



CHAIR OF THE COORDINATING BUREAU OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT



STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA, ON BEHALF OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM), DURING THE RESUMED SESSION OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (C-24), ON THE QUESTION OF PUERTO RICO

Mr. President,

1. It is an honor for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during this resumed session of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (C-24).
2. At the outset we would like to express our sincere appreciation to you and other members of the Bureau and the Committee as whole for the hard work and much valuable efforts put into the issue of decolonization; one to which the Movement has historically attached particular importance.
3. In addition, we would like to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Oscar López Rivera in this room today, a Puerto Rican political prisoner who served over thirty-five years in prison for reasons related to his fight for the independence of Puerto Rico, until just weeks ago, after his sentence was commuted by the Government of the United States of America; a decision that was welcomed by the Movement on 18 January 2017.

Mr. President,

4. In relation to the Question of Puerto Rico, which has been in the agenda of this Special Committee for over 40 years, the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) reaffirm the validity and relevance of their principled position, as expressed during the XVII Summit of Island of Margarita, held in September 2016, in Venezuela. Hence, we reaffirm the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence, on the basis of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.
5. Moreover, the Member States of the Movement reiterate their unwavering support to the resolutions on Puerto Rico, many of which have been adopted by consensus within the framework of this Special Committee, while calling for their expeditious implementation. We also avail ourselves of this opportunity to vow for the adoption of yet another resolution on Puerto Rico this year, by consensus, as in previous years, and taking into account our position on this issue.



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Mr. President,

6. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) further calls on the Government of the United States of America to assume its responsibility to expedite the process that will allow the Puerto Rican People to fully exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence. Likewise, we urge the Government of the United States of America to return to the Puerto Rican People the occupied land and installations of Vieques Island and the Roosevelt Road Naval Station.
7. In addition, the Member States of the Movement reiterate their concern over legislation adopted in the Congress of the United States of America to impose a fiscal control board over the Government of Puerto Rico, which will effectively infringe upon the limited power of the Government of Puerto Rico over its budget and fiscal and other affairs.
8. To conclude, the Movement expresses its concern that the present political subordination of the Puerto Rican people impedes their sovereign decision-making regarding their serious economic and social problems, including the present fiscal crisis, insolvency of the government of Puerto Rico, and the need to restructure the public debt.

I thank you, Mr. President.