



# 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 7th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 17 June 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Huntley. . . . . (Saint Lucia)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.*

## **Adoption of the agenda**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

### **Question of New Caledonia** (A/AC.109/2002/13, A/AC.109/2002/L.13)

2. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea), introducing the draft resolution on the question of New Caledonia (A/AC.109/2002/L.13) said that, compared with the 2001 resolution, no substantive changes had been made in the text of the draft resolution. During its formulation, consultations had been held with representatives of France, and consultations with representatives of New Caledonia, including the Front de libération nationale kanak socialiste (FLNKS), were continuing, although there were some difficulties in the context of that process. The text of the draft resolution in its current form was acceptable, however, and he called on the Committee to adopt it.

3. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2002/L.13 was adopted.*

4. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had completed its consideration of that item.

### **Question of Tokelau** (A/AC.109/2002/6, A/AC.109/2002/L.14)

#### *Hearing of a representative of the Non-Self-Governing Territory and of a representative of the administering Power*

5. **The Chairman** said that he had received requests for hearing from the Ulu-o-Tokelau and from the Administrator of the Territory. In the absence of objections, and in accordance with established procedure, he took it that the Committee wished to grant those requests.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **Mr. Watt** (New Zealand), Administrator of Tokelau, said that the useful role played by the United Nations in the trilateral process under way in Tokelau could be regarded as a "case study pointing to successful decolonization", in the words of the draft resolution on the question of Tokelau. On the other hand, more than 40 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the United Nations

could not confidently state when its work in the area of decolonization would be complete.

8. With regard to the Committee's case-by-case approach to the work programme, while that approach was being tested in regard only to Tokelau, it might well help in finding common ground for the solution of the remaining problems of decolonization. The drafting of the work programme for Tokelau had begun 12 months earlier, when representatives of the administering Power and of the Territory had engaged in a dialogue with the Committee's working group. The Territory had been assisted by its legal adviser, Professor Angelo, who had subsequently been invited to attend the Pacific Regional Seminar held in Nadi in mid-May 2002. At that seminar Professor Angelo had praised the case-by-case approach, which offered broad opportunities to the parties concerned in the decolonization process — the United Nations, Territories working towards self-determination and States promoting decolonization. Such efforts by Territories and support from States were essential to the establishment of a dialogue that would make it possible to achieve the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

9. It was noteworthy that the Committee was adopting a flexible approach to studying the situation in individual Territories, and that the work programme took into account Tokelau's special characteristics. The recognition that no measures would be imposed on the inhabitants of Tokelau against their will had given the Territory a feeling of being a real participant in the decolonization process. Tokelau must forge links with the outside world, and in that connection the dialogue at the United Nations played a very constructive role. The dialogue helped develop strategies for the achievement of self-determination that fitted the local context and encouraged the discussion of problems at the local level, thereby enabling the people to understand the questions that arose in any debate about self-determination. In addition, the dialogue allowed the administering Power and the Territory to work out a comprehensive plan for advancing the self-determination process and gain a clear idea of the road to be followed towards that destination. The dialogue also enabled Tokelau to continue more confidently on its path of devising a form of self-government that fitted its cultural context and establishing external relationships, particularly with New Zealand, which would ensure support for Tokelau's efforts to achieve

self-government in those areas where the Territory could not rely on its own capacities. If the issue was viewed in a broader context, two conclusions could be drawn: first, the dialogue process had the potential to be salutary for any administering Power and the Territory under its administration, provided that real effort was put into developing the process; one of the important themes of the Seminar was the increasing desire of Territories to be able to tap independent advice; and second, the United Nations provided a basis for the adoption of practical measures by administering Powers and Territories.

10. New Zealand continued to provide economic assistance to Tokelau. In the forthcoming financial year, as in the past, New Zealand would provide specific funding for the Modern House of Tokelau project to support both capacity-building and economic development. In 2002-2003, total assistance to Tokelau would amount to \$NZ 8.1 million. In 2002, work would be undertaken to review the level of budget support in the light of developments in the Modern House of Tokelau project and other factors. Progress had been made in establishing a trust fund to provide Tokelau with long-term revenue, and New Zealand would contribute capital of at least \$NZ 2.5 million for that purpose in the 2001-2002 financial year.

11. New Zealand and Tokelau believed that it was timely to review their relationship. The aim of that review would be to confirm the commitment of both parties to their cooperation, to identify the principles underpinning their relationship and to clarify each party's expectations of the other. It was hoped that the relationship framework would provide a solid foundation for the Modern House of Tokelau and for progress towards self-determination on terms firmly supported by both parties. Preliminary work in that area was already under way. The process of developing the New Zealand/Tokelau relationship framework would be collaborative, and Tokelau would have independent legal/constitutional advice throughout the discussions with New Zealand. New Zealand hoped that those discussions would bear fruit before December 2002. The outcome would be better coordinated support for Tokelau in all key areas such as sustainable economic development, capacity-building and governance.

12. **Mr. Tuia** (Ulu-o-Tokelau) said that in his statement he wished to focus on the efforts under way in Tokelau aimed at the achievement of self-

government; the work to develop a form of self-government and a plan of action for the next three years; and questions of the support required to sustain those developments. To add to the Committee's database of information, he had provided the full text of a report about recent nation-building activities under the Modern House of Tokelau project, as a way of expressing Tokelau's gratitude to the United Nations, and in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for the assistance and support provided to Tokelau.

13. Within the context of preparations for the transition to self-government, Tokelau was expanding its system of governance. The Territory had the ingredients for a national government, but the solid traditional foundation also needed to be strengthened. Historically the three atolls, which were effectively three villages, had always existed autonomously. However, they had a common history, language and culture, and their inhabitants had strong family ties. Tokelau was currently making decisions regarding the powers and responsibilities that should be accorded to national institutions. At the same time, it recognized the need for a national institution, like the General Fono, which would deal with matters affecting the entire Territory, including matters of interest to the external world. The powers of the General Fono would be sourced from the collective powers of the three villages.

14. In the event of doubts and uncertainties, the General Fono, as a national body, not a traditional institution, would turn to the council of elders, a traditional body which provided guidance at critical moments in history. Since stability in Tokelau — harmony, law and order — had been ensured by the councils of elders in recent times, Tokelau could build its system of governance on those solid foundations, which should not be changed, although to meet modern needs, skilled modern advisers should be brought in to assist in the work. That was the fundamental concept of the Modern House of Tokelau project: to reaffirm what worked for Tokelau — the three villages and their traditional systems of governance — but enhance them by providing modern advice regarding the inhabitants' modern needs.

15. He welcomed the decision of the administering Power and UNDP to provide support for at least another year to the Modern House of Tokelau project. Initiatives would continue to be carried out in the four

main areas: good governance, capacity/capability development, the “friends of Tokelau” network and sustainable development. Over the next three years, however, economic development, within the sustainable development strand, would receive the highest priority. Tokelau would map out a draft plan of action for the next three years, which would be submitted to the council of elders of each village and to the General Fono; possibilities for strengthening the village administration/management system and supporting village governance were also being considered.

16. No one should have any doubt about Tokelau’s determination to build a nation — a small self-governing nation in accordance with the principles of the United Nations. However, a great deal of help would be needed. Tokelau’s efforts to establish an independent State would be based on guaranteed support from the administering Power and the United Nations. In order to provide the necessary programmes for the people, including programmes in the areas of health and education, a sufficient level of resources and knowledge had to be available. Tokelau needed to start working seriously on revenue-earning activities, so that it would cease to be totally dependent on aid from New Zealand, and would earn more revenue and ensure more resources for the national budget. That would give Tokelau a sense of ownership, achievement and higher level of responsibility in adopting financial decisions. The political, economic and social initiatives carried out for Tokelau’s benefit needed to be better coordinated and carefully developed.

17. Plans and wishes could not be put into practice without the means of doing so. In that connection, Tokelau looked forward to redefining the relationship between the Territory and the administering Power, and determining the level and nature of guarantees in the relationship with the administering Power. In his view, Tokelau could build the foundation for sustainable economic development by developing its own fisheries industry. By modern standards the Territory did not have the experience, knowledge and skills required to ensure a better return from its economic zone, other than the income earned as a member of the Forum Fisheries Agency and from the issuance of fishing licenses. The commercialization of fisheries had thus become a priority for the three-year plan. The establishment of an economic base of that nature could have positive benefits for Tokelau’s sense of

ownership, achievement and higher level of responsibilities. In order to carry out those plans, skilled human resources were needed, and an initial injection of capital. Considering that, according to data from the latest census, the population of Tokelau was 1,515 people, and over half were under the age of 19, there was a very small group of people to carry out governance and support roles. Those statistical figures pointed to the need for the formulation of appropriate socio-economic strategies to deal with those young groups as they came of age and the possible need for external support for education and training in the context of the nation-building exercise under way in Tokelau.

18. In the process of capacity-building, Tokelau was finding out what it was capable of doing for its own development, under certain conditions, and what its limitations were. It was planning to continue its dialogue with the administering Power on those matters. In that situation, there was clearly a need to plan ahead. He was pleased to inform the Committee that the Territory and the administering Power planned to carry out an in-depth analysis of their relationship, so as to define it more precisely. Moreover, the administering Power was giving serious consideration to a request for the opening of a new facility in its capital to facilitate dialogue between the partners and more effective support to the Territory during the phase of nation-building.

19. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation welcomed the statements made by the Administrator and the Ulu, in which they had provided a clear and sincere explanation of their positions with regard to a final settlement of the question of Tokelau. His Government commended the efforts of New Zealand to resolve the question; it also had respect for customs and traditions, and well understood the sincerity and truth of the Ulu’s assertion that his people were trying to preserve their characteristics and traditional way of life. At the same time, the need to make changes to take into account the realities of the modern world needed to be borne in mind. The parties had prepared a detailed comprehensive plan reflecting the Committee’s views. In its efforts, the Government of New Zealand was taking into account the requirements and needs of the people of Tokelau. That approach would make it possible to achieve the necessary results in the decolonization process; his

Government would do everything possible to ensure its success.

20. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire) commended the report on Tokelau and said that the question of Tokelau was being resolved in the right way. The report frequently stated that Tokelau would be modernized, but Tokelau should carry out that process, on the basis of its own way of life and at its own pace. Above all, the interests of the population of the Territory must be taken into account. In the case of Tokelau there was active cooperation between the administering Power, the Non-Self-Governing Territory and the Committee, and all the parties had a responsible attitude towards that cooperation. The decolonization process was taking into account all the complex aspects, and he praised the Administrator and the Ulu for their work.

21. **Mr. Stanislaus** (Grenada) said that he fully shared the views expressed by the preceding speakers, and noted that in their convincing, sincere and well-founded statements they had clearly described the situation in the Territory. The partnership relations between the administering Power and the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Tokelau were a good example to be emulated. Usually relationships of that type were not equal. Many administering Powers did not regard Non-Self-Governing Territories as fully-fledged partners, but the cooperation between New Zealand and Tokelau was exemplary.

22. **Mr. Naidu** (Fiji) said that his delegation shared the Ulu's concern about the difficulties that would be faced by the Territory after the completion of the decolonization process. The world was a global village, and after Tokelau took responsibility for its own governance, the countries of the world would stand with it, above all New Zealand, which had met Tokelau's needs for a long time. If all the peoples of the world demonstrated good will and if greater assistance was granted, the Territory would be able to resolve the problems it faced. He commended the assistance provided by New Zealand and said that if the need arose, other members of the international community too would give Tokelau the necessary support.

23. **Mr. Requeijo Gual** (Cuba) welcomed the start of the implementation of the Modern House of Tokelau project, with the active support of UNDP. The Tokelau authorities could count on the Committee's full and

resolute support. His delegation had frequently commended the role played in the Tokelau decolonization process by the Government of New Zealand. Unfortunately, it was very rare for the Committee to take such a favourable view of the cooperation between the administering Power and the Non-Self-Governing Territory as in the case of Tokelau. His delegation called upon other administering Powers to follow New Zealand's example and study ways and means of enhancing the standard of living and improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

#### *Adoption of a draft resolution*

24. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea), introducing draft resolution A/AC.109/2002/L.14, said that there was broad cooperation between the administering Power and the Non-Self-Governing Territory. His delegation believed that the positive measures adopted were a step in the right direction. Tokelau's example could not be applied to other Territories, but with political will on the part of Non-Self-Governing Territories and administering Powers, it was possible to formulate individual programmes for each separate country. Fiji and Papua New Guinea were very pleased that the draft resolution met the interests of all the parties concerned and took into account the views expressed by the administering Power and by the people of Tokelau. Compared with the 2001 resolution, a number of changes had been made, and had been agreed upon by the sponsors, the administering Power and the people of Tokelau. His delegation hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

25. **The Chairman** said that if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

26. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2002/L.124 was adopted.*

#### **Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands**

#### *Hearing of a representative of a Non-Self-Governing Territory*

27. **The Chairman** said that he had received a request for hearing from a member of the Government

of the United States Virgin Islands. He took it that, in accordance with established practice, the Committee wished to grant the request.

28. *It was so decided.*

29. **Mr. Corbin** (Government of the United States Virgin Islands) expressed satisfaction that a number of Territories were now taking part in the Committee's work, although some Territories, especially Caribbean Territories, were still not involved in that process. Individual resolutions on each Territory had been consolidated into one omnibus resolution on some, but not all, Territories, and the question arose as to why that happened. He noted with disappointment the lack of resources and willpower needed to undertake the necessary studies and analyses so as to inform the Committee of the actual political and socio-economic situation on the ground. The lack of information continued to impede the decolonization process. It was encouraging that the General Assembly had adopted resolutions on the need to formulate political education programmes in the Territories in order to foster an awareness among the people of the possibilities open to them. However, such programmes had been formulated only for the former Trust Territories many decades earlier. Many Territories used scarce resources to implement limited and often incomplete political education programmes.

30. The public information campaign conducted in East Timor had been very successful, which demonstrated that similar programmes needed to be developed for the other Non-Self-Governing Territories. It had long been argued in General Assembly resolutions that the United Nations system, as well as regional institutions, should play a more active role in that process. It was therefore entirely appropriate to include socio-economic data on individual Territories from such sources as UNDP, the Caribbean Development Bank and others. In five of the seven Non-Self-Governing Territories in the Caribbean, country programmes were being carried out jointly with UNDP. It was also appropriate to include in the resolutions on the Territories information from public sources on political developments. In addition, it was important to include information on the recommendations of regional seminars in the resolutions on decolonization. The Committee and the General Assembly should pay greater attention to the implementation of the resolutions on decolonization; in that connection, his Government proposed that a

mechanism should be developed to review the implementation of the proposals in those resolutions concerning the adoption of measures by the international community. The 2001 resolution on the United States Virgin Islands had effectively been a repetition of the previous year's text, and it needed updating.

31. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that, as indicated in the working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2002/4), the first and only referendum on the political status of the United States Virgin Islands had been held in 1993 and its results had been considered invalid as less than the requisite percentage of the electorate had voted. He asked what the current situation was concerning the level of information among the population of the Territory about matters of self-determination, what had changed in that respect since 1993 and what work was planned in that respect.

32. It was indicated in the same working paper that the administering Power was casting doubt on the applicability of the term "non-self-governing", particularly in relation to the United States Virgin Islands. However, the Committee needed more information to confirm the validity of that argument.

33. **Mr. Corbin** (Government of the United States Virgin Islands) confirmed that the results of the 1993 referendum had been considered invalid. He was a member of the political status commission, which had been responsible for the organization of the referendum. One of the Commission's tasks had been precisely to educate the population and acquaint it with the options in the election. At that time it had been unclear to many people whether the issue was the implementation of an act of self-determination or merely a nationwide survey. It had in fact been a referendum whose results did not have binding legal force but would constitute the basis for further negotiations. In any event, the referendum had not been successful, and that had largely been the result of an inadequate level of information in the population and confusion about the proposed options. Before conducting the referendum, his Government had asked the Committee to provide information, and then had made a further request for observation of the referendum, but there had been no response to those requests.

34. Unfortunately, since 1993 the situation with regard to the level of information among the population had further deteriorated. The political education of the population was a fairly costly undertaking. Although the Territory's economic situation had improved considerably, the establishment of permanent political education would be too complex for it. Hence, the Territory's interest in receiving up-to-date information from the United Nations system, for example the information centres, whose activities did not always reach the population of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

35. **Mr. Stanislaus** (Grenada) recalled that in resolution 56/72 B, the General Assembly had requested the administering Power to facilitate the participation of the United States Virgin Islands in various organizations, in particular the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS). He asked about the current situation in that regard.

36. **Mr. Corbin** (Government of the United States Virgin Islands) said that under the Territory's current political status, its participation in international organizations, including regional organizations, required the approval of the administering Power. With regard to CARICOM, in 2002 the Governor of the Territory had made an official request to the administering Power for authorization to apply for observer status at that organization. The discussions had been positive, but no official reply had been received so far. As soon as the administering Power gave its consent, his Government would make a request for observer status.

37. With regard to OECS, in the mid-1990s his Government had expressed its intention to apply for status as an associated member, but the administering Power had had objections. However, the Territory remained interested in OECS, particularly since 40 per cent of the population of the United States Virgin Islands were immigrants from OECS countries. At the appropriate time, his Government intended to revert to that question.

38. As to ACS, his Government was following its work with interest, but had not made an official request to the administering Power regarding participation in that organization. According to existing information, Puerto Rico had announced its intention to join ACS.

When the administering Power made a determination in that regard, the United States Virgin Islands would define its position.

39. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) asked whether the holding of a referendum had been a local initiative, and how the cooperation between the Territory and the administering Power could be characterized.

40. **Mr. Corbin** (Government of the United States Virgin Islands) said that the initiative for the referendum had originated with the Territory's legislature, whose decision had been based on the outcome of consultations among the political leadership. The organization of the referendum had actually been the third stage of the process of reviewing the Territory's political status. The first stage had been the work in 1980 of the first political status commission, which, unfortunately, had not completed its tasks, but had assembled a great deal of information which had been useful later. The second stage had been the work of the committee of the legislature concerned with the organization of the referendum and determining the options for the Territory's political structure. The Committee had been unable to complete its work because of the elections to the legislature, which had changed its political composition. The third stage was the referendum itself, which had been held with the knowledge and consent of the administering Power.

41. Cooperation between the Territory and the administering Power was permanent in nature, and took place mainly at the socio-economic level. In the political sphere, there had been no progress since the 1993 referendum.

42. **The Chairman** asked why there had been such a low level of participation by the population in the 1993 referendum.

43. **Mr. Corbin** (Government of the United States Virgin Islands) said that there were two main reasons. The first reason was that the participants in the referendum had been offered too many options to choose from: seven. The political status commission had felt that there were too many options, but the legislation in force at the time laid down the requirement of seven options. The second reason was the inconsistency of the question of who could participate in the referendum. According to the legislation in force, any national of the United States of America who had lived in the Territory for 90 days

could participate in the referendum. Some sectors of the population who believed that what was at stake was nothing less than determining the future of the Territory had deemed it impossible to take part in the referendum under those conditions.

44. **Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda) expressed appreciation to the United States Virgin Islands for receiving such a large number of nationals of other Caribbean countries. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda was sometimes criticized by certain circles in the country for its liberal immigration policy, and it therefore fully appreciated the merits of the United States Virgin Islands. He asked why a visitor from the United States of America to the United States Virgin Islands needed a passport, whereas a visitor from the United States of America to Puerto Rico did not.

45. **Mr. Corbin** (Government of the United States Virgin Islands) explained that the United States Virgin Islands were outside the customs zone of the United States of America. In actual fact, a person visiting the Territory from the United States of America needed a passport not for entry, but for re-entry into the United States of America. Puerto Rico was within the customs zone of the United States of America, hence the difference. The problem of passports was one of the problems associated with the Non-Self-Governing status of the Territory. It would be recalled that at one time, the harbour of St. Thomas had been under the control of Denmark, which had been the administering Power before the United States of America. That problem had been resolved: the harbour had been transferred to his Government, although not free of charge.

46. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire) recalled that General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) provided for only three options for the self-determination of Non-Self-Governing Territories. In that connection, he wished to know why there was now a question of seven options, and what those seven options were.

47. **Mr. Corbin** (Government of the United States Virgin Islands) said that during the period leading up to the 1993 referendum, an inquiry had been sent to the United Nations. However, the reply received had been deemed incomplete, and as a result the seven options had been maintained. Those options were grouped into three categories and were as follows: integration, integration after a transitional period (first category); status quo, a somewhat modified status quo and broad

autonomy (second category); and free association and independence (third category). About 20 per cent of voters had opted for the second category. However that fact that only 27.5 per cent of the electorate had participated in the referendum made it impossible to draw any definite conclusions about the preferences of the population of the Territory.

48. **Mr. Stanislaus** (Grenada) recalled that at the Pacific Regional Seminar the Chief Minister of Gibraltar had referred to four options for the attainment of self-determination, and now the representative of the United States Virgin Islands was talking about seven options. It was clearly necessary to refine the terminology and make it clear that while General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) referred to three options, in the case of the Territory in question, there were seven options, determined by the particular characteristics of that Territory.

49. **Mr. Corbin** (Government of the United States Virgin Islands) said that the issue was clearly not what to call a given option, but what it consisted of. General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) provided a basis, but there could be any number of options, provided that they met the minimum standards that were envisaged. With regard to relations of free association, for example, at the current time there were various models: the Netherlands model in the Caribbean, the New Zealand model in the Pacific Ocean and the United States model, also in the Pacific Ocean. In the last-mentioned case the relations of association were perhaps the freest: those associated States had even become Members of the United Nations.

50. **The Chairman** said that it was his understanding that the seven options in question were determined by the specific circumstances of the Territory.

51. **Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that the representative of the Territory had not asked the United Nations to envisage any additional options for self-determination for the United States Virgin Islands, but had simply reported that at the 1993 referendum there had been seven options and that it was precisely the multiplicity of options that had been largely responsible for the failure of the referendum.

*Hearing of a petitioner (aide-memoire 9/02)*

52. **The Chairman** recalled that at its 6th meeting, the Committee had granted a request for hearing to a petitioner on the question of Guam.



53. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Quinata (Guam Commission on Decolonization) took a place at the petitioners' table.*

54. **Ms. Quinata** (Guam Commission on Decolonization) said that at the beginning of the work on Guam's Commonwealth Act initiative, there had been the same seven options for possible status of the island which had been proposed and had given rise to major confusion during the referendum on the United States Virgin Islands; she would find out how that had happened.

55. She was gratified by the outcome of the Pacific Regional Seminar held in Fiji in the previous month, where she had represented grass-roots organizations, and supported the draft resolution on Guam.

56. Since the United States of America had failed to move forward with the Commonwealth Act initiative approved by the voters of Guam and first introduced in the United States Congress in 1988, resulting in confirmation of the island's colonial status, in 1997, in accordance with Guam public law 23-147, the Commission on Decolonization had been established. That Commission had already completed a review of the three status options — independence, free association and statehood (full integration into the United States of America). A public education programme had been started but was now at a standstill, and the plebiscite for the exercise of the right of the indigenous inhabitants to self-determination was being postponed because of the economic situation, which was so bad that thousands of inhabitants of Guam had left to seek jobs in the United States of America; the Guam Chamber of Commerce had prepared a white paper calling for a larger military presence on the island, which had been endorsed by the leadership of the Territory and which clearly showed the extent of the American military presence on the island and its influence in local affairs because of the island's colonial status. Since Congress had not authorized the continuation of financial and medical assistance to the impoverished strata of the Territories, including Guam, during the current session she would be exploring the possibilities of assistance to the people from the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system.

57. Ever since Guam had first appeared at the United Nations in 1982 seeking decolonization through the exercise of the right to self-determination of colonial

peoples, the administering Power had tried in a number of ways to prolong the colonial situation. The latest attempt was a direct appeal to the United Nations itself, which had begun with a statement by the United States representative in the Economic and Social Council on the question of the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, in which she had said, in particular, that the military presence could be extremely beneficial to multilateral efforts to support international peace and security. Since then the administering Power had made other attempts to demonstrate the importance of Guam to the entire world as an American military base, trying to convince everybody of the need to maintain its status as a colonial Territory. The people of Guam were now afraid not that they would be the last Non-Self-Governing Territory, but that they would be the first global colony. If Guam was to be a colony, then the United Nations should be the administering Power.

58. **Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoué** (Côte d'Ivoire), referring to paragraph 15 of the working paper on Guam (A/AC.109/2002/8) noted that only 15 people out of 16,000 who were eligible had registered to participate in the decolonization plebiscite, and the main problem in Guam's self-determination was financial. He asked the Chairman to study the question of how the Committee could help the Territory in terms of financing, and also investigate the question of the seven options for self-determination.

59. **The Chairman** said that he would follow up on those requests.

60. **Ms. Quinata** (Guam Commission on Decolonization) said that the problems of Guam's self-determination were aggravated by the high proportion of military personnel within the population. There was also the very real problem of fear of the super-Power. The Committee's contribution to the work on Guam's decolonization could take the form of information assistance, for example the provision to the Territory of brochures on questions of decolonization, and also of encouraging the administering Power to be aware of the Territory's problems.

61. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) said that the sponsors of the draft omnibus resolution on the Non-Self-Governing Territories were interested in holding consultations with the representatives of Guam regarding the section of the draft resolution concerned with Guam. Recalling that the organization of the

plebiscite had been postponed because of financial problems, he asked about the timetable for further steps. It was to be hoped that in selecting the options to be included in the plebiscite, the experience of the United States Virgin Islands would be taken into account. He recalled that during the first part of the current meeting everyone had noted the level of cooperation between the administering Power, New Zealand, and the Non-Self-Governing Territory, Tokelau. It was to be hoped that the same level of cooperation would be achieved in Guam.

62. **Ms. Quinata** (Guam Commission on Decolonization) said that in the course of the political education campaign, there would be discussion of the three options for self-determination laid down by the United Nations. However, it should be noted that all efforts in the area of self-determination for Guam had been halted after the events of 11 September 2001, for understandable reasons, including fears of being accused of being anti-American. As to cooperation between Non-Self-Governing Territories and administering Powers, Guam too would like to communicate with the administering Power in a civilized manner.

63. **Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda) said that it was his recollection that in 1996 the then-representative of the United States Virgin Islands had requested the Committee to hold one of its regional seminars in Guam. It would be interesting to explore the possibility of holding such seminars not in countries which had already become independent, as was currently the case, but in Non-Self-Governing Territories.

64. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Committee, said that when the request had been made to hold a seminar in Guam, the Committee had sent a letter to the administering Power, but the response had been negative.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*