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CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE
ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

Note verbale dated 1 April 1982 from the Permanent Mission of the
United Republic of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to
the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the United Republic of Cameroon to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit to it herewith the text of a statement by the Cameroonian Government on the problem of Western Sahara and the work of the thirty-eighth session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity.

The Permanent Mission would be grateful if the Secretariat would issue the text of that statement as an official document of the General Assembly under item 29 of the preliminary list.

* A/37/50.

Annex

Statement by the Cameroonian Government on the problem of Western Sahara and the work of the thirty-eighth session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity

The Cameroonian Government decided to suspend its participation in the work of the thirty-eighth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of OAU, held at Addis Ababa from 22 to 28 February 1982, as a sign of its utter disapproval of the initiative taken by the Secretary-General of OAU in inviting a delegation of the Polisario Front to take part in that work as representative of a member State.

In so doing, it wishes to recall that Cameroon has always upheld, and will continue to uphold, the legitimate right of all peoples, particularly the peoples of Africa, to self-determination, independence and sovereignty.

Consequently, its decision can in no way be interpreted as opposition to the admission of an African State to the pan-African organization, much less to self-determination for a brother people. That decision derives essentially from its dedication to the principles, purposes and relevant provisions of the OAU Charter, its desire to make a positive contribution to the search for peaceful solutions to African problems and its constant concern to comply with decisions of the organization and to preserve the unity of the continent.

It should be recalled in this connexion that, because of its complexity and its implications for the peace, unity and solidarity of the African continent, the problem of Western Sahara was referred by the seventeenth summit Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, held at Freetown, to an Ad Hoc Committee of African Heads of State.

The Cameroonian Government therefore considers that that problem and the concomitant question of admission of the Democratic Saharoui Arab Republic to OAU fall within the exclusive competence of the Assembly of Heads of State, the organization's highest body, and of the above-mentioned Ad Hoc Committee.

Lastly, it continues to believe that a negotiated, just and lasting settlement of the problem of Western Sahara must be in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth sessions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU and the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee of Heads of State on Western Sahara.

Accordingly, the Cameroonian Government considers the decision taken in his personal capacity by the Secretary-General of OAU unacceptable and null and void, since it constitutes a flagrant violation of the OAU Charter and creates a de facto State and a dangerous precedent that is apt to freeze divisions within the organization and jeopardize immediate prospects for a peaceful and lasting settlement of the problem of Western Sahara.

Moreover, while deploring the fact that this unfortunate initiative deprived the Council of Ministers of OAU of the quorum required for its meetings and thoroughly impaired the conduct of the work of its thirty-eighth session, the Cameroonian Government, for its part, reaffirms the nullity of the conclusions of that session.

It nevertheless stands ready, as in the past, to contribute to the search for just and realistic solutions to the problems confronting the Organization of African Unity of a kind calculated to safeguard and consolidate the unity of the continent.
