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Chairman: Mr. Hasmy. (Malaysia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Requests for hearings (A/C.4/56/2 and Add.1, A/C.4/56/3 and Add.1-7 and A/C.4/56/4)

1. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the request for hearing contained in document A/C.4/56/2 relating to Gibraltar. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant that request.

2. *It was so decided.*

3. **The Chairman** said that another request for hearing was contained in document A/C.4/56/2/Add.1 relating to Gibraltar. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant that request.

4. *It was so decided.*

5. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the eight requests for hearings contained in documents A/C.4/56/3 and Add.1-7 relating to Western Sahara. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant those requests.

6. *It was so decided.*

7. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the request for hearing contained in document A/C.4/56/4 relating to the small Territories. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to grant that request.

8. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (*continued*) (A/56/1 and Corr.1, A/56/23 (part II), chapters VI and IX-XI, A/56/23 (part III), chapter XIII (D-F and H), A/56/159; S/2001/148, S/2001/398, S/2001/613)

Agenda item 91: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/56/23 (part II), chapter VIII, A/56/23 (part III), chapter XIII (A), A/56/67)

Agenda item 92: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/56/23 (part II), chapter V, A/56/23 (part III), chapter XIII (B))

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Agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*) (A/56/3)

Agenda item 94: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*) (A/56/88)

9. **Mr. Shen** Guofang (China) said that, ever since its inception, the United Nations had had the important task of helping colonial countries and peoples to exercise their right to self-determination and to strive for independence. Gratifying results had been achieved in that regard. Of particular importance was the adoption by the General Assembly in 1960 of the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which had greatly accelerated decolonization throughout the world. The active participation in international affairs of a large number of newly independent countries had also greatly enhanced the universality of the United Nations. At the same time, as humanity was currently entering upon the new millennium, the decolonization process had still not been completed and the goals set by the Declaration remained unfulfilled. At its fifty-fifth session, the General Assembly had adopted a resolution declaring the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, thereby fully demonstrating the common aspiration of all Member States to eradicate colonialism completely.

10. It was the duty of all Member States to attach importance to the interests of the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories and to help them to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and to realize the goal of the total eradication of colonialism throughout the world. He called on the administering Powers to

cooperate more effectively with the United Nations and the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, so as to create the conditions for the peoples of those Territories to exercise their right to self-determination.

11. His delegation hoped that the administering Powers would enter into closer cooperation with the United Nations, would fully ensure that the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories knew all their rights, and provide in a timely manner the information necessary for that purpose, and would accept United Nations visiting missions to Territories under their administration. Most of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories were small and had a very weak potential for development. His delegation therefore called upon the administering Powers to take effective measures to ensure well-balanced social, economic, cultural and educational development in those Territories while protecting natural and human resources.

12. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria) expressed his gratitude to the Chairman and the members of the Bureau of the Special Committee on Decolonization for their efforts to achieve the goals of the first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Despite the progress achieved during that Decade, the last bastions of colonialism in the world still remained. As a result of the close cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, a settlement plan had been agreed upon 10 years earlier for Western Sahara, the last Non-Self-Governing Territory in Africa. The achievement of that settlement plan had been a long and difficult task, although most of the problems had been overcome in 1997 thanks to the work of Mr. James Baker, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General.

13. Unfortunately, that process had unexpectedly become deadlocked when the appeals procedure had broken down. In response to the ambiguous position taken by the Secretariat, the Frente POLISARIO had rejected the plan proposed by it for a political solution based on so-called autonomy. At the same time, the Security Council, through its resolution 1359 (2001) of 29 June 2001, reiterated its support for the ongoing efforts by MINURSO to implement the Settlement Plan to hold a free, fair and impartial referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

14. The so-called draft framework agreement could not, under any circumstances, be considered a basis for

a just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara. The Settlement Plan remained the only framework that had been agreed by the two parties and enjoyed the support of the entire international community. That solution would be based on the principles of international legality and would enable the Saharan people to decide freely their future through the holding of a referendum on self-determination.

15. **Mr. Mollahosseini** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, at the beginning of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, it was important to emphasize the central political role of the United Nations in support of the decolonization process. The implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade would enable countries to fulfil their commitments under the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and conclude the process of decolonization and the implementation of the right to self-determination of the peoples in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. That process should continue to be based on the freely expressed wishes of the populations of the Territories concerned and in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. The Special Committee on decolonization had played an instrumental role in bringing about the decolonization of 60 former Territories since the adoption of the Declaration in 1960. In its future activities, the Committee should be guided by the need to cooperate with the administering Powers and dispatch periodic visiting missions to the Non-Self-Governing Territories to ascertain the wishes and aspirations of the people of those Territories and transmit the corresponding information to the Organization on the basis of Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Together with other members of the international community, his country firmly supported the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization and, as a member of the Special Committee, it was determined to continue to fulfil its responsibilities in that regard.

16. **Mr. Foo Shyang Piau** (Singapore), noting the important work carried out by the Committee since the adoption in 1960 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, bringing independence to over 85 million people, said that more remained to be done to put an end to the anachronism of colonialism. Although the first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism had made significant achievements, there

were still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories and the United Nations should redouble its efforts to ensure that they achieved self-determination during the Second Decade, which had begun. Singapore fully appreciated the complexities faced by small Territories in making the transition to independence and, therefore, urged the United Nations to remain engaged in all phases of the decolonization process. The Special Committee, for its part, should continue the implementation of the updated plan of action as contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the Second Decade and intensify cooperation with the administering Powers.

17. The information technology revolution had opened up new possibilities in the exchange of information and experience and the formulation of corresponding strategies, including through the Internet, which contained a wealth of resources relevant to those Territories seeking self-determination. However, many Non-Self-Governing Territories lacked even the basic infrastructure required to access the Internet and reap its full benefits. Singapore was keen to share its own experiences in information technology with other developing countries in order to develop their human resources, which was vital for economic and social progress. Along with some setbacks, the process of self-determination had advanced considerably and, during the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, countries should redouble their efforts to ensure that all the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories achieved their full political, economic and social potential.

18. **Mr. Bakoniarivo** (Madagascar) expressed appreciation to the Special Committee for its report (A/56/23), which dealt with the implementation of the Committee's noble aim of eliminating colonialism. The current debate on decolonization was taking place a year after the adoption by the General Assembly of the Millennium Declaration, in which the leaders of the world's nations had reiterated their resolve to uphold the ideals of freedom and justice and to respect the right to self-determination of peoples that were still under colonial domination or foreign occupation. The United Nations should therefore, at the current session, declare that its position on the question of the decolonization of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories remained unchanged.

19. Human rights were predicated on independence, and the struggle for independence was essentially a

struggle for human rights. His delegation therefore supported the resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Rights on 6 April 2001 on the question of Western Sahara, which stressed the need for a referendum on the self-determination of the people of that Territory. In the interests of finding a just and lasting settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara, the international community and the General Assembly were in favour of the strict implementation of the settlement plan agreed to by both parties to the conflict. The General Assembly's assistance played a vital role in vouchsafing the Non-Self-Governing Territories their inalienable right to self-determination, as the successful organization of the nationwide referendum of the people of East Timor in 1999 had convincingly shown. While it welcomed the efforts made by the Special Committee during the course of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism which had ended, his delegation considered it essential that even more active and decisive measures on decolonization should be taken in the course of the Second International Decade.

20. **Mr. Ononye** (Nigeria) said that his delegation supported the principles of self-determination as enunciated in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It also identified with the urgent call, in General Assembly resolution 55/139 of 8 December 2000, for all States to intensify their efforts in the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration and other relevant United Nations resolutions. His delegation supported the measures undertaken by the United Nations to ensure that the remaining 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories gained independence and called on the international community, especially the administering Powers, to speed up the process.

21. Efforts should be intensified to resolve the problem by organizing a referendum in all the Territories to enable the inhabitants to determine their political future. With regard to Western Sahara, the parties concerned should respect the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 55/141 of 8 December 2000, and ensure the early organization of a referendum. His delegation called for greater assistance to Territories in the dissemination of information on decolonization and for

the award of scholarships to citizens of those Territories to enable them to acquire education.

22. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia) said that his delegation attached particular importance to the situation in Western Sahara and was deeply disappointed about recent developments regarding decolonization in what was the last Non-Self-Governing Territory in Africa. His delegation had noted with deep concern the recent proposed so-called “Framework Agreement on the Status of Western Sahara”, which provided no possibility for the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right of self-determination and generally deviated from the principles of the United Nations regarding decolonization. It was significant that, as recently as June 2001, the Security Council had lent no support to the proposal but had reiterated its full support for the efforts of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to implement the settlement plan and the agreements adopted by the parties to hold a free, fair and impartial referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

23. The proposed United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara, adopted under Security Council resolutions 658 (1990) of 27 June 1990 and 690 (1991) of 29 April 1991, remained the only framework accepted by both parties to the conflict. Its main purpose was the organization of a free and fair referendum on self-determination, free from any administrative or military constraints. Efforts should therefore continue to ensure the achievement of a just and lasting solution to the conflict in Western Sahara. His delegation objected, and would continue to object, to any attempts to abandon the settlement plan. It therefore called for a speedy resumption of efforts for its full implementation and pledged its support for the efforts of MINURSO and the Secretary-General, and of his Personal Envoy, Mr. James Baker III, to find a genuine, just and lasting solution to the question of Western Sahara.

24. **Ms. Seth** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that in the framework of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, CARICOM member States — represented by Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and Saint Lucia — continued to cooperate closely to facilitate ongoing dialogue and to introduce potential new approaches. At the regional level, CARICOM countries continued to facilitate the

participation of Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories in regional integration institutions, irrespective of the level of political development of those Territories. In emergency situations, CARICOM responded quickly to the needs of Non-Self-Governing Territories experiencing adverse conditions arising from natural disasters. For all the efforts of CARICOM to promote the development of neighbouring Territories, work at the international level must be accelerated. CARICOM States continued to affirm that the United Nations must invariably play a steering role in the future development process of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The successful decolonization of over 80 Territories since the Second World War testified to the success of global efforts to ensure that the peoples of those Territories attained full self-government through an internationally recognized process. In the Caribbean, such a global commitment had resulted in the achievement of either independence, as in the case of the 14 independent CARICOM States, free association, as in the case of two countries in association with the Netherlands, or integration with full political rights, as illustrated by the overseas departments of France in the Caribbean.

25. Such models of self-governance had largely proved successful, owing to the unwavering adherence to the parameters of self-determination adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 1541 (XV). There should be no faltering of international commitment to those principles. It was vital to resist the urge to legitimize the existing dependency arrangements that were unequal by any objective criteria, even if account was taken of new proposals for governance that were often applied unilaterally to many Territories, especially in the Caribbean. There was no basis for the removal of any of those Territories from the United Nations list until they had achieved full political equality.

26. CARICOM States wished to stress that the Settlement Plan for Western Sahara remained the most viable basis for determining the will of the Saharan people. Any alternative proposals must be mutually agreed by both parties.

27. In previous statements to the Committee and in plenary meetings, CARICOM had expressed its concern that major provisions of the action plan had not been implemented during the first International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. An information deficit on decolonization issues had arisen

owing to the lack of real, basic analysis available to member States of the constitutional, political and economic situation in the Territories. CARICOM reiterated its view that such analyses of the prevailing conditions in the Territories were critical to eliminating the information deficit on decolonization.

28. The information deficit on decolonization had been apparent at the recent World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. In that connection, it should be noted that although the Declaration, Programme of Action and statements delivered during the general debate had contained references to colonialism, the overwhelming emphasis had been on past colonialism. The convening of regional seminars — alternately in the Caribbean and Pacific regions — served to bridge the information gap on decolonization and provided an opportunity to assess the unique political and socio-economic development process of those Territories from a regional perspective, by hearing directly from representatives of territorial administrations, non-governmental organizations and experts. CARICOM wished to stress the need for a public education programme on political status options in the Territories and for United Nations assistance for their socio-economic development process, and the importance of participation by the Territories in any United Nations negotiations on their political future. CARICOM took note of the formation of an International Expert Group on Self-Determination in the hope that the members of the Group would contribute meaningfully in the months and years ahead.

29. **Mr. Naidu** (Fiji) said that Fiji had long been an advocate for decolonization and independence, particularly for peoples in the Pacific region, and reiterated its continuing interest in maintaining progress for the Kanak people in New Caledonia under the Matignon and Noumea Accords. A climate of peace and amicable cooperation had prevailed during that political process. However, the communiqué adopted by the heads of Government at the South Pacific Forum had expressed concern about the violence in Irian Jaya. The remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories in the list of the Committee of 24 were in the Pacific and Caribbean regions. Each of them was encountering obstacles on the path to decolonization. Individual work programmes for each Territory could provide an ideal agreed platform for the parties to work out their mutual path to complete decolonization.

30. **Mr. Da Silva** (Angola) said the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, enshrined in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, had been a landmark decision in terms of the principle of self-determination. The Declaration was the basis of the principle of decolonization, and the right to self-determination was the meeting-point of the two concepts of nationality and democracy.

31. Angola was grateful to the United Nations for the active role it was playing in the process of self-determination in East Timor, which had enabled the Timorese people to choose independence on the basis of a popular referendum, culminating in democratic elections. Angola recognized that progress had been achieved in global decolonization, but the results were still not satisfactory enough for it to consider that colonialism had been almost totally eradicated worldwide. More than a dozen Territories in the world had still not achieved independence. In the current decade it was imperative that the United Nations and the international community make greater efforts to help the countries and peoples still under colonial rule to decide freely about their political future and become part of the concert of nations.

32. As for the question of Western Sahara, Angola urged the international community to keep on supporting the United Nations Peace Plan. Angola believed that the most appropriate way to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara was to create favourable conditions for the Saharan people to exercise their right to self-determination through a popular referendum with international monitoring.

33. **Mr. dos Santos** (Mozambique) welcomed the report and the work of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Unfortunately, the process of decolonization was not yet complete. Self-determination and independence were inalienable rights of all peoples, according to the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, and other relevant norms of international law. The proclamation by the General Assembly of the period 2001-2010 as the Second International Decade for the Elimination of Colonialism was clear testimony that the international

community was aware of the need to take decisive steps to complete the process of decolonization.

34. Mozambique thanked the Secretary-General for his report on the question of Western Sahara, and commended his efforts, in close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and those of his Personal Envoy and his Special Representative, to implement the settlement plan. However, the plan, adopted more than ten years previously, had still to be fulfilled. A referendum had still to be held on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. In spite of some successes in implementing the plan, the efforts of the international community, and the repeated appeals of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the obstacles preventing its implementation had not been overcome. The international community must focus its attention on renewing the process of implementing the plan through the holding of a free, fair and impartial referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, as the only solution agreed to by both parties and supported by the international community. He believed it was now high time to direct the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to complete in an expedited manner the identification process which would lead to the holding of the referendum in Western Sahara, as envisaged in the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council.

35. He reiterated the appeals made to the two parties, in General Assembly resolution 55/141 of 8 December 2000, to continue their cooperation with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, as well as with his Special Representative, in implementing the various phases of the settlement plan and in overcoming the difficulties that remained, and to refrain from undertaking anything that would undermine the implementation of the plan and the agreements reached for its implementation.

36. **Mr. Vankham** (Lao People's Democratic Republic), after associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples had greatly accelerated the decolonization process and changed the composition of the United Nations, as well as altering inter-State relations. Notwithstanding the progress achieved, however, the goal set in the first International Decade for the Eradication of

Colonialism remained unrealized. There were still 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories around the world whose future was uncertain.

37. It should be remembered, in that regard, that the ultimate goal of a world free from colonialism had been set in General Assembly resolution 46/181 of 19 December 1991. His delegation therefore urged all the parties concerned, including the United Nations, the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the administering Powers, to take appropriate measures to ensure the exercise of the right to self-determination by the peoples of those Territories, as there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination for all Non-Self-Governing Territories, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). In that connection, the administering Powers should cooperate more closely with the United Nations and the peoples of the Territories in order to create the necessary conditions for them to exercise their right to self-determination. In conclusion, he expressed his delegation's full support for the idea of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, 2001-2010 and said that his delegation would always participate actively in United Nations work in that field and support its endeavours.

38. **Mr. Donigi** (Papua New Guinea), noting that the Special Committee had acknowledged that the Non-Self-Governing Territories were at varying stages of development, said that there could not be a "one-size-fits-all" programme of work for all the Territories. The Informal Working Group on Pacific Territories had, with the cooperation of New Zealand, made some progress with respect to the question of Tokelau. The representative of New Zealand had expressed the hope that the work programme for Tokelau could be finalized by the end of the year. His delegation looked forward to continued close cooperation with New Zealand in finalizing that work programme and to the achievement of the same degree of cooperation with the other administering Powers. It was important that the representatives of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories should participate at every stage of development of the work programmes. The question of the development of the work programmes had been discussed informally with the administering Powers. During the General Assembly debate at the preceding session all the administering Powers had welcomed that new approach. It was important to make progress,

however, to complete the work programmes and submit them to the Special Committee for endorsement.

39. Turning to the current state of global affairs, he expressed his delegation's abhorrence of the terrorist activities conducted throughout the world over the past decade, culminating in the horrendous crime against humanity perpetrated in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. Terrorism knew no political boundaries, and its consequences were far-reaching and unpredictable, including for the economies of the small island Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Special Committee had already called on the administering Powers to continue to provide special assistance to those Territories. It had to be acknowledged that not enough was being done for their development. The administering Powers and the international aid agencies within the United Nations system should be asked to make extraordinary efforts to cater to the needs of those Territories, whose economies would steadily worsen following the recent terrorist attacks.

40. It was imperative that the administering Powers, the Secretary-General and the various organizations of the United Nations system should, in their reporting at the following session, provide information on the effects of recent terrorist acts on the economies of those Non-Self-Governing Territories and on the remedial measures taken. That information would be required in order to enable the Special Committee to make appropriate recommendations to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee and the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

41. **Mr. Haggag** (Egypt) said that, following the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the United Nations had been extremely successful in promoting decolonization and the right of non-self-governing peoples to self-determination. Notwithstanding the efforts of the Special Committee, however, not all the goals set in the Declaration had been attained. The United Nations should continue its work in that area with a view to completing the process of decolonization in the course of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

42. During the Millennium Assembly, Heads of State and Government had committed themselves to intensifying efforts to achieve self-determination for colonial countries and peoples and for peoples under

foreign occupation. In order for that goal to be achieved, administering Powers must fulfil their responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations and cooperate with the Special Committee. Egypt wished to express appreciation to the administering Powers which had established relations of constructive cooperation with the Special Committee, and called on the other administering Powers to follow their example. In addition, it appealed to administering Powers to allow visiting missions to go to the Territories under their administration, so that the United Nations could obtain first-hand information on the needs and wishes of the population of those Territories. Egypt also expressed the hope that administering Powers would provide information on Non-Self-Governing Territories in accordance with Article 73 *e* of the United Nations Charter and respect the legitimate rights of the population of Non-Self-Governing Territories, including the right to dispose of their own natural resources.

43. Important events had taken place in the two years since the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). For example, a referendum had been held, in which the population had been able freely to express their wishes, and democratic institutions had been created which would ultimately permit the formation of an independent State. Egypt supported the efforts of the international community to bolster that process. In addition, it expressed appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for its encouragement of those efforts. Without that country's courageous decision, the 1999 referendum would not have been possible. Egypt would follow closely the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General concerning the form and structure of the international presence in that Territory after the expiration of the UNTAET mandate.

44. The United Nations must also continue to work for a settlement of the conflict in Western Sahara in accordance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Egypt was closely following developments and hoped that the two parties would cooperate with the Secretary-General, his Personal Envoy and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), so as to remove the obstacles preventing a solution of the problem.

45. **Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) noted that one of the most lasting conflicts on the African continent was the one in Western Sahara, which had caused much suffering and many tragedies, divided families and created refugee flows. The international community — and primarily the United Nations, which had been trying for many years to bring the positions of the two parties closer together — must put an end to that fratricidal conflict. A solution would certainly not be easy, but each party was acting with good will and they must carefully study all avenues which could lead to the establishment of a peace process. Burkina Faso believed that the Framework Agreement on the Status of Western Sahara, proposed by Mr. James Baker III, should not be rejected outright, because it was quite promising. The granting of significant autonomy to the Saharan population could form the basis for further negotiations and did not presuppose automatic rejection of self-determination. The Secretary-General must be supported in his efforts to settle that long-standing conflict and the parties must be urged persistently to continue their dialogue and to seek a compromise, because that was the only way of achieving peace.

46. **Mr. Fall** (Senegal) emphasized that Senegal had long-standing multifaceted ties with Morocco, which had only become stronger and deeper over the centuries. In the matter of Western Sahara, it fully supported the position of Morocco, which was based on a clear understanding of the fact that a just and lasting solution of the question could be achieved only through honest and trusting negotiations. In that connection, the delegation of Senegal welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Mr. James Baker III, who had succeeded in displaying political pragmatism and boldness in the search for new ways out of the prevailing situation. The Framework Agreement, proposed by the Personal Envoy and supported by the Secretary-General, provided a basis for negotiations and, if adopted, could remove the obstacles in the way of implementation of the Settlement Plan. The delegation of Senegal called on the parties to continue negotiations on the basis of the draft Framework Agreement as an alternative route to a final settlement of the question of Western Sahara, to respect the ceasefire agreement and to facilitate solution of the humanitarian issues in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) without any political conditions. Senegal hoped that the parties would display political will and, in the threefold

task of achieving peace, cooperation and development, would be guided solely by the basic interests of the population of Western Sahara and of the countries of that region.

47. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) reminded the Committee that his country constantly displayed a real commitment in favour of a just, lasting and final settlement, within the framework of international law, of a dispute which had been poisoning the atmosphere in the Maghreb region for more than a quarter of a century. That regional dispute had been artificially raised at a time when Morocco had been legitimately recovering its southern provinces. Since then the dispute was being artificially prolonged even though everyday life in that Territory had long been pursuing a normal course. Like all States represented in the United Nations, Morocco was defending its territorial integrity in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Everyone was aware that Morocco was deploying all possible efforts to ensure stability and peace in the Maghreb, a peace which would enable all parties concerned to overcome their differences. That strategic choice had been strongly and repeatedly reaffirmed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI since his accession to the throne more than two years earlier. Final and lasting settlement of the dispute would pave the way for the building of a regional entity in the Maghreb that would contribute to the well-being of all the populations concerned as well as to the enhancement of relations between Africa and Europe. For that reason the international community had decided to support the framework for negotiations proposed by the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Mr. James A. Baker III, in annex I to the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara of 20 June 2001 (S/2001/613).

48. According to the reasons given by the Secretary-General in that document, the draft Framework Agreement was the only way out of the situation that had been created. The inapplicability of the settlement plan, drawn up more than 10 years earlier, had been revealed year after year. In fact the plan had become a hindrance, not allowing the parties to reach agreement on a list of persons originating in the Territory who should be invited to make the choice between integration and independence. For that reason, it was necessary to search for a third alternative which fully respected the principles of international legality. That alternative could only consist of a compromise formula

allowing the creation of a local authority which would represent the population and exercise maximum powers within the framework of Moroccan sovereignty.

49. In that regard he recalled that, by its resolution 1309 (2000) of 25 July 2000, the Security Council had urged the parties to meet in direct talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy. At that meeting, which had taken place in Berlin in September 2000, Morocco had taken up the aforementioned third option based on a sincere and frank dialogue with all the other parties. Morocco's evident goodwill had been recognized by the Secretary-General in his report of 24 April 2001 (S/2001/398), in which he had stated his conviction that the Government of Morocco was prepared to offer or support some degree of devolution of authority for all the inhabitants and former inhabitants of the Territory which would be genuine, substantial and in keeping with international norms. With that conviction Mr. Baker had elaborated a draft Framework Agreement on the Status of Western Sahara which translated the concept of a transfer of authority into a legal document. In May 2001 the Personal Envoy had visited Algeria, where he had submitted that document for the consideration of the Algerian authorities and the Frente POLISARIO. In its memorandum addressed to Mr. Baker on that question, Algeria, even if it did not approve the document, had wished the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy success in his efforts to seek an alternative solution, thereby acknowledging the possibility of an alternative.

50. The draft Framework Agreement clearly underlined the fact that, once agreed upon by the parties, the decision on status would be submitted to the population for approval through a referendum within five years following its adoption. Thus all the requirements had been assembled enabling the Security Council, acting under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations on the peaceful settlement of disputes, to recommend the most suitable procedure for reaching a just, lasting and final solution. In that regard the Security Council had unanimously adopted its very important resolution 1359 (2001) of 29 June 2001, which marked a watershed in the international community's treatment of the so-called question of Western Sahara and the dispute resulting therefrom.

51. Morocco had immediately declared its acceptance of the draft Framework Agreement as a basis for negotiations and its readiness to participate fully in those negotiations with the aim of reaching a just and

lasting settlement of the dispute as soon as possible with the other parties over Western Sahara. With that commitment on the part of Morocco in mind, Mr. Baker had convened a meeting in Pinedale in the state of Wyoming, United States of America, from 27 to 29 August, with the participation of representatives of the Frente POLISARIO and of the Governments of Algeria and Mauritania, during which the Frente POLISARIO and the Government of Algeria had discussed the provisions of the draft Framework Agreement and had promised to provide further clarifications at a future meeting. The representative of Mauritania had underlined his support for any solution likely to promote peace and stability in the region and which enjoyed the approval of the parties.

52. Morocco hoped that Algeria and the Frente POLISARIO would fulfil their promise as soon as possible and clarify their respective positions regarding the draft Framework Agreement. Only by doing so would they be able to fulfil their obligations towards the international community. As for the 1,479 members of the Armed Forces of Morocco still detained in camps, they should be freed without delay in accordance with the norms of humanitarian law and in response to the urgent appeals of the United Nations Secretary-General and Security Council.

53. **Mr. Baali** (Algeria), referring to the statement made by the representative of Morocco, said that after the Wyoming meeting the representative of the Secretary-General had issued a communiqué referring to both a Settlement Plan and a Framework Agreement. Algeria had again stated its objections regarding the Framework Agreement, and the Frente POLISARIO had totally rejected it. The Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General had proposed that Algeria should clarify its position in writing, and it intended to submit the appropriate document soon, setting out its objections. Referring to the statements made by the representatives of Burkina Faso and Senegal, he said that there were no grounds in the context of the Framework Agreement for drawing the Committee's attention to Security Council resolutions on Western Sahara, since they did not in any way demonstrate the Council's support for the Framework Agreement.

54. **Mr. Bennouna** (Morocco) said that, at the recent seminar in Barcelona, academic circles had shown a keen interest in the Framework Agreement. He recalled that the Security Council had supported the idea of holding negotiations on the basis both of the

Framework Agreement and of any other proposal, and any amendments to the Agreement could be sent to Mr. Baker. If Algeria was not satisfied with particular aspects of the Agreement it could submit for consideration any alternatives it preferred. The Framework Agreement was intended to give a new impetus to the discussions and negotiations aimed at achieving a political solution.

55. **Mr. Simamora** (Indonesia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the references made by the representative of Fiji to events in Irian Jaya amounted to a violation of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States. The matter was an internal affair of Indonesia and had nothing to do with the Committee's agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.