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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

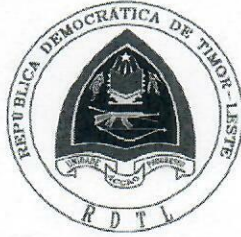
**Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth
International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:
pursuing goals and addressing needs of
the Non-Self-Governing Territories**

Caracas, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

14 to 16 May 2024

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF

TIMOR-LESTE



THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK

STATEMENT OF TIMOR-LESTE
TO BE DELIVERED BY

H.E. AMBASSADOR DIONISIO DA COSTA BABO SOARES
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

AT THE REGIONAL SEMINAR OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
DECOLONIZATION (C24)
On the issue of Western Sahara

14-16 May 2024
Caracas, Venezuela

Check Against Delivery

Dear Madam Chair,

I want to start by congratulating you on being reelected as Chair, along with the Bureau members of this Special Committee. We have full faith in your leadership and offer our complete support for guiding this Committee. I also wish to thank the Government of Venezuela for hosting the Seminar. We look forward to the outcomes that will assist in the decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories as per UN resolutions.

Madam Chair and Excellencies,

As we enter the fourth international decade aiming to eradicate colonialism, it is vital for this special committee to prioritize the aspirations and rights of the people in these territories in relation to their political status, history, society, economy, environment, and culture. This will help in advancing decolonization and assisting them in overcoming challenges to achieve sustainable development. Open dialogue and negotiations involving all stakeholders are necessary for resolving conflicts and determining the future status of these territories in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

On the issue of Western Sahara, which is recognized as the final colony in Africa, it is important to expedite its decolonization, particularly by supporting the affirmation of the UN's framework backing the self-determination of the Sahrawi people. Moreover, the Special Committee should utilize multilateral efforts, including those of the African Union, to mediate the conflict between the two African Union members, the Sahrawi Republic and Morocco, with the goal of achieving a peaceful and enduring resolution consistent with the AU Constitutive Act and relevant OAU/AU resolutions.

Madam Chair and Excellencies,

Given the lack of official visits to Western Sahara by the Committee since 1975, it is important for the Special Committee to arrange a visit to the region to thoroughly assess the current situation. With significant changes having occurred, it is essential for Committee members to directly engage with the

local community, officials, and other key stakeholders to gain firsthand knowledge of the evolving dynamics in Western Sahara. This will aid in better understanding the decolonization process in the region and furthering the principles of self-determination and human rights.

Recent escalations underscore the necessity of bolstering the UN presence in the region, including integrating human rights monitoring within the mandate of MINURSO. Ongoing dialogues and negotiations among relevant parties are crucial to advancing the decolonization process in Western Sahara.

In closing, Timor-Leste echoes the calls for the full implementation of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) mandate to enable a democratic exercise of self-determination by the people of the Western Sahara to choose their own destiny. We urge all involved parties to support the UN peace process in Western Sahara and protect their fundamental human rights, including the right to control their own natural resources.

Thank you.