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held on  
Monday, 26 November 1984  
at 3 p.m.  
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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 23rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea)

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AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE  
TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued) (A/39/23 (Part VI), A/39/634 and Add.1, 680; A/C.4/39/2/Add.5 and Add.7; A/C.4/39/L.12 and L.13; A/AC.109/785)

Question of Western Sahara (continued)

Hearing of petitioners (continued)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Douihi (Front de libération et de l'unité - FLU) took a place at the petitioners' table.

2. Mr. DOUIHI (Front de libération et de l'unité - FLU) observed that his organization had been formed in 1973 to battle the Spanish occupiers of Moroccan Sahara. In so doing, it was carrying on the struggle for territorial unity begun by earlier liberation movements, a struggle that dated back to the seventeenth century. There was documentary evidence of the Moroccan identity of the Saharan region since that time; and in the period between 1958 and 1975, Morocco had never ceased to claim and try to reclaim its Saharan region.

3. Confusion on that score had been created by Algeria, when it had stepped in in 1975 to assemble a group of mercenaries calling themselves the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) and, in 1976, to proclaim a phantom "Saharan Arab Democratic Republic". Since then, Morocco and Moroccan Sahara had waged a bitter war with Algeria on the military and diplomatic front.

4. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) had repeatedly taken the initiative in searching for a peaceful settlement to the question, culminating in its 1983 proposal for a popular referendum, to which King Hassan of Morocco had immediately assented. During the same period, Algeria had plotted to prevent such a referendum from ever taking place, since it knew that the Saharan people would proudly proclaim their Moroccan identity and their allegiance to the King. Algeria had also sought constantly to gain some kind of international recognition for its mercenary agents, and had recently succeeded in having its satellite "Republic" admitted as a member of OAU.

5. If law and justice were to prevail, no international or regional organization was ever entitled to impose recognition of one party to a conflict to the detriment of the other. In the case of Moroccan Sahara, such recognition could be the outcome only of a referendum expressing authentic popular choice, for all the world to see. Over 90 per cent of Moroccan Sahara lived in peace and could not be expected to sacrifice its option for self-determination to a band of mercenaries, merely to satisfy Algerian schemes.

6. In view of allegations made by certain members of the Committee at its preceding meetings, his organization wondered if a new plot was under way, within the United Nations itself, to impose a fait accompli on the people of Moroccan

(Mr. Douihi)

Sahara. Such a development would force his organization, as a true representative of those people, to reassess its commitment to peaceful settlement.

7. The delegation of Mozambique had irresponsibly insulted the State of Morocco by referring to it as a colonizing State: Morocco had been among the first to take up the struggle against colonialism on the African continent and had remained in the vanguard of that struggle by assisting other States, among them Mozambique itself, let alone Algeria, to gain independence. Furthermore, Mauritania's assertion that the Moroccan Government had been set up by colonizers was a shameful distortion of living history, for Morocco had been born of the will of a truly African people.

8. The situation in Morocco's Saharan territory had been distorted by those who were hardly in a position to make accusations of any sort. Mozambique had branded the people of Morocco as colonizers but was faced by a liberation movement of its own. He would remind the representative of Nigeria that Morocco's Saharan people were citizens of the Sahara and would not withdraw. Those who referred to the Frente POLISARIO as African brothers might remember the actions of Tanzania in Zanzibar and of Ethiopia in Eritrea. In Angola there was the problem of Kabinda and UNITA, while in Algeria the Touaregs had been completely eliminated.

9. He proposed that the Fourth Committee should establish a sub-committee to visit the Western Sahara to meet with the people and witness what they had accomplished. The Frente POLISARIO was no more than a group of Algerian, Moroccan and Mauritanian mercenaries. The unity of the Moroccan people was a solid rock on which the expansionist designs of Algeria would be shattered. Morocco's economy was solid and would enable the people to reach the goal which the King had set.

10. His organization would reject any resolution which did not take the will of the Moroccan people fully into account.

11. Mr. DOUIHI withdrew.

12. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Khalil (Partie de l'Union nationale sahraouie) took a place at the petitioners' table.

13. Mr. KHALIL (Partie de l'Union nationale sahraouie) said that his party was the only party which had fought the Spanish occupation and had finally compelled the colonialist régime to recognize it as the only representative political force in the territory of Western Sahara. In May 1975 it had sent a delegation to present a petition to King Hassan II consistent with the traditional indestructible bond between the King and his subjects.

14. Contrary to the allegations of Algerian propaganda, there had been a constant effort to develop the provinces of Western Sahara through the enhancement of the infrastructure and the establishment of hospitals, schools, housing projects, professional training centres, roads and health facilities throughout the entire territory. Representatives of the international press had seen those achievements for themselves. The population hated Algeria and its propaganda.

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(Mr. Khalil)

15. The international community should not consider the problem of Western Sahara from the point of view of certain African countries which were notorious for the instability of their régimes and their own selfish designs. Those States appeared intent on forgetting problems which affected their own peoples. The recognition of the so-called Saharan Arab Democratic Republic by the Organization of African Unity had made it abundantly clear that there were many who were prepared to ignore the problems of their own region. His party condemned such irresponsibility which could not lead to a solution but could only worsen the situation in the area. The so-called Saharan Arab Democratic Republic could certainly not be regarded as representing the people of the area; representation could not be imposed from outside by an expansionist State. The Frente POLISARIO was an instrument which was being unscrupulously exploited by Algeria to obtain its own objectives. The group had been specially trained for the purpose of attacking the Saharan people; it comprised impoverished elements from various parts of the Sahara, including Mauritania, Mali and southern Algeria, where people had been driven to join it by the disastrous effects of the drought.

16. His party invited the Fourth Committee to send a delegation to visit the Western Sahara in order to obtain an objective view of developments throughout the territory. They would be able to speak freely with the inhabitants and to confirm the truth of what his party had said. Only in that way could the Fourth Committee come to understand the real situation.

17. At the Nairobi summit, King Hassan II had proposed a referendum so that the Saharan people could freely express their will. The people of Western Sahara applauded that initiative because it would satisfy world opinion and meet the territory's claims, as the results would certainly confirm the views of his party.

18. Mr. KHALIL withdrew.

Draft resolution

19. Mr. BRANCO (Sao Tome and Principe), introducing draft resolution A/C.4/39/L.13, said that the sponsors had been joined by Belize, Ghana, Rwanda and Uganda.

20. The draft resolution reiterated the main elements of resolution 38/40 which had been adopted by the General Assembly by consensus on 7 December 1983. With a view to seeking consensus, the current draft had been based on the fundamental principles and recommendations which had already been accepted by the international community, including, in particular, the principles enshrined in the Charter and in resolution 1514 (XV) as well as the procedures for the peaceful settlement of the question of Western Sahara which had been accepted by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. Fundamental to those procedures was the need for Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO to negotiate directly for a cease-fire with a view to creating the necessary conditions for a peaceful and just referendum concerning the self-determination of the people of the Western Sahara.

(Mr. Branco, Sao Tome  
and Principe)

21. In its references to General Assembly resolution 38/40 and resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX) adopted unanimously by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, the text had taken account of earlier decisions on the issue.

22. The draft resolution reflected the consensus of the international community on the question of Western Sahara and its sponsors appealed to the United Nations to adopt the text with a view to hastening a just and peaceful settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara.

23. The CHAIRMAN announced that a second draft resolution on the question of Western Sahara had been submitted for the Committee's consideration and that its text would be circulated shortly.

General debate (continued)

24. Mr. BRAVO (Angola) said that colonialist régimes of occupation, oppression and exploitation remained among the most important sources of tension and conflict on the African continent. His Government accordingly attached the greatest importance to the right of peoples to self-determination and independence and gave its unconditional support to all national liberation movements. It was a matter for regret that there was a deadlock on the question of Western Sahara where the people, under the leadership of the Frente POLISARIO, its sole and legitimate representative, continued their just struggle for self-determination and independence in conformity with resolutions and decisions of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement.

25. In the view of his delegation, direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict with a view to reaching a cease-fire in accordance with the relevant resolutions was the only means through which a just and durable political solution to the issue could be achieved. Such a procedure would be in full compliance with Article 33 of the Charter and with the concept of the promotion of international peace and security on the basis of justice and equality.

26. The history of international relations had demonstrated that dialogue constituted the most eloquent and reasonable means of ending wars of national liberation. In that connection, the heroic struggle of the people of Angola against their colonialist oppressors had ended with the cease-fire signed with the Portuguese Government on 21 October 1974.

27. States were both the creators and the beneficiaries of the international legal system. It was logical therefore that the same States should guarantee the implementation of the international legal instruments which they had themselves adopted. Resolutions pointing the way to the solution of the issue of decolonization already existed; all that was required therefore was that they should be implemented integrally. He felt certain that the international community would assume its responsibility and would contribute to bringing about the independence of the Sahara and the establishment of peace in the Mediterranean region.

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28. Mr. DJOUDI (Algeria) said that at its previous session the General Assembly had unanimously adopted resolution 38/40 endorsing the OAU's resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX), which contained the carefully worked-out plan of the African leaders for a just and lasting solution to a conflict that seriously threatened peace and stability in north-west Africa and in the continent as a whole. The resolution had clearly established the parameters of the dispute: first, that the point at issue in Western Sahara was decolonization, in accordance with the general principle of the right of peoples to self-determination and independence and, in the particular case, respect for the national aspirations of the people of Western Sahara; second, that the conflict could only be settled through a negotiated political solution that would restore peace and amity in the region in the interest of all its peoples; third, that the only path to such a solution lay in direct negotiations between the belligerents themselves; lastly, that the OAU was the appropriate arena in which to pursue the political settlement outlined.

29. The path marked out by the OAU was the only fair and correct one, as the General Assembly had confirmed by endorsing it. Regrettably, the African peace-making effort, despite its universal backing, had come to nothing. It was clear where the responsibility lay: those who had done their duty towards Africa and the international community as a whole and those who had failed had been clearly identified. On the occasion of the Twentieth Meeting of Heads of State and Government, therefore, Africa had lived up to its responsibilities in respect of the conflict in Western Sahara and the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic had resumed its place among the African nations.

30. Algeria deeply regretted the ensuing withdrawal of the Kingdom of Morocco from the OAU, the more so since it was convinced that the only possible settlement of the conflict lay in a political agreement to be worked out by the two belligerents. The continuation of the conflict was in the interest neither of the Saharan nor of the Moroccan people, nor of the region as a whole. Algeria still hoped that Morocco would see the light and that the voice of peace would be heard at last.

31. Africa had thus fulfilled its obligations, and it was now for the United Nations to assume its own responsibilities with regard to the decolonization of the territory. It was the duty of the United Nations to bring to bear all the weight of its universal authority so that the appeal for a dialogue could be heard, the peace-making efforts of the OAU brought to fruition, and friendship and concord restored in the entire region.

32. There was no beneficial alternative to peace. Accordingly, there was no beneficial alternative to a process of peaceful settlement, a process in which the two belligerents, Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, would unite their efforts in a courageous determination to overcome the present circumstances and achieve a reconciliation in the interest of the unity, stability and prosperity of the Maghreb as a whole.

33. It was precisely that interest which had determined Algeria's position on the issue, a position that was also in line with the decisions of the United Nations

(Mr. Djoudi, Algeria)

and the OAU. It wished to reaffirm that stand and to proclaim its faith in the approach taken to the conflict by the OAU and the United Nations. It stood ready, therefore, to make every effort to assist its two brother peoples to reach a peaceful political settlement, and would continue to work for a just and definitive solution which would satisfy to the full the legitimate aspirations of the people of Western Sahara. Such a settlement could brook no delay. Now more than ever, therefore, the United Nations must reiterate Africa's unanimous appeal for a peaceful settlement. By so doing, it would not only be confirming its promise to guarantee the people of Western Sahara the exercise of their right to self-determination; it would also be keeping high the standard of decolonization raised a quarter of a century before.

34. Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) said that, because of the intransigent attitude of one of the parties, the situation with regard to Western Sahara was less encouraging than it had been in the previous year, when the General Assembly had adopted resolution 38/40 without a vote. There had already been disturbing attempts to obstruct the efforts of the OAU in September 1983, when Morocco had refused to participate in the 3rd meeting of the Implementation Committee, although the Frente POLISARIO had accepted a compromise formula designed to promote negotiations, and recently the situation had been complicated still further by its defiant attitude towards the regional organization.

35. It was also disturbing that instead of the resolutions aimed at a peaceful settlement, in particular General Assembly resolution 38/40 being respected, the area was still being militarized and the illegal occupation of Saharan territory reinforced, thus intensifying the conflict and endangering regional stability. The Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, on the other hand, had repeatedly demonstrated its political will to seek a peaceful settlement.

36. Mexico was convinced that the international community, and the OAU in particular, should redouble its efforts to secure full respect for the right of the Saharan people to self-determination and independence. It was vital, therefore, that the Kingdom of Morocco should start direct negotiations with the Frente POLISARIO, as called for in the relevant resolutions.

37. Mexico, which had recognized the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic in 1979, welcomed the fact that it was again exercising its rights as a member of the OAU. Mexico based its position on the principles of the self-determination of peoples and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States, and on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. It therefore supported the struggle of the Saharan people to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity. His delegation, which had joined in sponsoring the draft resolution (A/C.4/39/L.13) urged that it should be adopted without a vote and that the Committee should reiterate its appeal to the parties to bring the conflict to an end and thus restore confidence and solidarity in the region.

38. Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) said that the development of the situation in Western Sahara, from the time of the United Nations mission in 1975, through the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice up to the establishment of the Implementation Committee by the OAU, had led to the adoption by consensus in June 1983 of resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX). Difficulties had arisen, however, when one of the parties had refused to accept a recommendation which was vital in the creation of the climate needed for a settlement. The OAU resolution not only urged the parties to the conflict to engage in direct negotiation; it named those parties. In doing so, it had recognized the reality that the people struggling for self-determination in Western Sahara were led by a liberation movement known as the Frente POLISARIO. In their resolution, adopted by consensus, the African Heads of State had recognized Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO as the parties to the dispute, had tried to set out the conditions for a peaceful settlement, and had sought to respect and implement the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

39. Unfortunately, that resolution had not been put into effect. He recalled that at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly his delegation had said that it would be clear from the implementation of the resolution who followed and who did not follow the OAU's recommendations, and that it would draw the necessary conclusions. That was precisely what Burkina Faso had done when on 4 March 1984 it had recognized the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. The President of Burkina Faso, Mr. Sankara, had done so in still more striking fashion when on 3 April 1984 he had made an official visit to the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic and published a joint communiqué with his opposite number, President Abdelaziz, reaffirming their belief in the right of peoples to self-determination and their support for the resolution as a whole.

40. Burkina Faso's response had not been directed against Morocco but rather in favour of the sacred principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. It was well aware of Morocco's great contribution to the independence of colonial countries and peoples, and deeply regretted the attitude it had adopted. After the colonial peoples had forced the colonial Powers not only to recognize the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination and independence but also to act in favour of the exercise of that right, it was hard to understand how one of those very former colonies could fail to respect that right. His delegation accordingly appealed to Morocco to join with Africa and the international community to enable the Saharan people and all the peoples of north-west Africa to live in peace and security.

41. The people of Burkina Faso and its National Council of the Revolution welcomed the admission of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic to membership in the OAU, assured the Saharan people of their solidarity and support, and reiterated once more their unfailing attachment to the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination and independence.

42. Mr. FERNANDES (Sao Tome and Principe) said that the people of Western Sahara, like other oppressed peoples, had been obliged to opt for armed struggle in order to affirm their legitimate right to freedom, self-determination and independence.



(Mr. Fernandes, Sao Tome  
and Principe)

Over the years, that struggle had earned increasing support from the peace-loving peoples of the world. His country, in accordance with its anti-colonial stand, was proud to be one of those which had given the Saharan people and their legitimate representative, the Frente POLISARIO, its unqualified support. It had always been convinced, however, that there should be a negotiated solution which would reconcile the two peoples and open up prospects for an era of understanding and co-operation among all the peoples of the Maghreb. In that context, it had supported all the efforts of the OAU for a just and dignified solution which would guarantee the realization of the Saharan people's aspirations.

43. In its resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX), the OAU had urged the parties to the conflict - the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO - to undertake direct negotiations with a view to bringing about a cease-fire in order to create the necessary conditions for a peaceful and fair referendum, with no administrative or military constraints, under the auspices of the OAU and the United Nations, and had called on the Implementation Committee to ensure the observance of the cease-fire. Though the Saharan leaders had been willing to co-operate, the Implementation Committee had been unable to carry out its mandate.

44. Recent developments proved that no peace could be attained without respect for the legitimate rights of the Saharan people. The international community had no doubt that the question of Western Sahara was purely one of decolonization, the solution to which must be found in the application of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). His delegation therefore appealed once again to the Kingdom of Morocco to renew its anti-colonial tradition, reconsider its position and undertake in good faith the search for a negotiated settlement in accordance with the terms of the OAU resolution. In that way, the people of Africa would be able to utilize to the full the great potential of the people of the Maghreb in their struggle for the total liberation of the continent. His delegation hoped that the adoption of the draft resolution (A/C.4/39/L.13) would be a further contribution to that end.

45. Mr. KAKOURIS (Cyprus) reiterated his delegation's profound concern at the serious situation prevailing in Western Sahara. The decolonization process called for in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and other pertinent resolutions had not been carried out to the full and the sacrosanct principle of self-determination had not been respected.

46. The right of the Saharan people to self-determination had been stated on many occasions and in many forums. It had been reaffirmed by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 1975. Ten years later, however, that inalienable right had yet to be realized.

47. The repeated appeals of the United Nations and the OAU to the two parties to the conflict - the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO - to agree to and observe a cease-fire had yet to be heeded. His delegation regarded a mutually agreed and strictly observed cease-fire as a prerequisite for the preparation and implementation of a peaceful and fair referendum.

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(Mr. Kakouris, Cyprus)

48. He reiterated his delegation's full support for resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX) and recalled that, at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, it had commended the two parties to the conflict for supporting that resolution, which was undoubtedly a step in the right direction in the search for a lasting solution. One of the resolution's main provisions had been that the parties should agree to undertake direct negotiations, but, unfortunately, such negotiations had yet to take place, thus further delaying a lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara and the implementation of the Saharan people's right to self-determination.

49. His delegation fully supported the findings of the Implementation Committee of the Organization of African Unity contained in document A/39/680; the formula must involve prior commitments by both sides and the observance of all relevant resolutions.

50. His country also fully supported the liberation aspirations of the Frente POLISARIO and expressed its continued support of the courageous Sarawi people who were fighting for the right of self-determination.

51. Cyprus would vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.4/39/L.13, of which it was a sponsor. The draft resolution contained all the necessary elements for a just, peaceful and permanent solution to the question of Western Sahara.

52. Mr. MANZOU (Zimbabwe) said that his Government had never equivocated in its condemnation of acts of colonialism, military aggression or any other form of intervention or domination. It had accordingly always viewed the problem of Western Sahara as a striking example of the negation of the rights of a people to self-determination. Morocco's invasion and continued occupation of that Territory against the wishes of its inhabitants was inadmissible.

53. The United Nations, in full accord with the thrust of the earlier advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and taking the same position as OAU and the Non-Aligned Movement, had called for a supervised referendum as the only way of determining the wishes of the people of that area. Morocco's claim over Western Sahara on the grounds of territorial unity could not, therefore, be justified under international law. Moreover, one was compelled to ask why Morocco had had to resort to arms at all to achieve integration, if the alleged legal and historical ties of allegiance between Morocco and the Saharan people actually existed.

54. Zimbabwe believed that the struggle being waged by the people of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, led by the Frente POLISARIO, was a legitimate struggle for self-determination, and it once again appealed to the Government of Morocco to reconcile itself to that reality and not to escalate the conflict. General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), OAU resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX) and all subsequent General Assembly resolutions on Western Sahara offered the only practical and peaceful approach to a settlement of the colonial problem of Western Sahara. His delegation therefore welcomed the latest OAU decision and efforts aimed at achieving an early solution. History was on the side of the Saharan people.

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55. Mr. RASON (Madagascar) drew attention to General Assembly resolution 38/40 and Organization of African Unity resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX) and said that the failure to implement them had resulted in the recognition of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic by the Organization of African Unity and the escalation of the war in the Western Sahara. After years of confrontation, the causes of the crisis persisted and the danger to peace was growing. The main obstacle to a solution was Morocco's persistent refusal to comply with the decisions of the United Nations. The United Nations must therefore take action to obtain a cease-fire and the withdrawal of Moroccan troops from Western Sahara as an essential precondition for implementing the right to self-determination of the Saharan people. The recognition of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic by the Organization of African Unity reflected the former's political maturity. Both parties to the conflict must negotiate in order to end the war and release the resources currently being spent on it for the peaceful development of the region. His country was ready to help in any way it could to arrive at a just solution to the problem.

56. Mr. VAN LIERO (Vanuatu) said that his delegation's position on the question of Western Sahara was clearly set forth in draft resolution A/C.4/39/L.13.

57. It was regrettable that one of the Organization of African Unity's foremost members had withdrawn from the Organization in response to the resumption of its seat by the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. His delegation remained optimistic, however, that in the near future, Morocco, a nation his delegation respected and whose anti-colonial history it revered, would again assume its rightful place in the OAU alongside the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. It also looked forward to the day when the parties to the conflict would engage in direct negotiations and enter into a partnership of peace and prosperity. His delegation's plea, therefore, was for a consensus on a resolution which pointed no finger at anyone, but instead pointed the way to peace, justice and equality.

58. Mr. NGENDANGANYA (Burundi) said that it was precisely the unquestionable success of the United Nations in the area of decolonization that made unacceptable and incomprehensible the survival of the last bastions of colonialism, especially in such a region as Western Sahara. Upon the departure of the colonial power, that territory had been occupied by force, in violation of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity, thereby provoking a war between the Moroccan occupation army and the Saharan people, which insisted upon its right to self-determination and independence. The proposals to remedy the situation set out in General Assembly resolution 38/40 and in OAU resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX) had failed because of Morocco's refusal to negotiate, which had left no choice but to recognize the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic and to admit it to the OAU. In doing so, the African States had shown their concern for the establishment of just and lasting peace in the region, and it was with that same concern that his delegation joined the preceding speakers in asking the Fourth Committee to support draft resolution A/C.4/39/L.13. It was time for Morocco to abide by the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity and withdraw its troops from the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic as a step towards restoring stability in the region and promoting international security.

59. Mr. HADDAOUI (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that few were really familiar with the background of the question of Western Sahara and that he had therefore been surprised that nearly all the previous speakers had stressed the right of self-determination. He wondered how they could fail to appreciate the contradiction between insisting on the right of the people of the region to self-determination - in other words, on their right to express their views - while at the same time recognizing the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, which would mean that self-determination was already a fait accompli.

60. Anyone was welcome to visit the Moroccan Sahara, which was perfectly peaceful, and indeed safer than many of the cities of the countries represented in the Fourth Committee. The Algerian representative knew very well what efforts Morocco had made to resolve the problem peacefully. In fact, never before had a Member State consented to the holding of a referendum without restriction in territory under its sovereignty, as Morocco had. Morocco's enemies were not satisfied with that, however, because they insisted on direct negotiations; but Morocco would never negotiate with those who stated that Moroccan Sahara already constituted a republic and had achieved self-determination, and who claimed to be the sole representatives of people over whom they had no control. The fact was that certain countries feared the results of a referendum.

61. Mr. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that if there was no problem with respect to self-determination, he wondered why Morocco had not agreed to a referendum until 1981.

62. Mr. HADDAOUI (Morocco), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Morocco had previously refused to agree to a referendum because Moroccan Sahara was an integral part of Morocco and its population was Moroccan. It was other States, in the United Nations and in OAU, which had created the problem by opposing the implementation of the 1975 Madrid Agreement. Morocco's willingness to accept a referendum was a concession and a sacrifice. Never had any Member State agreed to a referendum in territory it regarded as its own. He rejected attempts to distort the meaning of what Morocco had agreed to.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.