



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

Provisional

9771st meeting

Thursday, 31 October 2024, 3 p.m.

New York

President: Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
China	Mr. Dai Bing
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan	Mr. Mikanagi
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
Republic of Korea	Mr. Cho
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. Kanu
Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara
(S/2024/707)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2024/707)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2024/707, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2024/796, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

The representative of Algeria has asked for the floor to make a statement.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Since we joined the Security Council, we have always sought to be constructive, open and responsible. That has been the case since the beginning of the negotiations on the draft resolution on the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). We have worked transparently and in accordance with the rules of procedure. We have been forced to submit two amendments, quite simply because the penholder decided to impose its own draft resolution and to put it in blue yesterday at 5.30 p.m.

Both amendments relate to human rights, an element about which we often talk — perhaps too often — around this table. The first amendment draws its reference scrupulously from the report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/707), in particular, paragraph 72, which I would like to read now:

“The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was not able to visit Western Sahara for the ninth consecutive year despite multiple official requests and despite the Security Council, in its resolution 2703 (2023), urging enhanced cooperation, including through facilitating such visits”.

Members have before them the first of my country's proposed amendments. The second amendment is not our own invention. It is text taken verbatim from various Council resolutions on peacekeeping operations over the past 20 years, which were all equipped with a component to monitor the human rights situation. In that regard, I wonder about the risk of the Council being accused of double standards, to the detriment of the people of Western Sahara. Indeed, next month, we will all vote on a text concerning Abyei and Somalia, one which provides for a human rights component within those missions. Why should MINURSO not be equipped with such a component? The Council's legitimacy on the subject of human rights is at stake here.

In conclusion, those who have known me for almost a year now know that I have the shortcoming of being a frank person. I know the pressure that members have endured here in New York and in their capitals. I know all members here personally, and I know the difficulties that their instructions have caused within their Permanent Missions here in New York. The fact is that by denying the people of Western Sahara the international legal protection that is guaranteed under international law — because between us, it is international law that counts here — we will have lost a large proportion of the Council's legitimacy.

The President (*spoke in French*): Members of the Council have before them two proposed amendments, submitted by Algeria, to the text of the draft resolution contained in document S/2024/796, submitted by the United States of America.

Accordingly, I intend to put the proposed amendments to the vote first.

I shall first put to the vote the proposed amendment to be inserted after the nineteenth preambular paragraph (S/2024/797).

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, China, Guyana, Mozambique, Slovenia, Switzerland

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, United Kingdom

of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): The proposed amendment received 6 votes in favour, none against and 9 abstentions. The proposed amendment has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now put to the vote the proposed amendment to be inserted after operative paragraph 13 (S/2024/798).

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, China, Guyana, Mozambique, Slovenia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): The proposed amendment received 5 votes in favour, none against and 10 abstentions. The proposed amendment has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

China, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Mozambique, Russian Federation

The President (*spoke in French*): The draft resolution received 12 votes in favour, none against and 2 abstentions. One member did not participate in the voting. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2756 (2024).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): The United States is pleased to see the Council reaffirm its support for the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, and for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alexander Ivanko, with the adoption, just now, of resolution 2756 (2024).

The Council has made clear its robust support for the Personal Envoy as he intensifies efforts to advance an enduring and dignified resolution for Western Sahara without further delay. Negotiations leading to a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution are urgently needed. It was with that sense of urgency that we carefully crafted our first revision. We sought common ground in the spirit of enabling a long-overdue political solution.

We appreciate the long hours of constructive, good-faith engagement with Council members throughout the process on this important resolution. We regret that, despite our sincere efforts, the Council was not able to be unanimous in renewing the mandate today, as unity greatly enhances United Nations efforts to achieve peace.

It is more urgent than ever to reach a political solution for Western Sahara. As Secretary Blinken recently reaffirmed, the United States continues to view Morocco's autonomy proposal as serious, credible and realistic, and one potential approach to satisfy the aspirations of the people of Western Sahara. In that regard, the Council has welcomed the recent momentum and has urged that it now be built upon. Council members should lend all possible support for a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. The people of Western Sahara and the region are counting on us.

Today is an important step that should now be reflected in urgent action consistent with the resolution we just adopted. By renewing MINURSO's mandate, the Council has also affirmed the Mission's critical role and its progress in sustaining critical operations.

Members of the Council reiterated our deep concern about the breakdown of the ceasefire. An important proposal was put forward earlier this year for a cessation of hostilities and for avoiding any acts that endanger peace and security. We remain prepared to lend all possible support to achieve a lasting end to the fighting. Further violence and attacks, which endanger civilians, are not acceptable. Any acts that would jeopardize the quest for lasting peace must be avoided.

Today's renewal also calls crucial attention to the importance of enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights in Western Sahara, taking into consideration the spirit of the proposed amendments. The Council has encouraged the parties to work actively with the international community to implement credible measures to ensure full respect for human rights, bearing in mind relevant obligations under international law.

The Council has intensified its call for enhancing cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). We are confident that there is broad support in the Chamber for OHCHR's critical work, and strongly urge every effort to facilitate its mission. We applaud the members of the Council who, with the adoption of the resolution, have reiterated their confidence in a principled and pragmatic approach to that vital work.

Finally, we remain deeply concerned about the humanitarian conditions in Tindouf. The United States remains the largest donor to the ongoing humanitarian response there. The ongoing needs are considerable, despite the generous support provided by the Algerian Government and other donors. The effects of climate change, poor living standards, food insecurity and lack of access to basic services must galvanize our collective efforts to ensure a successful political resolution in short order.

I would reiterate that we, as Council members, share the responsibility of making possible a long-overdue and mutually acceptable political solution for Western Sahara.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique): Mozambique voted in favour of amendments S/2024/797 and S/2024/798, proposed by the Algerian delegation, for two main reasons. First, we consider the amendments to be consistent with the previous decisions of the Council on similar matters. Secondly, the amendments are valid on their own merits because they relate to human rights.

The issue of Western Sahara has been before the Security Council and the General Assembly for half a century. The approach taken by those two organs is based on the fundamental question of self-determination. In that context, resolution 2756 (2024), in its current form, without the amendments proposed by the representative of Algeria, will not assist the parties in achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. Nor will it assist the Special Envoy in his work.

On the contrary, it entrenches the trend of a gradual departure from the original mandate, as stated in the very name of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The right to self-determination is a foundational principle in international law, and it is fully enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. That sentiment was recently echoed in the European Court of Justice's ruling of 4 October, which underscores that any sustainable solution to the Western Sahara conflict must uphold international law, particularly the principle of self-determination.

Any attempt to modify the Council's long-standing position on Western Sahara risks undermining both the rule of international law and the legitimacy of the Council. According to Mr. Staffan de Mistura's recent briefing to the Council, progress towards that delayed goal remains elusive. As the Council continues to deliberate on MINURSO's role in fulfilling its mandate, it is imperative that we uphold the Council's previous decisions on the issue of Western Sahara.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone acknowledges the efforts of the United States and the engagement on resolution 2756 (2024). We also acknowledge the engagement by the members of the Security Council.

Sierra Leone voted in favour of the resolution renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), indicative of our support for and acknowledging the critical role of MINURSO in maintaining stability and calm in the region, and needed to advance the political process. We abstained in the voting on the amendment, noting the bilateral engagement of the Kingdom of Morocco with the mandated human rights bodies and recognizing the specific mandate of MINURSO and the political process.

I would like to reaffirm Sierra Leone's unwavering support for the ongoing United Nations-led political process, under the auspices of the Secretary-General and facilitated by his Personal Envoy, Mr. Staffan de Mistura. We recognize the effort of the Personal Envoy to advance the political process, and we urge all parties to engage in good faith in order to reach a realistic, practicable and mutually acceptable political solution, based on compromise. Our vote also indicates our support for the Moroccan initiative for negotiating an autonomy statute for the Sahara region, which has been

a credible and realistic approach to moving the process forward since its submission in 2007. We also note the international momentum in support of that initiative and therefore share the sentiment that it is time to explore that option.

My delegation affirms its support for MINURSO and urges the parties to the conflict to return to a ceasefire, without delay, in order to preserve the conditions necessary for the relaunch of the political process. We therefore acknowledge Morocco's progress in strengthening its cooperation and communication with the Mission. We welcome the continued expansion of MINURSO's operational activities to increase ground patrols and the resumption of full demining operations east of the Berm for the first time since 2019. Furthermore, we maintain that the necessary access and freedom of movement be granted to all MINURSO personnel and logistics convoys at all times, as needed.

In conclusion, as we welcome the adoption of resolution 2756 (2024) today, we underscore the need to resume round-table engagement, with the full participation of all parties concerned.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation abstained in the voting on the United States-prepared resolution 2756 (2024) to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and on amendments S/2024/797 and S/2024/798, proposed by our Algerian colleagues.

Regarding the amendments, our decision was motivated by Russia's consistent position that it is not appropriate to expand the human rights component of United Nations missions. We are not convinced that, in the absence of the appropriate competence within MINURSO, it would be able to successfully perform the tasks assigned to it. Moreover, we believe that giving the Mission additional functions does not correspond to the key aim for which it was created in the past.

With regard to the resolution, in our opinion, it does not reflect the real situation on the ground and is hardly going to help to facilitate achieving a mutually acceptable solution to the conflict. Russia, together with other delegations, made a series of proposals and proposed additions to the text, which were ignored. At the same time, the Russian proposals were not radical in nature and did not seek to introduce clearly unacceptable language. We believed that it was appropriate to reflect things that were obvious to everyone: the lack of

progress in the settlement and an appeal to the parties to the conflict and to all stakeholders to avoid actions that could cause an escalation of tensions in the region. Our requests to clearly distinguish between the two sides of the conflict, Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), and the external players, was also not heeded in the text of the document. At the same time, the Americans penholders themselves introduced into the text several changes, compared with resolution 2703 (2023) of last year, making it even more unbalanced.

On the whole, the tactics chosen by the United States in the negotiation process on the text are baffling and even outrageous. There was only one round of consultations. It is also symptomatic that the traditional full discussion of the draft in the Group of Friends on Western Sahara was not carried out either. That gives the impression that our Western colleagues simply did not want to get involved in the discussion. I would draw their attention to the fact that they are setting an unpleasant precedent that could have a negative impact on subsequent work on the subject of Western Sahara and on other subjects in the Council.

Since 2018, the resolutions extending the Mission's mandates have introduced amendments that clearly do harm to the impartial and unbiased approach to the problem of Western Sahara. We did not agree with that in the past, and we cannot support it now either. We would once again like to underscore our consistent, balanced and unbiased position on the peace settlement in Western Sahara: a long-term and fair political settlement must suit the Moroccans and the Frente POLISARIO, correspond to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. We support efforts to organize talks directly between the parties to the conflict. We continue our active contact with the Moroccans and the Frente POLISARIO and external players. At the same time, we consistently support MINURSO, which plays a key stabilizing role in creating conducive conditions on the ground for the resumption of dialogue between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO and to make progress with the peace process.

In conclusion, we would like to underscore that the American penholder's actions have once again made us think seriously about whether they are able to act as an impartial participant in the discussions on the subject of Western Sahara. We have constantly been raising

that issue in recent years because after the previous United States Administration voiced the position that there is no alternative to Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Saharan territory, speaking about the United States being unbiased on the subject in the Security Council is not possible. We believe that the United States has demonstrated its disdain for the opinions of a number of Security Council members, including permanent members, which runs counter to generally accepted business practices. We call on the United States of America to consider relinquishing its functions as penholder on Western Sahara and transferring those duties to other, more responsible members of the Security Council.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2756 (2024), which ensures the continued operation of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

The United Kingdom has long supported and will continue to support MINURSO and Mr. Alexander Ivanko as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We further welcome the efforts of the United States as penholder in pursuing a balanced text that reflects the situation on the ground and seeks to account for Council members' varying views. The work of both MINURSO and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General depends on the continued broad support of the Council, and we appreciate all Council members' meaningful engagement with that mandate.

The resolution reaffirms the Council's commitment to assisting the parties in achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution based on compromise, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara — a principle to which the United Kingdom remains committed. The resolution also reiterates the importance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The United Kingdom supports calls for enhanced cooperation with its officials, including through the facilitation of visits to the region.

Over the past year, we have seen momentum in the form of improvements to MINURSO's operating environment and a significant reduction in the level of armed hostilities. The United Kingdom is grateful to the parties for their efforts to enable those improvements. We strongly encourage them to build on that momentum, including towards returning to a state of ceasefire and

re-engagement with the United Nations-led political process. The United Kingdom will continue to work with the parties and our international partners to support the United Nations-led process and hasten the achievement of a mutually agreeable solution.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, for his continued commitment and to reiterate the United Kingdom's full support for his efforts.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): We welcome the adoption of resolution 2756 (2024), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara for one year.

Slovenia voted in favour of the resolution. We greatly value the work of the Mission, which plays a crucial stabilizing role on the ground. Slovenia also voted in favour of the amendments presented by Algeria because we believe that, as a cross-cutting matter, United Nations missions are strengthened by having human rights responsibilities. They benefit the local population and contribute to a more sustainable peace. We also believe that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights should have unhindered access to the territory.

As we approach the fiftieth year of the conflict, we reiterate our commitment to a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We offer our full support to Personal Envoy De Mistura and his endeavours to that end, as well as to Special Representative Ivanko. We call on all parties to engage with both of them in good faith and with an open mind.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador voted in favour of the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which we deem essential to maintaining stability in the area. Therefore, with the sole purpose of guaranteeing the timely adoption of resolution 2756 (2024), we abstained in the voting on the proposed amendments S/2024/797 and S/2024/798.

I must emphasize that the adopted text strongly encourages enhanced cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human

Rights, including the facilitation of visits to the region. My country reiterates the appeal for improved cooperation and hopes that it will be fully and successfully implemented.

In April 1991, Ecuador — then also a non-permanent member of the Council — was part of the unanimous decision to establish MINURSO through resolution 690 (1991). More than 34 years have elapsed since then. It is time to move towards a definitive solution, which will require the political will and good faith of the parties, as well as the support of the international community. It is my sincere hope that the next time Ecuador is a member of the Security Council, that objective will have become a reality.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2756 (2024), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for a further year. Thanks to the resolution we have just adopted, MINURSO will be able to continue to play a key role in the stability of the region. We commend its cooperation with the Moroccan authorities.

France did not vote in favour of amendments S/2024/797 and S/2024/798, submitted by Algeria, as we believe that MINURSO's mandate, as it stands, is appropriate to the situation in Western Sahara.

We welcome the resumption of supply operations to MINURSO's observation sites east of the Berm. MINURSO must be able to implement the mandate entrusted to it by the Council, and it is essential to ensure that its freedom of movement is respected, as required by the resolution. On the ground, France calls for a cessation of hostilities and a return to the ceasefire. The low-intensity hostilities must not blind us to the risks that the conflict poses to the stability of the region and local populations.

Our position is well known. For France, the present and future of Western Sahara lie within the framework of Moroccan sovereignty. Autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the framework within which the issue must be resolved, and our support for the autonomy plan proposed by Morocco in 2007 is clear and constant. For France, it constitutes the only basis for achieving a just, lasting and negotiated political solution, in accordance with the relevant Council resolutions. We also note that there is a growing international consensus in that direction. It was important for the Council to take note of such momentum, as it now does in the resolution.

Moreover, it is imperative to pursue the economic and social development of the region. We commend all Morocco's efforts in that regard. France will support it in that endeavour for the benefit of the local populations.

The time has come to move forward. We encourage all parties to come together for a political settlement that is within reach. France supports the efforts of the Personal Envoy, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, to relaunch discussions in the round-table format, and recognizes Morocco's commitment to that end.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): As members have no doubt noted, Algeria made the fully conscious and responsible decision not to participate in the voting on resolution 2756 (2024) for a number of reasons, which I shall now touch upon.

The first reason was the attitude demonstrated by the penholder. Over the past week, our views, despite having been meticulously documented and based on language agreed within the Security Council, were not taken into account. Let us say it candidly — they were deliberately ignored. And that came as a surprise, because it flagrantly contradicts the provisions of notes S/2017/507 and S/2023/945 on the working methods of the Security Council. My Japanese colleague may correct me later, as he is chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, but the penholder is required to be attentive, fair and transparent in receiving the positions and views expressed by the members of the Council. Allow me to go even further. Let me read from S/2023/945,

“the members of the Security Council encourage penholders ... to conduct negotiations in an inclusive and respectful manner by: (i) Abiding by objectivity and impartiality during the drafting and negotiation process and prioritizing forging consensus ... and promoting the unity of the Council; (ii) Ensuring, as early as possible in the drafting exercise, an exchange of information among all Council members and engaging in timely consultations with all Council members” (*para. (c)*).

Did that happen here? No, that was not at all the case for the drafting process for this resolution. On the contrary, we saw promises not kept, and we witnessed stalling. Everyone here saw the unkept promises and the stalling, including with regard to the proposal made twice over to return to last year's resolution 2703 (2023), with a simple technical update. In exchange for

cancelling the meeting of Permanent Representatives, which I had asked to convene in order to discuss the issue of the Western Sahara at an appropriate level, yesterday — and I am choosing my words carefully here — with the representative of the penholder, we agreed on a text that was to be submitted to us two hours later as a final text. We waited until 5.30 p.m. only to discover that the penholder had circulated in blue a draft resolution that did not contain any of the elements that had formed part of that agreement. I am explaining that — and I am choosing my words carefully — in order to challenge the way in which the penholder has accomplished its mission, or rather has failed to do so, because the voting on this resolution changes nothing about the crux of the issue. That clearly and legitimately calls into question, at least for Algeria, the issue of trust in the impartial nature of who is supposed to be the penholder for resolutions on Western Sahara.

I will now move on to the critical elements of the question of Western Sahara, which is one of the oldest issues on the Security Council's agenda and which has, let us be honest, seen a change in the way that the Council addresses it. And yet, the Council is aware and, in fact, reiterates time and again that the issue of Western Sahara is a matter of decolonization. But the Council is losing sight of that issue, with the Sahrawi people suffering in a long-term refugee situation. And yet, we have sworn to implement and apply international law and international humanitarian law. That same international law is reaffirmed time and again by international and regional legal bodies.

Less than a year ago, some months ago, the Court of Justice of the European Union conclusively ruled on the illegal nature of the agreements between Morocco and the European Union, as they violate the consent of the people of Western Sahara and their permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth. All of that was ignored by the resolution. Last week, here in New York, the President of the International Court of Justice said,

“[i]n its advisory opinion on Western Sahara in 1975, the Court referred to self-determination not only as a ‘principle’ but as a ‘right of peoples’, which was enunciated in resolution 1514 (XV) of the General Assembly”.

In order to maintain its credibility, our Council must not divert its attention or its gaze from the fundamental norms of international law.

I wish to raise two issues, among others, regarding the resolution.

First, there has been much talk about the round tables, which have not met for several years, yet have been put forward by some as a possible format for resolving the issue. It is not the round tables that are contested, but the nature of the dishes served atop them. So far, there have been two round-table sessions, during which the question of autonomy has been discussed at length.

When the third session was convened, the Sahrawis asked to be allowed to talk about the other options described in resolution 690 (1991). They were refused. The occupying Power reiterated that it agreed to discuss only the matter of autonomy, and I recognize that this constant position was reaffirmed two weeks ago by the Moroccan occupying Power. Whether the table is round or oval or square is not the issue. The issue is the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The issue is reaching a peaceful settlement of the question that takes into account the inalienable rights of the Sahrawi people.

Secondly, there has also been talk of momentum. I would like to clarify the Algerian position, which is fully in line with international law. The right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara belongs solely to the Sahrawi people. The Sahrawi people have the right, with the support of the United Nations, to freely choose their future.

I would like members to listen to me: my country will denounce all transactions involving sovereignty in Western Sahara in exchange for strategic, economic or commercial advantages. Members can guess what and who I am referring to.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that Algeria continues to place its trust in the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, and at the same time expresses its hope that the Personal Envoy will be able to come in April with a political solution accepted by both parties and will enable the quest for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Switzerland.

Switzerland voted in favour of the resolution 2756 (2024), just adopted. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)

plays an indispensable role in the implementation of the ceasefire in Western Sahara, and it is absolutely essential to support a consensus that allows for the renewal of its mandate.

We consistently reiterate the Secretary-General's call for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to be granted access to the region. That is why Switzerland supported amendment S/2024/797, noting that the OHCHR has been unable to visit Western Sahara for the ninth consecutive year.

Regarding amendment S/2024/798, Switzerland is firmly committed to the protection of human rights in all contexts, including in Western Sahara. In the present case, however, the negotiations unfortunately failed to reach a consensus on the resolution and, in particular, on that issue. As we communicated during the negotiations, it is important for Switzerland that the mandate expresses strong support for the efforts of the Personal Envoy and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. In that context, we abstained in the voting on the amendment in order to ensure the continuity of MINURSO's work.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before adjourning the meeting, which is the last scheduled meeting for the month of October, I would like to express my sincere thanks and those of the entire Swiss delegation to the members of the Council and to the Secretariat for their support. At the end of a very busy month, we can congratulate ourselves on having been able to reach a consensus on several important issues on our agenda. We could not have achieved that on our own, and the hard work, support and assistance of each delegation and Secretariat representative, as well as of the technical support team, meeting services staff — interpreters, translators, editors, verbatim reporters and security personnel — all played a part. I wish to thank them all most warmly.

As our presidency draws to a close, I know that all members of the Council join me in wishing the delegation of the United Kingdom, which will assume the presidency for the month of November, the very best of luck.

I wish members a lovely Diwali and a happy Halloween and Día de los Muertos.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.