

Statement by Mr. Moinul Hassan Ahamed, Member of Parliament during the General Debate of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on 06<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Thank you Madam Chairperson

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Fourth Committee? I would also like to felicitate other members of the Bureau on their election.



I also take this opportunity to congratulate former Chairman, the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe, Ambassador Chitsaka Chipaziwa for the way he conducted the work of this Committee during the 65<sup>th</sup> session.

I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support during this 66<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly.

My delegation broadly aligns itself with the statement of the Chair of the NAM delivered on October 3, 2011.

Madam Chairperson,

Colonialism is not only anachronistic, archaic and outmoded. It also contravenes the fundamental tenets of democracy, freedom, human dignity and rights.

Today, as we discuss decolonization, many countries of the world are witnessing major social and political upheavals. These developments clearly indicate that the time has come to get rid of all aspects of colonialism.

The General Assembly in 1960, under Resolution 1514 (XV), adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The Declaration solemnly proclaimed the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end, colonialism in all its forms and manifestations. The right of peoples under alien subjugation, domination and exploitation, to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development was recognized as a result of this declaration.

The following year, the Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization was established to study, investigate and recommend action to bring an end to colonialism. India was in the forefront of these initiatives and was also the first Chairman of the Decolonization Committee.

Madam Chairperson,

Decolonization is in fact, one among the visible achievements of the United Nations since its formation in 1945. The fact that today, fewer than 2 Million people live under colonial rule in the remaining 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories when compared to 750 Million in 1945 is a testimony to the efforts to this august body.

However, these 16 territories also serve as constant reminders that the process of decolonization is as yet incomplete and that more needs to be done if we are to move the people in the Territories closer to their legitimate political status options defined in the Declaration.

Now we are in the third international Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020). It is our hope that by the end of this decade, these 16 territories would overcome the vestiges of a bygone system.

Madam Chairperson,

The way ahead must be a judicious mix of urgency and activism on the one hand, and one of sensitivity and circumscription, on the other. It must take into account, first and foremost, the needs and aspirations of the people of the Territories and their special circumstances, particularly developmental issues in context of geographical location, remoteness and fragile ecosystem in some cases.

It should be our common endeavour to work with the people of the remaining non-self-governing territories to realize what they perceive to be in their best interest. They should be given an opportunity to determine this freely from a well-informed standpoint. Many of the 16 territories already have threshold to form functional institutions that can thrive on their own.

Madam Chairperson,

We welcome the efforts of Special Committee on Decolonization (Committee of 24) to engage the administering Powers in a positive and constructive manner to end colonialism. Their role is crucial in attaining the objectives that we have laid down for ourselves. Cooperation, and not confrontation, is the key to our work. We are happy to note that this spirit has imbued the ongoing dialogue with the administering Powers.

India also appreciates the efforts taken by the Special Committee on Decolonization in formulating the report (A/66/23) and its recommendations. We would like to assure the Chairman of the Committee of 24, Ambassador Francisco Carrion-Mena of our full support and involvement in his efforts to move the agenda ahead and successfully complete the mandate of the Special Committee.

The Committee under his stewardship has already taken many initiatives such as the Caribbean regional seminar organized in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines on 31 May to 2 June 2011 on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Such seminars help to mobilize world opinion to support and assist the peoples of the Territories in speedily ending colonialism.

Madam Chairperson,

India-as always, is a strong believer in ideals of democracy, human rights, dignity and peaceful co-existence which are the corner stones of a civilized society. India has ceaselessly struggled for an end to colonialism since her independence in 1947 which was in itself was one of the most important milestones in the history of decolonization.

In conclusion, as a founding member of the UN and the Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization, I would like to reaffirm India's unrelenting commitment to achieving the goal of complete decolonization. Thank you.

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