



# General Assembly

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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 6th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 17 June 2013, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Morejón ..... (Ecuador)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Special Committee decision of 18 June 2012  
concerning Puerto Rico** (*continued*)  
(A/AC.109/2013/L.6 and L.13)

*Hearing of petitioners (continued)*

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

2. **Mr. Rochet-Santoro** (Concilio de Veteranos y Soldados Puertorriqueños) said that, after invading Puerto Rico in 1898 and imposing a colonial regime, the United States had described Puerto Ricans as blacks, mulattoes, Indians and mestizos who were incapable of governing themselves. The status of unincorporated territory imposed on Puerto Rico, which reflected that racial discrimination and the ideology of white supremacy, continued to the present day, even though a majority of Puerto Ricans had voted against colonial status in the 2012 plebiscite.

3. The case of Puerto Rico should be discussed by the plenary General Assembly; moreover, given the United States Government's racial discrimination and human rights violations against Puerto Ricans, the matter should also be taken up by the Human Rights Council.

4. **Mr. Mangual Cruz** (La Diáspora Puertorriqueña) said that for too long Puerto Ricans had been denied the right to self-determination enshrined in Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations. Despite the General Assembly's call, in its resolution 1514 (XV), for an end to colonial domination, the United States had oppressed Puerto Ricans by forcing them to use the language of that colonial Power and by making them subject to its federal laws without giving them the right to vote. The General Assembly's adoption of resolution 748 (VIII) as a result of the 1952 events that had made Puerto Rico a commonwealth of the United States had been vitiated by the use of coercion.

5. The issue of who should be eligible to vote — all those of Puerto Rican descent or only those residing on the island — arose with each referendum on the status of Puerto Rico, and the succession of inconclusive plebiscites had led to an atmosphere of uncertainty. Puerto Ricans should be able to decide their destiny without alien oversight regardless of their place of

residence; limiting voting to those residing in Puerto Rico would only strengthen the control exercised by the colonial Power. The United Nations should ensure that a proper mechanism was established through which Puerto Ricans could determine the status they desired.

6. **Mr. Castillo Ayala** (Coordinadora de Solidaridad Diáspora Boricua) said that the lack of sovereignty under the colonial system had caused an alarming rise in permanent emigration from Puerto Rico in recent years; that had resulted in a demographic imbalance — with over half the population currently residing abroad — that threatened the nation with gradual extinction. Since invading the island in 1898, the United States had imposed a policy of assimilation through education, cultural domination and the killing of nationalists. While Puerto Rican patriots had taken refuge in their folklore and continued their resistance, they wanted to sound the alarm about the plan announced by the current United States Administration to conduct yet another plebiscite. No nation could freely exercise its right to self-determination at the point of the imperialist's bayonet or under threat of economic blackmail. The only valid vote on self-determination would be one in which all Puerto Ricans participated and which was conducted under international law by a body empowered for that purpose by the United Nations.

7. **Mr. Jordán García** (Coordinadora Nacional de las Actividades del Cerro de los Mártires) said that his organization had been established in 1978 after two independence advocates had been recruited by undercover police officers to commit a terrorist act and then had been murdered during their apprehension. The defenders of the freedom of Puerto Ricans — more properly known as the Boricua nation — were under surveillance and their movements into and out of Puerto Rico were monitored. The island would remain a colony as long as sovereign power lay with the United States Congress. The long history of killings and persecution included the murder of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos in 2005 and the 32-year incarceration of Oscar López Rivera for alleged conspiracy. Mr. López Rivera should be released immediately and Puerto Rico should be granted observer status at the United Nations as the State of Borinken, as part of the effort to end colonialism and uphold the right to self-determination.

8. **Mr. Laspina** (New York Coordinator to Free Political Prisoner Oscar López Rivera) said that the

Puerto Rican diaspora in the United States formed an internal colony whose members sought to teach the younger generation about their history and culture and to instil pride through community activities. The organization for which he spoke united community organizations, individuals and elected officials in an effort to win the release of the political prisoner Oscar López Rivera, who during 32 years in prison had spent 12 years in solitary confinement and had suffered strip searches, sleep deprivation, denial of family visits and other human rights violations. To raise awareness, organization members had participated in conferences, panels and media interviews; they had also gathered signatures on a petition requesting President Obama to pardon Mr. López Rivera.

9. **Mr. Reyes Walker** (Partido Nacionalista de Puerto Rico) said that the president of his organization, who had been scheduled to speak at the current meeting, had been refused entry to the United States, the latest in a series of actions by United States authorities aimed at restricting his freedom of movement and yet another example of the repression of proponents of independence by a colonial Power that sought to isolate Puerto Rico from the rest of the world.

10. Fifty-four per cent of those who had voted in the 2012 plebiscite had rejected colonial status for Puerto Rico. Yet its current status as a United States commonwealth made it a de facto colony, for the United States controlled its defence, public security, treasury, borders, justice, commerce and customs. As part of the United States plan to control the hemisphere, Puerto Rico's infrastructure was being privatized and its labour laws were being altered to the detriment of social services and the labour market. The United States should end its military occupation and colonial control of Puerto Rico and the United Nations should recognize the Boricua nation alongside the State of Palestine.

11. **Mr. Ward Llambias** (Gran Oriente Nacional de Puerto Rico) said that Puerto Rico was fighting not only for its own freedom but also for that of Latin America, as the United States increasingly asserted its political and social domination. The United States Congress exerted control over Puerto Rican affairs and regarded the nation as private property to be exploited militarily and economically. Elections could not change the colonial status of Puerto Rico, as the results were predetermined, while the results of plebiscites

were ignored. United States law ruled supreme, as exemplified by the imposition of the death penalty even though it was prohibited under Puerto Rican law. United States agencies controlled such areas as customs, communications and immigration, and United States courts had absolute power over citizens' rights. Only the recognition of Puerto Rican sovereignty under international law could change its colonial status.

12. **Ms. Santiago Pérez** (Comité de Apoyo a Norberto González Claudio) said that her husband, Norberto González Claudio, had been convicted in the United States in 2012 after waging a lifelong struggle for Puerto Rican independence. Puerto Rican political prisoners in the United States were segregated from the general prison population; their medical treatment was delayed and their communications were censored. Family visits to Mr. González Claudio had been cut short, in violation of his rights. Puerto Rican independence fighters merely sought self-determination for their people, yet the United States continued to arrest and imprison them. Puerto Rico's status as a commonwealth was merely a guise for a colony governed by alien laws. All Puerto Ricans had a right to defend their human rights and national sovereignty. The United States of America should release the two Puerto Rican political prisoners it held, recognize Puerto Rico's right to self-determination, comply with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and allow Puerto Ricans freely to determine their own future.

13. **Mr. Berríos Dávila** (Acción Civil para el Status de Puerto Rico) said that, in the 2012 referendum, which had enjoyed broad voter participation, 54 per cent of Puerto Ricans had voted against maintaining the island's current territorial status and 61 per cent had voted in favour of statehood. The United States Congress must follow through on its undertaking to act on the results of such a referendum; consequently, it must allow Puerto Rico to enter the United States on an equal footing with the other states. He called on the Committee to draft a resolution for adoption by the General Assembly that would recognize those referendum results and urge the United States Congress to accept the status chosen by Puerto Ricans.

14. **Mr. Delgado Rodríguez** (Alianza pro Libre Asociación Soberana) said that the legal fiction of an associated free State, or commonwealth, had ended with the 2012 referendum, in which Puerto Ricans had heroically voted against maintaining their current

relationship with, and hence their economic dependence on, the United States. Consequently, Puerto Rico should be placed on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories under Article 73 *e* of the Charter.

15. He wondered whether the Committee would merely adopt yet another inconsequential resolution that would require Puerto Rican petitioners to appear before it repeatedly while the nation disintegrated socially and economically. It should instead ensure the implementation of General Assembly resolution [65/119](#), with the goal of decolonizing Puerto Rico during the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and should refer the issue of Puerto Rico's status to the plenary General Assembly. The United States, for its part, should accept the will of Puerto Ricans and begin talks on a mechanism for decolonizing the island. It should also immediately release the Puerto Rican activist Oscar López Rivera.

16. **Ms. Susler** (National Lawyers Guild) said that unprecedented numbers of Puerto Ricans in every sector of society, supported by a resolution of the Senate of Puerto Rico, were demanding the release of Oscar López Rivera, who had spent 32 years in prison for advocating the cause of Puerto Rican independence. Meanwhile, his jailers had heightened their harassment and surveillance and imposed stricter censorship against Mr. López Rivera. The Committee should urge the President of the United States to release him.

17. The United States Government should also cease its attacks against members of the Puerto Rican independence movement and prosecute those responsible for the assassination of several of them; release Puerto Rican political prisoner Norberto González Claudio; withdraw the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other United States police and military forces from Puerto Rico; clean up and return to Puerto Ricans the land on Vieques formerly used as a bombing range by the United States Navy, and compensate the people of Vieques for the damage done to their health; stop applying the death penalty in Puerto Rico; and negotiate in good faith with the Puerto Rican people to end the colonial regime.

18. **Mr. Nieves** (Consejo Nacional para la Descolonización (CONADE)) said that, throughout its history, Puerto Rico had resisted colonial domination, which had been fraudulently exerted first by Spain and then by the United States. Puerto Ricans had not been

properly consulted about the status they desired, as the referendum that had resulted in commonwealth status had not offered the option of independence. Puerto Rico was governed by President Obama, a President for whom Puerto Ricans could not vote. The island's economy was controlled by the United States; Puerto Ricans had no enemies, yet Puerto Rico had been used as a military base, resulting in the pollution of its land. The only way to resolve the situation was to end the unlawful colonial regime of the United States and establish a sovereign national Government.

19. For decades the Committee had been adopting resolutions recognizing Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and independence, to no avail. He urged the Committee to give Puerto Rico its freedom by calling for intervention by United Nations peacekeepers to ensure the departure of the United States military, the removal of the commonwealth government and the release of political prisoners. Under General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), freedom and national sovereignty were inalienable rights; CONADE called upon all States to recognize the sovereign national State of Borinken.

20. **Mr. Saldaña** (Igualdad) said that United States citizens living in Puerto Rico should enjoy the same constitutional rights, benefits and opportunities as those living in the 50 states. In 2012, a two-question referendum held at the request of the United States Government had shown that the majority of voters rejected the island's current status and that 61 per cent favoured statehood. The United States Government now had the moral obligation to respect the wishes of the Puerto Rican people. To that end, the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico had recently submitted a bill to Congress which was designed to start the process of admitting Puerto Rico as a state on terms to be accepted by the people of Puerto Rico.

21. Thousands of Puerto Ricans had emigrated to the 50 states because of the island's high poverty levels and inferior colonial status, and it was clear that statehood would enable Puerto Rico to achieve sustainable economic growth. The United Nations, as a friend of Puerto Rico, should recommend to the United States Government that it should resolve the territory's political status by admitting Puerto Rico as a state, in accordance with the democratically expressed will of the Puerto Ricans. Should the United States fail to do so, the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that Puerto Rico should be included on the

list of Non-Self-Governing Territories in recognition of the fact that it was a colony.

22. **Ms. Guzmán** (Movimiento Unión Soberanista) said that her organization fought for the decolonization and sovereignty of Puerto Rico, which was her enslaved homeland. Since imposing its language, laws and citizenship, the United States had claimed that it would bring prosperity to Puerto Rico, but it had done the opposite, destroying the nation's economy and depleting its population. Some 16,000 Puerto Rican soldiers had died in the Viet Nam and Korean wars, and wherever the United States military-industrial complex defended its capitalistic interests, Puerto Ricans were sure to be exploited. In addition, the United States had maintained military bases in Puerto Rico without paying anything for them.

23. The illegal occupation of Puerto Rico had been accompanied by the brutal repression of patriots and the arrival of United States security forces. The FBI, working with complicit local authorities, repressed anyone who challenged United States power, and dozens of independence advocates had been persecuted or murdered, while political prisoner Oscar López Rivera remained in a United States dungeon. The United States Navy recklessly refused to clean up the ocean and land it had polluted, leaving behind destruction, illness and death, as cancer rates were higher in Vieques than anywhere else in Puerto Rico.

24. The restrictive shipping laws imposed on Puerto Rico were discriminatory and put the nation at the mercy of the United States shipping companies that controlled maritime transport between Puerto Rico and the United States. Puerto Rico remained a United States colony and it was only the political and economic might of that country that was enabling it to practise colonialism, control the lives of Puerto Ricans with impunity and prevent the case of Puerto Rico from being exposed before the plenary General Assembly. In the 2012 referendum, the majority of voters had rejected the current political system. However, the United States insisted on treating the political status of Puerto Rico as a domestic matter and refused to respect the right of Puerto Ricans to self-determination in accordance with international law. The current situation was unsustainable.

25. **Ms. Grady Flores** (Ithaca Catholic Workers, Vieques Support Group) said that the Committee must make the decolonization of Puerto Rico a reality as a

matter of urgency and should continue to press for the release of Oscar López Rivera and Norberto González Claudio. Her Group supported the right of all Puerto Ricans to self-determination and independence from the United States. Recalling that it had been ten years since the United States Navy had ended its bombing practice on the island of Vieques, she urged the United States Government to fulfil the four demands of the people of Vieques: demilitarization, decontamination, devolution of occupied lands and development, including a moratorium on the sale of Vieques land to large developers. Every weapons system created by the United States had been tested on Vieques, including depleted uranium shells, the use of which had been condemned by the United Nations. As a result of United States military activities, the cancer rate in Vieques was 30 per cent higher than anywhere else in Puerto Rico, but the medicines produced by Puerto Rican labour for export did not benefit Puerto Ricans. It was therefore imperative that the demands of the people of Vieques should be met immediately.

26. **Mr. Umpierre** (Frente Autonomista) said that he aspired to a relationship between the United States and the nation of Puerto Rico based on recognition of the sovereignty of the Puerto Rican people under international law and their identity as Latin Americans and Caribbeans. The economic crisis had increased the urgency of resolving the status issue, but Puerto Rico lacked the political tools required to rescue its economy and the United States lacked the will to transfer the necessary powers and competences. Meanwhile, the international community appeared indifferent and afraid to act, offering the same speeches and the same useless resolutions year after year. The United Nations could and must do more, and there should be no further delay in referring the issue once again to the plenary General Assembly. In addition, Oscar López Rivera and the other Puerto Rican political prisoners should be released without delay and immediate measures should be taken to clean up the land in Vieques contaminated by the United States Navy.

27. It was irresponsible to claim incorrectly that Puerto Ricans had voted in favour of assimilation, since the numbers had clearly been manipulated in an undemocratic process. Both the Puerto Rican people and the United States Congress viewed that strategy as a desperate tactic by parties chasing an impossible dream. It was equally wrong to allow Puerto Rico's

political future to depend on the unilateral will of the United States, which had invited the people to vote on status options without undertaking to respect their wishes. The international community must take firm, bold action as a matter of urgency to resolve the issue.

28. **Ms. Villeneuve** (Boricuas por un Nuevo País) said that the nation of Puerto Rico had been invaded and colonized first by the Spanish military and then by the United States, which had imposed a military dictatorship. In 1900, the United States Congress had established a colonial government. Puerto Ricans had no say in the actions taken by that legislative body of the United States, including the imposition of United States citizenship and, at one time, United States military conscription. The United States Government controlled imports, exports and customs activities, as well as treaties on international trade, and could expropriate private property.

29. The United States had refused to comply with international law or with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and had prevented the case of Puerto Rico from being reconsidered by the General Assembly. Over the years, large numbers of Puerto Ricans had been killed, imprisoned and persecuted for their efforts to free their homeland. Her movement supported the national and international calls for the immediate release of Oscar López Rivera.

30. Despite centuries of foreign occupation, repression and attempted extermination, the indigenous Taino had survived and the people of Puerto Rico, as their legitimate descendants, had declared their right to self-determination and sovereignty in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions. However, they needed the help of both the Committee and the General Assembly to ensure compliance with those resolutions.

31. **Mr. Muller Vázquez** (Frente Socialista de Puerto Rico) said that his organization had come before the Committee once again to demand recognition of Puerto Ricans' right to self-determination and independence. Since 1898, the United States had maintained a colonial imperialist regime in violation of international law and against the will of the majority of the population, and was pursuing a policy of genocide by gradually exterminating the Puerto Rican nationality. Weapons, ammunition and drugs passing through ports managed by United States officials had fostered drug trafficking and gun violence on the island; over 7,000

Puerto Rican youths had been killed by guns in the last decade. The land was being used to test genetically modified seeds and the people were used as guinea pigs, as they consumed the crops grown from those seeds.

32. The FBI regarded independence fighters as domestic terrorists and such persons were arrested and murdered. Political prisoners such as Oscar López Rivera had not been found guilty of any real crime and had been imprisoned for fighting for a right recognized under international law: the right to sovereignty. Vieques was still occupied and contaminated. No referendum on the current or future status of Puerto Rico could ever be valid so long as the island remained under military occupation and the United States controlled every aspect of Puerto Ricans' lives. Puerto Ricans were demanding their right as a people to the immediate transfer of all political powers corresponding to a free, sovereign State; compensation for 115 years of exploitation; full demilitarization of their national territory; and the immediate release of all independence fighters.

33. **Mr. Betancourt** (Institute for Multicultural Communications, Cooperation and Development) said that, in a recently completed research paper, he had analysed the development of the Puerto Rican nation under its two colonial rulers: Spain from 1492 to 1898, and the United States from 1898 onward. He had focused on the independence movement's role in shaping Puerto Rico's social, economic and political development. His paper explained how the island's three political parties also acted as social movements and how colonialism had significantly contributed to the emergence and perpetuation of the nation's current political status by fragmenting Puerto Rican society and discouraging the international community from paying sufficient attention to Puerto Rico's colonial dilemma.

34. After giving a historical account of the Puerto Rican independence movement from the 1868 Lares revolt to the plebiscites of the 1990s, he said that significant progress had been made under Puerto Rico's economic model, but that unemployment had been in double digits since the 1940s and had worsened in recent years, as the model appeared to have run out of steam. Restrictions imposed by the United States had prevented changes in the model and globalization had removed some of the advantages that Puerto Rico had had in the past.

35. **Ms. Beltrán Virella** (Movimiento PR-USA) said that Puerto Ricans had the same rights and citizenship status as people born and living in the United States. Puerto Rico was already a state of the United States; all that remained was to complete the process of annexation in order to ensure equality for all Puerto Ricans. Puerto Rico could only tackle its economic, social and political challenges if its current territorial status, which was only temporary, was converted into a permanent status. Puerto Ricans had expressed their preference for full integration as a state of the United States in the recent referendum.

36. Puerto Rico had a non-voting representative in the United States Congress, as well as a Constitution that would need to be amended when the political parties of Puerto Rico finally allowed Puerto Ricans to vote, once and for all, on whether they wanted integration or independence. The people of Puerto Rico were ready to vote in a fair referendum, but they needed the Committee's help to make their choice a reality. Both the Puerto Rican Constitution and that of the United States laid down the right of Puerto Ricans to vote directly to resolve the current temporary territorial status, which was an undemocratic one. If Puerto Rico continued to be deprived of a full measure of self-government, it should be included on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. That was not what the people wanted, but it was the reality of the current situation.

37. **Mr. Meléndez-Ortiz** (League of United Latin American Citizens) said that for many years the Committee had heard different views from across the Puerto Rican political spectrum. However, the conclusion could not be more obvious: Puerto Rico was a United States territory that had yet to attain a full measure of self-government, and the struggle for equality for every Hispanic immigrant living in the United States would never be complete until the voice of the people of Puerto Rico had been heard and respected. The discussion had evolved and the League was asking the Committee and the General Assembly to act on a matter that, until recently, had been perceived by many as a domestic issue outside the jurisdiction of the United Nations.

38. Much had changed since the 2012 referendum, when 54 per cent of Puerto Rican voters had rejected the current territorial status. In response to a second question concerning alternatives, 61.16 per cent had voted for statehood, 33.34 per cent for a sovereign

commonwealth and 5.49 per cent for independence. Since Puerto Rican voters no longer consented to the current territorial status, the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that Puerto Rico should be included on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. That would spur the United States Congress to enact legislation enabling Puerto Rico to be admitted as a state, thus resolving the issue.

39. **Mr. Bermúdez Zenón** (Grupo por la Igualdad y la Justicia de Puerto Rico) said that anyone who wanted freedom must seize it instead of waiting for it to be granted. There was a shameful lack of understanding about what constituted a colony, and the reality was that the United States was making Puerto Rico defenceless. It was therefore imperative that Puerto Rico should be given observer status at the United Nations. Since its invasion and bombing of Puerto Rico in 1898, the United States had brought devastation to Puerto Rico as it pursued its colonial policy. The United States Government had asked Puerto Rico to participate in another colonial-style referendum, but it was clear that colonial subjects could not be asked whether they wanted to remain in a situation of colonialism, which amounted to political enslavement. United States citizenship had been imposed on Puerto Ricans against their will and they had been used as cannon fodder in all the wars of conquest waged by the United States. Nonetheless, Puerto Ricans could not vote in the United States presidential elections and had no voting representation in Congress.

40. **Mr. Baumann** (Socialist Workers Party) said that his Party had endorsed the widespread calls for the release of Oscar López Rivera. It had also celebrated the release of René González and called for the release of the other four Cuban revolutionaries who had been framed by Washington. Independence from the United States was a necessity for the people of the Latin American nation of Puerto Rico but was also in the interests of most United States citizens. Puerto Ricans and the working class in the United States had common interests and a common enemy: the United States Government and the capitalist ruling class it defended. Working people in the United States had borne the brunt of the capitalist economic crisis, including persistent unemployment and unrelenting corporate efforts to drive down wages and living conditions. The



4 million Puerto Ricans living in the United States faced systematic discrimination.

41. The drive to squeeze more profits out of working people was accompanied by efforts to curtail constitutional rights. In the name of “fighting terrorism”, the United States National Security Agency had been spying on the communications of millions of people, and the Department of Justice had admitted to widespread wiretapping of news reporters. Support from workers fighting for their rights in the United States could help to free Puerto Rican political prisoners and support Puerto Ricans in their struggle for independence. Contrary to the capitalist rulers’ claims, the Puerto Rican people were not dependent on the United States for their survival; the Cuban Revolution was proof that when workers and farmers took political power out of the hands of the capitalist minority, they could win genuine independence and reorganize society in the interests of the vast majority. The Committee’s condemnation of United States colonial rule over Puerto Rico would serve the interests of the overwhelming majority of people in the United States and of those everywhere who fought for self-determination and against oppression.

42. **Ms. López Ramos** (Hijos de los Presos Políticos Puertorriqueños), daughter of Oscar López Rivera, said that during her father’s 32 years of imprisonment, she had never stopped dreaming of spending time with him without guards watching. During the 12 years when her father had been in solitary confinement, she had had no physical contact with him during visits and he had been deprived of access to fresh air. Describing the dehumanizing, toxic conditions in prison, she said that her father had been brought to his family visits in chains and had been strip-searched both before and after the visits. He had not been allowed to attend his mother’s burial and funeral in Puerto Rico, even though the family had offered to pay for his transportation.

43. On 29 May 2013, exactly 32 years after his arrest, her father had written to her to express the deep sadness he felt at the thought that he was unlikely ever to be free to share his life with his daughter and granddaughter. He knew that his dream might not come true, but at least he had shown them the price that had to be paid for living with dignity and for serving what would, for him, always be the most just and noble cause for any Puerto Rican.

*Draft resolution A/AC.109/2013/L.6: Special Committee decision of 18 June 2012 concerning Puerto Rico (continued)*

44. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2013/L.6 was adopted.*

45. **Mr. León González** (Cuba) said that the close ties between Cuba and Puerto Rico, forged during the battle against dictatorship and imperial domination waged by both nations after the extermination of their indigenous Taino ancestors, had lasted for over a century. Cuba’s national hero, José Martí, had established the Cuban Revolutionary Party to fight for independence for Cuba and to support that fight in Puerto Rico, and more than 2,000 Puerto Rican soldiers had taken part in the struggle for Cuban independence. The two peoples had strengthened those bonds during years of struggle, sacrifice and resistance. They shared common heroes, such as Oscar López Rivera, who exemplified a people that remained unbowed.

46. In January 2013, the Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) had adopted a historic declaration highlighting the Latin American and Caribbean character of Puerto Rico and, in light of the resolutions on Puerto Rico adopted by the Special Committee, considering that issue to be of interest to CELAC. Despite 115 years of colonial domination, Puerto Ricans had maintained their culture, identity, sense of nationhood and desire for independence. His Government would defend unremittingly Puerto Rico’s right to self-determination.

*The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.*