



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

Official Records

Distr.: General
5 December 2018

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 12th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 22 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Kemayah, Sr. (Liberia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 58: Questions relating to information
(continued) (A/73/21 and A/73/288)

1. **Mr. Vergés Aleix** (Andorra) said that multilingualism was essential to ensuring that the goals, values, decisions and policies of the United Nations were effective and reached as many people as possible. It also played an important role in implementing inclusive policies and ensuring that no one was left behind. It should therefore be practised in all sectors, particularly in information and communications services.

2. The United Nations should continue to use traditional channels of communication, such as radio, television and print, so that its message reached all regions of the world. However, it must also modernize communication, especially to connect with younger generations. In that connection, Andorra supported the vital work of the United Nations information centres.

3. The Organization clearly had the will and the capacity to communicate with greater numbers of people, given that the Department of Public Information continued to use non-official languages in its materials. Furthermore, by achieving parity among the six official languages, the United Nations could impact 3 billion people daily.

4. His Government defended multilingualism as a way to maintain the international impact of the United Nations. A good understanding of its values and missions was essential to the achievement of its goals.

5. **Ms. Florea** (Romania) said that her delegation called for the effective integration of multilingualism into the daily information and communications work of the Secretariat and stood ready to support those efforts. It also welcomed the expertise provided by the International Organization of la Francophonie, which contributed to the development of an integrated policy for multilingualism at the United Nations.

6. **Mr. Halfaoui** (Morocco) said that information provided by the United Nations was vital to international public opinion, as its work was being increasingly followed through the Internet portal, social networks and traditional media. The Department of Public Information was to be commended for providing reliable and objective information. His Government welcomed in particular the activities carried out under the special information programme on the question of Palestine, which ought to put still more emphasis on the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a viable independent State with Al-Quds as its capital. The

Department should also enhance communication on the numerous reforms undertaken by the Secretary-General with a view to improving the response of the United Nations to challenges relating to terrorism, peace and security, migrants and displaced persons, climate change and development. Member States, through their information centres, should provide as much information as possible on those reforms.

7. Tolerance, dialogue and respect were at the heart of his Government's policy of openness and balance. Given its commitment to cultural pluralism and the rights of minorities, Morocco played a pioneering role in promoting dialogue among cultures and religions and reiterated its continued commitment to the Department in promoting those common ideals. As a regular troop contributor, his Government welcomed the Department's collaboration on peace and security, particularly with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Its efforts included the "Service and sacrifice" campaign and the promotion of significant events, such as the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The Department of Public information was encouraged to continue improving its coverage of the Peacebuilding Commission and promoting the Sustainable Development Goals on its dedicated platform.

8. Migration was a flagship issue in 2018, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration would be adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference to be held in Marrakesh in December. The Department was to be commended for the importance it attached to the event and its collaboration with the Moroccan authorities.

9. One way to overcome the lack of financial and logistical resources that impeded efforts to disseminate information was to use new information technologies, as the Department had done. However, the existing digital divide meant that traditional tools of communication remained important in many developing countries, and the Department should adapt its programmes to that reality.

10. The United Nations information centres were at the forefront and should enjoy the Department's consistent support. Through its partnerships with academia and its collaboration with national and international press organizations in Morocco, the Centre in Rabat disseminated United Nations activities to the general public. In 2018, it had focused on migration in preparation for the adoption of the Global Compact. His Government hoped to further strengthen the work of the Centre, with the support of the Department.

11. Morocco attached particular importance to the equitable use of the six official United Nations languages in the dissemination of information. The Department should be congratulated for what it had done to achieve language parity and also to reach the widest possible audience through its use of local languages.

12. Lastly, his Government was committed to working with all United Nations bodies to provide reliable, credible and effective information in order to further the goals of the Organization.

13. **Mr. Dunham Maciel Siaines de Castro** (Brazil) said that the Department of Public Information should continue to disseminate information on the ideals and activities of the United Nations in as many languages as possible, taking into account the linguistic diversity of countries and their varying degrees of digital development. The Department should continue to use a combination of traditional means of communication, including radio, television and print, and new Internet-based media. Given that Internet access remained limited in developing countries whereas radio could reach most households in those countries, traditional media should continue to receive special attention in strategic plans.

14. His delegation welcomed the Department's use of dozens of languages in its information products and encouraged it to reinforce its multilingual approach even further. Portuguese was spoken by approximately 260 million people worldwide and was the most spoken language in the southern hemisphere. The United Nations News station in Portuguese, the first to become a full multimedia operation, had the third-largest audience of all United Nations News stations. Since 2013, the radio unit had established relevant partnerships with television channels in Portuguese-speaking countries and in countries with Portuguese-speaking diasporas. The Department was to be commended for strengthening United Nations social media operations and launching the new integrated United Nations News platform in the six official languages, as well as Portuguese and Kiswahili.

15. His Government reiterated its support for the United Nations information centres and recognized the important role they played in raising awareness of and mobilizing support for the work of the Organization, using local languages to reach local populations, particularly in developing countries. It was important to respect diversity in the provision of public information, not only through multilingualism but also by ensuring diverse content and a variety of broadcasting styles and intended audiences.

16. Civil society involvement in the Organization had increased and the Department was encouraged to continue to develop activities in conjunction with the academic community, non-governmental organizations and young people. His Government also welcomed the Department's campaigns to promote the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Decade for People of African Descent and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among others.

17. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) said that discrepancies continued to be observed in the press releases covering various United Nations meetings, despite repeated requests made by Member States in the Fourth Committee and in the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly. The Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications should ensure strict adherence to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and avoid misinformation in the future. Department staff responsible for writing press releases must faithfully reflect the debate proceedings and refrain from introducing their own comments. His delegation welcomed the commitment of the Under-Secretary-General to address those issues but felt that it was not simply a matter of mistakes, as had been suggested.

18. Algeria fully supported the initiatives and awareness programmes undertaken by the Department to address issues such as decolonization, peacekeeping, disarmament, human rights, Palestine, sustainable development, poverty eradication, the needs of Africa and climate change. He called on the Department to heed Africa's priority needs in order to formulate effective information policies and welcomed its promotion of the aims and priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

19. Furthermore, the Department should expand its activities in disseminating information on the Non-Self-Governing Territories, with a special focus on the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. In that connection, his delegation welcomed General Assembly resolution [72/110](#) and reiterated its request that the report on the 1975 visit to Western Sahara by the Special Committee on decolonization be made available on the website dedicated to Non-Self-Governing Territories without further delay. The Chair and the Secretariat should formally register the aforementioned requests in order to ensure follow-up by the Department. He also asked the Under-Secretary-General to explain why the Department was unable to fulfil those legal and legitimate requests.

20. The Department must ensure broad media coverage of the United Nations system, as a deeper understanding of the General Assembly's role would promote the revitalization of its work. Moreover, a reinvigorated Assembly exerting its role and authority fully would contribute significantly to strengthening the United Nations system and to enhancing international governance and multilateralism.

21. The potential politicization of public information and inappropriate use of information and communications technologies to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States was deeply concerning. While the Department's emphasis on digitalization was a welcome step, it should continue using traditional print, radio and television media, since those remained the primary means of public communication in many developing countries.

22. Stressing the importance of equitably using all the official languages of the United Nations in all activities of the Department, in the spirit of General Assembly resolution [69/324](#) on unity in diversity and international understanding, he expressed support for the efforts of the United Nations information centres to disseminate information in local languages about the work and activities of the United Nations, and called for the centres to be strengthened. He also welcomed efforts to integrate multilingualism into all information and communications activities, including webcasting, so as to ensure transparency, accountability, ownership and sustainability of the Department's communications.

23. **Mr. Kazi** (Bangladesh) said that, at a time of renewed challenges to the United Nations and multilateralism, the Department of Public Information played a critical role in upholding and promoting its values and principles. The Department should exercise the highest degree of professionalism and carefully calibrate its messages so that the world continued to receive credible and verifiable information about the work of the United Nations from its official media. Given the tendency of misinformation campaigns to twist or reinterpret messages, United Nations spokespersons must convey their analyses and commentary in a clear, concise and comprehensive manner. Because the mainstream media preferred to highlight adverse coverage, United Nations media must be further strengthened to promote the positive news emanating from the Organization. His delegation appreciated the Department's efficient use of social media platforms, making them accessible to a wider audience, and underscored the importance of constructive engagement with mainstream media, civil society and academia.

24. For several years, Bangladesh had been hosting over 1.1 million refugees and forcibly displaced persons from Rakhine State in Myanmar. He commended the Department for providing appropriate coverage of the humanitarian crisis, which had further intensified in the aftermath of the violence perpetrated against the Rohingya in August 2017 and was one of the largest displacement situations in the world. The Department should continue to advocate for humanitarian assistance for the forcibly displaced Rohingya and the restoration of their rights and freedoms to allow for their safe, dignified and voluntary return to Myanmar.

25. The Department had undertaken communication and outreach activities to promote multilingualism and had collaborated with his delegation to celebrate International Mother Language Day on 21 February, which promoted respect for pluralism, diversity, tolerance and the value of multilingual education. His delegation would continue to work with the Department and other relevant United Nations agencies to further those goals.

26. Enabling half of the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation was one of the major objectives of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020. It was also imperative for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the establishment of lasting peace and prosperity around the world. The Department should therefore continue to give increased exposure to the structural challenges faced by Bangladesh and other countries that had fulfilled those criteria.

27. Lastly, his delegation appreciated the supporting role played by the United Nations Information Centre in Dhaka, particularly its ongoing efforts to reach young people and to disseminate critical messages concerning sustainable development, migration, development, the impacts of climate change, peacekeeping, human rights, counterterrorism, the prevention of violent extremism and complete disarmament.

28. **Mr. Husni** (Sudan) said that, given the importance of information in the modern world, his Government valued the efforts of the Department of Public Information to use modern technologies to improve its working methods. The Department's efforts to disseminate information via modern platforms, in particular social media, during the current session of the General Assembly had received unprecedented attention and supported the efforts of the United Nations to raise awareness about important issues such as sustainable development, climate change and human rights.

29. The United Nations represented the will of culturally, socially and linguistically diverse peoples

and regions around the world. The promotion of multilingualism was therefore key to achieving the objectives of its Charter. Efforts to use all official United Nations languages equally helped promote transparency and language parity. The development of partnerships with regional organizations in the areas of training and information capacity-building helped raise awareness about major United Nations projects, engage local populations, promote a culture of peace and tolerance and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

30. United Nations peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts required intensive information support from the Secretariat, in particular the Department of Political Affairs and the Peacebuilding Support Office, in order to raise awareness of the facts on the ground, the challenges faced and successes achieved. It was also important that a comprehensive information strategy was developed to discuss the challenges faced by the peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions and the special political missions.

31. Not only did United Nations information centres play a constructive role in the societies in which they operated, but they were also responsible for ensuring the accuracy and objectivity of all information, which was of importance given that the misuse of inaccurate or distorted information threatened unity between peoples and undermined nation-building efforts, in particular in societies that were struggling to achieve stability and sustainable development. The desire to use modern information and communications technologies to achieve humanitarian goals should be balanced by efforts to limit the destructive powers of information. The Sudan was fully prepared to cooperate with the Department of Public Information to realize the important information goals of the United Nations.

32. **Ms. Salem** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that her delegation commended the special information programme on the question of Palestine, which included organizing international media seminars on peace in the Middle East. At the most recent seminar, held in the Russian Federation in September 2018, both Israeli and Palestinian human rights activists and representatives of civil society had shared objective facts about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Department of Public Information also maintained the permanent exhibit on the question of Palestine, organized activities in connection with the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and offered an annual training programme for young Palestinian journalists. Such activities were necessary to establish facts about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and her delegation appreciated the expressions of support

for the special information programme voiced by many delegations.

33. Attacks and incitement against journalists, human rights activists, members of society and their right to freedom of expression were unacceptable, particularly at the United Nations. In October 2018, Hagai El-Ad, the director of an Israeli human rights non-governmental organization called B'Tselem, had been invited to brief the Security Council about the grim reality in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Permanent Representative of Israel had insulted him in Hebrew in an attempt to cover up the truth about the atrocities of the Israeli occupation. Hagai El-Ad was not a traitor; he spoke the truth and defended the universal values necessary to live in peace. Given that an Israeli diplomat had insulted an Israeli citizen in the Security Council, it was not difficult to imagine what an Israeli soldier could do to a Palestinian citizen at a checkpoint.

34. The State of Palestine reaffirmed its appreciation for the information disseminated by the Department with regard to human rights, peace, justice, freedom and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and would continue to support that work.

35. **Ms. Herdt** (Observer for the International Organization of la Francophonie) said that it was vital to mobilize the Secretariat and Member States in support of multilingualism, particularly in the light of the serious challenges facing multilateralism. More than ever, people were in need of access to information on the impact of United Nations activities on the daily life of millions; such access must be guaranteed while preserving traditional means of communication alongside new technologies. To that end, her organization could provide high-level expertise and concrete solutions to assist in developing an integrated policy on multilingualism at the United Nations and to promote its integration in the daily information and communications activities of the Secretariat. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the imminent reforms of the Organization would depend on effective multilingualism, enabling Member States to contribute equally in the reform process.

36. Given that 2018 marked the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a multilingual communications strategy was crucial in creating a sense of genuine sharing in the Organization's founding values and key to advancing its Sustainable Development Goals. Her organization welcomed the achievements of the Department's News and Media Division and the work of its Press Service, Publications Section and Radio Section. However, in order to reflect adequately the diversity of culture and opinion within

the Organization, content must be not only translated into the official languages but also produced in other non-official languages. The Department's awareness-raising and strategic communication work would hinge on such an approach.

37. The seventeenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of la Francophonie had been held in Yerevan in October 2018. The number of French-speaking people in the world had increased by 10 per cent since 2014. It was therefore essential to promote participation among Francophone youth, in which multilingualism would play a vital role. Her organization would continue to work with the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications and support the efforts of the Department of Public Information, thereby ensuring the success of multilateralism, to the benefit of the world's peoples.

Draft resolution A: Information in the service of humanity (A/73/21 (chap. IV))

Draft resolution B: United Nations public information policies and activities (A/73/21 (chap. IV))

38. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on the draft resolutions before it under agenda item 58, which contained no programme budget implications.

39. *Draft resolution A was adopted.*

40. *Draft resolution B was adopted.*

41. **Ms. Stanford** (United States of America), making a general statement after the decision, said that her Government continued to support United Nations efforts to protect and advance core shared principles, which included protecting freedom of expression for members of the press, reducing barriers to access to information and strengthening communications capacity in developing countries. It also strongly supported efforts to facilitate transparency in United Nations operations and activities.

42. While the United States had once again supported the draft resolutions, it disassociated itself from paragraph 49 of draft resolution B, as it had not participated in negotiations on the Global Compact for Migration and would not be endorsing that instrument. As a result, the United States would not accept any commitments or outcomes in that connection. Furthermore, it could not support United Nations efforts to promote the Global Compact and prejudice Member States, which included the Department's proposed public information campaign.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

43. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that, for the second year in a row, Algeria had attempted to politicize the work of the Committee in its discussions regarding public information. During the previous week's meetings on the decolonization items, approximately 60 delegations had spoken on a number of questions. However, the Algerian delegation, which claimed to defend the right to self-determination, had spoken only on the question of Moroccan Sahara, as if it were the only important issue under consideration. He wondered why the Algerian delegation had not raised the issue of self-determination under the other questions discussed.

44. Algeria was attempting to unearth a report that was over 43 years old and bully the Secretariat into making it available on the website. That report was no longer relevant, as Morocco had recovered Moroccan Sahara in 1975 pursuant to the Madrid Accord, which had been endorsed by the General Assembly. Perhaps the Algerian delegation could ask the Department to highlight the 2001 report of the Secretary-General, which had exposed the Algerian proposal to partition Moroccan Sahara. He wondered where that country's respect for self-determination had been in that instance.

45. In reopening the debate over the question of Moroccan Sahara during the discussion on public information, the Algerian delegation had demonstrated its confusion over the previous week's proceedings on decolonization. A large majority of Member States had clearly indicated their support for the efforts of Morocco, the Moroccan autonomy initiative and its sovereignty and territorial integrity with regard to the regional dispute on the question of Moroccan Sahara. Therefore, he urgently called on the representative of Algeria to respect the work of the Committee, as well as the work and mandate of the Department of Public Information, which was managed in an impartial and responsible manner.

46. **Mr. Lynn** (Myanmar), in response to the statement made by the representative of Bangladesh, said that his delegation recognized the important role of the Department of Public Information in disseminating accurate and impartial news to the citizens of the world and supported its activities. While it was disappointing that the representative of Bangladesh had raised an issue that was unrelated to the work of the Committee, he would take the opportunity to describe what had been done to resolve the issues in Rakhine State.

47. His Government had established the Central Committee for the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development in Rakhine State in May 2016, and the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State had been

formed in September of the same year. Barely a month later, an extremist terrorist group known as Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army had launched attacks on three border police posts in northern Rakhine State. Another attack had followed in August 2017. Those attacks had resulted in the outflow of people from Rakhine State to Bangladesh. The Government was sincerely addressing critical issues and taking steps for the early repatriation of all displaced persons who were verified as residents of the country.

48. Myanmar had signed three bilateral agreements with Bangladesh to arrange for the return of displaced persons and had stood ready to receive verified returnees since January 2018. His delegation therefore called on Bangladesh to do its part so that there would be no delay in the return of verified persons under voluntary, safe and dignified conditions. Recognizing the crucial role played by the United Nations, his Government had also signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to assist in the quick and efficient resettlement and rehabilitation of returnees. Thus far, a number of people had made their own arrangements to return to Myanmar of their own volition. They had been systematically registered and processed and were now living with their families in their own houses. However, Bangladesh had not yet sent back a single person.

49. An independent commission of inquiry made up of local and international members had been established to investigate all human rights violations committed in Rakhine State. The Government was taking a holistic approach to finding a long-term solution and was doing its best to resolve the complex issues there. It sought the cooperation and understanding of the international community; finding fault and voicing unhealthy criticism would not help to solve the problem.

50. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria), taking issue with the perspective of the representative of Morocco on the Committee's work, said that his delegation was not politicizing the Committee. It had simply raised two important issues. First, it had objected to press releases that had violated the principles of objectivity, transparency and neutrality that should characterize them. The Secretariat itself had recognized the errors, and the Under-Secretary-General for Global Communications had said that she would look into the issue. When there were anomalies, Member States had a duty to call attention to them so that action could be taken, which was what his delegation had done.

51. Secondly, in connection with the question of Western Sahara — not the question of Moroccan Sahara, as the Moroccan delegation chose to term it — his delegation was merely seeking an explanation, from the Department and not Morocco, as to why the Department had not included the 1975 report on Western Sahara on its website, which was intended to inform the public and Member States. The age of the report did not detract from its value because it detailed human rights violations under the occupation of the Territory. That omission suggested selectivity, and where there was selectivity there was politicization. Unbiased information should be given about all Non-Self-Governing Territories. He asked the representative of Morocco to specify which 2001 report he was citing.

52. With regard to the right to self-determination, his delegation's statements had always emphasized the right of all 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories to freely choose their own future. The representative of Morocco emphasized the Moroccan solution to the question of Western Sahara but made no mention of the solution proposed by the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO). United Nations resolutions stated that a mutually acceptable solution must include self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, which the Moroccan delegation never mentioned because it did not wish to recognize the perspective of international law. There was no confusion among the Algerian delegation. On the contrary, it was satisfied that the question of Western Sahara would remain on the agenda until a referendum of self-determination was held, pursuant to various United Nations resolutions.

53. The Committee had heard 48 petitioners in favour of self-determination for the Sahrawi people and respect for international law, while 49 had praised the Moroccan initiative. The Moroccan delegation had claimed that there was a large majority in favour of Morocco, but no State had recognized Moroccan sovereignty over the Territory. Indeed, the International Court of Justice and, most recently, the Court of Justice of the European Union had clearly stipulated that Western Sahara did not form part of Moroccan territory. Although the Moroccan delegation claimed that Western Sahara was Moroccan, its Government treated the population in the Territory differently from the people in Morocco. Numerous reports had illustrated that all Sahrawi activists who called for independence were jailed, and some of them even sentenced to over 20 years in prison by military tribunals.

54. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that the Sahara was, always had been and would remain Moroccan until the end of time, despite the objections of the Algerian delegation.

55. With regard to the Algerian delegation's support for the right to self-determination, he challenged the representative of Algeria to name one question that his delegation had mentioned, aside from the question of Moroccan Sahara, in the Fourth Committee or the Special Committee. It was clear that the right to self-determination applied only when Algeria wished to attack the territorial integrity of Morocco.

56. The Algerian representative's arithmetic was faulty: the records of the meetings showed that there had been many more petitioners who had supported Moroccan sovereignty over the Sahara region and the Moroccan autonomy initiative. They had come from the Sahara region to provide a true account of the situation on the ground, telling of their political empowerment and their economic and social development. At the same time, they had deplored and condemned the massive human rights violations in the Tindouf camps and the fact that Algeria allowed an armed separatist movement to operate lawlessly. In fact, the most recent report of the Human Rights Committee ([CCPR/C/DZA/CO/4](#)) had painted a dark picture of the human rights situation in all of Algeria, not just the refugee camps. The massive violations included hundreds of thousands of enforced disappearances and violations against African migrants who were thrown into the desert by Algerian authorities. That was not the Moroccan position; that was according to Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other bodies. Since Algeria claimed to champion human rights, it should grant the right to self-determination to the Kabyle people in its own country.

57. The 1975 report was no longer relevant; it had been dead and buried because the question of Moroccan Sahara had been resolved through the Madrid Accord, with the support of the General Assembly. In fact, Morocco had itself requested the inclusion of Moroccan Sahara on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories in 1963 during the Spanish occupation. If Algeria had not attacked the territorial integrity of Morocco, the issue would have been resolved in 1975. The Frente POLISARIO had not even existed in 1963. It had been created over a decade later by Algeria, which maintained and financed it.

58. At the request of the representative of Algeria, he cited the report of the Secretary-General ([S/2002/178](#)), issued on 19 February 2002, which stated that: "Algeria and the Frente POLISARIO would be prepared to

discuss or negotiate a division of the Territory as a political solution." Morocco had rejected that proposal because its territorial integrity was non-negotiable. He challenged the representative of Algeria to provide one report of the Secretary-General that mentioned an occupation. Furthermore, no report of the Secretary-General and no Security Council resolution had mentioned a referendum since 2001 and 2002, respectively. The Security Council resolutions called for a realistic and practicable political solution to the regional dispute and reiterated the pre-eminence of the Moroccan autonomy initiative proposed in 2007.

59. Algeria should assume its role as the interested party in the question of Moroccan Sahara and would have a chance to do so in the forthcoming round table meeting in Geneva. It must take responsibility in order to end the regional dispute, which it had fabricated and continued to sustain.

60. **Mr. Bessedik** (Algeria) said that, no matter how many times the representative of Morocco repeated the term Moroccan Sahara, it remained the perspective of Morocco, not that of international law. In addition, territorial integrity applied to borders that were internationally recognized by the United Nations, not those conceived of by Morocco.

61. He would not mention the situation within Morocco because there would be much to say. He suggested that the representative of Morocco re-examine the history and current situation of his country. While no one could claim that the situation in Algeria was perfect, Morocco should put its own house in order before criticizing others.

62. While Morocco always referred to a separatist movement, that argument had not been taken up by the international community. The Western Saharans in Algeria were not living in a lawless territory, as could be attested to by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operation and numerous non-governmental organizations. In fact, the people had chosen to set aside violence in order to pursue their right to self-determination.

63. Given that United Nations resolutions recognized the Frente POLISARIO as the legitimate representative of the Sahrawi people, it was, in fact, an occupation. Furthermore, it was important to clarify that Algeria was not a party to the conflict; it was an observer country and would attend the forthcoming round table meeting in Geneva in that capacity.

64. The Moroccan delegation often cited the mutually acceptable solution referred to in the relevant Security Council resolutions but neglected to mention what followed: that such a solution would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

65. Algeria defended the principle of the right to self-determination for all 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories but focused on Western Sahara because its people had taken refuge in Algeria, 173,600 of them according to the most recent United Nations estimates.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.