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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

French Polynesia

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information in this working paper has been derived from public sources and is extracted from sources published on the Internet, including new information now available on the environmental, ecological, health and other impacts of nuclear testing. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available at www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/documents/workingpapers.



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The Territory at a glance

Territory: French Polynesia is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations. It is administered by France.

Representative of the administering Power: Éric Spitz, High Commissioner of the Republic (since 26 September 2022).

Geography: French Polynesia occupies a vast maritime zone in the South Pacific, covering an area of 2.5 million km².

Land area: The 118 islands that comprise French Polynesia, grouped in five archipelagos, have a land area of about 3,500 km².

Exclusive economic zone: 5.5 million km².

Population: 279,000 (2022 estimate, Institute of Statistics of French Polynesia).

Life expectancy at birth: women: 79.0 years; men: 74.9 years (2022).

Ethnic composition: Polynesian (65 per cent); Demis (mixed race) (16 per cent); persons of Chinese origin (5 per cent); Popâa (white) (12 per cent).

Languages: French; Tahitian; Marquesan; Tuamotuan; Mangareva; Languages spoken in the Austral Islands: Ra'ivavae, Rapa and Rurutu; English; Hakka Chinese; Cantonese; and Vietnamese.

Capital: Papeete.

Head of Government of the Territory: Moetai Charles Brotherson (since 12 May 2023).

Main political parties: The political groupings in the Assembly of French Polynesia are Tāvini Huira'atira (38 seats) and Tāpura Huira'atira (16 seats). There are also three non-party affiliated representatives in the Assembly.

Elections: Territorial elections were held on 29 June and 6 July 2024 (first and second rounds, respectively).

Parliament: The Assembly of French Polynesia consists of 57 representatives elected for five years by universal suffrage.

Gross domestic product per capita: 2.5 million Pacific francs (at current prices, 2023).

Unemployment rate: 9.0 per cent (2023).

Economy: The service sector, which generated 85 per cent of value added in 2019 and employed more than 80 per cent of wage workers in 2022, plays an important role in the economy of French Polynesia. Tourism is the leading source of goods and services exported from the Territory. Nevertheless, aquaculture, in particular the production of cultured black pearls, which is Territory's second-largest own resource, remains important. Given the small size of the domestic market, the economy is dominated by large public and private companies, particularly in the energy and retail sectors.

Monetary unit: Pacific franc, or CFP franc (1,000 CFP francs = 8.38 euros, at a fixed exchange rate).

Brief history: The people of French Polynesia became established as a result of successive waves of migration from the fourth century to the end of the fourteenth century. Europeans first reached French Polynesia in 1521 (Magellan) and started to settle after the arrival of Captain Wallis in 1767. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, the Pomare dynasty extended its influence over both Tahiti and the Tuamotu and Leeward Islands. It signed a protectorate treaty with France in 1842; then, in 1880, King Pomare V granted France sovereignty over the islands that were dependencies of the Tahitian crown, thereby giving rise to the French Establishments in Oceania. The latter became an overseas territory with the establishment of the French Union in 1946 and have been referred to as French Polynesia since 1957. The people of French Polynesia reaffirmed their wish to remain a territory of France in a referendum held in 1958. The term “overseas territory” (territoire d’outre-mer) was replaced with the term “overseas collectivity” (collectivité d’outre-mer) in 2003 following a constitutional amendment (source: Institut d’Émission d’Outre-mer).

I. Constitutional, political and legal issues

1. According to the French government portal for collectivities, French Polynesia was designated an overseas territory (*territoire d'outre-mer*) under the Constitution of 27 October 1946, and that status was maintained under the 1958 Constitution. The constitutional amendment of 28 March 2003 modified article 74 of the Constitution on overseas territories and replaced the term “overseas territory” (*territoire d'outre-mer*) with the term “overseas collectivity” (*collectivité d'outre-mer*). Lawmakers were tasked with defining the organizational and operational rules governing the collectivity’s institutions and the election of its Assembly. In each case, the status of overseas collectivity was adopted following consultations with the legislative body of the affected overseas collectivity. The special status of French Polynesia was established by Organic Act No. 2004-192 of 27 February 2004, which provided for a system that was different from that under ordinary law and close to a unicameral parliamentary government. The President of French Polynesia has a representative function, leads the Territory’s Government and Administration, and promulgates local “country laws” (*lois du pays*). The Government of French Polynesia, comprising between 7 and 10 ministers, is responsible for conducting the Territory’s policy. The Assembly of French Polynesia, the Territory’s legislative body, is elected by direct universal suffrage every five years.

2. As also indicated on the French government portal for collectivities, although it has a unique institutional system, French Polynesia does not have political autonomy. It does, however, enjoy administrative autonomy and a special legal regime. In line with the principle of legislative and regulatory speciality, the organic legislative body of each overseas collectivity decides on the applicability of certain laws and regulations. Metropolitan law is thus applicable only where expressly indicated. Moreover, the Assembly of French Polynesia can adopt certain types of legislative acts, in accordance with its competencies in the legal domain, which are known as “country laws” (*lois du pays*). Such acts relate to the very broad areas that fall within the scope of the statutory jurisdiction of French Polynesia and can be appealed only to the French Council of State and not to the administrative court in French Polynesia. Such administrative autonomy entails a division of powers between the French State and French Polynesia. The French State has sovereignty in the areas indicated in article 14 of Organic Act No. 2004-192 and in 37 other areas, such as inter-municipal cooperation, police and civil aviation security, which the Assembly has chosen to confer on the French State. For its part, in addition to having ordinary jurisdiction, French Polynesia may, subject to oversight by the French State, exercise its jurisdiction with regard to upholding civil liberties throughout the national territory (art. 31 of Organic Act No. 2004-192).

3. According to the annual report of the Institut d’Émission d’Outre-mer for 2023, the 2004 reform led to a long period of political instability, which was not remedied by the adoption of Organic Act No. 2007-223 of 21 February 2007, on abolishing the electoral rule whereby additional seats were allocated to the party having won the majority of votes, and Organic Act No. 2007-1720 of 7 December 2007, on introducing motions of no-confidence, with 11 Governments succeeding one another until 2013. In 2011, Organic Act No. 2011-918 of 1 August 2011 on the functioning of the institutions of French Polynesia was adopted to restore stability. That Act modified the electoral process by re-establishing the electoral rule, previously abolished, whereby 19 seats were allocated to the party having won the majority of votes, and by creating a single electoral constituency; it also set a limit on the number of ministers and the ways by which the Government can be forced to resign. The Act has been in force since the local elections held in May 2013.

4. The institutions of French Polynesia consist of the President, the Government, the Assembly of French Polynesia and the Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Council. The role and powers of these institutions are defined under statutory organic law.
5. The President is elected by the Assembly of French Polynesia by secret ballot for a five-year term. The President forms the Government by appointing the Vice-President and the ministers, whom he or she oversees and can dismiss. The President promulgates country laws and signs the Acts adopted by the Council of Ministers. He or she authorizes the budget and oversees the administration of the Territory. The President's mandate is compatible with that of a deputy, senator or mayor and can be terminated by a vote of no confidence by the Assembly, or in the event of the latter's dissolution. Moetai Charles Brotherson was elected President of French Polynesia on 12 May 2023.
6. The Government of French Polynesia serves as the Territory's executive body and conducts its policy. It meets every week through the Council of Ministers, which has collective and collegiate responsibility for affairs within the Government's jurisdiction. The Government decides on the draft decisions to be submitted to the Assembly and on the implementation measures to be taken. It also has broad regulatory powers. The Government of French Polynesia must be consulted by the Minister of the Overseas or the High Commissioner of the Republic, as appropriate, with regard to matters that fall within the State's areas of jurisdiction.
7. The Assembly of French Polynesia, consisting of 57 members elected by direct universal suffrage for five-year terms, takes decisions on all matters within the collectivity's purview, other than those vested in the Council of Ministers or the President. The Assembly adopts country laws, over which the French Council of State exercises jurisdictional oversight, and the decisions submitted by the Government of French Polynesia. It votes on the Territory's budget and accounts and oversees actions taken by the Government. The Assembly can force the resignation of the Government by passing a motion of no confidence and, conversely, the Assembly may be dissolved by a decree of the President of the French Republic, at the request of the Territory's Government.
8. The Economic, Social, Environmental and Cultural Council, a consultative body, consists of representatives from professional groupings, labour unions, organizations and associations involved in local economic, social and cultural life. The Council consists of 51 members who are appointed by their peers for a four-year term and are distributed among five colleges. The Council's presidency rotates every two years.
9. According to the 2022 *Guide to French State Services and Institutions in French Polynesia*, the High Commissioner of the Republic represents the central Government and its ministers. The High Commissioner works closely with the President, the Government and other government institutions of French Polynesia, remains in contact with all national stakeholders, and acts in the broader public interest.
10. In the *Observatoire des communes de Polynésie française* (2023), the French Development Agency reports that an analysis of the financial data from the Territory's 48 municipalities has underscored the resilience of municipal finances, made possible by large financial transfers from the Polynesian local Government and the French State for operational expenses and investment. The Agency also points out that the findings should not obscure disparities that depend on the size of the municipalities and their distance from Tahiti, the administrative and economic centre.
11. On 5 July 2019, the President of the Republic promulgated Organic Act No. 2019-706, amending the autonomous status of French Polynesia, and Act No. 2019-707 on various institutional arrangements in French Polynesia. Act No. 2019-786 of 26 July 2019 on French Polynesia included, without amendment, the articles of

Organic Act No. 2019-707, which had been struck down by the French Constitutional Council (see [A/AC.109/2021/7](#)).

II. Economic situation

A. Overview

12. According to the Ministry of the Overseas, the economy of French Polynesia is based on the service sector. Market services, including business services, account for 48 per cent of the economy. Non-market services make up 35 per cent. The secondary sector, which includes construction and manufacturing, accounts for 10 per cent. As stated in the annual report of the Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer for 2023, the service sector generated 85 per cent of value added in 2019. Meanwhile, the primary sector accounted for only 3 per cent of the economy of French Polynesia. According to the Institute of Statistics of French Polynesia, between 2021 and 2022, the value of imports for civilian use has risen by 25 per cent, with mainland France serving as the lead supplier to French Polynesia in 2022. The value of local exports also rose by 25 per cent, boosted by higher per-gram prices for raw cultured pearls. The real trade deficit increased by 25 per cent in 2022.

B. Agriculture, pearl farming, fisheries and aquaculture

13. According to the annual report of the Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer for 2023, the agricultural sector of French Polynesia relies on small-scale family farms that practise mixed cropping. Agricultural production is divided into vegetable products (70 per cent) and animal products (30 per cent). Since agricultural production is insufficient to cover all the population's food needs, it is supplemented by food imports. In February 2021, the Assembly of French Polynesia adopted a master plan for agriculture in French Polynesia for the period 2021–2030 aimed at remedying this dependence.

14. According to the Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer, pearl products (the Territory's second-largest own resource after tourism) accounted for three quarters of all revenues from the export of local products in 2023. Between 2022 and 2023, exports of raw pearls doubled in volume and tripled in value. The sudden upturn in demand, as contrasted with the supply constraints during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, has pushed export prices to their highest level in 15 years.

15. Thanks to its exclusive economic zone, French Polynesia has considerable fishery potential. Polynesian fishery production rose significantly in 2022 as a result of a greater number of domestic and foreign opportunities during the economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. Polynesian fisheries production peaked in 2023, mainly due to a sharp rise in fishing on the high seas. However, the sector is facing profitability challenges: most of the increases in yields have been in albacore tuna, for which markets are saturated, leading to excess stocks and downward pressure on prices.

C. Manufacturing sector

16. According to the annual report of the Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer for 2023, the manufacturing sector generated 8 per cent of value added in 2019. Most manufacturing activity takes place on the Windward Islands and is carried out by very small companies; 9 out of 10 such companies have at most two employees. Most companies are in the food industry, which accounts for one third of total sales and workforce. The development of the manufacturing sector faces structural constraints,

including a small domestic market that limits economies of scale and a heavy dependence on imported raw materials and energy products.

D. Transport and communications

17. The port of Papeete is managed by the Autonomous Port of Papeete, a public enterprise. French Polynesia is connected by air to most continents. It has one international airport, in Tahiti (Faa'a Commune), which is within the competence of the State but is managed by a private concession holder. The concession, awarded in 2010, has been rescinded by court order three times, in March 2017, October 2021 and October 2022. A concession notice for the selection of the next concession holder to operate, maintain and develop the infrastructure of Tahiti-Faa'a airport for a period of 40 years was issued on 13 September 2024. Also according to the 2023 annual report of the Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer, there has been a decline in international maritime freight shipping (-7.2 per cent), in line with the reduction in import and export volumes. By contrast, there has been an increase in the number of passenger on both international (+22.4%) and domestic (+19.5%) flights.

E. Tourism

18. According to the 2023 annual report of the Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer, the tourism strategy, drawn up during the health crisis and entitled "Fari'ira'a manihini, l'accueil qui nous ressemble et nous rassemble", is based on three pillars: mitigating the effects of the crisis, relaunching the tourism industry and developing inclusive, sustainable tourism. Relaunched after the COVID-19 pandemic, for the period 2022–2027, the strategy was approved by the Assembly of French Polynesia in December 2022. French Polynesia welcomed 261,800 tourists in 2023 (a year-on-year increase of 20 per cent) – more than before COVID-19 (there were 236,600 tourists in 2019) and above its previous all-time record of 252,000 tourists in 2000.

F. Environment

19. The Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer reports that the Government of French Polynesia has set the goal of producing 75 per cent of the Territory's energy from renewable sources by 2030 (compared with 30.2 per cent in 2020), as part of its sustainable development strategy. According to the Observatoire Polynésien de l'Énergie, the rate of energy dependence, calculated as the proportion of energy generated by fossil fuels that French Polynesia must import for its primary energy consumption, was 92.5 per cent in 2022, the lowest in a decade, although the figure has remained relatively stable, around 93.6 per cent.

20. According to the Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer, the significant demographic disparities and unequal distribution of fresh water in French Polynesia have led to different water management strategies. Water management is the responsibility of the communes, which had until 31 December 2024 to ensure that all their residents have access to drinking water and a sewerage system. According to the 2022 population census, nearly 10 per cent of homes in French Polynesia did not yet have running water. This figure ranges from 2 per cent in Tahiti to 87 per cent in Tuamotu-Gambier Islands, an archipelago where the specific characteristics of the soil and the low population density have made the construction of a direct distribution network difficult. Since 2020, the Government of French Polynesia has paid for half of the costs for transporting cisterns by sea. Only 10 of the 48 communes in French Polynesia have a drinking water distribution network.

21. Since the adoption of Organic Act No. 2004-192, responsibility for the collection and treatment (recovery and disposal) of domestic and organic waste, with the exception of toxic waste, has rested with the communes. The General Code on the Territorial Collectivities requires communes to establish an effective waste management service. Initially scheduled for the end of 2011, the deadline for meeting this responsibility was postponed first to the end of 2019, then to the end of 2024, in view of the difficulties encountered in implementing the regulation. Lockdowns and reduced activity in connection with the pandemic resulted in less waste and more selective waste sorting.

III. Social conditions

A. Overview

22. In March 2022, the Institute of Statistics of French Polynesia published “Diagnostic territorial 2021”, an assessment of matters related to the Sustainable Development Goals, including income inequality, discrimination, gender inequality, health, welfare and education challenges, and sustainable and resilient economic development. Such an assessment is a first step towards developing a convergence plan, as defined by Act No. 2017-256 of 28 February 2017 on achieving real equality for overseas collectivities and establishing other social and economic provisions. The purpose of the convergence plan is to enable the implementation of a long-term convergence strategy with a view to reducing the development gap with metropolitan France over a 10-year period with regard to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

23. Implementation of the French Polynesia Innovation Strategy 2030, entitled “Polynesia, Ocean of Innovation”, began on 5 December 2023. The strategy defines the key strategic areas for the sustainable and inclusive development of French Polynesia, for which the strengths of researchers (public entities) and innovators (private, charitable and community stakeholders) will need to be mobilized, including the development of a sustainable and low-carbon blue economy, the resilience of the land and sea, high-quality outputs, the bioeconomy, the promotion of biotechnology, and cultural and eco-tourism.

B. Employment

24. According to the Institute of Statistics of French Polynesia, the unemployment and employment rates in 2023 were 9.0 per cent and 56.0 per cent, respectively, compared with 9.0 per cent and 53.8 per cent in 2022.

25. According to the Institute of Statistics of French Polynesia, in 2023, there was no change in the gender wage gap, although it had been narrowing previously. Across all jobs, women earn 6 per cent less on average than men, down from 10 per cent in 2018. During this period, the proportion of part-time employees fell more sharply among women, by 4 points for women compared to by 2 points for men, although it remains higher than among men. In addition, women hold more positions that require higher qualifications in the public sector than in the private sector. In 2023, the average number of hours worked per month rose by 1.1 hours to 147.7 hours, compared to 146.6 hours in 2022. This number of hours worked had not been seen since the global financial crisis of 2007–2008. The number of employees working overtime rose for the third year in a row (13.0 per cent). Men are still twice as likely to work overtime (17 per cent, compared to 9 per cent of women); women are still more likely to work part-time (36 per cent, compared to 31 per cent of men).

C. Education

26. According to the Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer, French Polynesia has had authority over the organization of education since the adoption of the 2004 law on the Territory's autonomous status. The Minister of Education coordinates the management of educational institutions, organizes the different curricula and defines school programmes. However, the French State retains responsibility for public education, the awarding of national diplomas and the administration of higher education. This division of responsibilities requires close collaboration, as set out in the Agreement on education between French Polynesia and the State of 29 September 2016. French Polynesia has 228 primary schools (including nursery schools and special-needs schools) and 62 secondary schools. The State guarantees the national equivalency of the diplomas awarded. Moreover, French Polynesia has complete authority over educational activities. French Polynesia has a diversified educational system that caters to all subjects. The University of French Polynesia is a public scientific, cultural and vocational institution. Established in 1987 and autonomous since 1999, this young university has been a major hub of education and research activities for over 30 years.

D. Health care

27. According to the Institut d'Émission d'Outre-mer, French Polynesia has full authority over health issues. The health policy has several objectives, including improvement of the governance of the health and medical welfare system, the quality of the health system, coverage for public health and social needs, and prevention. The 2016–2025 Strategic Health Plan, which outlined the organization and geographic distribution of healthcare services, is being implemented using five-year targets for organizing public health services. Since January 2020, all beneficiaries of the healthcare system are required to select a primary care physician.

28. Healthcare services are provided by both the public sector, which provides medical services for all the archipelagos, and the private sector, which is concentrated in Tahiti. Medical evacuations to Tahiti or out of the Territory, to metropolitan France or New Zealand, are organized for conditions that cannot be treated locally.

29. With regard to the health impact of nuclear tests, Act No. 2010-2 of 5 January 2010 on the recognition and compensation of victims of nuclear tests, known as the Morin Act, raised questions about the concept of negligible risk in relation to victim compensation. The reference to negligible risk was removed in the Act on achieving real equality for overseas collectivities and establishing other social and economic provisions, thus enabling a larger number of victims to receive compensation. Under article 113 of that same Act, a commission, half of whose members were to be parliamentarians, while the other half were to be qualified individuals, was instituted in order to propose measures to ensure that compensation was paid only to people whose illness had been caused by the nuclear tests, and to make recommendations to the Government of France. That commission was established by Decree No. 2017-1592 of 21 November 2017, formed on 28 May 2018, and is chaired by Lana Tetuanui, Senator for French Polynesia. The commission's members visited French Polynesia in October 2018 and submitted their report to the Prime Minister of the Republic on 20 November 2018 (see [A/AC.109/2019/7](#)).

30. An amendment to the 2019 budget bill was submitted by the Senator on 30 November 2018, introducing several changes proposed by the commission in its report (see [A/AC.109/2019/7](#)). The amendment provides that the presumption of causality between the illness developed and exposure to atomic radiation produced

by French nuclear tests may be reversed if it is established that the claimant did not receive an effective dose (external exposure and internal contamination) in excess of the permissible dose limit for the general public set out in the radiation protection rules established in article L1333-2 of the Public Health Code, currently 1 mSv per year, according to a directive of the European Atomic Energy Community and article R1333-11 of the Public Health Code. The deadlines for beneficiaries of deceased persons to file claims were extended to three years following death for persons who died after the promulgation of Act No. 2018-1317 of 28 December 2018 on the budget for 2019, and to 31 December 2021 for persons who died before the date of promulgation of that Act. The deadline for submitting an appeal of a denial issued by the Committee for Compensation of Nuclear Test Victims on the basis of the former criterion of negligible risk was extended to 31 December 2020.

31. In February 2021, the National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM) published a document entitled “Nuclear testing and health: consequences in French Polynesia”. The objective of this collective appraisal, requested by the Ministry of Defence at the time, was to assess available international scientific knowledge in order to ascertain the impact of the atmospheric nuclear tests conducted by France in French Polynesia on the health of the general population and former civilian and military workers. In order to explore the possible relationship between certain pathologies and exposure to ionizing radiation, particularly at low doses, a multidisciplinary group of experts specializing in sociology, public health, epidemiology, dosimetry, radiobiology and genetics analysed the available international scientific knowledge on the damage to health from the atmospheric nuclear tests carried out by different countries, including France. It also looked at the health effects caused by other types of exposure to ionizing radiation, as well as the underlying biological mechanisms and retrospective methods for estimating the doses received. Following this analysis, the group of experts proposed avenues for research, health monitoring and scientific observation in order to improve assessment and follow-up of the health effects of nuclear testing in French Polynesia.

32. In a press release upon the publication of the collective appraisal, INSERM indicated that the researchers considered that the link between pathologies and those nuclear tests was difficult to demonstrate in the Polynesian population. The experts proposed several measures for gaining a better understanding of the risks and recalled the established damage to health from ionizing radiation. Given the paucity of epidemiological studies specific to French Polynesia, the analysis was extended to available data on the health damage from atmospheric nuclear tests conducted by other countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The group of experts completed this work by studying the health damage caused by other types of exposure to ionizing radiation and made several recommendations (see [A/AC.109/2022/7](#)).

33. During the last videoconference of the Advisory Committee for monitoring the consequences of nuclear testing, held on 23 February 2021, the President of French Polynesia recalled that the Committee was important for Polynesians because it was the only legally constituted round table to talk about the nuclear question. He also reiterated his request for State support to French Polynesia in its sincere and loyal search for the truth, which alone could lead to the restoration of justice and, consequently, trust.

34. In its assessment of radioactivity monitoring in French Polynesia in 2019 and 2020, published in December 2021, the French Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety noted that radioactivity measurements taken in various environmental media in 2019 and 2020 were in line with previous years, remaining at a level considered very low. This residual radioactivity is mainly attributable to caesium-137. Radiological monitoring of the environment has been carried out by the Institute’s environmental survey laboratory since 1962 in French Polynesia, outside

the nuclear test sites of Mururoa and Fangataufa. Since 1966, annual reports on the radiological monitoring of the environment have been transmitted by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. Since the end of 2020, the findings for French Polynesia have been publicly available on the website of the national network for environmental radioactivity measurements.

35. In its 2022 activity report, the Committee for Compensation noted that of the 328 new compensation claims filed in 2022, 239 involved residents of French Polynesia. The proportion of claims filed by or on behalf of residents of French Polynesia had increased by 20 percentage points, to 73 per cent, compared with 53 per cent in 2020. In 2022, the Committee made 172 offers of compensation to recognized victims, of which 89 were made to Polynesians and 83 to people from metropolitan France. For the first time, the number of offers made to Polynesians exceeded the number made to people from metropolitan France.

36. In its 2023 activity report, the Committee notes that in 2023 it received 564 new claims for compensation, an increase of 72 per cent compared to the 328 claims it received in 2022. Of the 564 new claims received in 2023, 495 involved residents of French Polynesia. Since 2021, there has been a significant increase in applications from people who have lived in French Polynesia. This trend continued and strengthened in 2023. Prior to 2022, Polynesians had filed 814 claims with the Committee. In 2023, the number of claims received by the Committee was more than 60 per cent of all claims received between 2010 and 2022. This increase is largely due to the “Aller vers” initiative of the High Commissioner of the Republic in French Polynesia in 2022 (see para. 43). The initiative helps claimants prepare their compensation claims and has been instrumental in disseminating information on the compensation process throughout the various archipelagos of French Polynesia. In 2023, the Committee handed down 287 decisions, 137 of which recognized the claimant as a victim, which amounted to an acceptance rate of 48 per cent, which has not changed in recent years. The Committee granted a total of 108 claims filed by people from French Polynesia in 2023; it has granted a total of 383 claims since 2010 (275 claims were accepted between 2010 and 2022). The Committee also notes that the compensation claim acceptance rate was very low between 2010 and 2017 (around 7 per cent), when the Committee was applying the negligible risk criterion. Since 2018, the application of the 1 mSv criterion has led to a sharp increase in the number of decisions to award compensation taken by the Committee and, consequently, to a drop in the number of rejected claims.

37. In the same report, the Committee notes that the entry into force of article 179 of Act No. 2021-1900 of 30 December 2021 on the budget for 2022 amended article 1 of the Morin Act with respect to time limits for filing claims. The new time limits are based on the date of death of the person on whose behalf the claim is filed. A compensation claim may be filed for a deceased person by his or her beneficiaries until 31 December 2024, if he or she died before 30 December 2018, or until 31 December of the sixth year following the death, if he or she died after 30 December 2018. Where a compensation claim has been denied before the entry into force of the Act of 28 February 2017, the claimant or the claimant’s beneficiaries, if he or she is deceased, could submit a new claim for compensation before 31 December 2024.

38. A new methodology to be followed by the Committee for Compensation when investigating compensation claims and making decisions was adopted on 22 June 2020. The methodology specifies the conditions under which the right to recognition as victims of French nuclear tests is assessed by the Committee and establishes the level of compensation when that right has been recognized. When the offer of compensation has been accepted, the total amount of compensation for damages is paid to the victim or to his or her heirs in accordance with the rules of inheritance (see [A/AC.109/2022/7](#)).

39. A round table on the nuclear issue was held in Paris on 1 and 2 July 2021. It was given the name “Reko Tika”, which means “the right word” in the Polynesian language Pa‘umotu.

40. In a letter dated 7 July 2021 addressed to the President of French Polynesia, the Prime Minister of France presented the results of the round table and the commitments of the French Government that had resulted from it. The contents of the letter were shared by the President of French Polynesia at a press conference held on 12 July 2021. In his letter, the Prime Minister announced several practical measures prompted by the round table. The first measure concerns the question of opening the archives, while the second concerns the essential question of the effects of nuclear testing on health, which cannot be denied, as the Prime Minister stated in his letter. It is essential to have better awareness and knowledge of the mechanisms involved in the appearance and development of radiation-induced illnesses. On the subject of compensation for victims of nuclear testing, the Prime Minister recalled that the principle was simple and clear and that it must be applied: the State has created a right to compensation for victims of nuclear testing and it has a duty to allow all those who consider themselves victims to submit a file to the Committee for Compensation. It was decided to set up a team with medical and administrative skills that would be able to travel to French Polynesia to inform Polynesians of their rights and help them to assess their health and put together their case file, if necessary.

41. During his visit to the Territory from 24 to 27 July 2021, the President of the French Republic stated that France owed French Polynesia a debt of gratitude for the nuclear tests and that he and the Polynesians wanted truth and transparency in that area.

42. An interministerial commission in charge of opening the nuclear test archives was established on 5 October 2021. French Polynesia is represented on this commission by two qualified persons.

43. Following the “Reko Tika” round table (see para. 39), the High Commissioner began the “Aller vers” initiative at the end of 2021 to monitor the effects of nuclear testing. The initiative is aimed at facilitating access to compensation for people suffering from radiation-induced illnesses potentially owing to nuclear testing and complements the work of victim support associations. The report on the initiative’s activities during its first two years (2022–2023) was published in September 2024. In its two years of existence, the initiative’s team, which comprises three Reo Tahiti-speaking agents and a doctor, has visited 28 islands and communes across the five archipelagos of French Polynesia. The team has met with more than 2,350 people and assisted with 1,425 case files, including 646 complete files already transmitted and being processed by the Committed for Compensation.

44. The Scientific and Cultural Council of Pū Mahara was established on 20 August 2024 in connection with the centre for the remembrance of nuclear tests conducted by France in the Pacific Ocean. The Council brings together 23 qualified individuals who have agreed to take on the task of drafting the scientific, cultural and educational framework for this future centre. In 2005, the Commission of inquiry on Polynesians and nuclear testing established by the Assembly of French Polynesia recommended that a memorial centre be established to serve as both an archive and a memorial to nuclear testing and that it be open to the public.

45. Participating in the 15th Triennial Pacific Women’s Conference, organized by the Pacific Community, held in the Marshall Islands from 22 to 24 July 2024, the Vice-President of French Polynesia highlighted the efforts made by French Polynesia to mainstream gender into its environmental and climate policies, with particular attention paid to improving the health of women and girls, especially with regard to access to healthcare, in light of the specific challenges they face. The question of the nuclear legacy shared by French Polynesia and the Marshall Islands, particularly in

terms of health and environmental consequences, was also discussed. The Vice-President stressed the importance of recognizing this legacy and continuing to support the victims of these tests and called for greater collaboration in examining the continuing effects on public health and the environment.

46. The outreach committee on monitoring of the Moruroa and Fangataufa atolls held its annual meeting on 29 October 2024. Founded in 2015, this committee is dedicated to the right to information about former nuclear test sites in the Pacific. Its purpose is to present the findings of geomechanical and radiological monitoring to local representatives, elected officials and associations. The French Ministry of the Army presented the results of measurements taken at the two atolls using samples of soil, plants, fish, molluscs, and lagoon and ocean water. The findings of geomechanical monitoring at Moruroa and Fangataufa show that there is very limited movement of the atoll reefs and that the risk of a major event is therefore very low, posing no danger to the populations of neighbouring atolls (Tureia and Vanavana). The representative of the French Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety presented the monitoring findings for the whole of French Polynesia, in addition to the two atolls. According to geomechanical and radiological monitoring, the results show that the radioactivity still present at Moruroa and Fangataufa is not migrating into the environment and therefore poses no danger to the population.

IV. Relations with international organizations and partners

47. French Polynesia has been an associate member of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific since 1992 and a full member of the Pacific Islands Forum since September 2016. It is a member of the Pacific Community and the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and a participating territory in the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission and the Polynesian Leaders Group. French Polynesia is also a member of other regional bodies, including the Oceania Customs Organization and the Pacific Power Association. French Polynesia officially became an observer member of the International Organisation of La Francophonie at the plenary session held on Saturday, 5 October 2024, as part of the nineteenth Summit of la Francophonie.

48. The President of French Polynesia took part in the fifty-third Pacific Islands Forum, held in Nuku'alofa from 26 to 30 August 2024. The President also chaired the twelfth meeting of the Polynesian Leaders Group, held on 6 November 2023 in the Cook Islands, and took part in the opening ceremony of the eighth French Polynesia Blue Economy Forum, held on 16 and 17 November 2023 in Papeete. Te Henua Enata (the Marquesas Islands) have been inscribed on the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), following a decision taken at the forty-sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, held in New Delhi from 21 to 31 July 2024.

V. Consideration by the United Nations

A. Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

49. The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples considered the question of French Polynesia at its 3rd and 10th meetings, held on

10 and 21 June 2024, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [78/91](#). At the 3rd meeting, the delegate for international, European and Pacific affairs of French Polynesia made a statement. The observer for France also made a statement. The Committee heard one petitioner (see [A/AC.109/2024/SR.3](#)). At its 10th meeting, the Special Committee adopted draft resolution [A/AC.109/2024/L.24](#) without a vote (see [A/AC.109/2024/SR.10](#)).

B. Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

50. At its 3rd meeting, held on 7 October 2024, on the basis of a decision taken at that same meeting, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee heard a statement on the question of French Polynesia by the President of French Polynesia, Moetai Charles Brotherson. At the same meeting, on the basis of a decision taken at its 2nd meeting, the Fourth Committee heard 27 petitioners on the question of French Polynesia. At the same meeting, a statement was made by the representative of France (see [A/C.4/79/SR.3](#)).

51. At its 10th meeting, held on 17 October 2024, the Fourth Committee adopted, without a vote, draft resolution IX, entitled “Question of French Polynesia”, contained in the report of the Special Committee for 2024 ([A/79/23](#)).

C. Action taken by the General Assembly

52. On 4 December 2024, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution [79/104](#), based on the report of the Special Committee transmitted to the Assembly and its subsequent consideration by the Fourth Committee (see [A/79/431](#)). In that resolution, the General Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of French Polynesia to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution [1514 \(XV\)](#), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(b) Also reaffirmed that it was ultimately for the people of French Polynesia to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection called upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of French Polynesia of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution [1541 \(XV\)](#) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

(c) Took note of the statement made by the President of the Territory in October 2023 that the Territorial government fully supported a proper decolonization process and self-determination process under the scrutiny of the United Nations;

(d) Reaffirmed, in that regard, General Assembly resolution [67/265](#), which provided for the reinscription of French Polynesia on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, and took careful note of an independent self-governance assessment of the Territory, presented to the Fourth Committee on 4 October 2016, that the Territory did not meet the full measure of self-government;

(e) Called upon the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work 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 in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Special Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in French Polynesia, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(f) Reiterated its request to the administering Power to facilitate a visiting mission to the Territory, and requested the Chair of the Special Committee to take all the steps necessary to that end;

(g) Regretted that the administering Power had not responded to the request to submit information on French Polynesia under Article 73 *e* of the Charter since the reinscription of the Territory by the General Assembly in 2013;

(h) Reaffirmed that an obligation existed on the part of the administering Power to transmit information under Chapter XI of the Charter, and requested the administering Power to transmit to the Secretary-General such information on French Polynesia as called for under the Charter;

(i) Urged the administering Power to ensure the permanent sovereignty of the people of French Polynesia over their natural resources, including marine resources and undersea minerals, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly;

(j) Took note of the efforts made by the administering Power concerning the recognition and compensation of victims of nuclear tests, and in that regard encouraged the administering Power to take steps to this effect;

(k) Reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to provide continuous updates on the environmental, ecological, health and other impacts of the 30-year period of nuclear testing in French Polynesia as they became available, in follow-up to the report of the Secretary-General on the matter, prepared pursuant to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution [71/120](#);

(l) Called upon the administering Power to initiate a dialogue with the Government of French Polynesia in order to facilitate rapid progress towards a fair and effective self-determination process, under which the terms and timelines for an act of self-determination would be agreed;

(m) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of the Non-Self-Governing Territory of French Polynesia and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its eightieth session.

Annex

Map of French Polynesia

