



# SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE

## PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AMIDST SHIFTING GLOBAL TRENDS

Reviewing Sustainable and Viable  
Means of Assisting Non-Self-Governing Territories

Intensifying Cooperation in the Peaceful Use  
and Exploration of Outer Space

# REVIEWING SUSTAINABLE AND VIABLE MEANS OF ASSISTING NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

## INTRODUCTION

The end of the Second World War unlocked opportunities for independence of territories from their respective colonial powers. With the Charter of the United Nations, these territories were later recognized as the Member States of the International Community. However, numerous states were still under Colonial Powers. This led to the creation of the International Trusteeship Council, the former committee established under the United Nations that was tasked to monitor a total of 11 "Trust" Territories under its system. More than 80 territories have gained independence over the years, and among them were the 11 Trust Territories that have achieved self-determination and have been recognized as independent states. Thus in 1994, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) terminated the International Trusteeship Council as its responsibilities accorded in the UN Charter have already been well accomplished. However, aside from the Trust Territories given under the Council, 17 classified as Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGTs) under UN are currently still intact. NSGTs are defined as territories whose

peoples have not yet attained the full measure of self-governments that are mostly due to the incapability of its peoples to govern themselves. This is a result of their dependence on Colonial Powers

## PAST ACTIONS

In 1960, in the hopes of speeding decolonization procedures, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted *the Resolution 1514 (XV)* titled the "*Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.*" This called upon all Colonial or Administering Powers to reaffirm their faith in the fundamental human rights, the promotion of social progress, the equal rights of men, women, and of nations, large and small, the rights in the dignity and worth of the human person, and the better standards of life in larger freedom. According to South Africa's Minister Counselor, the continued existence of colonialism prevents the development of international economic cooperation, hampers the economic, social and cultural development of

dependent peoples, and militates against the United Nations' ideal of universal peace.

As the issue remained stagnant, in 1988, the UNGA moved to implement a resolution in the thirtieth year of the declaration known as the Resolution 1514 (XV). This promulgated and established the first *International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism* of 1990-2000. The *Special Political and Decolonization (SPECPOL)* Committee was assigned to make reports on monitoring the NSGTs where, by the end of the decade resulted to *AVRES/52/78* titled the *"Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples."* This called upon all Member States, especially the Administering Powers of the NSGTs, to ensure that foreign economic activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, under their administration, are directed to assist its peoples in exercising their right to self-determination.

The resolution urged all states to render moral and material assistance to the peoples of the colonial Territories. All Administering Powers together with the Governments of the Territories under their supervision were implored to take steps in enlisting and making efficient use of all possible support, on both a bilateral and

multilateral basis, in strengthening of the economies of those Territories. Furthermore, this resolution also called upon special Administering Powers to remove military bases within their directed Territory in compliance with the related resolution of UNGA. This resolution urged these Powers to not involve their respective NSGTs in any kind of offensive acts or interference against other States.

The fortieth anniversary of the *"Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples"* in the year 2000 established the next decade regarding the elimination of colonialism, *"the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in the years 2001-2010."* The UNGA continuously carried out the implementation of the declaration through monitoring and submitting reports on managing these Territories. However, two years towards the end of the decade, discussions on decolonization was intensified. A general debate opens on decolonization stating that eradicating colonialism requires fresh, concrete, and creative impetus.

In 2008, the General Assembly adopted *Resolution 63/110*, which requested the Special Committee to continue its search for suitable means to immediately and completely



implement the Declaration. This aims to accomplish the actions and resolutions it has concurred in the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in all Territories that are still under a Colonial Power and have not fulfilled their right to self-determination. In relation to Resolution 63/110, other resolutions were passed regarding specific matters reaffirming and renewing areas from the Implementation of Resolution 1541 (XV).

To continue the progress made within the second decade, the General Assembly adopted resolution *A/RES/65/119* on December 2010, wherein it proclaimed the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism in the years 2011-2020. The UNGA once again called upon the Member States to cooperate with the Special Committee on the situation regarding the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

## CURRENT ACTIONS

On June 2013, the committee approved a draft resolution on the information concerning NSGTs. The draft resolution *A/AC.109/2013/L.4* tackled the dissemination of information on decolonization, which states that this division of data plays an important role in fostering the

decolonization declaration's goals. It emphasized the role of the Department of Public Information, through the UN information Centers in spreading UN's programs at a regional level. It stated that time and communication of the Administering Powers is crucial for disseminating adequate information. Moreover, under document *A/AC.109/2013/L.5*, the General Assembly requested Managing Powers to work together with the Special Committee in a prospect of visiting or sending special missions with adherence to the decolonization mandate. The same year at December, the UNGA adopted resolution *A/RES/68/90* where the Member States were requested to offer educational and training assistance for the peoples of NSGTs. It also urged Administering Powers to spread the Territories under their supervision for these people to completely fulfill the assistance offered. Thus, the Secretary General reaffirms this statement in annual reports to render scholarships and training facilities, made available to the inhabitants of NSGTs.

The *Economic and Social Council* (ECOSOC) adopted Resolution *E/RES/2015/16* in July 2015, wherein international organizations associated with the UN are implored to support Non-Self-Governing Territories. It is stated in the resolution that NSGTs face difficulties in planning and implementing sustainable development



without the assistance of these agencies and institutions as these Territories heavily depend on their administering power. Member states of these agencies and other UN organizations are encouraged to intensify their efforts in order to be able to fully and effectively implement their duties to these Territories. In relation to this, efforts to revise and reaffirm the provision under the resolution were implemented in E/RES/2016/20, which was created in July 2016.

Furthermore, in 2013, the General Assembly adopted resolution *A/RES/67/134*, which discusses the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People. The resolution reiterated Resolution *A/RES/65/119*, wherein it was declared that the period 2011-2020 would be known as the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. The resolution recognized that eradication of colonialism continues to be one of the top priorities of the UN along with racial discrimination and violations of human rights.

As the committee continues to urge Administering Powers concerned in effectively setting out measures to protect and guarantee the rights of the people from Non-Self-Governing Territories, the United Nations called upon all member states to address the issue of self-

government and discussed feasible mechanisms to implement the decolonization procedure as guided by the principles embedded in the UN Charter. This meeting resulted in their recently reviewed project last 2016, which was titled "What UN can do to assist Non-Self-Governing Territories."

This framework discussed the works that different committees of the United Nations and other International Organization has done in assisting these territories. Under this committee, the following are continuously being done to assist NSGTs:

1. Keeping the political, economic, and social situation in Non-Self-Governing Territories under review;
2. Provides information on territorial developments;
3. Facilitates Territory-specific decolonization processes under way;
4. Offers advice on the decolonization options under the Declaration;
5. Conducts annual regional seminars for face-to-face discussion with territorial and civil society representatives as well as experts; and
6. Dispatches fact-finding and advisory visiting missions to Territories.

Reports regarding the project shall be discussed in their next committee session. Nonetheless, other UN agencies were able to carry out the measures in assisting the people of the NSGTs. The *Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS)* assists these Territories in promoting Sustainable Development Goals, especially on the reduction of people living in poverty. The *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* provides recovery programs and capacity building in environmental sustainability. The *Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)* provides support in creating sustainable rural development policies. The *International Labor Organization (ILO)* provides Territories with technical and advisory services on labor matters.

## CONCLUSION

### THE DECOLONIZATION OF EAST TIMOR IN 2002

During the eighteenth century, East Timor was divided between the North and East, where the Dutch (Netherlands) occupied the North and the Portuguese (Portugal) in the East. After the Cold War, the western part of East Timor was handed over to Indonesia under the ruling of President

Suharto. The eastern part of East Timor was abandoned by the Portuguese colony in the middle of 1970s, however, was afterwards conquered by the Indonesians. Resistance groups such as the Fretilin (Frente Revolucionaria do Timor Leste Independence) started to emerge, which then led to a collision between the Indonesian government and Timorese resistance groups. The battle between the two resulted in mass persecutions, displacements, and even ethnic cleansing, which lasted until the presidential term of President B.J. Habibie. The presidency of Habibie halted the conflict of the state until the United Nations was asked to adopt a referendum to assist the voting process of determining the autonomy of East Timor from Indonesia. The result of the referendum granted the autonomy of East Timor with approximately 70% votes. The settled separation of East Timor from Indonesia created another conflict that brought intervention to the state.

The adoption of *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1246* granted INTERFET (International Forces East Timor) Australian-led intervention to enter East Timor in September 1999 during the post-ballot period. The call for intervention in the state was due to the ostensible number of affected Timorese victims of famine, displacement, death and injuries. INTERFRET assisted UNAMET (United Nations



Mission in East Timor) in providing relief aid in the forms of food programs, which was headed by *World Food Programme*, water sanitation programs led by major international Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) facilitated medical activities and carried out visitations for prisoners. Australia rendered development aid where resources were transferred to East Timor. Likewise, the deployment of 10,000 troops to protect convoys for the delivery of aid was also an exercise of counterinsurgency. Finally, East Timor declared independence in 2002 and joined the UN in September the same year of its independence.

## MOROCCO'S CLAIM ON WESTERN SAHARA

Western Sahara is one of the largest areas categorized as a Non-Self-Governing Territory (NSGT). It was a former Spanish Colony annexed in 1975 and has been declared independent as the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in 1976. The case is not entirely due to the incapability of the peoples of the Western Sahara to govern themselves, but because its peoples were not given the next step in decolonization, which was a referendum for their right to self-determination. At present, it

is currently a long-running disputed territory, mainly between Morocco and the Western Sahara, but to some extent, also for the entirety of North Africa. The territorial dispute had been a constant battle of governance and diplomacy between Morocco and the People of Western Sahara who are the Indigenous Saharawi peoples headed by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) or the Polisario Front. Western Sahara then gained the current title of the territory as "the last colony in Africa."

Morocco colonized the region towards the establishment of the Western Sahara's independence in November 1975. To stigmatize and mark their control over the Territory, an event called the "Green March" occurred, where approximately 350,000 Moroccans moved into the Western Sahara. With that, the United Nations brokered ceasefire that became the consequence of half the population living in the Sahara to live a life in refugee camps. In the present day, after 41 years of the conflict, some still lived in tents as it severely damaged the livelihood of the Territory's peoples.

The issue stipulated further when Morocco left the African Union (AU) in 1984 as the organization recognized SADR as a member and the legitimate governing body of the Western Sahara. It was stated that Morocco is unwilling to

cooperate due to extensive oil and gas reserves in the territory. Furthermore, immediately after the ceasefire in 1991, an attempt to resolve the conflict stipulating that a referendum is to take place, however, the disagreement between Morocco and the POLISARIO regarding voter registration stopped the possibility of the referendum. This was due to the issue of the citizens of Morocco who were a part of the "Green March" was insisted to vote by the Government of Morocco during the referendum. Consequently, the POLISARIO was against the idea. Today, the issue of colonization of the Western Sahara remains to be unsolved.

## GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. How can NSGTs achieve total independence from their Administering power without endangering their future development and security?
2. How can the declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples be implemented?
3. How can the Administering Powers in the decolonization process be persuaded to cooperate on the annexation of the NSGTs?



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# INTENSIFYING COOPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USE AND EXPLORATION OF OUTER SPACE

## INTRODUCTION

Global arms race and militarization have exacerbated the dangers that threaten mankind, as it impedes the very existence of the global community. Moreover, the rapid advancements of technology and space innovations intensified the issue on the exploration of Outer Space and the development of space utilization. With that, the United Nations has tasked the Special Political and Decolonization Committee to create feasible and sustainable protection for humanity in using space to mitigate and prevent such issues that will further aggravate the entire world. The committee was also mandated to monitor and create viable mechanisms on peace, security, and development regarding the use and exploration of Outer Space.

## PAST ACTIONS

The *United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)* was created on December 1958 under *Resolution 1348 (XIII)* as an ad hoc Committee on the *Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)*. It is mandated to encourage international cooperation on the peaceful use

and exploration of the outer space. UNOOSA is responsible for conducting international workshops, satellite navigation, and satellite meteorology. In 1959, COPUOS was established as a permanent body by the General Assembly. It is used as an avenue for governmental and non-governmental organizations in transposing information about outer space and promoting international cooperation.

COPUOS, as a governing body, is mandated to resolve issues on the exploration and the use of space. It is guided by the principle that Outer Space shall only be used for peace, security, and development that will be beneficial to all mankind. It is tasked to encourage space research programs, evaluate the extent international cooperation on the operations of outer space, study space-related activities and act as an overall guide to the utilization of outer space undertaken by the United Nations. The Committee oversees the implementation of treaties and agreements concerning the peaceful uses of outer space, however at present, the agenda topics before the committee are constantly evolving due to rapid advancements

in space technology, hence international cooperation is crucial in regulating matters of space exploration and space technology application.

The UNGA adopted *Resolution 1962 (XVIII)* declaring the legal principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of Outer Space. The resolution discussed several provisions mainly on the interest of mankind, outer space utilization and on the responsibility of states for their activities in space. The resolution further reiterated that national activities carried on by international identities should be carried on, in accordance with the principles stated in the Declaration.

It emphasized that the Outer Space is not subjected to national appropriation. All States are not entitled to claim sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, undertaken in the grounds of outer space. It also specified that all the exploration, technologies and development in the area should be accorded with the United Nations Charter.

In 1966, the *Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space and the Moon and other Celestial bodies*, or the *Outer Space Treaty* was passed by the Legal Subcommittee, a subsidiary committee of the COPUOS. The

Treaty was mainly based on the Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space or the Resolution 1962 (XVIII) with a few provisions and added policies. The treaty emphasizes that war technologies such as nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) shall not be placed, orbit on celestial bodies, nor be situated in outer space in any other manner. The treaty forbids the use of establishing military bases, application, or emplacements, testing weapons of any kind, or conducting military maneuvers. Furthermore, it serves as a reminder to those that may cause impairment of the outer space, shall be held accountable for the impairment caused by their space objects.

In 2009, the COPUOS and the *United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER)* discussed the importance to continue playing a vital role in guaranteeing that countries carry out the benefits of space activities to people around the world. They emphasized the urgent need to enhance capacity building so that developing countries distribute the available data. The COPUOS encouraged International Community to avoid using outer space as arena for an arms race whereby it can destroy the auspicious future of outer space and threaten world's very existence.



## CURRENT EFFORTS

The 70th General Assembly raised concerns in international space law and long-term sustainability. In regards to the issue, *Resolution A/RES/70/53*, a resolution adopted by the General Assembly on December 2015, tackled the transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. The resolution reaffirmed that all countries have the right to explore and use outer space in accordance with the international law. The resolution emphasized the importance of the prevention of arms race in outer space, as well as how international cooperation is essential to maintain peace and security in outer space. It also encouraged Member States to hold a regular discussion in the COPUOS, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament on the prospects for their implementation with regards to these issues.

In February 2016, COPUOS held a meeting in the United Nations in Vienna wherein they called upon member states to discuss the issue of sustainability in outer space activities; they emphasized the importance of sustainability and international cooperation when it comes to securing the long-term stability of outer space activities. They also emphasized UNISPACE+50, a special segment of the COPUOS meeting that

will take place on June 2018, wherein the increase in the activities in outer space will be tackled. The goal of UNISPACE+50 is to create an extensive agenda involving stakeholders, governmental and non-governmental organizations, wherein space activities will be able to contribute to the attainment of the *2030 Sustainable Development Goals*.

In September 2016, UNOOSA called upon representatives to gather for a workshop intended for matters of the "Contribution of Space Law and Policy to Space Governance and Space Security in the 21st Century." The conference stimulated a comprehensive dialogue regarding perspectives ranging from space law, governance, and space security, which included military and civilian issues and concerns. It reiterated capacity building efforts for the benefit of developing countries and to emphasize the importance of considering ways and preserving outer space for peaceful purposes. Furthermore, the objective of the workshop was to attain the goal of UNISPACE+50, which aimed to create considerations of mechanisms and processes in the long-term sustainability of outer space, as well as the mechanisms and platforms for space cooperation, and coordination at the international, regional, interregional and national levels towards stronger space governance and global partnerships.

During the 71st meeting of the General Assembly, *Resolution A/RES/71/90* was adopted. It tackles international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The resolution acknowledged the progress in the development of space science and space technology and emphasized the role of UNOOSA as an avenue where they can foster capacity building in the use of space science and technology. UNOOSA is urged to continue examining how space science and technology could contribute to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It also recognized the role of COPUOS as a global platform for international cooperation in space activities.

## CASE STUDY

### INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION IN U.S. – RUSSIA AND CHINA RELATIONS

After World War II, the United States of America and Russia have been competing for the title of becoming a superpower; as a result, the Cold War era took place in the history of the world. Both US and Russia, which at that time was still known as the Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) underwent various avenues in the fight for dominance to secure the title of a hegemon. Areas such expansion of the military, ensuring allegiances and technological

advancements were very relevant in pursuing the title of becoming a superpower and one area of competition relevant in the Cold War were the Space Races. While tensions have been present between the states, only the US and USSR were the states capable of acquiring space technology, and thus, in May 1972 both States decided to collaborate in the exploration of the Outer Space.

However, towards the end of the Cold War, the USSR dissolved and proxy wars erupted in the international arena. At the end, the United States of America visibly dominated the seemingly silent tension between both States, and the post-Cold War era severely damaged the foreign relations of both USSR, now known as the Russian Federation and the USA. Through time, it was somehow restored when the US invited Russia to become partners in 1993 to work on the International Space Station, which also led to the strengthening of US-Russia relations. The never-ending controversies from stern economic sanctions over Russia's involvement in Crimea and Syria to Russia's granting of Edward Snowden's asylum in 2013 further strained their mending relations. Tensions have resulted in some initial controversial statements and threats about the two countries' collaboration around space exploration, two major agencies, NASA and Roscosmos making damaged relations of

both states problematic for the prospect of their collaboration on International Space Station (ISS).

Moreover, another country is emerging on space developments. In 2011, China is the first country in Asia to launch a space station and put it in an orbit, thus in order to further harness the power of space diplomacy, the US was expected to engage other countries like China. However, the US accused China of industrial espionage in 2007 where the US stressed the lack of transparency in China's space activities. Hence, with strained diplomatic relations, countries that are capable of Space Exploration that can be used for the benefit of the International Community is yet to fulfill its full potential.

suffering the impediment of their current disputes or issues from other Member States?

## GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. How can the Member States intensify cooperation in the Implementation of the Outer Space Treaty?
2. How can each Member State contribute in utilizing the Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes?
3. With the current trends in the International Community, how can the Member States unlock their full potential in using space technology for peaceful purposes without



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