



The Dependency Studies Project

Analysis of dependency, autonomous and other non-independent governance models

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Statement

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The Dependency Studies Project

to the

Permanent Forum on People of African Descent

Item 5: Thematic Discussion: The Second International Decade for People of African Descent: Expectations and Challenges

Madam Chair, Excellencies.

The Caribbean has the most diversified colonial arrangements in the 21st Century than any other region of the world in such a small space. The British, Dutch, French and US collectively maintain over 20 colonies in the region presently populated by majority of peoples of African descent.

The abolition of chattel slavery in the Caribbean in 1804 (Haiti) and for the rest of the Caribbean between 1834 through 1886 did not constitute full and complete emancipation. It merely ushered in over a century and a half of colonialism which, in many respects, merely perpetuated a refined form of what had formerly prevailed. Thus, the anti-colonial struggle was born, in earnest, as a logical outgrowth of the emancipation struggle.

The process of full emancipation for many Caribbean countries did not come before the early 1960s through independence, and there have been no political advances since 1983. Even as colonial status was never meant to be permanent, but rather as an interim phase to full and complete decolonisation, there remains a tendency to countenance colonial reform and modernisation to legitimise contemporary colonial arrangements.

In 1960, the UN General Assembly adopted the landmark Decolonisation Declaration to complete the task of remedying the damage caused by the colonial condition, and the Non Aligned Movement has long called for the colonial states to compensate colonised peoples for

the damage inflicted. Reparations for the past and present consequences of colonialism are integral to global reparations efforts.

Colonialism as a contemporary condition for peoples of African descent in the Caribbean, in any form or manifestation, is violative of the UN Charter and relevant human rights conventions. This was recognised by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 48/7 on “Negative impact of the legacies of colonialism on the enjoyment of Human Rights” which “stressed the importance of eradicating colonialism and eradicating the legacies of colonialism on the enjoyment of human rights.”¹

It is recommended that a Second International Decade for People of African Descent should include a focus on the legacy of colonialism in the Caribbean which followed abolition and the contemporary colonial condition of those African descendants remaining under present colonial conditions. In this connection, the UN General Assembly has recognised that self-determination is a fundamental human right within the context of the first through fourth International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism.

The legacy of colonialism and its contemporary forms and manifestations continue to affect the people of African descent, particularly in the Caribbean. In this connection, it is suggested that the PFPAD commission an expert study on Decolonisation in the Caribbean consistent with a similar study done on Decolonisation in the Pacific region conducted for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII).²

¹ Human Rights Council Resolution 48/7, 8th October 2021.

² Valmaine Toki, Study on the Decolonization of the Pacific Region, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Twelfth session, New York, 20 - 31 May 2013 (E/C.19/2013/12).