

Distr. RESTRICTED

CRS/2024/CRP.16

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

**Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth
International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:
pursuing goals and addressing needs of
the Non-Self-Governing Territories**

**Caracas, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
14 to 16 May 2024**

STATEMENT BY

MS. MAREVA LECHAT-KITALONG

(FRENCH POLYNESIA)

French Polynesia President Representative speech (10 min)
Mareva Lechat-Kitalong, Delegate/PS for International Affairs of FP
14 mai 2024, Caracas, Venezuela, Séminaire C24

(10 minutes)

Check against delivery

Madam Chair,

I am deeply honored to once again represent the government of the non-self-governing territory of French Polynesia in front 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, and to participate for the first time in the Seminary on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

I also would like to thank the government of Venezuela for the warm hospitality.

On May 17th 2024, we will celebrate the 11th anniversary of re-inscription of French Polynesia on the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories, thus affirming the inalienable right of the people of French Polynesia to self-determination and independence in accordance with Chapter XI of the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People.

This year, this anniversary will be different.

In fact, after a decade of silence from an empty chair, the administering power finally initiated the Dialogue with us during the last 4th UN commission in October 2023.

We trusted that the administering power would do so, because France values democracy, and the democratic voice of *Maohi* people was heard.

I recall that in June 2022, the *Tavini Huiraa* party won the 3 seats at the National Assembly of France. The “blue” wave was only starting. Then came our general elections. The same party won both rounds in April 2023, and now holds 38 out of 57 seats of the deliberative Assembly of French Polynesia. And Mr Moetai BROTHERRSON, who previously won the legislative election, was elected as the “*Manatu*”, the President of French Polynesia on May 12th .

The then Prime Minister of France Elizabeth Borne, congratulated him on his election and also recognized a “*deeply respectful parliamentarian. A firm opponent but committed to democratic debate and always ready for dialogue*”. She said “Our political choices are deeply distant, but our attachment to the values of democracy and the republic will always bring us together.” ‘The questions that arise are major, we will not seek to circumvent them, but we must take the time to converge on a method’.

The time to converge on a method started.

Madam Chair, I would like to confirm to you that the government of French Polynesia fully supports a proper decolonization process and self-determination process under the scrutiny of the United Nations.

Our president invitation to the administering Power for a democratic debate and dialogue over these processes remains.

He is pursuing a decolonization process which could be cited as an example for the World. A genuine and innovated process. A peaceful yet determined path. Without exclusion, nor ruptures, respectful of our mutual interests.

And for that goal, the C24 UN committee is fundamental.

The theme of this caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism is “**pursuing goals and addressing needs of the Non-Self-Governing Territories**”.

All of us attendees are reunited around the “*conscious of the need for the creation of conditions of stability and well being and peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for the principal of equals rights and self determination of all peoples*” as stated in the 1514 Declaration.

The goal 1 is a program of work.

The United nations decolonization committee role is fundamental, in “*assisting the movement of independence in NSG territories*”.

The most recent resolution concerning the implementation of the 1514 declaration is the “resolution 78/91 of 7 December 2023. Its paragraph 6. is “*calling upon the administering Powers to cooperate fully with the special committee to develop and finalize, as soon as possible, a constructive program of work on a case-by-case basis for the Non Self-Governing Territories, to facilitate the implementation of the mandate of the Special*

Committee and the relevant resolutions on decolonization, including resolutions on specific territories”.

Our President pleaded for the insertion of the 2022 resolution in the French Polynesia resolution. I hereby reiterate his will to insert the 2023 resolution and the reference of the constructive program of work on a case-by-case basis in the preliminary paragraph of our resolution.

Reference to the program of work would also be more effective if inserted in the operative paragraphs as a new one.

Our deliberative Assembly of French Polynesia, today represented by his President Mister Antony GEROS, created a “Special Committee on Decolonization”, with the participation of the President or his Representative.

The committee, through its resolution n°1-2024/CSD/APF of the 19th of January 2024, asked the President to present a work of program to the administering Power.

Our President stands ready to co-construct this programme of work with the administering power, with France.

Her Excellency Madame ROGER-LACAN already knows that our door is always open to her and the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, His Honourable Mister SEJOURNE, for any discussions, including the decolonization one.

Votre Excellence, Mme ROGER-LACAN, les portes de la Présidence de la Polynésie française sont grandes ouvertes au Ministère de l’Europe et des Affaires Etrangères pour tous les sujets de discussion, y compris celui du programme de travail que nous devrions co-construire et qui nous mènera pacifiquement et démocratiquement à un référendum d’auto-détermination.

This program of work is the C24 committee goal. It will be instrumental to address the needs of our non self-governing territory, French Polynesia.

What are the needs of our NSGT ?

1. The first need is SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our President said in October that *““Decolonization” is often seen as an affront by administrative powers, as a concern by those who no longer aspire to emancipation, and as a remedy for all ills by those who desire it. In reality, for everyone, it is, above all, an exercise in introspection and openness to others.*

Decolonizing also means ensuring harmonious socio-economic development in line with our identity, our history, our culture, our resources and our constraints.

We have no reason to doubt France's desire to support us on the path to this development, based on four priority sectors: tourism, the primary sector, renewable energies and the digital economy. ”

Sustainable socio-economic development also suppose intangible ownership of Maohi people over its natural ressources.

Marine resources including undersea minerals shall not not suffer any legislative enlargement of the list of “strategic” materials, a list upon which only the administering power has control, in Paris.

The rights of our people over their natural resources, including terrestrial ones, but also aerial and spatial resource which are now collected by the French state, are also fundamental.

It is also relevant to include all consequences of the 193 nuclear tests in our resolution and discussions. For example to take into account the possible trans-generational damages of the nuclear test contamination. An updated dialogue must be re-established on this issue.

The work plan shall be based first of the understanding of the French Polynesia comprehensive political, constitutional and socio-economic situation. Thanks to information coming from French Polynesia, but also from the administering power.

Thus, we invite our administering Power to respond to the request of this honorable UN C24 committee by submitting “ information on French Polynesia under Article 73 e of the Charter”.

2. The second need is awareness about the decolonization path.

We would be honored that another phase of the work plan be in the hands of this honourable committee : to raise awareness of our People about what is the United Nations, how it works, what is the role of the decolonization committee and of course, what is the right of self determination. What options would be available. What would happened during the referendum campaign, how the referendum would happen, and what would be the next steps.

We do not want that what happened in New Caledonia for the 3rd referendum in 2021 happen in our Country. For a question so fundamental as Independence or not, the majority of the registered voters for the referendum shall be mandatory for the result to be legitimate and democratic.

I give you the edited resolution we suggest the General assembly to adopt later.

Finally, the reference in § 3 “*recalling the previously made calls for the delisting of the Territory*” shall be deleted. The inexorable and unique way to delist French Polynesia is now the decolonization path.

Thank you for your attention.