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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION
WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE DECLARATION OF THE GRANTING
OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES
AND PEOPLES

Letter dated 9 February 1972 from the Permanent Representative
of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the
Special Committee

On the instructions of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba, I have the honour to request the inclusion of the colonial question of Puerto Rico in this year's agenda of the Committee on Decolonization.

Consideration of this Territory falls well within the competence of the Special Committee on Decolonization under the mandate expressly entrusted to it by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

As will be recalled, the inclusion of the question of Puerto Rico in the agenda of the Special Committee was requested by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba in a letter addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on 1 October 1965 (A/AC.109/144). My Government made that request in accordance with the decisions adopted in October 1964 by the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, which included the following in the Declaration it adopted:

"It draws the attention of the Ad hoc Decolonization Commission of the United Nations to the case of Puerto Rico and calls upon that commission to consider the situation of these Territories in the light of resolution 1514 (XV) of the United Nations (A/5763)."

The Special Committee was unable to discuss the question of Puerto Rico at its 1966 session for lack of time, and it decided to postpone discussion to the following year.

In April 1967, after the question had been examined by the Working Party, the Committee discussed the situation in Puerto Rico at two meetings and decided to adjourn the discussion of the question of Puerto Rico sine die.

My Government is strongly of the opinion that far too much time has already elapsed without the Committee finding any solution to this problem.

And yet, Puerto Rico is a Territory to which resolution 1514 (XV) fully applies; Puerto Rico is not an independent Territory and it does not form an integral part of any other Territory but has been under the colonial domination of the United States of America for 73 years. For that reason, immediate discussion of this matter and the fulfilment by the Special Committee of the mandate specifically laid upon it by the General Assembly involve an imperative question of principle and there must be no more delay.

In this connexion I should like to draw the Committee's attention to resolution 2878 (XXVI) adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 1971, paragraph 10 of which reads as follows:

"10. Requests the Special Committee to continue to seek suitable means for the immediate and full implementation of General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2621 (XXV) in all Territories which have not yet attained independence and, in particular, to formulate specific proposals for the elimination of the remaining manifestations of colonialism and report thereon to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session."

In view of the fact that it is more than six years since Cuba originally made its request and that the General Assembly is to consider "the immediate and full implementation of General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2621 (XXV) in all Territories which have not yet attained independence" at its next session, the Special Committee is under an obligation to include the question of Puerto Rico in its agenda, to discuss it at its present session and to make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly for discussion at its next session, in the autumn of this year.

My Government therefore requests the Special Committee to decide immediately to include the question of Puerto Rico in its agenda and to give due priority to the discussion of this question at the session now beginning.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated to all members as an official document of the Special Committee.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Cuba
to the United Nations