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

Western Sahara

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

I. Reports and good offices of the Secretary-General

1. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/133](#), the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-eighth session a report on the question of Western Sahara ([A/78/249](#)). The report covered the period from 1 September 2022 to 30 June 2023 and contained a review of the activities carried out by the Secretary-General in the exercise of his good offices.
2. During the period under review, pursuant to Security Council resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), the Secretary-General also submitted a report, on 3 October 2023, to the Security Council on the situation concerning Western Sahara ([S/2023/729](#)). The present working paper provides a summary of the aforementioned reports, with additional information regarding the consideration of that question by the Security Council and the General Assembly.
3. In its resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), adopted on 27 October 2022, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 October 2023. In the same resolution, the Council called upon the parties to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts made since 2006 and subsequent developments with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which 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 of the United Nations, and noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in that respect; and invited Member States to lend appropriate assistance in that respect.
4. The report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council ([S/2023/729](#)) covered developments since his previous report dated 3 October 2022 ([S/2022/733](#)) and described the situation on the ground, the status of political negotiations on Western Sahara, the implementation of resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#) and the existing challenges to the Mission's operations and steps taken to address them.



5. In his report, the Secretary-General informed the Security Council that, during the reporting period, the situation in Western Sahara had continued to be characterized by tensions and low-intensity hostilities between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO). The prevailing situation had led to significant challenges for the operations of MINURSO, in particular its logistics and resupply efforts.
6. In letters addressed to the Secretary-General on 14 October 2022 ([S/2022/797](#), annex) and thereafter on 17 July 2023, the Secretary-General of Frente POLISARIO had accused Morocco of “using all types of weapons, including unmanned aerial vehicles, to callously kill, not only dozens of Sahrawi civilians, but also civilians of neighbouring countries in transit” through the Territory.
7. In a letter to the Secretary-General on 30 June 2023, the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations in New York had accused Frente POLISARIO of putting into practice its “new modus operandi [...] notably the use of unmarked vehicles, [and] the hiring of fighters disguised as civilians”, to “deceive [Royal Moroccan Army] units and tarnish their image in the event of casualties”.
8. Restrictions by Frente POLISARIO on freedom of movement had continued to prevent MINURSO from maintaining a safe and reliable logistics, maintenance and resupply chain to its team sites east of the berm. In a letter to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara on 26 January, Frente POLISARIO had conveyed its assessment that there had been “multiple risks associated with the ongoing war for the security and safety of MINURSO personnel” which “provide reasonable grounds for believing that conducting ground convoys remains highly risky and therefore inadvisable under the current circumstances”.
9. Following high-level engagement by the Personal Envoy, the Special Representative and Security Council members, the Secretary-General of Frente POLISARIO had written to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 29 March to inform that, as a “gesture of goodwill to help overcome some of the logistic challenges” that MINURSO had been facing, Frente POLISARIO had been “willing to provide safe passage, on an exceptional and provisional basis, to the Mission to conduct a logistical ground convoy to resupply its team sites” east of the berm.
10. On 6 November 2022, King Mohammed VI of Morocco had delivered a speech on the occasion of the forty-seventh anniversary of the Green March, in which he had stated that the “Tiznit-Dakhla highway is in its final stages” and that “the construction of the major Dakhla Atlantic Port will begin soon” ([S/2020/938](#), para. 8, and [S/2021/843](#), para. 19). Frente POLISARIO had continued to protest that such investments had been in violation of international law ([S/2020/938](#), para. 8, and [S/2022/733](#), para. 19).
11. On 1 December, Guatemala had inaugurated a “consulate general” in Dakhla. In a letter addressed to the Secretary-General on the same day, Frente POLISARIO had called the action “a serious breach of the international legal status of Western Sahara as a Non-Self-Governing Territory” and had indicated that it had been “seriously undermining the prospect for relaunching the United Nations peace process”.
12. The implementing protocols of the sustainable fisheries partnership agreement concluded between the European Union and Morocco in 2019, which had extended the application of those protocols to goods from Western Sahara, had expired on 17 July 2023 ([S/2019/282](#), para. 11). On 29 September 2021, the General Court of the Court of Justice of the European Union had issued a judgment annulling the agreement as it considered that the conclusion of the agreement “cannot be regarded as having secured the consent of the people of Western Sahara”. A final ruling on an appeal launched by the Council of the European Union and the European Commission

had remained pending. On 17 July 2023, Frente POLISARIO had issued a statement defining the agreement as “a flagrant violation of the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination”.

13. Reportedly, in a letter addressed to King Mohammed VI on 17 July, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, had announced Israel’s decision to “recognize the sovereignty of Morocco over the territory of Western Sahara” and that it had been examining “the opening of a consulate in the city of Dakhla”. On 19 July, King Mohammed VI had sent a message to Mr. Netanyahu indicating that the decision “reaffirms Morocco’s legal entitlement to, and irrefutable historical rights over, its Saharan Provinces”. On 17 July, in an official statement, Frente POLISARIO had stated that “such a decision, by Israel or others, has no legal or political value”.

14. On 29 July, King Mohammed VI of Morocco had delivered a speech on the occasion of the twenty-fourth anniversary of his accession to the throne, in which he had referred to a “series of decisions to recognize Morocco’s sovereignty over its southern provinces – the latest being that of the State of Israel – as well as to open consulates in Laayoune and Dakhla, not to mention the growing support for the Autonomy Initiative”.

15. On the margins of the Summit of the League of Arab States, held in Algiers on 1 and 2 November 2022, the Secretary-General had met the President of Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune. On 23 November, the Secretary-General had met with King Mohammed VI of Morocco in Rabat following the Ninth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. In each of those meetings, among other issues, the situation in the region, including Western Sahara, had been discussed.

16. On 11 September 2023 in New York, the Secretary-General had met the Frente POLISARIO Secretary-General, Brahim Ghali. They had discussed prospects for advancing the political process led by the Personal Envoy, Staffan de Mistura. They had also discussed the importance of ensuring the sustainability of the presence of MINURSO throughout the Territory.

17. From 27 to 30 March 2023, Mr. de Mistura had invited the senior representatives in New York of Morocco, Frente POLISARIO, Algeria and Mauritania, as well as members of the Group of Friends of Western Sahara, namely France, the Russian Federation, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, to informal bilateral consultations with him at United Nations Headquarters. In his invitation to them, the Personal Envoy had reiterated his belief that a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, was achievable. He had indicated that he would be guided by all aspects of Council resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), including its provisions stressing the importance of all concerned expanding on their positions in order to advance a solution. He had also indicated that the purpose of the consultations would be to discuss lessons learned in the political process, to deepen the examination of the positions and to continue seeking mutually agreeable formulas to advance the political process.

18. The Personal Envoy had met the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Ramtane Lamamra, in Rome on 2 December 2022. He had also conducted a bilateral visit to Algiers on 2 July 2023, which had provided an opportunity for initial discussions with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Attaf, following his appointment.

19. Following discussions with Morocco and Frente POLISARIO, the Personal Envoy had visited Laayoune on 5 and 6 September and Dakhla on 7 September 2023. During his visit, the Personal Envoy had met with a large number of Moroccan

officials and “locally elected officials”, who had expressed support for the Moroccan autonomy proposal and emphasized the significant development efforts undertaken by Morocco. The Personal Envoy had visited several Moroccan-funded infrastructure projects, such as hospitals, vocational training centres, sports facilities and the construction works of the Dakhla Atlantic Port. He had been also briefed by the Regional Commissions on Human Rights operating in Dakhla and Laayoune, established by Morocco.

20. The Personal Envoy had met with civil society organizations and women’s groups, an engagement that he had viewed as a crucial aspect of his visit in keeping with United Nations principles. Those in favour of the Moroccan autonomy plan had expressed their appreciation for Morocco’s development efforts in the Territory. Some of them had highlighted that the absence of a political settlement had curtailed opportunities for investment and international business. Those supporting a referendum had broadly aligned themselves with the positions of Frente POLISARIO concerning self-determination and its modalities. They had felt that the “locally elected officials” had not represented them and that they had not enjoyed the same rights as pro-Moroccan citizens in Western Sahara. Most interlocutors on both sides had expressed a longing that the families divided between the Territory and the Tindouf camps be reunited. The Personal Envoy had taken note of allegations of human rights violations and abuses levelled against Morocco and Frente POLISARIO, respectively. Several civil society interlocutors, across the board, had called upon the United Nations to do more to promote human rights, provide protection and monitor and investigate alleged violations and abuses. Allegations had emerged that a number of activists opposing Morocco’s policies had been detained during the stay of the Personal Envoy in Western Sahara.

21. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco, Nasser Bourita, had received the Personal Envoy in Rabat on 8 September 2023. He had indicated that the priority of his Government had remained shoring up international support for the 2007 autonomy proposal and that starting to elaborate on the proposal would only come at a later stage. He had also reiterated the significance of the round-table formula. On the issue of human rights raised by various civil society representatives in Western Sahara, the Minister had indicated that “Morocco is always open to dialogue with United Nations mechanisms on human rights, in the north as well as in the south of the Kingdom”.

22. The Personal Envoy had met Mr. Brahim Ghali in New York on 11 September 2023. Mr. Ghali had reiterated the positions of Frente POLISARIO that “Morocco [had been] responsible for the breach of the ceasefire” and that the only political solution lay in a process leading to “decolonization” and the exercise by the Sahrawi people of its “right to self-determination and independence” by way of a referendum. He had shared a document with the Personal Envoy entitled “Fundamentals for relaunching the UN peace process in Western Sahara and advancing it towards the peaceful, just and lasting solution”, which had expanded on those elements.

23. The Personal Envoy had continued his regional visits with a visit to Algiers, where the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria had received him on 13 September 2023. The Minister had noted the usefulness of the March 2023 informal bilateral consultations in New York. The Personal Envoy had noted Algeria’s support for his efforts to facilitate a solution between the two parties and its view that political will and the support of the international community were necessary to reach a just and sustainable solution to the question of Western Sahara. In Nouakchott on 14 and 15 September, the Personal Envoy had met with the President of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, and its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug. He had taken good note of the reiteration of Mauritania’s “positive neutrality” regarding the issue of Western Sahara and its concern for the regional implications of a continuation of the conflict.

24. During the reporting period, the Personal Envoy had also met senior officials from the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi on 8 September 2022; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Hadja Lahbib, in Brussels on 3 October; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, in Moscow on 7 October; senior officials of the Government of the United States, including the Deputy Secretary of State, Wendy Sherman, in Washington, D.C., on 21 and 22 October 2022 and 20 and 21 April 2023; senior officials of the Government of France in Paris on 16 November 2022; the Secretary of State of Switzerland, Livia Leu, in Bern on 22 November; senior officials of the Government of Germany in Berlin on 15 December; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, José Manuel Albares Bueno, in Madrid on 4 October 2022 and in Munich in February 2023 on the margins of the Munich Security Conference, where he had also met various senior international officials, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, Wopke Hoekstra; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Tobias Billström, in Stockholm in March; and senior European Union officials also in Stockholm in May. In those meetings and interactions, the Personal Envoy had noted with appreciation the expressions of support by his interlocutors for the efforts of the United Nations to facilitate a political settlement of the situation in Western Sahara.

25. In line with paragraph 10 of Security Council resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#) and paragraph 11 of Council resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), the Personal Envoy had briefed the Council on 17 October 2022 and 19 April 2023 on his activities and considerations for the way forward. On those occasions, the Personal Envoy had received broad support from members of the Council for his efforts. He had also met with senior United Nations officials, Security Council members and Member States while in New York.

26. Turning to the activities of MINURSO, between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023, the Royal Moroccan Army had reported to MINURSO 550 incidents involving firing from a distance against its units at or near the berm, approximately 69 per cent of which had been concentrated in Mahbas. Since November 2022, MINURSO had conducted 108 investigation patrols, visiting a total of 219 reported incident sites. During the reporting period, the Royal Moroccan Army had also reported observing flights over its units by small, unmanned surveillance aircraft on 18 occasions.

27. During the same period, Frente POLISARIO had announced that they had conducted 758 firing incidents against the Royal Moroccan Army, approximately 68 per cent of them concentrated in Mahbas.

28. MINURSO had collected 19 reports from a variety of sources of alleged strikes conducted by Royal Moroccan Army unmanned aerial vehicles east of the berm between 1 September 2022 and 1 February 2023, following which no reported air strikes had been recorded by the Mission until 31 August. Royal Moroccan Army unmanned aerial vehicles had been regularly seen by MINURSO military observers at Smara airport. On each occasion, MINURSO had liaised with the parties to receive additional information. On 14 occasions, in coordination with the Royal Moroccan Army and Frente POLISARIO, MINURSO had been able to visit the sites of the reported incidents. On five occasions, clearance had not been received from Frente POLISARIO. In 12 instances, investigations conducted by MINURSO military observers assisted by experts from the mine action component had been able to independently confirm that some form of aerial strike had taken place and assessed that nine casualties had occurred.

29. On mine action, the explosive ordnance clearance activities by the Mine Action Service had remained suspended until April 2023. During that period, mine action activities had been limited to emergency disposal of explosive ordnance, route

verification and combined explosive ordnance risk education, as well as assistance to investigation patrols at sites of alleged aerial strikes and support to ground convoy movements east of the berm.

30. MINURSO had assessed that, following the resumption of hostilities, there had been a probable additional threat of landmines and explosive ordnance in the Territory, and the Mission had continued advocating for the parties to share the detailed information necessary to update the MINURSO mine action database. As at 31 August 2023, 24 out of 61 known minefields and 43 out of 531 recorded cluster strike areas had been yet to be cleared from explosive ordnance hazards east of the berm. Since the resumption of demining activities, the Mine Action Service had destroyed 30 cluster munitions and 92 pieces of explosive ordnance.

31. With regard to assistance for the protection of Western Saharan refugees, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) had continued to provide humanitarian assistance to Sahrawi refugees in the five camps near Tindouf, Algeria.

32. During the reporting period, UNHCR and WFP had received funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund's underfunded emergencies window to address threats related to food security and nutrition for Sahrawi refugees.

33. UNHCR had continued to provide basic services, including water by drilling boreholes and providing distribution networks in the camps, and begun transitioning from trucking water to a full-scale distribution network so as to improve water supply and production capacity. UNHCR had also focused on improving livelihoods and self-reliance by supporting skill-acquisition courses, the establishment of new businesses and providing training and coaching to over 340 existing businesses in the camps. WFP had continued to address crisis-level food insecurity and supported resilience activities in the camps related to agriculture, livestock and fish farming, as well as cash-based transfers. The WFP school feeding programme had provided fortified snacks every month during the school year to over 41,500 pupils.

34. The confidence-building measures, pursuant to Security Council resolution [1282 \(1999\)](#) and subsequent resolutions, to allow family links between Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps and their communities of origin in Western Sahara, had remained on hold. The Personal Envoy had continued to take note that neither Morocco nor Frente POLISARIO had expressed immediate interest in further work on those issues.

35. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had been unable to conduct any visits to Western Sahara for the eighth consecutive year, despite multiple requests¹ and despite the Security Council in its resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#) urging enhanced cooperation, including through facilitating such visits. The lack of access to first-hand information and independent, impartial, comprehensive and sustained monitoring of the human rights situation had been detrimental to a comprehensive assessment of human rights in the region.

36. OHCHR had continued to receive allegations pointing to an increased shrinking of civic space, including through obstruction, intimidation and restrictions against Saharawi activists, human rights defenders and student movements. According to those reports, organizations advocating the right to self-determination had continued to face

¹ On 7 March 2023, in his annual report and global update to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-second session, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, echoed the importance of OHCHR being able to conduct meaningful missions to the region (see www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/03/global-update-high-commissioner-outlines-concerns-over-40-countries).

obstacles on registration and holding meetings and had been subject to intimidation and surveillance. In addition, Moroccan authorities had reportedly continued to prevent and quell gatherings in support of the right to self-determination and Saharawi commemoration events. Furthermore, OHCHR had received allegations of at least six cases of international observers, researchers and lawyers engaging in advocacy on Western Sahara being denied entry into or being expelled from Western Sahara.

37. On 23 June 2023, the National Human Rights Council of Morocco had provided OHCHR with information on Western Sahara, including on its activities and those of Morocco's national preventive mechanism against torture and its child redress mechanism.

38. On 22 September 2022, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights had issued a judgment in a case brought by a Ghanaian national against eight African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Malawi, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania) alleging that they had violated the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights because of their failure to safeguard the territorial integrity and independence of "SADR". The Court had found that the respondent States had not violated the right to self-determination and other related rights alleged to have been violated by the Applicant and had dismissed the request for reparations. At the same time, the Court had reiterated in the judgment that all States members of the African Union had the responsibility under international law to ensure the enjoyment of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people.

39. In his observations and recommendations, the Secretary-General remained deeply concerned by developments in Western Sahara. He had made similar assessments in his two previous reports to the Security Council on the situation concerning Western Sahara ([S/2021/843](#) and [S/2022/733](#)), which indicated that the deteriorated state of affairs had become entrenched. That must urgently be reversed, including to avoid any further escalation. For that reason, the Secretary-General called on all concerned to work towards changing course without delay, with the facilitation of the United Nations and the support of the broader international community.

40. The continued hostilities and lack of a ceasefire between Morocco and Frente POLISARIO remained a major setback to the achievement of a political solution to that longstanding dispute. Daily incursions into the buffer strip adjacent to the berm and hostilities between the parties in that area violated its status as a demilitarized zone and further threatened the stability of the region, with a real risk of escalation while hostilities persisted. Aerial strikes and firing across the berm had continued to contribute to increasing tensions. In that context, it was critical for a ceasefire to be re-established.

41. That challenging context made negotiating a political solution to the question of Western Sahara more urgent than ever, almost five decades into the conflict. Provided that all concerned engaged in good faith and there was strong political will and continued support from the international community, the Secretary-General continued to believe that it was possible to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in accordance with Security Council resolutions [2440 \(2018\)](#), [2468 \(2019\)](#), [2494 \(2019\)](#), [2548 \(2020\)](#), [2602 \(2021\)](#) and [2654 \(2022\)](#).

42. The United Nations remained available to convene all those concerned with the issue of Western Sahara in a joint effort to advance the search for a peaceful solution. The Secretary-General urged them to approach the political process with an open mind, to desist from preconditions and to seize the opportunity provided by his Personal Envoy's facilitation and efforts. In guiding present and future approaches,

due consideration should be given to the precedents set by his previous personal envoys in the framework of existing Security Council resolutions.

43. The Secretary-General regretted to note that lack of trust continued to permeate the region. In the Territory, ongoing unilateral assertive actions and symbolic gestures continued to be a source of enduring tension and had a negative impact on the situation. The Secretary-General encouraged the parties to focus on the interests they had in common and urged them to refrain from escalating the situation further through rhetoric and actions.

44. Against that backdrop, the Secretary-General welcomed the holding of informal bilateral consultations under the auspices of his Personal Envoy in New York in March 2023. The Secretary-General was encouraged that Morocco, Frente POLISARIO, Algeria, Mauritania and the members of the Group of Friends had accepted his invitation and that the format had been broadly acceptable. That pointed to an additional new framework on which to build. It was now essential that all concerned expanded on their positions in order to advance a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, as called for by the Security Council in resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#).

45. The Secretary-General welcomed the resumption of MINURSO ground patrols to areas adjacent to the berm, with Royal Moroccan Army escort, increasing the Mission's ability to independently assess the reported firing incidents. The Secretary-General noted Morocco's stated intention to remain respectful of the ceasefire and the provisions of the military agreements and to maintain close cooperation with MINURSO at all levels. The Secretary-General urged Morocco to remain true to that spirit and refrain from building further military infrastructure west of the berm. It also remained essential that the Royal Moroccan Army refrain from conducting military activities that had an impact on civilians and directly or indirectly affected MINURSO operations east of the berm.

46. The Secretary-General also welcomed recent improvements in the ability of MINURSO to operate its logistics, resupply and maintenance chain to team sites east of the berm, including through the deployment for the first time since 2020 of a limited number of ground convoys and increased resupply and passenger flights, which had allowed the Mission to maintain its presence east of the berm. However, a sustainable solution to that issue, in line with the request by the Security Council in resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), remained elusive. Furthermore, unresolved limitations on the freedom of movement of MINURSO continued to hinder the Mission's ability to conduct the required ground and aerial observation activities east of the berm. The Secretary-General urged Frente POLISARIO to remove all the remaining restrictions on the free movement of MINURSO and to resume regular, in-person contacts with MINURSO leadership, both civilian and military.

47. The Secretary-General welcomed the resumption of humanitarian demining activities east of the berm. Through their activities, the Mine Action Service demining teams in MINURSO played a critical role in facilitating the Mission's operations by enabling safe passage for MINURSO military observers to monitor developments in the Territory safely and securely. The Secretary-General was grateful to the parties for their continued cooperation with MINURSO in that regard.

48. The Secretary-General was concerned about the further deteriorating humanitarian situation in the refugee camps near Tindouf. Following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the global rise in fuel and food prices, Sahrawi refugees faced water scarcity, food shortages, malnutrition, extreme weather conditions, including both sandstorms and floods, lack of adequate housing, environmental degradation, unemployment and poverty. The Secretary-General thanked the international community and the Government of Algeria for their assistance to the Sahrawi refugees and wished to echo the calls of UNHCR, UNICEF,

WFP and WHO to the international community to renew efforts and provide additional and urgent support to bring an appropriate response to that protracted refugee situation.

49. MINURSO remained the main and often sole source of impartial information and advice to the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the Member States and the Secretariat concerning developments in and related to the Territory. It continued to fulfil that role despite the serious challenges it faced in a fundamentally changed operational and political environment. It also continued to provide a stabilizing presence to create a conducive environment for the advancement of the political process led by the Personal Envoy. MINURSO represented the commitment of the United Nations and the international community towards achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the conflict in Western Sahara in accordance with Security Council resolutions [2440 \(2018\)](#), [2468 \(2019\)](#), [2494 \(2019\)](#), [2548 \(2020\)](#), [2602 \(2021\)](#) and [2654 \(2022\)](#). The Secretary-General therefore recommended that the Council extend the mandate of MINURSO for another year, until 31 October 2024.

II. Consideration by the Security Council

50. Following its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General, the Security Council adopted resolution [2703 \(2023\)](#) on 30 October 2023, by which it decided to extend the mandate of MINURSO until 31 October 2024. In the same resolution, the Council expressed its full support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to facilitate the negotiations process in order to achieve a solution to the Western Sahara question.

51. The Council emphasized the need to achieve a realistic, practicable and enduring and mutually acceptable political solution to the question of Western Sahara based on compromise, and called upon the parties to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts made since 2006 and subsequent developments with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which 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 of the United Nations, and noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in that respect. The Council also emphasized the importance of a renewed commitment by the parties to advancing the political process in preparation for further negotiations and called upon the parties to demonstrate political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue in order to advance negotiations.

III. Consideration by the General Assembly

52. During the debate held by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) on 2, 6 and 9 to 11 October 2023, Member States addressed, among other things, the issue of Western Sahara. Member States welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Staffan de Mistura. Some supported the position of Morocco and its autonomy plan, while others expressed support for the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination (see [A/C.4/78/SR.2](#), [A/C.4/78/SR.6](#), [A/C.4/78/SR.7](#), [A/C.4/78/SR.8](#) and [A/C.4/78/SR.9](#)).

53. At its 9th meeting, on 11 October, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled “Question of Western Sahara” ([A/C.4/78/L.4](#)), submitted by the Chair, which it adopted without a vote.

54. On 7 December, the General Assembly adopted the draft resolution, without a vote, as resolution [78/85](#). In that resolution, the Assembly, among other things, welcomed the commitment of the parties to continue to show political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue, also welcomed the ongoing negotiations between the parties, called upon the parties to cooperate with the International Committee of the Red Cross and to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, requested the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to continue to consider the situation in Western Sahara and to report thereon to the Assembly at its seventy-ninth session and invited the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-ninth session a report on the implementation of the resolution.

Map

