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FOURTH COMMITTEE
22nd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 6 November 1984
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 22nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE
TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

Question of Western Sahara

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 18: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

Question of Western Sahara (A/39/23 (Part VI), A/39/634 and Add.1, A/39/680; A/C.4/39/L.12 and L.13; A/AC.109/785)

Hearing of petitioners (A/C.4/39/2/Add.2, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 12 and Corr.1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Hamdati Chbihanna Maalainine, President of the Association of Former Members of the Moroccan Liberation Army in the Saharan Provinces, Es-Smara (Morocco), took a place at the petitioners' table.

2. Mr. MAALAININE (Association of Former Members of the Moroccan Liberation Army in the Saharan Provinces, Es-Smara (Morocco)) said that he wished to reply to certain States that had tried to distort history in order to mislead the international community and, in particular, to Mauritania which would do well to re-examine the history of the Moroccan region. If it did so, it would notice that ancient history knew neither of any Saharan people, as such, nor of Mauritania.

3. The Association of Former Members of the Moroccan Liberation Army in the Saharan Provinces had been established in 1956 in order to combat the Spanish colonialists in the Moroccan Sahara, known today as Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro. National resistance, which had extended throughout the territory from Tangier in the north to Lagüera in the south, had only carried on the torch of the struggle of the former inhabitants of the region from Ouadi El-Makhazin in the north to Dakhla and other towns in the southern parts of Morocco, with the goal of liberating the entire territory from the foreign presence. That had been a fine example of national unity and the people had struggled heroically until the African Territories had been evacuated by the imperialist forces.

4. The objective of the struggle had then changed, and it had endeavoured to frustrate all attempts to divide and destroy the unity of the Moroccan nation, such as those made by Algeria through its unconscionable and immoral lackeys. The Alawi dynasty had made itself the defender of national unity and territorial integrity until the shameful banishment of King Mohammed V and his family. On the return of the King, all the Saharan people had taken an oath of allegiance to him and the colonialists had, at that time, made no claim that they were not Moroccans. The Algerian revolution had by then taken refuge in Morocco and FLN, its representative, had acclaimed the enthusiasm with which the Saharans were asserting their Moroccan identity. The fact that that part of the Sahara had remained attached to the motherland and that there had been an exodus of the inhabitants of the region to Morocco following the murderous actions launched by the French and Spanish armies in Mauritania and the Sahara were the best proof that the territory was Moroccan and that the inhabitants wished to remain Moroccan, and showed the sacred character of the struggle to restore unity in the face of the traitors of the Frente POLISARIO. The existence of bonds of allegiance to the King of Morocco

(Mr. Maalainine)

had, moreover, been recognized by the International Court of Justice as being the (Islamic) expression of the unity of the nation.

5. Algeria, however, thanklessly forgetting the devotion of the King and people of Morocco to its cause, had conspired with the Spanish officers. When the Green March had given a definite expression to the unity of the Moroccan people around King Hassan II, its supreme leader, and had given shining proof of Moroccan patriotism, Algeria, throwing off its disguise, had called upon the Spanish army to attack the crowds marching towards the Sahara. The artificial tension prevailing in the Maghreb was mainly due to the hegemonistic ambitions of the Algerian leaders who, not content with having deprived Morocco of a good part of its territory to the east, was now attempting, through the use of treacherous mercenaries, to encircle it to the south.

6. Algeria obstinately took a course counter to that of Morocco. When, in 1966, Morocco had requested, at the United Nations, the return of its part of the Sahara or, failing that, the holding of a referendum in those provinces whereby the inhabitants might decide if they wished to be associated with Morocco or to remain under Spanish domination, Algeria had supported the colonialist argument which ruled out self-determination. When, on the other hand, in 1976, King Hassan II was bringing about the unification of the country, Algeria had preached self-determination. When the King of Morocco had suggested the holding of a referendum in order to make the choice of the inhabitants of the Moroccan Sahara clear to the entire world, Algeria had protested against that bold initiative. Its aim, in fact, was no less than to polarize all forces in the Maghreb for the good of its own interests.

7. The Organization of African Unity, in defiance of the wishes of more than 95 per cent of the inhabitants of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro, had allowed itself to be caught out by the Algerian plot and had recognized the handful of separatist mercenaries in the pay of that country.

8. Interim developments reaffirmed the inviolable character of the status of the Sahara as Moroccan territory. A number of points should be stressed. First, his organization was the spokesman of the legitimate struggle in the region and its choice was that of the population as a whole. Any resolution adopted against the will of the true Saharans would be considered by them as null and void. Secondly, the Association of Former Members of the Moroccan Liberation Army in the Saharan Provinces roundly condemned the decision reached by the Organization of African Unity which, as the King's adviser had said at the twentieth OAU conference, had put itself in the place of the inhabitants of the Sahara by recognizing a phantom republic instead of acknowledging the genuine will of the population concerned. Some Africans were so lacking in knowledge of the question that they went so far as to demand, at the prompting of Algeria, the establishment of a State in an area where neither history nor the population could be disregarded. Morocco and, in particular, the Sahara were not the docile tools they were believed to be by Algeria. Thirdly, the inhabitants of the Sahara would gladly welcome any commission or envoy of the United Nations seeking on-site acquaintance with the

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(Mr. Maalainine)

circumstances of peace, security and development prevailing in the reintegrated areas of Morocco. Fourthly, there was irrefutable proof of the status of the Sahara as Moroccan territory and of the acceptance of that status by the inhabitants of the region. Those inhabitants rejected any resolution or recommendation that might cast any doubt, however slight, on that principle.

9. If Algeria would allow the referendum proposed by the King to be held, it would make it possible to confirm the long-established fact that the Sahara was Moroccan and would remain so. The Fourth Committee should adopt resolutions in greater conformity with the principles of the United Nations, which had been established in order to ensure the independence of peoples and the integrity of their territories.

10. Mr. Hamdati Chbihanna Maalainine withdrew.

11. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs. Malika M'barka Zaroiali, representative of the Union des Femmes du Sahara Marocain, Laayoune (Morocco) took a place at the petitioners' table.

12. Mrs. MALIKA M'BARKA ZAROIALI (Union des Femmes du Sahara Marocain, Laayoune), speaking as the representative of women's organizations in the Sahara, said that she wished to reaffirm before the Fourth Committee that the women of the Saharan provinces in the southern part of the Kingdom of Morocco enjoyed the same rights and privileges as men, thanks to the democratic constitution of the country. Women in all the Moroccan provinces participated actively in the life of society, worked in all government departments and, in most cases, belonged to the political party of their choice.

13. In connection more specifically with the problem of the Moroccan Sahara, she said that historically the territory had always been part of the Moroccan empire. The Saharans not only formed part of the Kingdom of Morocco by means of the act of allegiance (bay'ah), but, like all Moroccans, they were subject to military service and had fought under the King during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries against the French and Spanish occupations. They had always had, and still had, the same rights and obligations as the inhabitants of the other Moroccan provinces. As that brief historical outline showed, the action taken by Algeria and Mauritania was a ploy designed to mislead international public opinion. The group of mercenaries of the Frente POLISARIO was merely a tool of the Algerian Government and could in no circumstances speak on behalf of the Saharans, because the Saharans were Moroccans.

14. As the legitimate representative of Moroccan women's organizations, she also wished to state that, a few days earlier, the Organization of African Unity had committed the most serious error that could be committed by an organization which represented almost all African nations by admitting to its ranks a group of mercenaries whose business was terrorism and who could in no way represent provinces which formed an integral part of Morocco, an independent sovereign State and a Member of the United Nations. It was regrettable that certain nations in OAU

(Mrs. Malika M'barka Zarouali)

had disregarded the wishes of organizations which genuinely represented 95 per cent of the population of the southern Moroccan provinces. Before taking a decision which was so fraught with consequences, OAU should have consulted the real inhabitants of the territory. OAU, of course, was free to take what decisions it wished, but that did not mean that the problem of the Sahara had thereby been resolved; on the contrary, by blindly following orders from Algeria and its allies, OAU had helped to complicate the problem. It had moreover treated as a State an entity which did not fulfil any of the conditions required for it to be considered as a State. The Frente POLISARIO had no territory, because it was in Algeria; it had no population because the inhabitants of the Sahara were Moroccans and lived in Morocco; and it did not constitute a government but was simply a group of mercenaries in the pay of Algeria. She hoped that the Committee would take a decision based on reality and in accordance with international law, taking into account the declaration made by King Hassan II in Nairobi.

15. Mrs. Malika M'barka Zarouali withdrew.

16. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Igne Bohoy Sid Ahmed, Secretary-General of the Mouvement de Résistance des Hommes Bleus (MOREHOB), took a place at the petitioners' table.

17. Mr. IGNE BOHOY SID AHMED (Mouvement de Résistance des Hommes Bleus (MOREHOB)) said that as history showed, MOREHOB, which had been established before the end of the colonial era, had been part of the resistance against Spain in the Saharan territory from the outset. At that time, the Frente POLISARIO did not exist, and it was only after the Spaniards had departed that Algeria had introduced that unknown movement to the political scene.

18. Shortly after its formation, for tactical reasons and in order to obtain the same political, moral and material aid which Morocco had given Algeria during its struggle for independence, MOREHOB had established itself in Algeria, and it was from Algeria, with whose Government it had maintained close links, that it had carried on its struggle and had attempted to make international public opinion aware of its aim, which was to liberate Western Sahara in order to allow its unconditional return to its mother country, Morocco. An article which had appeared on 11 April 1973 in Le Monde clearly showed that Algeria had at that time identified with the struggle and the objectives of MOREHOB.

19. The serious international consequences of Algerian aggression against Morocco were a matter of concern to the entire international community and aroused the indignation of more than 85 per cent of the populations which lived in the territory and participated in a democratic manner in the running of their mother country. It was on behalf of those populations that 10 organizations representing political and military currents of resistance had come to testify before the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session. It was those currents which had shaped the history of the struggle for the triumph of the inalienable rights of Morocco to that part of its territory of which it had been deprived by colonialism. Morocco remained convinced that the United Nations had the power to

(Mr. Igne Bohoy Sid Ahmed)

contribute to the re-establishment of justice and human rights in that part of the world.

20. The inhabitants of Western Sahara called for justice and human rights for their families, who had been held hostage in Algerian territory since 1976, with Algeria refusing to allow international conventions to apply to them or the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to make arrangements for their voluntary repatriation. His organization hoped that the Fourth Committee would turn its objective and impartial consideration to the problem of the Saharan hostages who had been abducted from their country by specially trained commando units of the Algerian army. It was heart-breaking that an association set up in Paris was falsifying past history and present events, as well as the rules of law. It was ridiculous to claim that the Frente POLISARIO could be regarded as a State. In point of fact, the population it claimed to represent was mixed, with people born in Western Sahara being only a small minority; its Government was made up of mercenaries, often foreigners, and its territory did not extend beyond the Hôtel Saint-Georges in Algiers or isolated encampments in the Tindouf region. As for the false assertions about social organization and economic, cultural and other development, he invited the members of the Fourth Committee to visit Western Sahara to see for themselves that the Frente POLISARIO had not undertaken any development activity or "liberated" one inch of territory. A conscientious examination would allow the United Nations to realize that, as far as refugees were concerned, the Tindouf camps were mainly occupied by nationals of neighbouring countries driven there by the drought. That was why Algeria had always opposed any census or fact-finding mission. What was more, the hostages at Tindouf were being kept in servitude and exploited in the interest of a country which cared very little about the Saharan families. It was therefore surprising that international opinion, usually so quick to denounce human rights violations, had not reacted to the hostages' plight.

21. The Fourth Committee was well aware that destabilization manoeuvres and guerrilla tactics were no longer confined to any one group, and it was not beyond possibility that the real Saharan peoples might resume the fight if that was the only way of freeing their families. His organization, one of the first liberation movements in the Sahara to oppose the occupying Power, hoped that the members of the Committee would be able to recognize the truth. Convinced of the justice of the cause it had always defended, MOREHOB declared its full support for the holding of the referendum proposed by His Majesty Hassan II at the African Summit Meeting in Nairobi in 1981, so that the truth might emerge and the peoples of the Moroccan Sahara be able once again to express their unswerving devotion to the mother country.

22. Mr. Bohov Sid Ahmed withdrew.

23. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Biadillah Mohamed Cheikh, Secretary-General of the Front de libération du Sahara took a place at the petitioners' table.

24. Mr. BIADILLAH MOHAMED CHEIKH (Front de libération du Sahara) said that his main purpose was to contribute to an understanding of a trumped-up problem, made up

(Mr. Biadillah Mohamed Cheikh)

quite recently out of whole cloth by the Algerian leaders immediately upon the departure of the Spanish in 1975: the problem of the so-called Western Sahara.

25. The inhabitants of that territory had taken up arms against the Spanish occupiers at the end of the nineteenth century and had fought continuously until 1934, and again in 1956 as part of the movement of the entire Moroccan nation, a national endeavour which had given birth to the South Moroccan Liberation Army, whose representatives had already appeared before the Committee. The evidence of those freedom fighters was relevant and irrefutable: the people of Western Sahara were determined to be and to remain Moroccan, as was shown by the archives of the former administering Power and as had been demonstrated by the International Court of Justice in 1975.

26. There was much talk currently of a Saharan State, although no one had ever heard of a Saharan people before 1975, no one had said that the Saharan State should be liberated, and no one had heard of the mercenaries of the Frente POLISARIO before that time. There was no information about that fictitious entity in any textbook of ancient or modern history. The explanation was simple: it was Algeria which had set up a pseudo-liberation movement after the departure of the Spanish administration and the 1975 Tripartite Agreement of Madrid. The aim of that pseudo-movement was to prevent the recovery of the Moroccan Saharan provinces and to hamper Morocco's efforts towards social and economic development. Despite periodic attacks by the mercenaries financed, armed and trained by the Algerian agents, Morocco had made great strides in its economic development.

27. Unfortunately, Algeria's twisted version of history was gaining ground, and the fiction was becoming a reality. The Organization of African Unity had admitted a phantom State as a member and, as a result, there was no longer any talk there of Namibia, apartheid, or famine, but only of the Sahara. In other words, effort was being spent on a marginal and artificial problem invented by the Algerians, who coveted territory which was an integral part of a neighbouring State, who were financing mercenaries to win control of that territory, and who were deceiving a large part of public opinion. The deplorable result of all that was that a phantom State was represented in OAU and causing total confusion and complete misunderstanding.

28. Thus, the people of the Sahara no longer had the right to self-determination, to decide their future, or to say who they were, or to be consulted about their fate. They were being dictated to, their fate was being forced on them, and it was OAU which was doing it, in total disregard of its own charter. In the process, the referendum that the King of Morocco had proposed in order to find a solution to the problem had been forgotten. That thoughtless and irresponsible act undermined the very credibility of OAU and sullied the noble cause of the African peoples fighting for their freedom. It was a great disappointment to those who believed in OAU, and an insult to the memory of the founding fathers of an organization which only yesterday had been the focus of most of the hopes of the African peoples. It was also a clear defiance of the will of the Moroccan people, particularly the inhabitants of the Sahara, and a humiliation for the peoples of Africa, as well as constituting a serious precedent for the African States themselves.

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(Mr. Biadillah Mohamed Cheikh)

29. The admission of a fictitious body to OAU was a serious violation of the principle of legitimacy and Algeria's leaders would have to bear the unpleasant consequences once a wise and responsible continent realized the full extent of its gravity.

30. He assured the Committee that the inhabitants of the Sahara whom he represented were living peacefully everywhere in the territory and going about their daily business in peace. They were taking an active part in developing all three provinces, as evidenced by the ports, airports, roads, schools and hospitals built in the last nine years, and described in detail in the reports of the foreign missions which had visited the territory over the years.

31. The inhabitants of the Sahara, firmly rejecting any attempt to overrule their own wishes, would remain mobilized behind His Majesty King Hassan II in order to preserve and consolidate the achievements of the Green March and the Moroccan identity of the three Saharan provinces. Faithful to the memory of their parents and forbears who had fought for the independence and territorial integrity of Morocco, the inhabitants of the Sahara would fight for their Moroccan identity and any attempt to prevent them from doing so would be to no avail.

32. Mr. Biadillah Mohamed Cheikh withdrew.

33. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Ahmed Rachid, (Secretary-General of the Association des originaires de Saguia el-Hamra et de Río de Oro (AOSARIO)) took a place at the petitioners' table.

34. Mr. AHMED RACHID (Association des originaires de Saguia el-Hamra et de Río de Oro (AOSARIO)) emphasized that he had come before the Fourth Committee to give evidence on behalf of the true indigenous inhabitants of Western Sahara and asked it to take account, in an impartial and responsible spirit, of the genuine aspirations and legitimate interests of 95 per cent of the Saharan population living in Morocco, by bringing out the fact that the representative nature of the so-called Saharan Arab Democratic Republic was, to say the least, doubtful.

35. He drew attention to the fratricidal war, to the barbarous and inhuman treatment inflicted on his compatriots who were subject to the authority of the Algerian army in the camps in and around Tindouf, and to the plight of the thousands of hostages held since 1976 by that same army, which denied them the benefits of international conventions and prevented the circulation of any free and objective information on the camps. The loss of so many lives on both sides was due to a war of aggression motivated by the ambition for regional hegemony pursued by the Algerian Government.

36. The AOSARIO movement challenged the right of anyone to speak for the indigenous inhabitants of Western Sahara and to attribute to them wishes or choices which they had never themselves expressed democratically and by legal means, as they would be able to do, for example, at the referendum called for by the King of Morocco at the 1981 summit conference in Nairobi.

(Mr. Ahmed Rachid)

37. The Moroccan Government had given those whom the Algerian Government represented as the refugees of Tindouf solemn commitments and formal guarantees with a view to their voluntary repatriation to their native soil. However, the Algerian Government had claimed that such a repatriation could only be implemented as part of a comprehensive solution of the political problem. It was obviously trying in that way to remove evidence of capital importance from the record and to deprive international justice of witnesses whose version of the facts could provide decisive elements. Algeria's aim was to prevent international opinion from knowing that it had been deceived into believing in the existence of 700,000 Saharan refugees at Tindouf, for whom Algeria had drawn international subsidies. Algeria wanted to prevent the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or any other international authority from discovering that, in reality, there were only sham refugees who had no connection with the Sahara region.

38. Algeria also wanted to prevent people from knowing that the real Saharans who were being held at Tindouf had never voted for the Frente POLISARIO, still less for the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. The so-called army of the Frente POLISARIO was really only a part of the Algerian regular army assigned to such duties, and that was Algeria's real reason for refusing to receive an international commission entrusted with the task of verifying the truth of its claims. It was the duty of the United Nations and, above all, of the Fourth Committee, to prevent such abuses and violations of human rights being committed by a Member State with impunity, and it was also its business to shed as much light as possible on what had really been happening in the camps of Tindouf since 1976.

39. By tamely submitting to the Algerian Government's will, certain African States had made themselves accomplices to the illegal admission of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic to OAU, which AOSARIO vigorously denounced because, by endorsing such an unjustified and biased act those OAU member countries had flouted the inalienable rights of 95 per cent of the Moroccan population living in the territory of Western Sahara. They had enabled Algeria's interests, which were upheld by means of the 5 per cent who were detained and who were represented in the international arena by individuals unconnected with the Saharan population, to prevail. The Frente POLISARIO and the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic were nothing more than Algerian creations.

40. AOSARIO, as spokesman for the real Saharans, had vowed to recognize peace only when its dignity had been restored and its people had been freed by Algeria in accordance with international conventions. It held OAU responsible before history and regretted that certain facts relevant to just causes never reached international opinion. As proof, he recalled that thousands of Saharans had been detained for nine years in the camps of Tindouf (about which Amnesty International had provided precise details), and that no attention had been paid to the testimony of parliamentarians from the Netherlands who had declared at The Hague in 1981 that the Frente POLISARIO did not control any territory and was nothing but an extension of the Algerian Government.

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(Mr. Ahmed Rachid)

41. In the course of its machinations, Algeria had suppressed any news about the victims and had substituted false news by inventing a people who, it said, were the legitimate claimants to the southern Moroccan provinces; the same Algeria had set itself up as the defender of the rights of that people. Algeria was making itself look good, but a people could not be manufactured and a myth could not be sustained indefinitely. The Algerian Government invoked the principle of self-determination, but it remained to be seen whether the right to self-determination existed for an imaginary people, and the pseudo-organization Frente POLISARIO, a myth cleverly spread and maintained for the benefit of an incongruous group, a pure invention of foreign Powers acting for reasons of self-interest, was in no way representative. Morocco therefore refused to negotiate with that body in order to avoid creating a dangerous precedent for which the African continent might have to pay the cost.

42. AOSARIO reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and assured the Committee of its full support and material co-operation in implementing the resolutions adopted at Nairobi. He called upon the Committee to do everything possible for the implementation of resolutions calling for a referendum of the Saharan population on self-determination under the supervision of such international bodies as OAU and the United Nations. He also called upon the Committee to refrain from any act which might harm 95 per cent of the Saharan population, pending the verdict of a popular vote. AOSARIO undertook to respect the result of such a vote, whatever it was, and emphasized that no one had the right to prejudge the result. In addition, an international commission should be set up to inquire into the real situation at Tindouf, so that the Committee could take an informal decision on the matter.

43. Mr. Ahmed Rachid withdrew.

44. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Taquio Allah Maalainine (on behalf of those elected by the communes and those elected by the occupational chambers, Laayoune (Morocco)) took a place at the petitioners' table.

45. Mr. MAALAININE, speaking on behalf of those elected by the communes and those elected by the occupational chambers, Laayoune (Morocco), said he was convinced that the Committee, given its high integrity, would be able to form its own clear and accurate picture of the situation actually prevailing in Western Sahara.

46. The Kingdom of Morocco, which was based on the multi-party system, was one of the rare democracies really worthy of the name. All social classes and all segments of the population, including those in the areas of Western Sahara that had been recovered, could participate actively and constructively in the life of the country, whether through their representatives or by being active within one of the various political parties. The active and untrammelled participation of the inhabitants of the Saharan provinces in the electoral process, in which participation had been greater than 80 per cent in 1984, irrefutably demonstrated that those inhabitants belonged to the Moroccan national community.

(Mr. Maalainine)

47. As previous speakers had pointed out, the history of the Moroccan Sahara had been marked by a constant struggle against foreign invasion. That struggle had, however, always been conducted and led by the Moroccan sovereigns of the Alawi dynasty, with whom the leaders of the Saharan resistance had always been in direct contact. Contrary to the assertions of the enemies of the peoples concerned, that resistance had never sought to separate the area of Western Sahara from the Kingdom of Morocco. As was well known, when Morocco obtained its independence, certain areas were still under the colonial yoke. Bloody struggles still raged between the Kingdom of Morocco, led at that time by King Mohammed V, and Spanish colonial power. Morocco had, before the Fourth Committee itself, continued to call for the return of Western Sahara to the motherland. On 16 October 1975, the International Court of Justice had issued an advisory opinion in which it had stressed the natural bonds existing between the Saharan tribes and the Kingdom of Morocco. The Moroccan sovereign, King Hassan II, had at that time proposed that a referendum should be held in order to enable the peoples of that area to decide their future status. However, Algeria, the true cause of the conflict, had done its utmost to prevent those peoples from exercising their right to self-determination.

48. The Algerian party had always held contradictory positions with regard to the question of Western Sahara. It had been endeavouring, since 1966, to say its piece on the question of Western Sahara. In 1974, its then President, Houari Boumédiène, speaking in the very city of Rabat, had proclaimed that Algeria stood beside Morocco in its struggle to recover its province of Western Sahara. In 1975, it had, in contrast, reaffirmed its devotion to the principle of the "self-determination" of the Saharan people and, in 1976, it had even proclaimed the establishment of an imaginary State within its own borders. In 1980, at the OAU summit conference held at Freetown, it had incited that alleged Saharan State to apply for membership of the Organization of Africa Unity. Morocco had thereupon protested and requested clarification with regard to the admission of that phantom State. It had, in particular, asked whether that State met the criteria necessary for it to be considered an independent sovereign State. Convinced that it did not, it had requested the Heads of State to refuse admission to the imaginary entity. In 1981, OAU had considered the report of the Secretary-General on Western Sahara, which had reviewed the events that had taken place between the Freetown summit conference and that at Nairobi. King Hassan II had then insisted that a referendum should be held as quickly as possible in accordance with the recommendations made at Nairobi. Subsequently, however, at Addis Ababa, OAU had adopted a resolution requesting "direct negotiations" to be undertaken with a view to the holding of a referendum. That resolution would oblige Morocco to negotiate with a band of mercenaries financed by Algeria. Those mercenaries ought not even to take part in the referendum, since they were, for the most part, nationals of Mauritania or Algeria and even, in the case of Mohamed Abdel Aziz, of Morocco.

49. Not content with having hoaxed OAU, Algeria had gone so far as to bring about the participation of the alleged Saharan State in the twentieth OAU summit conference, in violation of the very Charter of that organization and of international custom. The question arose of what right Algeria and its satellites had to decide the fate of the peoples of Western Sahara. The destiny of those

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(Mr. Maalainine)

peoples was theirs alone. It was not in the hands of any other African State. In that regard, the conduct of OAU was an insult to those peoples and a defiance of international law. Moreover, Algeria's manoeuvrings had led OAU into self-contradiction, casting doubt on the very credibility of that organization. The admission of mercenaries to OAU would solve nothing and would only further increase the complexity of the problem.

50. The Saharan people did not know what the Algerian leaders wished to do. Those leaders had removed their children and had placed them in internment camps situated in their territory. They had even prevented them from making contact with their families, putting to death those who tried to flee. All such criminal acts, which were an expression of Algeria's desire for hegemony, had nothing to do with the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination.

51. As the representative of the peoples of the different areas of Western Sahara, he wished to point out that, unlike territories struggling for their independence, those areas lived in peace, tranquillity and security; that confirmed the cohesion and unity of the Moroccan people. The "representative" of the so-called Saharan Republic, who sought to enter into negotiations with the Kingdom of Morocco, was living in a world of total illusion. All of his dreams would be frustrated when faced with reality, for no Saharan State existed in the Saharan areas reunited with Morocco. Any Saharan State that there might be existed in a hotel in Algiers and, without territory or population, such an alleged State had not the slightest legal or social basis.

52. Contrary to the assertions of that agent in the pay of Algeria who claimed to represent the peoples of Western Sahara, the Moroccan economy, far from being in jeopardy, was flourishing. It was much stronger and much more stable than the Algerian economy which was based on petroleum, an ephemeral resource which would soon be exhausted. The United Nations was invited to send a commission to the Moroccan provinces of Western Sahara in order to ascertain the enormous progress that had taken place in that region.

53. All the inhabitants of the regions of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro clung to their Moroccan identity which they considered an expression of their civic, patriotic, cultural and constitutional duty. The allegiance of the Saharan tribes to the Kingdom of Morocco was a long-attested fact which would persist and continue to guide future generations. All attempts to separate those regions from the Kingdom of Morocco were destined to fail and to rebound against those who undertook them. Only legally elected representatives, whom he represented, had the right to speak on behalf of the peoples in question.

54. The United Nations should strive for the holding of a referendum in accordance with the recommendations of the Nairobi summit conference of 1981. OAU, by adopting a biased position, had disqualified itself from involvement in the settlement of the question and no longer had any say in the matter. It was essential for the African and Arab States to demonstrate their solidarity and to avoid the balkanization of the continent. Algeria must understand that it bore responsibility for any aggravation of the situation in the region.

(Mr. Maalainine)

55. With regard to the draft resolution that had been submitted by Algeria and supported by a number of hostile States, for example Costa Rica, Morocco rejected it out of hand since it defied the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and of OAU. The draft, which was an insult to the rights of peoples, represented only the point of view of Algeria, which was blinded by expansionist ambitions. Reason and equity would most certainly prevail over such ambitions.

56. Mr. Tagrio Allah Maalainine withdrew.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.