Statement by Mr. Deepak Misra, Minister

at the

General Debate on Decolonization

Fourth Committee

73\textsuperscript{rd} Session of the United Nations General Assembly

15 October 2018

Mr. Chairman,

India welcomes your election as the Chair of the 4\textsuperscript{th} Committee and assures you of our support for furthering the cause of Decolonization during the forthcoming session. We also take note of the efforts put in by this Committee last year to meet the objectives of Decolonization.

2. We thank the Secretary General for his Reports providing information relevant to this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

3. When the United Nations was established in 1945, almost a third of the world’s population lived in Territories that were non-self-governing and were dependent on colonial powers.

4. As a country that itself was colonized, India has always been in the forefront of the struggle against colonialism and apartheid since its own independence seven decades ago.

5. India was actively engaged with the organization of the historic Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, Indonesia in 1955. Five years later, India was the co-sponsor of the landmark 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which was adopted by the General Assembly. The Declaration proclaimed the need to unconditionally end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations.

6. In 1962 India was elected the first Chair of the Decolonization Committee (Committee of 24) that was established to monitor the implementation of the 1960 Declaration and to
make recommendations on its application. We continue to remain an active member of this important Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Since the creation of the United Nations, more than 80 former colonies have gained their independence and joined the United Nations. As a result of sustained collective efforts by the UN membership, today, fewer than 2 million people live in Non-Self-Governing Territories, according to UN documentation.

8. However, even after seven decades, the process of decolonization that began with our own independence still remains unfinished. In 2011 the General Assembly had to proclaim the current decade 2011-2020 decade as the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, which is now coming close to conclusion.

9. There still remain 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, which are in various stages of the decolonization process on the Agenda of this Committee on Decolonization. We must step up our efforts to reach the conclusion of this long-drawn process.

10. The forceful deliberations and vigorous participation of all members of the C-24 indicates the seriousness with which the Committee continues to deal with to make progress on these 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories.

Mr. Chairman,

11. In this inter-connected world, India believes that pursuing a pragmatic approach towards Decolonization would surely lead to fulfillment of legitimate wishes of the people of Non-Self Governing Territories. The complex challenges facing the present world can only be met by coordinating our responses in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration.

12. We must prioritize increased cooperation with international agencies and actors and channelize resources for the 17 Non-Self Governing Territories. This would help enable these Territories to build capacities in their quest towards their long cherished goals.

Mr. Chairman,

13. To conclude, India remains committed to the objective of Decolonization and offers firm support to further accelerate the process.

Thank you.