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**Special Political and Decolonization Committee
Fourth Committee****Summary record of the 9th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 10 October 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)**Contents**Agenda item 58: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*)Agenda item 59: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)Agenda item 60: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*)Agenda item 61: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)Agenda item 62: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 58: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. V and XIII) and A/72/62)

Agenda item 59: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. VI and XIII))

Agenda item 60: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. VII and XIII) and A/72/69)

Agenda item 61: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/72/66 and A/72/66/Add.1)

Agenda item 62: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*Territories not covered under other agenda items*) (*continued*) (A/72/23 (chaps. VIII, IX, X, XI and XIII) and A/72/74)

1. **Mr. Tevi** (Vanuatu) said that his country attached particular importance to safeguarding the human rights of the indigenous people in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, as decolonization and human rights were pillars of its foreign policy. He hoped that the Territories' aspirations for self-determination would be addressed in the foreseeable future. 2018 would be a milestone year for New Caledonia as its people would choose its political future in the referendum proposed under the Nouméa Accord. However, the electoral process remained unresolved, with some 20,000 New Caledonians excluded from the electoral roll. Vanuatu called on the administering Power to cooperate amicably with the people of New Caledonia to address the issue in order to facilitate a free, fair and transparent referendum.

2. Despite the call from some to remove French Polynesia from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories, his delegation would like to see the Territory remain listed in order to ensure that its concerns would continue to be heard by the United Nations. The administering Power should pursue its dialogue on self-determination with the people of French Polynesia, with a view to enabling them to choose their political status.

3. Vanuatu fully supported the political process aimed at achieving a lasting and mutually acceptable

solution to the regional dispute over Western Sahara, under the oversight of the Secretary-General, whose efforts should be commended. His delegation also welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General earlier that year and called on all parties to demonstrate the political will necessary to resume the stalled negotiations process. The parties should recall their endorsement of the recommendation in the report of 14 April 2008 that realism and a spirit of compromise were essential to achieving progress in negotiations. Neighbouring countries should also make meaningful and cooperative contributions to the process. His country would continue to support the work of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and would endorse an extension of its mandate beyond April 2018 if necessary.

4. **Mr. Sisa** (Botswana) said that his country, a long-standing supporter of the Palestinian struggle for sovereignty and independent statehood, had established diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine in 2017. The minimal progress achieved towards a viable solution of the question of Palestine in the half-century since the Israeli occupation was regrettable. He also expressed concern that despite the Secretary-General's efforts, the Sahrawi people continued to be denied their right to self-determination and independence. The negotiation process must therefore be revived and the living conditions of the Sahrawi people improved. Continued colonial domination precluded peace, development and universal respect for human rights; the eradication of colonialism must therefore remain the Organization's responsibility. His delegation encouraged the parties to the dispute over Western Sahara to approach negotiations in a spirit of tolerance and compromise in order to reach an agreement.

5. The will of the people, as expressed in a democratic and open referendum, would have to be respected by all. The international community must support efforts to establish a ceasefire and create an environment conducive to a referendum, culminating in self-determination for the Sahrawi people. The Secretary-General's new and coordinated approach to the negotiations was particularly heartening. His delegation welcomed the recent appointment of a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara and noted the extension of the mandate of MINURSO for another year, with a view to stabilizing the situation. In closing, he reiterated his country's support for the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in their quest to exercise self-determination.

6. **Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) said that his delegation reiterated its call for the General Assembly to discontinue consideration of the Saharan question, in

accordance with to Article 12, paragraph 1 of the Charter, in order to allow the Security Council to conduct without interference the process that would lead to a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution. That Article clearly stipulated that the General Assembly must not make any recommendation on an issue of which the Security Council was seized. The question of Moroccan Sahara was the only such matter on the agenda of the Security Council and the Special Committee on decolonization, and it was the only dispute being dealt with through a political process under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy under Chapter VI.

7. The Saharan question of Moroccan Sahara was not a decolonization issue but rather a matter of restoring the territorial integrity of Morocco. Contrary to the views of those still pining for the Cold War era and of proponents of the selective application of the principle of self-determination, Moroccan Sahara had re-joined its motherland in 1975, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations. In order to make sense of the equation of Moroccan Sahara and the territorial integrity of Morocco, it was necessary to understand the history of the country, whose different regions had been occupied in stages by various colonial Powers, starting in the 19th century and later restored in a similarly gradual manner. The final two occupied southern Moroccan territories, namely, Sidi Ifni and the Sahara, had been recovered from Spain in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2072 (XX) of 16 December 1965, which requested the Government of Spain, as the administering Power, to take immediately all necessary measures for the liberation of the Territories of Ifni and Spanish Sahara from colonial domination. As there had been no Frente Polisario in 1965, that entity had no legitimate claim to the Sahara. The decolonization of the Sahara had been recognized by the United Nations, which had taken note of the Madrid Accord signed between Morocco and Spain in General Assembly resolution 3458B (XXX) of 10 December 1975.

8. Algeria had deployed the principle of self-determination in respect of the Sahara and no other region of Morocco, creating a separatist movement in order to wage a proxy war against his country. In so doing, Algeria had selectively interpreted General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), which had clearly established the primacy of territorial integrity and its precedence over the self-determination of peoples. The resolution defined the latter as a simple right, while the former was an obligation that all States, including Algeria, must abide by, and one that, unlike the principle of self-determination, had been linked to compliance

with the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The safeguards included in General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV), which stipulated that self-determination did not apply to a part or region of a sovereign State Member of the United Nations, had been intended to prevent the implementation of self-determination from degenerating into balkanization. The principle of self-determination applied only to peoples that had no ties with a Member State and that were geographically, ethnically, culturally or linguistically distinct from the country administering them. Given that the Moroccan Sahara was geographically contiguous with Morocco; that its people shared a common language, religion, demographic makeup and culture with those of Morocco; and that its tribes, like the remainder of the Moroccan people, pledged allegiance to the King of Morocco, it was abundantly clear that the principle of self-determination, as defined in General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV), did not apply to the Moroccan Sahara.

9. Determined to establish regional hegemony and dismember Morocco, Algeria continued to distort the principle of self-determination by insisting on the exercise of Saharan self-determination by a referendum. However, none of the General Assembly resolutions on self-determination required its exercise to take place via a referendum. Those resolutions left the choice of mechanism up to the parties and merely proposed four distinct, equally valid potential outcomes to a process culminating in self-determination, namely, independence, association, integration or any other freely chosen political status. Of the 64 decolonization situations resolved by the United Nations since 1945, only four had been settled through a referendum, and of those four, two had degenerated into fratricidal civil wars, attesting to the inherent dangers of that particular mechanism.

10. The option of a referendum had been definitively ruled out for the Sahara. The report of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the Security Council (S/2000/131) had concluded that the 1991 Settlement Plan, and thus the referendum, would not constitute a viable solution, a conclusion affirmed by the Council, which had abandoned the option of a referendum in favour of a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution.

11. Morocco remained committed to resolving the regional dispute in spite of its conviction that the Sahara's reintegration into Morocco had resolved the colonial situation and that the principle of self-determination in no way applied to it. The Security Council had defined the parameters of that process in the 12 resolutions it had adopted since 2007, calling for a mutually acceptable and negotiated political solution;

welcoming the Moroccan autonomy initiative as serious and credible; and urging neighbouring countries, chiefly Algeria, to make significant contributions to the political process. It was deeply regrettable that Algeria had met his country's good-faith initiatives with intransigence, using a separatist movement as a weapon, sabotaging the political process and thwarting every effort to achieve peace. Its treasonous support of a non-State entity's bid for admission into the Organization of African Unity, its insistence on including Algerian and sub-Saharan citizens in the census carried out by the United Nations ahead of the referendum, effectively rendering the Settlement Plan unworkable; its ferocious but ultimately futile campaign to prevent Morocco from re-joining the African Union; and its open opposition to the Framework Agreement proposed by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General in 2002 were but a few instances of its obstructionist stance. He reminded Algeria that the Saharan question could only be resolved successfully with its cooperation and that it must assume responsibility for its role in the dispute and come to the negotiation table. The solution ultimately lay with Algerian political leadership, not with the so-called Frente Polisario in Tindouf.

12. Morocco remained determined to implement its advanced regionalization initiative in the Sahara as a precursor to autonomy. Its new development model would enable the Saharan population to take the reins of regional economic development, which must not be held hostage to the political process or the distortions of other parties. Regional and legislative elections held in 2015 and 2016 had been described by United Nations observers as transparent and proceeded without incident; the Saharan population's participation in the democratic process had strengthened the rule of law and respect for human rights. The prosperity, liberty and hope of life in the southern provinces of Morocco stood in stark contrast to the misery and despair of the camps in Tindouf, Algeria, where the captive populations, in addition to suffering human rights violations, had for several decades been deprived of humanitarian aid sent to them by international donors. Reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) had confirmed the large-scale diversion of humanitarian aid for the benefit of Frente Polisario and Algerian officials. Worse still, Algeria had neglected its duties as host country by allowing a militarized and armed separatist group to rule over and terrorize allegedly civilian camps. That refugee population was the only one in the world whose exact numbers remained a mystery to the international community and a secret carefully guarded by Algeria, in

violation of international law, international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions.

13. The global rise of separatist movements confirmed that the rampant exploitation of self-determination for political ends, fuelled by a blind obsession with referendums, endangered the stability, unity and development of many countries. In closing, Morocco reaffirmed its unwavering attachment to the sacrosanct principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States and stood with all Governments determined to champion those principles in their own countries.

14. **Mr. Boukadoum** (Algeria) said that 72 years earlier, in preparation for the establishment of what would become the United Nations, the authors of its future Charter had deemed it indispensable to articulate the principle of the self-determination of peoples. The Organization's founders clearly had in mind the goal of ending colonial domination. Following the horrors of the Second World War, two more decades would pass before many peoples, including his own, gained acceptance as nations. Against that backdrop, he expressed frustration at the fact that the merits of the domination of man by man were still being debated in 2017. Member States must put aside their differences and align their deeds with what he hoped was an increasing awareness of those fundamental truths. The Committee's debate should focus on how to put an end to colonial domination swiftly and peacefully.

15. Two years shy of the end of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories that remained were 17 too many. He wondered whether a fourth or fifth decade would be bequeathed to future generations. With a multitude of pressing global challenges to tackle, Member States could not afford to be sidetracked by a question that was a straightforward matter of freedom and justice. The Committee and the Special Committee on decolonization must take a stand against colonialism, a man-made system to which only man could put a definitive end.

16. Turning to Western Sahara, he stressed that the conflict, the last unresolved colonial situation in Africa, pitted the Frente Polisario against Morocco. The issue had been on the United Nations decolonization agenda for over 54 years. There had been no ambiguity concerning the legal status of Western Sahara when it had been listed as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. The landmark 1975 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice had concluded that there were no legal ties of any nature between Western Sahara and the two concerned neighbouring countries that might affect the

implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and confirmed unequivocally the inalienable rights of the Territory's people to the free and genuine exercise of self-determination. Subsequent United Nations resolutions had repeatedly and unequivocally reaffirmed the legal nature of the conflict and the principle of self-determination that must be implemented.

17. In 1988 the Organization of African Unity had brokered a settlement plan to put an end to 16 years of open conflict. The Security Council-endorsed plan remained the only valid agreement accepted by both parties. Furthermore, the Security Council had unanimously adopted resolution 690 (1991), which provided for the United Nations Mission on the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), mandated, as its name indicated, to organize and monitor a referendum on self-determination. The MINURSO mandate had been retained in recent Security Council resolutions, indicating that the Council continued to insist, as it had since 1975, on the right of the people of Western Sahara to exercise self-determination. The Council had recently extended the mission's mandate until April 2018 and called on both parties to resume negotiations without preconditions and in good faith, under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

18. His delegation welcomed the appointment of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General and reaffirmed its support for efforts to relaunch the negotiation process without delay. In accordance with its Constitutive Act, the African Union had continued to seek actively a peaceful resolution of the conflict, which opposed two of its member States. The Heads of State of the African Union had adopted a resolution the previous year calling on the General Assembly to set a date for the referendum. The African Union had also stressed the urgent need to address the issue of illegal exploration and exploitation of the Territory's natural resources, bearing in mind the Secretary-General's call for all relevant actors to recognize that the interests of the inhabitants of the Territories were paramount, in accordance with Chapter 11 of the Charter and with legal opinions issued by various international organizations.

19. To conclude, he reiterated that resolving the conflict in Western Sahara was crucial for his country and for regional stability and integration. There was no alternative to respect for the well-established United Nations doctrine on decolonization.

20. **The Chair** said that, in the light of the devastation wrought by the recent natural disasters in the Caribbean, and in response to the expressions of concern by

petitioners and elected officials from Non-Self-Governing Territories in the region regarding inadequate relief efforts in those Territories, he proposed that the Committee should postpone the adoption of draft resolution II under agenda item 59 in order to add language that called for additional support for Non-Self-Governing Territories affected by natural disasters.

21. *It was so decided.*

22. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on the draft resolutions before it under agenda items 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62, none of which had any programme budget implications.

Draft resolution I: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, submitted under agenda item 58 (A/72/23 (chap. XIII))

23. *A recorded vote was taken at the request of the United Kingdom.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia,

Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

24. *Draft resolution I was adopted by 153 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.*

25. **Ms. Hourmouzi** (United Kingdom) said that, as in previous years, the United Kingdom abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. Her Government did not take issue with its main objective, which was to seek compliance with Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations, and would continue to meet its own obligations fully in that regard in respect of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. It believed, however, that the decision as to whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of the obligation to submit information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter ultimately fell to the government of the Territory and the administering Power concerned, and not to the General Assembly.

Draft resolution III: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations, submitted under agenda item 60 (A/72/23 (chap. XIII))

26. *A recorded vote was taken at the request of the United Kingdom.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El

Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

27. *Draft resolution III was adopted by 104 votes to 2, with 50 abstentions.*

28. **Ms. Hourmouzi** (United Kingdom) said that although her Government supported the specialized agencies and their efforts to provide assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories in the humanitarian, educational and technical fields in particular, the statutes of those agencies should be carefully respected. For that reason, her delegation had abstained during the voting.

29. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that he had voted in favour of the resolution on the understanding that it would be implemented in accordance with the relevant

resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and Special Committee on decolonization.

Draft resolution A/C.4/72/L.6: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories, submitted under agenda item 61

30. **The Chair** announced that Argentina, Cuba, Eritrea, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Singapore had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

31. **Mr Rivero Rosario** (Cuba) said it was surprising that, out of 193 Member States, only nine had reported offering scholarships or training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Rather than investing in areas such as militarization, all States, especially administering Powers, should offer greater support to the development of such populations.

32. Despite the criminal and unjust trade blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States, Cuba was making great efforts to contribute such support. It was currently hosting 122 students from Western Sahara and had awarded 43 scholarships to students from that Territory for the 2017 academic year. Thus far, over 2,500 students from Anguilla, Bermuda, Montserrat and, most of all, Western Sahara had studied in Cuba.

33. *Draft resolution A/C.4/72/L.6 was adopted.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/72/L.5: Question of Western Sahara, submitted under agenda item 62

34. **Ms. Lind** (Estonia), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the country of the stabilization and association process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union and its member States looked forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus. They welcomed the commitment of the Secretary-General to relaunch the negotiating process with the aim of achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter. They encouraged the parties to work within the United Nations framework and supported the meaningful participation of women in the political process. They stood ready to support the efforts of the new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara in his efforts to consult with the parties and neighbouring States who, in turn, should cooperate with him to advance towards a more intensive

phase of negotiations, in good faith and without preconditions, as advocated by the many Security Council resolutions.

35. The agreement reached between the United Nations and Morocco allowing MINURSO to return to full functionality was a welcome development, and the parties were encouraged to cooperate with the Mission. They should also work more closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on confidence-building measures which would help improve the political climate. UNHCR should also, at the urging of the Security Council, continue to consider the registration of refugees in the Tindouf camps. The living conditions in those camps were deeply concerning and it was imperative that the international community should provide new and additional voluntary contributions.

36. Lastly, the consequences of the Western Sahara conflict on security and cooperation in the region continued to be of concern.

37. *Draft resolution A/C.4/72/L.5 was adopted.*

38. **Ms. Hourmouzios** (United Kingdom), speaking in explanation of position before the decisions, said that her Government would join the consensus on the eight draft resolutions concerning British Overseas Territories submitted under agenda item 62 in order to demonstrate its full support for the right to self-determination, even though some of the language in the draft resolutions was unacceptable. Unfortunately, the Special Committee had failed once again to take into account the positive evolution of the relationship between the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories. The latter enjoyed a large measure of internal self-government and had all freely chosen to maintain their links to the United Kingdom. The draft resolutions failed to reflect that modern relationship, which was based on partnership, shared values and the right to self-determination.

Draft decision A/C.4/72/L.7: Question of Gibraltar, submitted under agenda item 62

39. *Draft decision A/C.4/72/L.7 was adopted.*

Draft resolution IV: Question of American Samoa, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

40. *Draft resolution IV was adopted.*

Draft resolution V: Question of Anguilla, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

41. *Draft resolution V was adopted.*

Draft resolution VI: Question of Bermuda, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

42. *Draft resolution VI was adopted.*

Draft resolution VII: Question of the British Virgin Islands, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

43. *Draft resolution VII was adopted.*

Draft resolution VIII: Question of the Cayman Islands, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

44. *Draft resolution VIII was adopted.*

Draft resolution IX: Question of French Polynesia, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

45. *Draft resolution IX was adopted.*

Draft resolution XI: Question of Monserrat, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

46. *Draft resolution XI was adopted.*

Draft resolution XIII: Question of Pitcairn, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

47. *Draft resolution XIII was adopted.*

Draft resolution XIV: Question of Saint Helena, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

48. *Draft resolution XIV was adopted.*

Draft resolution XV: Question of Tokelau, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

49. *Draft resolution XV was adopted.*

Draft resolution XVI: Question of the Turks and Caicos Islands, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

50. *Draft resolution XVI was adopted.*

Draft resolution XVII: Question of the United States Virgin Islands, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

51. *Draft resolution XVII was adopted.*

52. **The Chair** said that whereas in the past, the Committee had voted on a single resolution for all the Non-Self-Governing Territories, two years prior it had switched to voting on each Territorial resolution on case-by-case basis, which was a fairer if marginally more cumbersome procedure. The Committee had consequently postponed voting on the resolutions

pertaining to New Caledonia and Guam in order to reflect concerns that had been expressed during the debate on the texts.

Draft resolution XVIII: Dissemination of Information on Decolonization, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

53. A recorded vote was taken at the request of the United Kingdom.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

France, Rwanda, Togo.

54. *Draft resolution XVIII was adopted by 150 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions.*

55. **Ms. Hourmouzios** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation had voted against the resolution. The obligation it placed on the Secretariat to publicize decolonization issues represented an unwarranted drain on United Nations resources and was therefore unacceptable.

56. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that he had voted in favour of the resolution on the understanding that it would be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Special Committee resolutions. The General Assembly and the Special Committee expressly referred to the question of the Malvinas Islands as a special situation involving a sovereignty dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina. That dispute should be resolved urgently through a just, peaceful and lasting negotiated settlement that took into account the interests of the populations of the islands.

Draft resolution XIX: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Peoples and Countries, submitted under agenda item 62 (A/72/23, chap. XIII)

57. **Mr. Ashby** (Australia) said that despite having consistently voted in favour of the resolution in the past, his delegation would now regretfully vote against the resolution as it could not accept paragraph 14 calling upon the administering Powers to terminate military activities and eliminate military bases. Australia recognized the sovereign rights of Member States to defend the Territories that they administered, which was often in the interest of the peoples of those Territories and the broader region. In the Pacific region alone, France, Australia and New Zealand coordinated humanitarian and disaster response through the FRANZ arrangement, which involved the participation of forces based in French Polynesia and New Caledonia; the same forces also combatted illegal fishing and transnational crime. His delegation therefore called for the unnecessary language of paragraph 14 to be removed from future resolutions.

58. *A recorded vote was taken at the request of the United Kingdom.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State

of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Israel, Morocco, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Afghanistan, Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo.

59. *Draft resolution XIX was adopted by 107 votes to 7, with 40 abstentions.*

60. **Ms. Hourmouzios** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation continued to find some elements of the resolution unacceptable and had therefore voted against it once more. It nonetheless remained committed to modernizing its relationship with its Overseas Territories while fully taking into account the views of the people of those Territories.

61. **Ms. Pedros Carretero** (Spain) said that although her delegation had abstained, it fully supported the right

to self-determination. In cases involving a sovereignty dispute such as Gibraltar, however, the principle of territorial integrity applied, and General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), paragraph 6, and General Assembly resolution 2353 (XXII) should be taken into account. Visiting missions could be dispatched only to Territories where the right to self-determination was at stake and only with General Assembly approval, which was indeed the practice followed by the Special Committee.

62. **Mr. Mazzeo** (Argentina) said that visiting missions could be sent only to Territories to which the right to self-determination applied, meaning Territories where there was no dispute over sovereignty. That requirement was fully in line with General Assembly resolution 850 (IX), which had also established the requirement that any visiting mission must be approved by the General Assembly. It was also in line with the doctrine of the Special Committee, as evidenced in its regional seminars and declarations that visiting missions must be sent on a case-by-case basis and carried out in compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions

63. **Ms. Boels** (Belgium) said that despite its strong support for self-determination, Belgium had abstained on account of the language contained in paragraph 14. The call to eliminate all military activities, without distinction, did not take into account military activities that were for the benefit of the Territories, such as following natural disasters.

64. **The Chair**, expressing appreciation for the efforts of all Committee members, delegations and petitioners, said that 19 draft resolutions had been adopted. In addition, 117 petitioners had been heard and 80 countries had participated in the general debate. The 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories expected much of the United Nations, which offered the hope that territorial and sovereignty disputes could be resolved through diplomacy.

65. **Mr. Kendrick** (United States of America) said that his delegation reiterated its concern that the resolutions placed too much weight on independence as a one-size-fits-all status option for Territories in pursuit of self-determination. As had been established in General Assembly resolution 2625, Territories could validly opt for free association as an alternative to independence or any other political status, including integration with the administering State, provided that status was freely determined by the people. The United Nations must therefore not seek to influence the outcome of various decolonization processes, but rather respect the free will of the people.

66. His delegation expressed dismay at the outdated call to terminate all military activities and eliminate all military bases in Non-Self-Governing Territories contained in paragraph 14. The United States had a sovereign right to carry out military activities in accordance with its national security interests and it was facile to assume that such activities were harmful or incompatible with the wishes of the people.

67. The right to self-determination of a Non-Self-Governing Territory must be exercised by all the people in a given Territory, not just a segment of the population. All self-determination decisions should be carried out in accordance with applicable human rights commitments, upholding the principles of non-discrimination and universal and equal suffrage as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

68. In regard to draft resolution XVIII, his delegation observed that it was for an administering State to determine if self-governance had been achieved in one of its Territories under the terms of the Charter, and consequently whether to transmit information concerning that Territory under Article 73(e). His delegation stressed that the statements made in the current and previous resolutions were non-binding and did not necessarily reflect conventional or customary international law. Any reaffirmation of prior documents contained in the resolutions applied only to those States that had affirmed them initially.

69. **The Chair** said that it should be recalled that France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States were the only administering Powers with colonies left.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.