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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 4th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 14 June 2012, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Morejón (Ecuador)
later: Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Vice-Chair) (Cuba)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

(A/AC.109/2012/12; A/AC.109/2012/L.6)

2. **The Chair** informed the Committee that the delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay had indicated their wish to participate in the Committee's consideration of the item. He drew attention to the working paper on the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/2012/12) and to a draft resolution on the issue (A/AC.109/2012/L.6).

Hearing of petitioners

3. **The Chair** said that, in line with the Committee's usual practice, petitioners would be invited to take a place at the petitioners' table and would withdraw after making their statements.

4. **Mr. Edwards** (Legislative Assembly of the Falkland Islands) said that as a result of the defeat suffered by Argentina following its illegal invasion and occupation of the Falkland Islands 30 years earlier, that country had put an end to its brutal military dictatorship and experienced the longest period of democracy in its history. Unfortunately, the current Argentine Government persisted in its attempt to deny the people on the Falkland Islands their democratic rights and subject them to alien domination. It was incomprehensible that the Argentine Government could absolve itself from its recent past while seeking to punish a small and peaceful people for something that Argentina incorrectly claimed had happened almost two centuries earlier.

5. Contrary to the Argentine Government's allegations, Argentines were able to visit and had settled in the Islands. In a manner symptomatic of its hypocrisy, Argentina claimed to fight for human rights and United Nations resolutions, even as it ignored the rights of the Falkland Islanders and the principle of respect for self-determination enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Argentina's economic warfare against the Falkland Islands had taken several forms, including withdrawal from cooperation and active

attempts to harm the Islands' hydrocarbons, fishing and tourism industries.

6. Since the eviction of the Argentine forces in 1982, the Falkland Islands had grown out of its colonial status to become a democratic overseas territory of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Falkland Islands' post-colonial constitution was a reflection of its aspirations to continue its internal self-governance and determine its own future, which it hoped to do without having to endure the belligerent and bullying tactics of a neighbouring country.

7. The Committee would surely recognize how important it was for the people of the Falkland Islands to continue exercising their right to self-determination were one of its representatives to visit the Islands; his Government's invitation to do so had never been accepted, although the Chair's predecessor had visited Argentina. He wondered how the Committee could adopt resolutions on the basis of an impartial and informed understanding of the issues without such a visit.

8. According to international law and United Nations resolutions, there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination in any instance. That right extended even to those peoples involved in a sovereignty dispute, contrary to the claim advanced by Argentina, which persisted in its attempts to dilute the principle of self-determination set out in the Charter of the United Nations. As the principles of the Charter prevailed over all other international agreements and resolutions, it was strange that the draft resolution before the Special Committee reaffirmed only some of those principles. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), direct negotiations between the United Kingdom and Argentina against the wishes of the people of the Falkland Islands would violate their right to self-determination and deny their fundamental human rights. Moreover, the argument that the principle of territorial integrity supported the Argentine claim to the Islands was not supported by the facts, as the Islands had never been Argentine and no Argentine civilians had been forcibly expelled from them in 1833. Since that time, several Argentine presidents had confirmed publicly that Argentina had no dispute with Britain over the Falkland Islands.

9. Under General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), the people of Non-Self-Governing Territories could

exercise self-determination by free association, integration or independence. However, were the people to freely determine to remain as they were, the United Nations would accept the status quo. A poll of the electorate had shown it to be overwhelmingly in favour of remaining a British overseas territory enjoying full self-government while looking to the United Kingdom for guidance on foreign policy and defence, in view of Argentina's ongoing belligerence. In closing, he expressed confidence that the upcoming referendum planned by the Government of the Falkland Islands would show a result similar to those of previous polls.

10. **Mr. Summers** (Legislative Assembly of the Falkland Islands) said that he was pleased to make the case for the Falkland Islands once again, yet dismayed that it should still be necessary to do so, when the people of the Islands had so clearly expressed their wish to retain their current political arrangements. The Falkland Islands were a successful country, both economically and politically, and their inhabitants had a distinct and clear identity. Argentina was pursuing its unwelcome and unsubstantiated claim on the Falkland Islands with increasing vigour, arguing, incorrectly, that the United Nations had ruled out self-determination as applying to the Falkland Islanders, even as General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) protected that right. Despite Argentina's call to negotiate the Islanders' future without consulting them, Member States' obligation to respect the principle of self-determination could not be negotiated away or ignored when convenient, nor would calls for United Nations reform enable Argentina to achieve its objectives in that regard.

11. The people of the Falkland Islands came from many parts of the world and had developed their own culture based on a broad variety of influences. Despite a gross domestic product that matched European standards and a sizeable reserve, the Islands faced economic challenges that were compounded by relative isolation and vindictive Argentine attempts to stifle their economy.

12. The Falkland Islands continued to grow and had been economically self-sufficient for over two decades, relying on the United Kingdom for defence because of the illegal invasion by Argentina in 1982. The Islands neither paid taxes to nor received income from the United Kingdom. The Falkland Islands Constitution, last revised in 2009, contained a full suite of protections of fundamental rights and freedoms in line

with the European Convention on Human Rights, including the right to self-determination. The Government was composed of clearly distinct executive, judicial and civil service branches.

13. The Falkland Islanders had no wish to associate with Argentina and were comfortable with their existing post-colonial relationship with the United Kingdom, which had clearly stated that it would only discuss the sovereignty of the Islands if the population so wished. Argentina based its persistent claim to the Falkland Islands on spurious historical interpretations. There had been no indigenous inhabitants of the Islands, and no civilian population had been expelled. Families currently living in the Falkland Islands traced their local roots back to 1843. Large swathes of the Argentine and other Latin American populations could not trace their own families' history in the region back as far, yet they enjoyed their right to self-determination. Such double standards held by Argentina out of an unjustified lust for the Falkland Islanders' land did not make them second-class people with unequal rights and must not be tolerated.

14. In its post-1982 Constitution, the Argentine Government had pledged to reclaim - and in essence, decolonize — the Islands and to respect the interests of the Islanders but not their wishes. The wishes of the Falkland Islanders, who had settled the Territory peacefully for over a century and a half, were merely to be left in peace to continue their development and to make a safe home for future generations, an ambition impeded in every way possible by a much larger, aggressive and uncaring neighbour. On the thirtieth anniversary of their liberation, he called on all members of the Special Committee to remember and regret the untimely deaths of over a thousand young men in the 1982 war, and to celebrate freedom, justice, and the right to live in peace and harmony. In response to Argentina's call for negotiations with the United Kingdom, the Government of the Falkland Islands invited the Government of the Argentine Republic to listen to the views of the people of the Islands with a view to finding ways to cooperate in matters of mutual interest and to preserve the environment of the South-West Atlantic, for the benefit of future generations of Falkland Islanders and Argentines.

15. **Mr. Betts** said that as of 1982 it had become impossible for him, a fourth-generation Malvinas Islander raised on the Islands, to continue residing in the Territory due to his support for Argentina's

sovereignty claim. Year after year, the United Kingdom's intransigent refusal to abide by United Nations resolutions on the Malvinas question obliged the Special Committee to consider yet another draft resolution calling for a definitive solution to the sovereignty dispute. Such a solution must be reached bilaterally by Argentina and the United Kingdom, the only relevant parties.

16. The United Kingdom sought to manipulate the principle of self-determination in order to perpetuate a colonial situation at the expense of the Argentine people. Nevertheless, General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) had not been adopted in order to allow colonial Powers to consolidate their military conquests by installing a proxy settler community. Statistics culled from a recent colonial census showed that since 1982, roughly one third of the civilian population had been born outside of and spent fewer than ten years on the Islands, with a significant increase in the colonial population resulting from the administering Power's policy of contracting British employees alongside the severe restrictions it imposed on Argentine migration to the Islands. In stark contrast, for over a century Argentina had welcomed any native Malvinas Islander that had chosen to settle in the Argentine mainland and granted them Argentine citizenship. The administering Power's concerted effort to enforce a strictly pro-British position and conceal the obvious benefits of stronger relations with the Argentine mainland amounted to a totalitarian campaign of intimidation and persecution of dissenting Malvinas Islanders.

17. He stressed that there was no independent Government in the Malvinas Islands; the overwhelming majority of Government officials were citizens of the United Kingdom appointed by the British Crown. As the population represented by those individuals had been fashioned through strict immigration controls that favoured subjects of the Crown, it could in no way be considered a people entitled to the right to self-determination. It was therefore evident that it was not by rights but rather through military might that the administering Power was able to maintain the current situation in the region. The British military escalation in the area was of grave concern to Argentina and other countries of the region. The United Kingdom was utilizing the spurious pretext of self-determination to establish a powerful military base on the Malvinas Islands, in violation of the relevant United Nations resolutions. In light of the

legally sound and internationally recognized fact of Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands, the continuing British colonization of the Islands constituted an anachronistic and unjust situation that must be resolved peacefully and definitively through bilateral negotiations.

18. **Mr. Vernet** said that as an Argentine citizen, he was bound to the Malvinas Islands by their profound significance as the object of a sovereignty dispute and a national cause that dated back to Argentina's beginnings as an independent nation. Furthermore, his own family history was tied to that common cause, as his great-great grandmother, María Sáez de Vernet, had been the wife of Luis Vernet, the first political and military commander for the Malvinas Islands appointed by the Buenos Aires Government in 1829.

19. He read out entries from the journal his great-great grandmother had kept during that year, which vividly depicted her home and community, a microcosm of the Malvinas Islands of her day. The account attested to the presence of a cosmopolitan yet fundamentally Argentine population dwelling on Argentine soil, a historical reality that the distorted British version of events strove to conceal. Such a stance did nothing to further comprehension between the Argentine and British peoples.

20. The everyday acts described in his ancestor's journal — working, marrying, bearing and raising children, burying the dead — were also acts of control and possession, and indicated how history might have continued had it not been for the violent imperialist interference and usurpation perpetrated by the British in 1833. He was certain that the settlers that had come from faraway lands would have adopted the motherland of their children as their own and looked forward to a peaceful future. Against that backdrop, he requested that the Special Committee should promote constructive dialogue between the United Kingdom and the Argentine Republic in order to find a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the sovereignty dispute between them.

21. *Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Ecuador), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2012/L.6: Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

22. **Mr. Schmidt** (Chile), introducing draft resolution A/AC.109/2012/L.6 on behalf of the sponsors, said that the text acknowledged that the question at hand concerned a special and particular colonial situation that differed from other colonial situations as a result of the sovereignty dispute between two States. The only way to end it was through a settlement negotiated by the Governments of the two parties. Therefore, the draft resolution requested the parties to consolidate the process of dialogue and cooperation by resuming negotiations in order to find a solution, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

23. The issue was important to the Latin American countries, as demonstrated by the statements adopted at various regional forums reiterating their support for Argentina's legitimate rights in the sovereignty dispute. In addition, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States had recently adopted a special communiqué on the Malvinas Islands, in which it called on both parties to resume negotiations as soon as possible in order to find a peaceful solution to the sovereignty dispute.

24. The persistence of colonial situations in the twenty-first century was an anachronism that must end. Chile found it distressing that, notwithstanding the time that had elapsed and the numerous resolutions adopted by the United Nations to date, no direct diplomatic negotiation had been initiated between the parties. His country firmly supported the legitimate sovereignty rights of the Argentine Republic over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, and considered that bilateral negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom were the only way to resolve the dispute.

25. Noting that the thirtieth anniversary of the Malvinas Islands conflict underscored the urgent need to find a solution to the question of the Malvinas Islands, he called on the parties to resume effective negotiations as soon as possible. He hoped that the draft resolution, like previous resolutions on the subject, would be adopted by consensus.

26. *Mr. Morejón (Ecuador) resumed the Chair.*

27. **Ms. Fernández** (Observer for Argentina), President of the Argentine Republic, said that her

delegation included representatives of opposing political parties who were united in their conviction that the Malvinas question transcended the matter of Argentine sovereignty, as colonialism was an affront to a world in which many had died fighting for their independence. Argentina had suffered and continued to suffer tremendously as a result of domestic and foreign wars; the mothers of combatants buried in the Malvinas Islands could attest to that. A request to send a forensics team to the Malvinas Islands to locate their sons' remains had been addressed to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

28. The declassified Rattenbach report had shown that the dictatorship of Argentina had decided unilaterally to undertake the military campaign that had led to the events of 2 April 1982. Since its transition to democracy in 1983, Argentina had become an international leader in the area of human rights and boasted a migratory freedom rivalled by few other countries, welcoming citizens from all over the world. The cosmopolitan Argentine nation even included Englishmen in greater numbers on the mainland than on the Malvinas Islands, where one out of every three inhabitants was a member of the military.

29. She had not come before the Special Committee because of the events that had taken place 30 years earlier, but because of the events of 180 years earlier. At that time, Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands had been usurped when a British warship had forced Argentine Captain José María Pinedo to abandon the Islands in 1833. The British, despite being the great naval Power of the nineteenth century, had not succeeded in their initial attempts to take control of Buenos Aires in 1806 and 1807, owing to the valiant resistance of the people.

30. A letter written by Argentine General José de San Martín in 1816, requesting more soldiers and inquiring about those imprisoned in the Malvinas, demonstrated that there had been not only a population, but even a prison in the Malvinas at that time. Prior to Argentina's independence, the Islands had had 32 Spanish Governors. In addition, the Treaty of Utrecht and the Treaty of Tordesillas had clearly established which areas had been under the jurisdiction of the Spanish empire.

31. In 1845, an Anglo-French fleet that had blockaded the River Plate had been defeated by Argentine forces. That had been the third attempt,

while the fourth continued as a shameful anachronism in the twenty-first century. She wondered how the Malvinas, situated at 14,000 km from the United Kingdom and 700 km from the Argentine mainland, could be claimed as British territory. The Malvinas Islands were part of Argentina and part of the South American continental shelf.

32. General Assembly resolution 2065 (XX) of 1965 had been the first of 11 resolutions on the Malvinas adopted by that body, while 29 had been adopted by the Special Committee and countless statements had been issued by the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), CELAC and the Central American Integration System, as well as by the African States and the Arab States. They were all to no avail, as the United Kingdom had taken advantage of its privileged situation as a permanent member of the Security Council.

33. Negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom had taken place in 1974, in the utmost secrecy, during the third term of President Perón, as indicated by a letter in which the British Ambassador to Argentina had set out a proposal for agreement on a form of condominium by the Queen and the President. There were five main elements: (i) the British and Argentine flags would fly together and English and Spanish would be the official languages; (ii) all natives of the Islands would have dual nationality; (iii) the passports of the colony would be replaced by travel documents issued by the condominium; (iv) the constitution and administration of the legal system would be adapted to condominium and the governor would be appointed alternately by the Queen and the President; and (v) other constitutional changes would require the agreement of the condominium.

34. An Argentine counter-proposal, more favourable to the Argentine side, had been made: (i) both flags would be hoisted in public buildings and during public ceremonies; (ii) the Argentine, British and local currencies would be accepted and traded at an exchange rate agreed on by the parties; (iii) current passports would be replaced by a new document to be determined jointly by both administrations; (iv) the President of the Argentine Republic and the British Sovereign would be appointed joint administrators; (v) the official languages would be Spanish and English, and all official documents would be issued in both languages; (vi) Argentine, British and local laws would

be adapted for the administration of the Islands; (vii) the natives of the Islands would enjoy the benefits of dual Argentine and British nationality for all purposes; (viii) each administrator would appoint a Governor for a two-year term, the first being appointed by the President of Argentina while the other party would designate the Secretary of the Interior, or whichever executive official was next in hierarchy to the Governor; and (xi) the joint administration would gradually integrate the Islands into the political, economic, social and institutional life of Argentina. Unfortunately, President Perón had died in July 1974, and the British Ambassador involved in the negotiations had died soon afterwards. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, perceiving the Argentine political situation to be unstable, had aborted the negotiations, which would have followed the terms set out by the United Nations resolution.

35. Earlier that day, she had felt ashamed for the British when she had seen the so-called Falkland Islands flag flying at 10 Downing Street. A total of 649 Argentines and 255 British subjects had been killed in the conflict, and 449 Argentines and 264 British subjects had committed suicide afterwards. She wondered what the German people would think if the German flag was flown below the British flag at 10 Downing Street on the date of the German unconditional surrender in 1945, or what the Japanese would think if their flag was flown beneath the United States flag on the date of their country's surrender.

36. The Argentine people could not be blamed for the dictatorship; the people had in fact opposed it and been its victims. The search for relatives and friends who had disappeared still continued. Since 1983, Argentina's military had participated only in peace missions throughout the world. There were no Argentine soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan and she wondered why referendums were not planned in those countries.

37. Argentina had sufficient historical, geographical and political arguments to make its case, even without mentioning the agricultural and oil resources that were being plundered in a zone of peace. The countries of the region supported Argentina, not only out of solidarity, but also in self-defence: the South Atlantic was a demilitarized zone. Argentina, a leader in human rights, was also a leader in nuclear non-proliferation, despite being the country most advanced in nuclear science in the region.

38. Mr. Betts had had to leave the Malvinas Islands because he had been persecuted, and she had even had to ask, as a favour, that the relatives of those buried in the Malvinas should be allowed to travel there by air. Yet Argentina was a peaceful country, with open doors like no other, and had offered to provide weekly flights from Buenos Aires to the Malvinas. Thousands of British people lived in continental Argentina, which had very open immigration laws. Few countries of the world had so much freedom and respect for the rights to equality and freedom of expression.

39. It was not just a bilateral issue, but a global one, because the United Nations had different standards for its Members. Permanent members of the Security Council could choose whether or not to respect a United Nations resolution. It was a different matter for non-members of the Security Council, except in the special case of human rights violations in countries without oil or other resources, for which there were no consequences in the international system. The United Kingdom's lack of respect for United Nations resolutions went against international efforts to achieve a world that was more just, secure, equitable and egalitarian.

40. The world was moving to a different era, although some might prefer the old system. The question of the Malvinas had to be resolved sooner rather than later so that human beings could live in a civilized world in which everyone was governed by the same rules. The defence of South America's natural resources was a regional rather than a national issue. The defence of the role of multilateral organizations such as the United Nations was a global issue, and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly should be respected. The United Nations system could not last if some countries respected the rules while others systematically violated them. In the new era, change was inevitable and economic inequity and inequality might yet achieve what politics had been unable to do. Attitudes dating from the nineteenth century or the aftermath of the Second World War were out of place.

41. Argentina was open to resuming negotiations and although the 1974 talks had been interrupted, they had demonstrated that the United Kingdom recognized the existence of a sovereignty dispute. Argentina would continue to comply strictly with United Nations resolutions. The three key elements for negotiation in the new era would be energy, food, and science and technology. The United Kingdom should act more

intelligently, as a negotiation between the two countries would unlock many issues and result in partnerships that could be beneficial for all of South America and the international community. Globalization was moving forward and no State could act without affecting others. The question of the Malvinas was not merely a bilateral, territorial or sovereignty issue, as it posed the challenge of overcoming prejudices.

42. Argentina wished only to leave behind the anachronism of colonialism and construct a new story based on dialogue. She would not ask anyone to say that Argentina was right or that the Malvinas were Argentine, but was merely requesting dialogue. No State could refuse a dialogue and then claim to be a champion of human rights. Mr. Betts and Mr. Vernet had described the Malvinas of the past, which had sounded like a neighbourhood of Buenos Aires, or an Argentine province, with its mixture of culture and nationalities. That was what Argentina was and always had been. Lastly, she thanked the countries of MERCOSUR, CELAC and the Central American Integration System, the Special Committee on decolonization, the Arab and African countries and all those who had expressed support for Argentina's view that colonialism must be fully eliminated in the interest of building a new world.

43. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2012/L.6 was adopted.*

44. **Mr. Valero Briceño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that colonial situations and the occupation of countries and territories by foreign Powers violated the norms and principles of international law. Colonialist and imperialist practices that had continued since the sixteenth century showed that the use of military force was still a threat in international affairs. The Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas belonged to the Argentine Republic, and all Latin American and Caribbean peoples supported the just cause of Argentina. It was a sovereignty issue and there was no reason to invoke the principle of self-determination, as the British subjects settled on Argentine territory were not a population subjected to a colonial Power, but a population transplanted by the British Empire to the Malvinas Islands.

45. The illegal occupation of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and

the surrounding maritime areas contradicted the spirit and purpose of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It was contrary to the principles established in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Multiple resolutions and declarations of the United Nations, the Organization of American States and other regional forums, including the Declaration of 17 March 2012 by the Council of Foreign Ministers of UNASUR, had urged a speedy resolution to the sovereignty dispute.

46. **Mr. Núñez Mosquera** (Cuba) said that Cuba reiterated its full support for Argentina in the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands. The Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands would continue to be Argentine. Unfortunately, no progress had been made towards a solution, despite the many resolutions adopted by the Special Committee and the support expressed in regional forums. CELAC had recently issued a special communiqué on the subject and the Cuban parliament had made a similar declaration on 2 April 2012.

47. He reiterated the call for a negotiated, fair and definitive solution to the question of the Malvinas Islands, noting the need for dialogue and cooperation between the parties. The United Kingdom should respond positively to the Special Committee's calls to resume bilateral negotiations and resolve the dispute as soon as possible. Until there was a definitive solution, there should be no unilateral act that could change the situation of the Islands, as established in the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

48. The South Atlantic had been declared a zone of peace by the United Nations and any action taken to militarize it would create unnecessary tensions and would not contribute to a negotiated solution. The presence of any nuclear weapons in the region would clearly be incompatible with the provisions of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tlatelolco Treaty).

49. **Mr. Churkin** (Russian Federation) said that a fair and mutually acceptable solution to the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) should be achieved by exclusively peaceful means through bilateral negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom, taking into account the relevant General Assembly resolutions. His delegation welcomed the commitment of Argentina to establishing such bilateral

contacts. In the context of the dispute over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), his delegation was concerned at the possible militarization of the South Atlantic. The two sides should strictly observe their international obligations under the Tlatelolco Treaty and its additional protocols.

50. **Ms. Barruoin Machado** (Observer for Brazil) said that, although 30 years had passed since the end of the Malvinas conflict in 1982, there was still no definitive solution to the sovereignty issue. The General Assembly's repeated calls for the resumption of diplomatic negotiations between the parties had always met with a constructive attitude from the Argentine Government.

51. Brazil supported the Joint Communiqué issued by the Heads of State of MERCOSUR in December 2011, in which they had reiterated their support for the legitimate rights of the Argentine Republic in the sovereignty dispute relating to the question of the Malvinas Islands. Recalling the regional interest in an early solution to the dispute, the Heads of State had emphasized that the United Kingdom's military presence in the region was contrary to the region's policy of seeking a peaceful solution. They had also reiterated their opposition to British unilateral activities in the disputed zone, including the exploration and exploitation of Argentina's renewable and non-renewable natural resources and the conduct of military exercises. The Heads of State had emphasized the importance of reaching a peaceful solution in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions. In that context, the Brazilian Government reaffirmed the importance of an early resumption of negotiations and expressed support for the mission of good offices entrusted to the Secretary-General by the General Assembly.

52. **Mr. Wang Min** (China) said that his country had maintained a consistent position on the Malvinas Islands. Peaceful negotiations to settle territorial disputes were in line with the Charter of the United Nations and were an important principle to be followed and promoted by the international community. China hoped that the Governments of the United Kingdom and Argentina would pursue a constructive dialogue, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions on the matter, to find a peaceful and just solution as soon as possible.

53. **Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) said that there was no question as to Argentina's sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. Failure to recognize such sovereignty would be tantamount to an endorsement of the infringement of Argentina's territorial integrity. The Malvinas were a clear case of colonial dispossession. Her delegation called on the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to carry out his mission of good offices.

54. It was important to note that Argentina had always been ready to resume negotiations to find a solution to the dispute. That position had been recognized and supported by the international community, which at various regional forums had expressed its support for the resumption of negotiations between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom. Her country rejected the unilateral and illegal decision of the United Kingdom to conduct military exercises in the region and its exploitation of Argentina's renewable and non-renewable natural resources.

55. It was time for the colonialist and imperial enclaves in the Malvinas Islands to disappear and for the territory to be returned to its true and legitimate owner, the nation of Argentina. Nicaragua fully and unconditionally supported Argentina's defence of its legitimate right to sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, including the subsoil and natural resources.

56. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the presence of the President of Argentina at the current session highlighted the Committee's importance to Argentina, a State which had always respected the rights of peoples, honoured international resolutions and rejected foreign occupation and colonialism in all its forms. It also demonstrated Argentina's profound commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts, including the question of the Malvinas Islands.

57. The principle of self-determination could not be used as a pretext to maintain the status quo in a protracted sovereignty dispute that had jeopardized Argentina's regional security since 1833. Following the expulsion of the original Argentine inhabitants, British settlers had been installed in the Malvinas Islands, creating a special and particular colonial situation

which did not involve a colonized people and therefore did not come under General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

58. The Syrian Arab Republic supported Argentina's legitimate claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. It rejected all unilateral measures taken by the United Kingdom in the Malvinas Islands, such as military exercises and prospecting for natural resources, as they undermined efforts to start a constructive dialogue and violated relevant United Nations resolutions. The United Kingdom should implement the Special Committee's resolutions on the sovereignty dispute and enter into serious bilateral negotiations. Militarization of the region would escalate the conflict rather than contribute to its resolution, and the introduction by the United Kingdom of nuclear weapons into a nuclear-weapon-free zone was therefore a grave error. The era of diplomacy by force had passed and conflicts had to be resolved by civilized means.

59. **Mr. Touray** (Sierra Leone) said that his country had maintained the consistent position that the sovereignty issue concerning the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) should be resolved through a peaceful and negotiated settlement.

60. Non-Self-Governing Territories had different needs, expectations and concerns, and the Committee should therefore deal with them on a case-by-case basis. By General Assembly resolution 637 (VII), the States Members of the United Nations had undertaken to uphold the principle of self-determination of all peoples and nations and had recognized self-determination as a prerequisite to the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. Therefore, any solution that failed to embrace the aspirations of the Islanders would be inconsistent with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and would be tantamount to a denial of their fundamental human rights and a violation of their right to freely determine their political status and pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

61. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) said that his delegation supported a review of the working methods of the Special Committee in order to ensure that tangible results were achieved in its work. An innovative work plan should include real benchmarks to reflect the state of progress of the Non-Self-

Governing Territories towards self-determination. Otherwise, the Committee would fail to accomplish its mandate within the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

62. The Special Committee could not apply a “one-size-fits-all” approach to its work. Each territory had its own unique challenges and circumstances and had to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, with the cooperation of all the relevant stakeholders. Successive resolutions of the General Assembly on the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) had yielded very little result, but he noted that Argentina through its successive Governments had reiterated its desire to pursue its claim through peaceful means. However, the wishes for self-determination of the inhabitants of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) should be an integral part of the process.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.