

**Statement presented to the United Nations Pacific Regional Seminar
on Decolonisation**

*Statement of the Independent Expert on the
Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

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Introduction

The importance of the participation of the non self-governing territories in the work of the United Nations system is a longstanding mandate of the United Nations. There is an important organic link between the process of political development of the non self-governing territories (NSGTs), and assistance to these territories from the wider United Nations system.

This assistance is critical to developing the readiness of these territories in assuming the powers of full self-government, especially as many of the economies of these territories require a heightened measure of human resource development in relation to their engagement with the globalised economy.

The General Assembly has included the participation of the territories in the UN system in its resolutions since its very first session in 1946, and a series of resolutions continue to present day to this effect, with the aim of stimulating participation in the UN system.

This participation is facilitated in two ways. First, many of the territories have access to assistance from the UN agencies, usually through coordination of the *United Nations Development Programme*. In many cases the territories have country programmes facilitated by *UNDP* with input from relevant agencies depending on the scope and nature of the requirements of a territory. In some cases, these territories participate in regional programmes of specific agencies.

The second method of participation is direct membership, associate membership, and/or observer status, mainly in the UN specialised agencies and UN regional commissions, depending on the rules of procedure of the specific agency.

A number of the specialised agencies have heeded the call by the General Assembly to facilitate the participation of the territories in their work, including the *World Bank*

ECLAC member states sought to explore future modalities for their associate members in participation in some of the work of the *Cono c nd oc* *Co nc*

on overly restrictive and “control-based” considerations.