Webson. (Antigua and Barbuda)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Question of Montserrat (A/AC.109/2018/10;
A/AC.109/2018/L.17)

1. **Mr. Romeo** (Premier of Montserrat) said that Montserrat was a Non-Self-Governing Territory to which the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples still applied. He therefore withdrew the request made by the former Premier of Montserrat to remove the island from the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, which had been premature, ill-advised and undemocratic, as the people of Montserrat had not been consulted.

2. The devastating effects of Hurricane Hugo and the eruptions of the Soufrière Hills volcano had led to the collapse of the island's economy. Two thirds of the population had been forced into involuntary exile due to the slow replacement of homes and key infrastructure. Despite positive work in some areas, many vital development projects had been unduly delayed by the United Kingdom Government, and critical initiatives had been deadlocked for years. He invited the United Nations to work in special partnership with Montserrat and the United Kingdom to put the island back on the path towards sustainable development.

3. Although over £500 million had been spent on Montserrat over the previous 20 years, the Territory remained dependent on the United Kingdom for 60 per cent of its recurrent budget and 90 per cent of its capital programme. If more had been invested a decade before to adequately replace key infrastructure, Montserrat would be much less dependent on the United Kingdom Government for both its recurrent and capital budgets. By investing intensively in Montserrat now, the United Kingdom Government would spend less in the long run.

4. There had been significant improvements in recent years: the volcano had remained inactive and had been converted into a significant tourist attraction, and the remaining population had settled away from its path of destruction. There was tremendous potential for the export of sand and stone, and the United Kingdom Government had helped to dig a geothermal well, which could potentially provide Montserrat with cost-effective, renewable energy. The United Kingdom Government, the Government of Montserrat and the United Nations should seize the opportunity to use Montserrat to showcase the potential for success when people were prioritized over politics.

5. Legislation had recently been passed in the United Kingdom that contradicted its stated policy of allowing the country's territories to take control of their lives;

that new legislation was undemocratic and ill-advised. Recent devastation in neighbouring islands had led many to believe that Montserrat was one disaster away from being evacuated. If United Kingdom ministers chose to act against the greater good of the overseas territories and their own taxpayers, then policy, legal and constitutional commitments to the overseas territories would be meaningless. Ambivalence from the United Kingdom signalled the need for a memorandum of understanding with the support of the Committee, including a development partnership agreement, as sustainable development was the forerunner to any move towards post-colonial emancipation. The memorandum of understanding should contain a list of priority projects, with committed funds and a set timeline for their design and implementation. It should also address the relationship between the United Kingdom and Montserrat. The Committee should appoint a neutral team to monitor progress in the implementation of the projects, and to provide yearly reports. The Committee should organize a long-overdue visit to Montserrat.

6. The timely replacement of basic but key infrastructure stood between the people of Montserrat and economic independence. The current conditions in Montserrat and the lack of preparatory support meant that requesting political independence would be a mistake. Instead, an effective partnership between the United Kingdom Government and the Government of Montserrat was essential.

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.17: Question of Montserrat

7. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.17 was adopted.*

Question of American Samoa (continued)
(A/AC.109/2018/L.10)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.10: Question of American Samoa

8. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.10 was adopted.*

Question of Anguilla (continued)
(A/AC.109/2018/L.11)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.11: Question of Anguilla

9. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.11 was adopted.*

Question of Bermuda (*continued*)
(A/AC.109/2018/L.12)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.12: Question of Bermuda

10. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.12 was adopted.*

Question of the British Virgin Islands (*continued*)
(A/AC.109/2018/L.14)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.14: Question of the British Virgin Islands

11. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.14 was adopted.*

Question of the Cayman Islands (*continued*)
(A/AC.109/2018/L.15)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.15: Question of the Cayman Islands

12. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.15 was adopted.*

Question of Guam (*continued*) (A/AC.109.2018/L.16)

Draft resolution A/AC.109.2018/L.16: Question of Guam

13. *Draft resolution A/AC.109.2018/L.16 was adopted.*

Question of Pitcairn (*continued*)
(A/AC.109/2018/L.18)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.18: Question of Pitcairn

14. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.18 was adopted.*

Question of Saint Helena (*continued*)
(A/AC.109/2018/L.19)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.19: Question of Saint Helena

15. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2018/L.19 was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.