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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE
TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

Question of Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General

1. At its forty-second session, on 4 December 1987, the General Assembly adopted resolution 42/78, which reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Having considered in depth the question of Western Sahara,

"Recalling the inalienable right of all peoples to self-determination and independence, in accordance with the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,

"Recalling its resolution 41/16 of 31 October 1986 on the question of Western Sahara,

"Recalling resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) on Western Sahara, 1/ adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its nineteenth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 6 to 12 June 1983,

* Reissued for technical reasons.

1/ For the text, see resolution 38/40, para. 1.

"Taking note with appreciation of the part concerning Western Sahara 2/
of the final communiqué adopted by the Meeting of Ministers for Foreign
Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries to the
forty-second session of the General Assembly, held in New York from 5 to
7 October 1987,

"Having examined the relevant chapter of the report 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, 3/

"Having examined the report of the Secretary-General on the question of
Western Sahara, 4/

"Noting with appreciation the continuation of the joint good offices
process initiated in New York on 9 April 1986 by the current Chairman of the
Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity
and the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to implementing
resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) and General Assembly resolutions 40/50 of
2 December 1985 and 41/16 of 31 October 1986,

"1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General
on the question of Western Sahara;

"2. Reaffirms that the question of Western Sahara is a question of
decolonization which remains to be completed on the basis of the exercise by
the people of Western Sahara of their inalienable right to self-determination
and independence;

"3. Reaffirms also that the solution of the question of Western Sahara
lies in the implementation of resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX) of the Assembly of
Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity, in which
ways and means were established for a just and definitive political solution
to the Western Sahara conflict;

"4. Again requests, to that end, the two parties to the conflict, the
Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia
el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, to undertake direct negotiations, in the shortest
possible time, with a view to bringing about a cease-fire to create the
necessary conditions for a peaceful and fair referendum for self-determination
of the people of Western Sahara, a referendum without any administrative or
military constraints, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity
and the United Nations;

2/ A/42/681, annex, paras. 50 and 51.

3/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session,
Supplement No. 23 (A/42/23), chap. IX.

4/ A/42/601.

"5. Welcomes the efforts of the current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to promote a just and definitive solution of the question of Western Sahara, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 40/50;

"6. Takes note of the joint decision of the current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to send a technical mission to Western Sahara in order to collect the relevant technical information to assist them in discharging the mandate entrusted to them under General Assembly resolutions 40/50 and 41/16 and the present resolution;

"7. Invites the current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue to exert every effort to persuade the two parties to the conflict, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, to negotiate, in the shortest possible time and in conformity with resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX), General Assembly resolution 40/50 and the present resolution, the terms of a cease-fire and the modalities for organizing the said referendum;

"8. Appeals to the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro to display the political will necessary to implement resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX), General Assembly resolutions 40/50 and 41/16 and the present resolution;

"9. Reaffirms the determination of the United Nations to co-operate fully with the Organization of African Unity with a view to implementing the relevant decisions of that Organization, in particular resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX);

"10. Requests 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 as a matter of priority and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-third session;

"11. Invites the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity to keep the Secretary-General of the United Nations informed of the progress achieved in the implementation of the decisions of the Organization of African Unity relating to Western Sahara;

"12. Invites the Secretary-General to follow the situation in Western Sahara closely with a view to the implementation of the present resolution and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-third session."

2. The present report, which covers the period from November 1987 to September 1988, is submitted in accordance with paragraph 12 of the above-mentioned resolution.

3. In November 1987, following consultations with the current Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Secretary-General dispatched a survey mission to Western Sahara to gather technical information and data on the Territory necessary for the formulation of proposals relating to a cease-fire and the organisation of a referendum without any military or administrative constraints. The mission was led by Mr. Abdulrahim A. Farah, Under-Secretary-General, and included senior personnel from the United Nations and the secretariat of OAU. Copies of the mission's report were made available to the Secretary-General and to the Chairman of OAU for their personal use.
4. As part of the ongoing process of consultations with the current Chairman of OAU, the Secretary-General sent an Envoy to Lusaka in February 1988, to brief President Kenneth Kaunda, current Chairman of OAU, on developments relating to the latest series of contacts between the Secretary-General and the parties to the conflict. The Chairman of OAU was also briefed on particular aspects of the findings of the technical mission to Western Sahara.
5. On 9 and 10 April, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the current Chairman of OAU met at Brussels to review the progress in the talks with Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO. Agreement was reached on additional measures to be taken to facilitate the formulation of settlement proposals to be presented to the two parties. Plans for additional meetings with the parties were also discussed, including the impending visit of President Kaunda to the region. The Secretary-General arranged for Mr. Farah and Mr. Diallo to accompany the Chairman of OAU on his visit.
6. The current Chairman of OAU visited Morocco on 12 April, on the first stage of his journey. After holding talks with His Majesty King Hassan II, the Chairman of OAU proceeded to Tindouf for a meeting with Mr. Mohamed Abdelaziz, the Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO. While in the region, he also visited Algeria and Mauritania and held discussions with the heads of State of those countries in their capacity as observers to the peace process.
7. On 2 May, the Secretary-General paid a brief visit to Morocco for talks with His Majesty King Hassan II on specific issues relating to the presence of the Moroccan administration and military in Western Sahara.
8. The question of Western Sahara featured prominently in the Secretary-General's meeting with African leaders during the course of his visit to Addis Ababa from 25 to 28 May in connection with the annual Summit Conference. He discussed the question with the outgoing Chairman of OAU, President Kaunda, as well as with the incoming Chairman of OAU, President Moussa Traoré of Mali. Other meetings were held with the heads of State of Algeria, Mauritania and Tunisia. In addition he had talks with the Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO.
9. On 10 August, the Secretary-General met with the Special Envoy of the Chairman of OAU at United Nations Headquarters to finalize the Peace Proposals that were to be submitted to Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO for their consideration. The Peace Proposals were based on a careful analysis of the positions of the two parties and were designed to promote a just and definitive solution of the question

of Western Sahara in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The proposals offered a framework for bringing about a cease-fire and creating the necessary conditions for the holding of a credible referendum that would allow the people of Western Sahara to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination without military or administrative constraints.

10. The following day, the Secretary-General and the Special Envoy of the current Chairman of OAU received, in separate meetings, Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Morocco, and Mr. Bachir Mustapha Sayeb, a member of the Executive Committee of the Frente POLISARIO. Each representative was handed a document containing the Peace Proposals. The two parties were requested to respond to the Peace Proposals before 1 September.

11. The Secretary-General met again with the representatives of the two parties at Geneva on 26 August. The representatives sought separate meetings with the Secretary-General to obtain clarification on various aspects of the Peace Proposals.

12. The official response of Morocco to the Peace Proposals was conveyed to the Secretary-General at Geneva on 30 August by Foreign Minister Abdellatif Filali. The official response of the Frente POLISARIO was handed to the Secretary-General the same day, by Mr. Bachir Mustapha Sayeb. Both replies conveyed acceptance of the Peace Proposals put forward by the current Chairman of OAU and the Secretary-General as part of the mission of good offices for a peaceful settlement of the question of Western Sahara.

13. In a statement to the Security Council on 20 September, the Secretary-General informed members that Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO had accepted the Peace Proposals forwarded to them by the current Chairman of OAU and himself. The following is the full text of the statement made by the Secretary-General at the meeting of the Council:

It is my honour to inform the members of the Security Council that the Kingdom of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front, parties to the conflict in Western Sahara, while making remarks and comments, have, on 30 August 1988, in Geneva, given their agreement to the proposals for a peaceful settlement submitted by the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and myself within the framework of my mission of good offices.

Those proposals are aimed at the promotion of a just and definitive solution of the question of Western Sahara in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The proposals were drawn up following a lengthy series of discussions which successive Chairmen of the Organization of African Unity and I held with the parties to the conflict under the mandate conferred upon me by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/50.

The proposals aimed at the restoration of peace in the region provide a framework for the conclusion of a cease-fire and the establishment of conditions necessary for the organization of a credible referendum that will make it possible for the people of Western Sahara to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination without military or administrative constraints. The referendum will be organized and monitored by the United Nations in co-operation with the Organization of African Unity.

The peace proposals will be implemented under the guidance of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General with the assistance of a sufficiently large Support Group comprising a civilian unit, a military unit and a security unit in order to enable him to fulfil his organizational and monitoring functions. The composition of those units will be determined in due course by the Secretary-General in consultation with the parties to the conflict and having regard to what is required for the organization and control of the referendum.

During the transition period between the installation of the cease-fire and the announcement of the results of the referendum, the Secretary-General's Special Representative will be the sole and exclusive authority, particularly with regard to all questions pertaining to the referendum, including the organization, monitoring and conduct of the referendum. In that capacity he will be empowered to take any measures he deems necessary to guarantee the impartiality of the referendum, freedom of movement and the security of the population.

The peace proposals also provide for the deployment of a contingent of United Nations observers whose responsibility it will be to verify the cessation of hostilities, the implementation of the cease-fire, the exchange of prisoners, the determining of the positions of the parties at the time of the cease-fire and the consigning of their troops to sites to be determined by the Special Representative. The establishment and functioning of the Observer Group will be governed by the general principles applicable to United Nations peace-keeping operations.

The peace proposals also advocate a cease-fire and the complete cessation of hostilities so that the referendum process will be free from any interference or intimidation before the organization of the referendum and during its conduct. The proposals also provide that the Kingdom of Morocco will carry out an appropriate, substantial and gradual reduction of its troops in Western Sahara. The remainder of the Moroccan troops will be stationed at sites designated by the Special Representative and will be placed under the surveillance of the United Nations Observer Group.

Similarly, the troops of the POLISARIO Front will be stationed under the surveillance of the United Nations Observer Group at sites indicated by the Secretary-General's Special Representative.

At the present stage of our efforts, the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and I are working hard to finalize certain practical details of the peace plan for the settlement of the question of Western Sahara. The progress already made to that end is a preliminary and favourable result, which it is extremely important to consolidate in order to preserve the momentum of the process.

That is why I request the Security Council at this stage to authorize me to proceed to the appointment of a Special Representative for Western Sahara, who would thus be enabled to gain familiarity with the facts of the question and with the peace plan.

At a subsequent stage, after finalization of the settlement plan for the question of Western Sahara, and with a detailed elaboration of the degree of United Nations intervention in the field - that is an assessment of the required number of observers and civilian and military personnel - I propose to return to the Security Council to request the adoption of necessary measures.

14. On the basis of the Secretary-General's statement, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 621 (1988). The text of that resolution is as follows:

"The Security Council,

"Having heard a report by the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices pursued jointly with the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 40/50 of 2 December 1985, with a view to settling the question of Western Sahara,

"Taking note of the agreement in principle given by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro on 30 August 1988 to the joint proposals of the United Nations Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity,

"Anxious to support these efforts with a view to the holding of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, organized and supervised by the United Nations in co-operation with the Organization of African Unity,

"1. Decides to authorize the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative for Western Sahara;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to it as soon as possible a report on the holding of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara on ways and means to ensure the organization and supervision of such a referendum by the United Nations in co-operation with the Organization of African Unity."

Concluding remarks

15. The Secretary-General and the current Chairman of OAU are encouraged and gratified by the stage reached so far in their mission of good offices for a peaceful solution of the question of Western Sahara, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 40/50.

16. The present stage in their endeavours has been reached through a stop-by-step process. In addition to the extensive contacts mentioned above, there has been a continuous exchange of written and oral communications between the Secretary-General and the parties to the conflict. The Secretary-General and the current Chairman of OAU have also had detailed exchanges of views with the

observers to the peace process as well as with leaders of African countries and other interested parties.

17. An encouraging feature of the negotiations has been the recognition on the part of both parties that the ultimate objective in Western Sahara is to enable the people of the Territory to exercise their right to self-determination in a free and fair referendum without any administrative or military constraints. Both parties agreed that the United Nations, in co-operation with OAU, should supervise a cease-fire and be responsible for the organization and conduct of the proposed referendum in accordance with accepted international practices and norms.

18. The Secretary-General has taken note of the comments and observations that accompanied the acceptance of the Peace Proposals by the two parties. However, the Secretary-General views the Peace Proposals as a delicate balance of essential elements and a compromise aimed at promoting a just and definitive solution to the question of Western Sahara. For these reasons, he does not consider it advisable to re-open negotiations on any of the elements agreed to in principle by the parties. Moreover, the paramount objective of the Secretary-General and the current Chairman of OAU - an objective shared by the two parties - was the creation of conditions that would enable the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination through a referendum without any military or administrative constraints.

19. On the basis of Security Council resolution 621 (1988), the Secretary-General has already begun consultations with the current Chairman of OAU, as well as with the two parties, on the early appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara.

20. The Secretary-General and the current Chairman of OAU express the hope that the two parties, by accepting in principle the peace proposals, will continue to demonstrate the political will necessary for the early and successful completion of the peace process.
