

Opposition Press Release 85/2010 - UN CHAIRMANS REACTION TO BOSSANO SPEECH VERY POSITIVE

The Leader of the Opposition, Joe Bossano, believes that the words with which the Chairman of the Committee of 24, the UN Ambassador from St Lucia, greeted Mr Bossano's intervention at the Committee hearing on Tuesday in New York were very positive for Gibraltar.

The Chairman said that certainly the Committee wanted to "see movement" on these things and there was no point in parties appearing before the Committee every year to put arguments over and over and that matters such as Gibraltar's should be referred to the 4th Committee and work had to be done to take things forward.

The Opposition believes that this reaction is very positive for Gibraltar as, in the past, the Chairman has made no response to statements from Gibraltar delegations and have simply remitted the matter to the following year. On this occasion, despite also remitting the matter to the 4th Committee (as required by UN procedure), the Chairman has been prompted by Mr Bossano's intervention to make public the intention of the Committee not to stay idle for the remainder of the year and to take action on the matter. This follows statements made in New Caledonia (where Mr Bossano was present) by members of the Committee of 24 to the effect that declaring, as they have done, a Third Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism to run from 2011, should be on the basis of working to bring to a close the decolonisation process by ending colonialism and finishing the work of the Committee.

In addition, the remarks by the Chairman that the Committee is not established to hear a repetition of the same arguments every year are also very positive for Gibraltar. These remarks are clearly intended to refer to the statements of the Spanish representative, which was almost identical to that delivered by Spain the year before. Such repetition is entirely out of line with the message of the Secretary General of the United Nations, that there needs to be an innovative approach adopted on a case by case basis to the decolonisation of territories on the UN list.

The Opposition is therefore very happy for Gibraltar with the results achieved this year with Mr Bossano's intervention at the Committee of 24 in this respect.

The Chairman also replied to concerns expressed by Mr Bossano on the decision not to proceed with the Committee's resolution on sending visiting missions. Mr Bossano had referred to this during the course of his speech, when he renewed the invitation on behalf of the people of Gibraltar to visit us, expressing concern that this should not be related to Spain's continuing objection to a visit to Gibraltar of the Committee. The Chairman clarified that the decision not to proceed with the resolution had nothing to do with Spain's position and that there was no reason for there to be concern in Gibraltar about this.

Before Mr Bossano's presentation the Spanish Delegation at the UN made its own speech, setting out its continued claim for the sovereignty of Gibraltar.

Mr Bossano's presence before the Committee meant that he was able to in effect reply to the Spanish intervention and remind the Committee of 24 of Gibraltar's rejection of the Spanish position.

The Opposition regret that having asked GBC for an interview to follow up on what occurred at the United Nations in New York, they declined, referring to the policy of the Board of GBC being that the Leader of the Opposition's intervention in New York when Mr Caruana is not present is recorded by an Associated Press film crew but no interview is afforded to Mr Bossano on his return to Gibraltar. When Mr Caruana attends the costs of GBC's attendance is subsidised by the taxpayer. GBC must clearly therefore consider that these issues are not of sufficient public interests and that they have better things to fill their news bulletins.

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