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## Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

### Summary record of the 7th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 October 2015, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Bowler . . . . . (Malawi)

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\* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Agenda item 59: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations** (*continued*) (A/70/23 (chaps. VII and XIII) and A/70/67)

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**Agenda item 63: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items)** (*continued*) (A/70/23 (chaps. VIII-XI and XIII), A/70/73, A/70/73/Add.1 and A/70/201)

1. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin) said that his delegation welcomed the increased importance of mine action on the Committee's agenda and believed that assistance and regional cooperation were effective means to implement the Ottawa Convention on Landmines. Established in 2002 with support from France, the Centre for Humanitarian Demining Training in Benin was intended to advise and assist African countries affected by mines and explosives through training for humanitarian mine-sweeping programmes and peacekeeping operations. He called for more dynamic support to help the Centre reach its goals.

2. Benin strongly advocated a fair resolution of the question of Western Sahara and supported the initiatives of Mr. Christopher Ross, Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions promoting a negotiated and mutually-agreed solution to that issue.

3. His delegation was eager to see the situation on the ground transformed in the interest of lasting stability in the Maghreb region and of realizing its leaders' goals for regional integration. To that end, Africa needed all its

sons and daughters to efficiently confront the challenges of beneficially implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. His delegation emphasized the key importance of the political process, and supported any Security Council initiative providing for a timetable and concrete parameters for credible negotiations. It called on all parties to demonstrate a willingness to compromise with a view to finding a fair and mutually acceptable settlement of that issue.

4. Despite those efforts, the status quo was still firmly in place, which was totally unacceptable. He therefore reiterated his delegation's commitment to the April 2007 Moroccan autonomy initiative, which could constitute a basis for negotiations that were substantial, credible and in good faith.

5. **Mr. Gumende** (Mozambique) said that his Government attached great importance to the role of the United Nations and the Fourth Committee in particular in the implementation of the Declaration on decolonization. The granting of independence and self-determination to most former Non-Self-Governing Territories had bolstered their peoples' participation in global affairs. Denying a colonized people the right to freely decide their own sociopolitical and economic future contravened the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and hindered the promotion of world peace, stability, cooperation and respect for human rights.

6. Despite the international community's collective efforts, the harsh reality was that some Territories remained under foreign occupation. In the case of Western Sahara, the United Nations should take concrete steps to ensure that the Territory's people could at long last exercise their right to self-determination, which they had been denied for over 50 years.

7. Mozambique supported international efforts and regional initiatives, and particularly those of the African Union (AU), towards holding the long-delayed self-determination referendum that could lead to a peaceful resolution of the question of Western Sahara. His delegation welcomed the involvement of Mr. Joachim Chissano, the former president of Mozambique, as Special Envoy of the African Union for Western Sahara. The lack of encouraging progress on the question of Western Sahara continued to perpetuate its people's suffering and frustration. His Government appealed once more to the international community to take concrete steps towards a lasting and sustainable solution

to the question of Western Sahara with a view to ending the Sahrawi people's frustration and restoring their hope in choosing their own destiny.

8. **Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) said that his Government supported dialogue and the prevention and settlement of disputes in the dependent Territories through peaceful means that satisfied the parties involved. Peace and security in turn served the sustainable development of dependent peoples. Thanks to a new dynamic that had brought together the parties, the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, the long and bitter dispute had lately been moving towards dialogue and agreement, as evidenced also by the recent consensus resolutions on the question in the Committee. Equatorial Guinea welcomed those efforts to facilitate a viable and realistic solution that was beneficial to both parties to the dispute.

9. The parties as well should give the efforts of the United Nations their full support, offering their cooperation, making political compromises and continuing the current improvements in the human rights situation and the economic and social development in Western Sahara. Both parties were taking welcome steps in that direction, but the positive initiatives by Morocco, in particular, to strengthen national human rights bodies and cooperate with special procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council, as recognized in Security Council resolutions, should be acknowledged.

10. Not only the parties to the conflict but also the countries of the region and the entire international community must help advance the ongoing search for peace in the Territory, so that once an acceptable outcome was achieved, Western Sahara could look forward to enjoying its own sustainable development under the post-2015 development agenda.

11. **Mr. Soumah** (Guinea) taking note of the Secretary-General's latest report on the situation in Western Sahara, said that his Government appreciated the efforts undertaken by the Security Council, the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy towards a political, negotiated and mutually acceptable solution to the Western Saharan dispute.

12. His delegation welcomed the bilateral visits made by the Personal Envoy and encouraged continuing consultations towards a peaceful, realistic and compromise-based solution pursuant to Security Council

resolutions and particularly resolution 2218 (2015), which emphasized the need to consolidate cooperation within the Arab Maghreb Union in order to establish stability and security in the Sahel region.

13. Morocco's crucial advances in the human rights field, along with the strengthened role of its National Human Rights Council and the regional committees in Laayoune and Dakhla, its cooperative efforts with the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its implemented reforms deserved recognition and encouragement. The Secretary-General in his report, all relevant Security Council resolutions since 2011 and the High Commissioner for Refugees had all requested a census of the Tindouf camps' populations.

14. His Government subscribed to the principles of a negotiated political solution and peoples' self-determination, and believed that the Moroccan autonomy initiative complied with those principles. It supported that initiative as the foundation for an ongoing political process and the sole framework for a compromise to that long-lasting dispute.

15. **Mr. Diallo** (Senegal) said that the Committee should adopt a new outlook on the evolution of the Western Saharan conflict, particularly in the light of Morocco's April 2007 autonomy initiative. His delegation was convinced that the initiative was, more than ever, an appropriate framework for a favourable and definitive solution to that dispute on the basis of a dynamic compromise. To that end, the international community must not only consider the potential for cooperation and development, but also for the effective management of concerns and challenges arising in the Sahel region and beyond, including terrorism, cross-border organized crime, drug and human trafficking and illegal migration.

16. The Maghreb countries' unity would be strengthened, favouring the coordination of policies and actions for confronting mutual challenges, so as to benefit all their populations. The initiative would also facilitate resolution of the issue of Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps.

17. Such an initiative deserved special attention from the international community, which must resolutely continue efforts already undertaken in that regard. He noted the Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2218 (2015), which correlated a political solution to the dispute and strengthened cooperation

among the Arab Maghreb Union's member States with stability and security in the Sahel.

18. He invited the Committee to align itself with the recommendations in the resolution which, moreover, called for the parties to negotiate under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts undertaken since 2006 and new developments, in order to achieve a fair, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the question of Western Sahara.

19. Senegal reiterated its support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy in their efforts towards a definitive resolution to that still-divisive issue. It was committed to working towards the adoption of a resolution incorporating a willingness to compromise and cooperate in keeping with the Organization's previous resolutions since 2007.

20. His delegation welcomed the participatory approach adopted during the drafting of the report of the Special Committee on decolonization, as well as the administering Powers' participation in facilitating dialogue and understanding among the parties in the Special Committee, and the seminars and training sessions for non-autonomous peoples and Territories intended to strengthen their capacities and prepare them for taking charge of their own destinies. Moreover, field missions constituted effective mechanisms for evaluating the most appropriate steps for managing the future status of the Territories concerned. His delegation noted with interest the recommendations regarding economic activities and other factors detrimental to the peoples of non-autonomous Territories. Senegal would continue to support dialogue and consultation among various actors.

21. **Ms. Mwingira** (Tanzania) said that the existence of colonialism in any form was incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on decolonization and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As the international community commemorated the Organization's anniversary, it should reflect on the plight of the peoples of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, who were still struggling for their right to self-determination. The international community should therefore strive to find a lasting and justifiable solution that would be acceptable to all concerned parties, and, most importantly, the Territories' peoples. Tanzania reaffirmed its support for peoples' aspiration to exercise their right to self-determination, including

independence, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and provisions on decolonization.

22. Her delegation was deeply concerned that, despite sustained efforts, including by the current Personal Envoy, no tangible progress had been made in the search for a solution to the divisive question of Western Sahara. During the latest session of the General Assembly, the President of Tanzania had said that the Organization must not leave the issue of Western Sahara unresolved. The Organization's inaction on the matter was both regrettable and incomprehensible. Member States must put aside their national interests and work together, not to dictate what was best for the Sahrawi people, but to allow them to determine their own future. Tanzania would continue to strongly support the work of the Committee, the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, and other initiatives undertaken by regional organizations such as the AU, towards a lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Western Sahara and other remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. Tanzania urged the Security Council to fully assume its responsibility and take all necessary steps to expedite that solution. The Security Council should also effectively address human rights offences, regardless of which party committed them, as well as the illegal exploitation of the Territory's natural resources. She called on all parties to continue negotiations without preconditions and in good faith with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution.

23. **Mr. Wilson** (United Kingdom) said that his Government's relationship with its Overseas Territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of each Territory's people to choose to remain British. His Government and its Territories recognized that their relationship brought mutual benefits and responsibilities.

24. Since the June 2012 publication of its white paper *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*, his Government had worked closely with its Territories to further develop those partnerships. It had consolidated the annual meeting with the Territories' leaders into a Joint Ministerial Council, with a clear mandate to review and implement the strategy and commitments set forth in the paper. The elected leaders or their representatives from all inhabited Overseas Territories were invited to participate. As the white paper clearly stated, his Government's fundamental responsibility and objective under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, was to

ensure the security and good governance of the Territories and their peoples. However, Territory governments, too, were expected to meet the same high standards as the British Government in maintaining the rule of law, respect for human rights and integrity in public life, delivering efficient public services and building strong and successful communities.

25. In the area of democratic development, his delegation welcomed the elections held in Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands in April 2015 and June 2015, respectively. Both elections were monitored by independent international observer missions, which had commented favourably on their conduct. His Government looked forward to closely cooperating with the newly elected governments to support their new policies and development priorities as well as the upcoming elections in Gibraltar.

26. In the March 2013 Falkland Islands referendum, the overwhelming majority had expressed the wish to remain a British Territory, demonstrating his Government's commitment to its partnerships with the Territories and to those Territories' future development and continued security.

27. His Government reaffirmed its long-standing commitment to the people of Gibraltar. It would not enter into arrangements under which the Territory's people would pass under the sovereignty of another State against their freely and democratically expressed wishes. It would also not enter into a process of sovereignty negotiations with which Gibraltar was not content.

28. **Mr. Koroma** (Sierra Leone) said that his delegation remained firmly committed to the successful implementation of the Declaration and to its responsibility to the Special Committee on decolonization. The right to self-determination was an inalienable right of people the world over regardless of their number, race, colour or ethnic origin, and must be respected by all and sundry. His delegation commended the Secretary-General's and Special Committee's efforts and initiatives towards fulfilling the Declaration's mandate, and also believed that the principle of self-determination should be applied on a case-by-case basis to the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The destiny of those Territories' peoples was in their own hands. His Government would continue to respect their political aspirations and chosen path, whether it was

self-government, autonomy, free association or any other option suitable to their circumstances.

29. Although the international community was in the midst of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the prospect of achieving the goals set in the adopted plan of action was not encouraging. His delegation wondered why very little had been achieved since the adoption of the First International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Perhaps, in-depth study on the causes of the lack of progress in the decolonization process was needed, with concrete recommendations on the way forward and a critical look at the mandate of the Special Committee on decolonization.

30. The administering Powers must work closely with the Special Committee in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. The Special Committee must build the administering Powers' engagement level if it was to achieve any meaningful progress. The international community must engage in regular dialogue to identify areas or activities that were viable and those requiring further attention.

31. The administering Powers should continue providing relevant information on the socioeconomic situation of the Territories' peoples, as was their responsibility under Article 73 of the Charter, and should continue to do all within their powers to improve the lives of the Territories' peoples. It was important to face challenges such as climate change, education and capacity-building, and to prepare women and children to participate in the business of governance. In that regard, his delegation commended the Government of New Zealand for the exemplary support it had provided to the people of Tokelau.

32. In the Western Saharan conflict, his delegation welcomed the ongoing process led by the Secretary-General with support from his Personal Envoy, whose recent fact-finding visit to the region was a step in the right direction, and sincerely hoped that his efforts would lead to a mutually acceptable political solution bringing sustainable peace and progress to the Western Saharan people.

33. His delegation also appreciated the AU Chairperson's efforts to bring a lasting solution to the Western Saharan conflict. The AU Peace and Security Council's decision to consider the question of Western Sahara at least twice a year was a clear indication of the organization's readiness to expand its role in the crisis.

Maintenance of a high level of collaboration and cooperation between the United Nations and the AU on that issue was crucial, and the Secretary-General's recent warning that the lack of a political solution to the question of Western Sahara could have serious regional repercussions, amidst the growing threat of extremism, should be taken seriously.

34. The end of the road map set forth in the Noumea Accord for the Territory of New Caledonia was quickly approaching and constituted a critical stage in its people's lives. His delegation called on all stakeholders to embrace the path of peaceful negotiation, respect for the rule of law and tolerance for opponents' positions, and completely endorsed the call for national unity and reconciliation made by Mr. Morini of the Centre for a Common Destiny in New Caledonia. However, a common destiny presupposed equal access to the Territory's economic and social resources irrespective of race, colour, sex or religious beliefs. His delegation commended the administering Power's efforts to improve the Kanak people's access to economic and social benefits and show respect for their cultural heritage, but more must be done in the area of higher professional education to put the indigenous people on a more even footing in the business of governance. More rigorous civic education and awareness-raising on the forthcoming referendum must be carried out and the people must understand that the referendum would not be a life-and-death issue. His delegation also urged the French Government to redouble its efforts towards the swift resolution of differences over the provincial electoral list, which was crucial for the peaceful conduct of that referendum.

35. **Ms. Oho** (Palau) said that the process of self-determination was still very fresh and precious to her young nation. Her Government understood and empathized with all the peoples of the world undergoing the process of self-determination. For the Saharan people, who were among those enduring that struggle, it wished a swift process towards an outcome that was satisfactory to all concerned, and agreed with His Majesty King Muhammad VI's call during the latest session of the General Assembly for the United Nations to continue its efforts to resolve disputes through peaceful means and remain committed to upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States so that peoples' aspirations for peace, security and stability could be fulfilled.

36. **Mr. Al Musharakh** (United Arab Emirates) said that 70 years after the establishment of the United Nations, the role of the Fourth Committee was more important than ever. His delegation favoured a negotiated political solution to the issue of Western Sahara based on consensus between the parties, exclusively under the auspices of the United Nations and pursuant to relevant Security Council resolutions issued since 2007. It also affirmed that consensus language should be maintained in all related resolutions adopted by the Fourth Committee.

37. The United Arab Emirates commended all efforts made by Morocco to resolve the issue of Western Sahara and welcomed the tireless work of the United Nations Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to facilitate negotiations on a mutually acceptable political solution. In all its resolutions on the topic, including resolution 2218, the Security Council had taken note of the Moroccan proposal for negotiated autonomy, which was serious and credible, and had welcomed Moroccan efforts to move towards resolution of the dispute. His delegation reiterated the importance of reaching a solution for bringing peace and security to North Africa and the Sahelo-Saharan region.

38. **Mr. Bosah** (Nigeria) said that, regrettably, there were still Non-Self-Governing Territories facing the challenge of exercising their right to self-determination more than five decades since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). The eradication of all forms of colonialism and the promotion of peoples' inalienable right to self-determination remained a key priority for the United Nations and must be pursued with greater energy.

39. Nigeria firmly endorsed peoples' right to freely realize their political, economic and sociocultural aspirations, which undergirded its advocacy for accelerating the granting of independence to Territories under colonial domination. His delegation called for exploring all available options to reinvigorate the process for the self-determination of all colonized Territories and those under the domination of administering Powers.

40. Western Sahara remained a Non-Self-Governing Territory forty years after the International Court of Justice had delivered its advisory opinion on that issue. Nor had negotiations produced any significant results since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 34/37 in 1979. The quest for a free and impartial self-

determination referendum for the Sahrawi people was one of the most urgent tasks on the United Nations agenda. His delegation urged vigorous efforts to settle the question of Western Sahara through all available options, in conformity with the principles contained in Security Council resolution 2152 (2014) and all other relevant United Nations resolutions. Rising tension in the occupied Territory called for immediate action and intense negotiations on settling that long-standing dispute and ensuring peace and stability in the Maghreb. His delegation reiterated the AU call to set a date for holding a referendum.

41. **Mr. Anshor** (Indonesia) said that his delegation attached great importance to the issue of decolonization and stood ready to actively participate and contribute to the work of the Special Committee and the Fourth Committee. The continued existence of 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories was a vivid reminder that the international community's work on the United Nations decolonization agenda was far from finished.

42. His delegation welcomed the Special Committee's efforts and highly valued the continued support of the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs. Various activities, including the visiting missions and annual regional seminars, had provided the necessary platform to further assess, receive, disseminate and discuss the updated information on the political, social and economic situation in the Territories.

43. His delegation also appreciated the continued dissemination of information on decolonization by the Department of Public Information in collaboration with the administering Powers, and called on relevant United Nations bodies, including UNESCO and UNDP, to continue providing the technical assistance needed by the Non-Self-Governing Territories' populations. It further welcomed intensive consultations and dialogue between the Special Committee and the administering Powers, as well as relevant stakeholders. Nevertheless, it remained convinced that the decolonization process should be further expedited, and that Special Committee members should redouble their efforts to further assist the remaining Territories.

44. The intensive collaboration of the international community, the administering Powers and the Non-Self-Governing Territories was an undeniable prerequisite for success in attaining their shared goals. The international community could proceed and achieve

progress only with the open minds, active participation and political will of all concerned parties. The Committee's endeavours should be faithful to the principles of the Charter and relevant General Assembly resolutions. The decolonization process should be carried forward on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the characteristics and particular circumstances of the Non-Self-Governing Territories concerned.

45. His delegation encouraged all relevant parties to continue engaging in dialogue in the relevant United Nations fora or within the framework of bilateral relations to find mutually acceptable solutions. It hoped fervently that those efforts would have a real and meaningful impact on the lives of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

46. **Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola) said that the question of Western Sahara remained a concern for his Government, as no real progress had been made in the negotiations between the parties. After more than a quarter century since the cease-fire, a just solution to the conflict should start with a referendum in accordance with pertinent General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

47. In March 2015, the AU Peace and Security Council had issued a statement on Western Sahara reaffirming the total commitment of the United Nations and the AU to finding a solution to the conflict and promoting peace and security pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations. The 70th anniversary of the United Nations provided an opportunity for the international community to reflect on which actions to implement in order to find solutions to conflicts, particularly those related to self-determination and decolonization.

48. **Mr. Boukadoum** (Algeria) said that his delegation was rather puzzled that the international community was still debating the anachronistic issue of colonialism. There was unfinished work and unfulfilled responsibilities towards the 17 remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. The principle of self-determination was one of the four basic purposes embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and had been carved out as a fundamental human right in the two major human rights treaties of 1966. Self-determination was a part of Algeria's history on which it would never turn its back. His delegation would definitely and forcefully support the completion of the Special Committee's mandate as long as one square foot was illegally occupied anywhere in the world.

49. His delegation had duly noted the Special Committee's commitment, as reflected in its 2015 report, to the swift implementation of the Declaration and the continuation of the efforts approved by the General Assembly for the Second and Third International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism in all Territories.

50. The Western Saharan conflict, which brought into opposition the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario), the legitimate representative of the Territory's people, and the Kingdom of Morocco, was an unresolved decolonization issue that could only be settled through the Sahrawi people's full and fair exercise of its right to self-determination and if the United Nations assumed a specific responsibility to those people.

51. So many General Assembly and Security Council resolutions had reflected the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion, which had clearly concluded that the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination should be implemented in line with the Declaration. As long as the question of Western Sahara remained unsettled, the human rights situation there should be monitored, as was the case in all peacekeeping operations. Algeria would support all fact-finding missions and mechanisms launched by the Secretary-General, international agencies, media and non-governmental organizations.

52. In view of reports of increased exploitation of Western Saharan natural resources, all those involved or considering involvement should be aware of the Legal Counsel's January 2002 opinion stating that exploration and exploitation activities disregarding the interest and wishes of the Western Saharan people would be in violation of the principles of international law applicable to mineral resource activities in the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

53. At the twenty-first AU Summit, the AU Heads of State and Government had expressed their unwavering and unconditional support for the struggle of the Western Saharan people to exercise their right to self-determination. At their most recent summit, they had called on the General Assembly to set a date for a self-determination referendum for the people of Western Sahara and to protect its integrity as a Non-Self-Governing Territory. They had also urged the Security Council to fully assume its responsibilities and effectively address human rights violations and the

illegal exploitation of the Territory's national resources. The Security Council had regularly reaffirmed its commitment to the right of self-determination of the Western Saharan people, most recently in its resolution 2218 (2015).

54. His delegation still hoped and believed that a peaceful settlement was possible in Western Sahara. However, no one had the right to change the rules established by the Security Council and the General Assembly, which were the sole referees in the conflict. Both parties to the dispute were bound to abide by the rules, procedures and methods that they had willingly and fully accepted at the outset.

55. Some Committee members had mentioned the risks to stability that the Western Saharan conflict posed in a region where terrorism, transnational crime and other threats were on the rise. No country was more concerned than Algeria, which had proven its commitment to peace. The Committee must strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations to fulfil its duties and mission in Western Sahara. To support the Secretary-General, the Committee must support his Personal Envoy and the Special Representative for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO.

56. The Sahrawi continued to believe in the United Nations and the international community while facing the harshest conditions, watching humanitarian aid shrink and even being accused of stealing the meagre resources provided. They did so with extraordinary pride and by strictly abiding by the cease-fire and always cooperating with MINURSO, even when the mission itself was facing unexpected adversities. It was a shame that some representatives had dared to describe the refugees as captives when the latter would eagerly cast their ballots to unshackle themselves if that were really the case. He urged the Special Committee to go and speak to the Frente Polisario leadership, Sahrawi elders, sheiks, youth, women and civil society. The Sahrawi people's free choice of the future they wanted was of paramount importance to the stability, progress and integration of the Maghreb and all of Africa. Algeria would be the first to applaud and endorse any decision the Sahrawi people would freely make. Hence, the draft resolution under consideration, while modest in scope, was tremendously important.

57. **Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) said that the current year marked the fortieth anniversary of the glorious Green March, when 350,000 women, men and children had

managed to peacefully unite Morocco with its Sahara. The signing of the Madrid Accord between Morocco and Spain had irreversibly ended the colonization of Moroccan Sahara and definitively marked its return to its homeland, Morocco. For Morocco, the Saharan question was not a matter of decolonization, but of fully recovering its territorial integrity.

58. Another historic event was the September 2015 holding of the first regional elections in Morocco, which included two Saharan regions: Laayoune-Sakia El Hamra and Dakhla-Oued Eddahab. The people of the Moroccan southern provinces had demonstrated their devotion to their homeland by having the highest regional participation rates. The elections had been supervised by more than 4,000 foreign and national independent observers, including representatives of six international organizations, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations. The observers had all confirmed that the elections had been organized under the highest international standards and had provided every guarantee of freedom, equity and transparency. In addition, two native Sahrawis, including a former Frente Polisario official were elected to head the respective Saharan regions.

59. Furthermore, every chairman and member of the Saharan regional and town councils was a native, putting the Saharan women and men at the helm of managing the provinces' affairs, which fully corresponded to the United Nations self-determination paradigm. The Sahrawi officials would dispose of very broad economic, political, social and cultural powers, including the power to collect local taxes. A development agency with an annual budget of one million dirhams would be established in each region.

60. In October 2015, King Muhammad VI had declared that the popular and democratic legitimacy acquired by the freely-elected officials made them the true representatives of the Moroccan Saharan people and not the minority that resided outside the homeland and attempted, falsely and without the slightest legal basis, to proclaim itself a representative of those people.

61. Morocco had always supported dialogue and negotiation under United Nations auspices as a means to end the regional dispute, which had lasted too long. His Government had committed itself in good faith to the Organization's efforts to implement the settlement plan. However, the other parties, noting that the composition of the electoral body had been unfavourable to them,

had mounted numerous obstacles to the referendum, thereby obliging the Secretary-General to irrevocably conclude that the plan was inapplicable. That conclusion had been fully taken into consideration by the Security Council, which had made no further mention of a referendum in any of its resolutions in the last 15 years. The failure of that plan and subsequent plans as a result of the other parties' manipulative tactics, contrived obstacles and about-faces, as well as their abandonment by the Security Council, had led the latter to recommend, starting in 2004, the negotiation of a political and mutually acceptable solution as the only means to resolve the Moroccan Saharan dispute.

62. The Security Council's clear and firm support for the Moroccan autonomy proposal of 2007 demonstrated that the proposal was a departure from all previous plans. It perfectly fulfilled the self-determination principle and the parameters set by General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) on the Saharan dispute, and had launched the ongoing negotiation process under the exclusive auspices of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy. Moreover, it was in conformity with international law and the highest international standards on the transfer of powers and democracy, and remained completely open to negotiation.

63. In his most recent address to the Committee, the Secretary-General had declared that the United Nations must adopt a pragmatic and realistic approach that considered every Non-Self-Governing Territory individually. Thus, any attempt to re-introduce plans that had already failed or propose ideas exogenous to the historic, legal, cultural, demographic, geographic and religious context of Moroccan Sahara, as well as that of the greater region, was unacceptable to Morocco. Such misconduct would be fatal for the political process and would have severe repercussions for the peace, stability and security of the North African and Sahel-Saharan regions.

64. Morocco was more committed than ever to the political process, and supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to reach a negotiated and mutually acceptable solution on the basis of realism and the spirit of compromise and in conformity with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Moroccan autonomy initiative was and would continue to be the sole framework for settling that dispute.

65. Since the return of the southern provinces to their homeland, the Moroccan Kingdom had undertaken colossal efforts for their economic and social development. The Saharan region's social indicators, which were at their lowest in 1975, were currently the highest in the country. Morocco's investment in the Sahara had covered every key sector of the Millennium Development Goals. The region's sparse financial resources were used exclusively for the benefit of the Saharan people in consultation with their legitimate elected representatives and in full conformity with international law, allowing the Saharan region to meet the highest percentage of Goals targets.

66. His delegation was deeply concerned about the lack of registration of the Tindouf camps' populations. The international community was entitled to know the number and origin of the few thousand Sahrawis who remained in those camps. By virtue of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the census was not a voluntary formality, but a statutory obligation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (OHCR) and an imprescriptible responsibility of the host country, Algeria, as recently emphasized by the Secretary-General in his April 2015 report. In addition to suffering violations of their basic human rights, the Tindouf camps' populations had for several decades been deprived of humanitarian aid sent to them by international donors. A report recently published by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) had revealed the large-scale diversion of humanitarian aid for the benefit of Frente Polisario officials. One of the report's key findings was that the diversion was made possible owing specifically to the lack of a census in the Tindouf camps.

67. Morocco was irrevocably committed to promoting and protecting human rights throughout all its territory. Its National Human Rights Council and regional committees in Laayoune and Dakhla, whose credibility had been recognized by the Security Council, had taken considerable steps to improve the human rights situation in the Sahara and collaborate with local authorities to address all allegations of human rights violations. At the same time, Morocco had developed a constructive bilateral relationship with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

68. The Saharan conflict was not just the concern of a monarchy or a Government: it was the sacred cause of 35 million Moroccans. Every segment of Morocco's population was determined to defend the country's unity

and territorial integrity. Morocco — the sole regional haven — would not permit any change that would threaten the region. Moroccans must stand more united than ever against the threats of terrorism, separatism, obscurantist ideology and violent extremism, and utilize dialogue and cooperation to settle disputes and guarantee a better future for their youth.

69. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica) said that his Government attached great importance to the issue of decolonization and supported the work undertaken by the United Nations in that regard. Notwithstanding the achievements already made, his delegation recognized that much remained to be done and greater momentum was needed in the decolonization process, requiring enhanced collaboration and cooperation among the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the administering Powers and the Special Committee.

70. His delegation therefore welcomed the Committee's decision to hold annual meetings with the Secretary-General and several meetings with each of the four administering Powers for the first time in years. Jamaica fully supported the principle of self-determination as embodied in the Charter and was keenly aware that it would itself not be among the States Members of the Organization if not for the Committee's efforts.

71. His delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's call for innovative and practical ways to implement resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The reports presented for the Committee's consideration, including the Secretary-General's latest report, recognized the need for specific proposals to end colonialism and examine the political, economic and social situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories. The time was ripe for a deeper evaluation of what had been achieved and what needed to be done to facilitate the decolonization of each of the Territories, taking into account their specific situations.

72. Jamaica continued to support General Assembly and Security Council initiatives on the question of Western Sahara, and encouraged dialogue based on understanding, trust and mutual respect among all parties in the spirit of the Charter for a full, lasting and mutually acceptable solution, including the holding of a referendum to determine the will of the Sahrawi people. It was pleased to note that the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General had undertaken the first phase of

consultations to re-establish contact with the region and strengthen confidence in the negotiating process. The issue of decolonization was especially important to his delegation because several countries in the Caribbean remained Non-Self-Governing Territories, which continued to hinder regional integration. The international community must not lose sight of the fact that colonization in any form constituted an impediment to social, economic and cultural development.

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

73. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) recalled that the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were part of Argentina's national territory. As they were being illegitimately occupied by the United Kingdom, they were the subject of a sovereignty dispute between the two countries, as had been recognized by various international organizations and repeatedly in successive General Assembly resolutions, all of which had urged the two Governments to resume negotiations as soon as possible in order to find a peaceful, lasting solution to the dispute.

74. Argentina rejected the so-called white paper in all aspects related to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, as set out in a formal protest by his Government. Argentina also rejected all unilateral actions undertaken by the United Kingdom in those archipelagos and surrounding maritime areas, and continued to reject any reference by the United Kingdom to those Argentine territories as "British Overseas Territories", as well as its inclusion of the so-called "British Antarctic Territory" among its Overseas Territories.

75. In line with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), Argentina recognized the right to self-determination for peoples subjected to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation. That principle, however, did not apply in the case of the Malvinas Islands, which had been defined as a special and particular colonial situation involving a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom to which a peaceful and negotiated solution must be found, taking into account the interests of the inhabitants of the islands. The General Assembly itself had expressly ruled out the applicability of the principle of self-determination to the question of the Malvinas Islands in 1985, when it had rejected by a large majority two proposals by the United

Kingdom seeking to incorporate that principle into a draft resolution on that specific question. No General Assembly resolution accepted or supported the applicability of self-determination to the question.

76. The illegitimate "referendum" unilaterally organized and recognized solely by the United Kingdom, among the population it had implanted in the islands, whose predictable results had confirmed that the islands' British subjects wished to remain British, had been an illegitimate and tautological exercise that in no way changed the colonial essence of the question and could not resolve the sovereignty dispute. Any attempt to allow the British population on the islands to arbitrate a dispute to which their own country was a party distorted the right of self-determination of peoples, given that the situation did not involve a people subjugated, dominated or exploited by a colonial Power. Argentina reaffirmed its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which were an integral part of its national territory

77. **Mr. Gutiérrez Blanco Navarrete** (Spain) said that under United Nations doctrine regarding the Non-Self-Governing Territories, the principle applicable to the question of Gibraltar was that of territorial integrity rather than self-determination. The continuing relevance of that doctrine had been reaffirmed at regional seminars of the Special Committee on decolonization, held in Fiji in 2014 and in Nicaragua in 2015. The dispute could be resolved only through bilateral negotiations between the Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom, as administering Power, taking into account the interests of the people of Gibraltar, as stipulated in the 1984 Brussels Agreement.

78. The United Nations had recognized the situation as a dispute between Spain and the United Kingdom. The international status of Gibraltar had not changed, despite its 2006 Constitution — it remained one of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories under the Committee's mandate and, as the administering Power itself had stated repeatedly, could not be granted independence without the consent of Spain, in accordance with the Treaty of Utrecht. Furthermore, as he had stated in his reply to the United Kingdom at the Committee's 3rd meeting, under that Treaty, Spain had ceded the port, internal waters, city, castle, defences and fortifications of Gibraltar to the United Kingdom, but not the isthmus, which it considered to be under illegal British occupation. His

Government renewed its offer to enter into dialogue with the United Kingdom and its readiness to negotiate on the question of Gibraltar.

79. **The Chair** invited the Committee to take action on the draft resolutions before it under agenda items 59, 60, 61, 62 and 63, none of which had any programme budget implications, with the exception of draft resolution IX contained in document [A/C.4/70/23](#).

*Draft resolution I: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, submitted under agenda item 59 (A/70/23 (chap. XIII))*

80. *A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-

Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Against:*

Sierra Leone.

*Abstaining:*

France, Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

81. *Draft resolution I was adopted by 154 votes to 1, with 4 abstentions.<sup>1</sup>*

82. **Mr. Sherry** (United Kingdom) said that, as in previous years, the United Kingdom had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution. His Government did not take issue with the main objective of the draft resolution, which was to seek compliance with Article 73 e of the Charter of the United Nations, and would continue to meet its obligations fully in that regard in respect of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories. It believed, however, that the decision as to whether a Non-Self-Governing Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of the obligation to submit information under Article 73 e of the Charter ultimately fell to the Government of the Territory and the administering Power concerned, and not to the General Assembly.

*Draft resolution II: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, submitted under agenda item 60 (A/69/23 (chap. XIII))*

83. *A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji,

<sup>1</sup> The delegation of Sierra Leone subsequently informed that the Committee that it had intended to vote in favour of the resolution.

Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Against:*

Israel, United States of America.

*Abstaining:*

France, Palau, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

84. *Draft resolution II was adopted by 158 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions.*

85. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that the draft resolution just adopted must be considered within the framework of resolution 1514 (XV), according to which the right to self-determination presupposed the existence of a people subject to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation. Consequently, self-determination was in no way applicable to the question of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, because the United Kingdom, in its illegal occupation of the Islands, had forcibly expelled the local population and replaced it with its own population. All General Assembly resolutions subsequent to resolution

2065 (XX) and all subsequent Special Committee resolutions on the issue had expressly established that the way to put an end to that special and particular colonial situation, in which sovereignty over the Islands and the surrounding maritime areas was disputed, was not through self-determination but rather through a negotiated settlement of the sovereignty dispute between the two parties involved: Argentina and the United Kingdom. The General Assembly itself had expressly ruled out the applicability of the principle of self-determination to the question of the Malvinas Islands in 1985, when it had rejected by a large majority two proposals by the United Kingdom seeking to incorporate that principle into a draft resolution on that specific question. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in resolution 31/49, had called upon Argentina and the United Kingdom to refrain from taking decisions that would imply introducing unilateral modifications in the situation pending the completion of such negotiations. The unilateral and illegal exploration and exploitation by the United Kingdom of the renewable and non-renewable natural resources of Argentina in the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas were in open violation of that specific United Nations pronouncement.

*Draft resolution III: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations, submitted under agenda item 61 (A/70/23 (chap. XIII))*

86. *A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali,

Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Against:*

Israel, United States of America.

*Abstaining:*

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

87. *Draft resolution III was adopted by 112 votes to 2, with 50 abstentions.*

88. **Mr. Sherry** (United Kingdom) said that, while his delegation supported assistance by the specialized agencies to Non-Self-Governing Territories in the humanitarian, technical and educational fields, it considered that the statuses of those agencies must be carefully respected, and for that reason it had abstained in the vote.

89. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote because the draft resolution must be implemented in accordance with the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee relating to specific Territories.

*Draft resolution A/C.4/70/L.3: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories, submitted under agenda item 62*

90. **The Chair** said that El Salvador had become a sponsor.

91. *Draft resolution A/C.4/69/L.3 was adopted.*

*Draft resolution A/C.4/70/L.4: Question of Western Sahara, submitted under agenda item 63*

92. **Mr. Hallegard** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Iceland, Liechtenstein and the Republic of Moldova, said that the European Union supported the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. Encouraging the parties and neighbouring States to cooperate with the Personal Envoy, it welcomed their commitment to step up the negotiations, which should be held in good faith and without preconditions, taking note of developments since 2006, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2152 (2014) and other recent Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2218 (2015). The European Union fully supported the new methodology of shuttle diplomacy, which had been proposed by the Personal Envoy and accepted by the parties, and encouraged the parties to continue to cooperate with MINURSO.

93. The European Union also encouraged the parties to continue their cooperation with UNHCR in implementing confidence-building measures, which could help to improve the political process. Welcome progress had been made in that area, particularly the increase in the number of beneficiaries of family visits by air as well as the five cultural seminars held in Portugal and the meetings held to assess the implementation of the updated plan of action on confidence-building measures. UNHCR should also continue to consider conducting a refugee registration in the Tindouf camps. The European Union remained concerned about the implications of the Western Sahara conflict for security and cooperation in the region.

94. *Draft resolution A/C.4/70/L.4 was adopted.*

*Draft resolution IV: Question of New Caledonia, submitted under agenda item 63 (A/70/23, chap. XIII)*

95. *Draft resolution IV was adopted.*

*Draft resolution V: Question of French Polynesia, submitted under agenda item 63 (A/70/23, chap. XIII)*

96. *Draft resolution V was adopted.*

*Draft resolution VI: Question of Tokelau, submitted under agenda item 63 (A/70/23, chap. XIII)*

97. *Draft resolution VI was adopted.*

*Draft resolution VII: Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands, submitted under agenda item 63 (A/70/23, chap. XIII)*

98. *Draft resolution VII was adopted.*

99. **Mr. Sherry** (United Kingdom) said that, since his Government supported the right to self-determination, it had joined the consensus on draft resolution VII. However, it found some of the wording in the draft resolution unacceptable in that it failed to reflect the modernization of the relationship between the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories, all of which had a large measure of self-government and had freely chosen to retain their link to the United Kingdom. It was a mutually acceptable relationship, based on partnership, shared values and recognition of the right to self-determination. The United Kingdom did not accept the assertion that the people of its Overseas Territories did not have the right of self-determination.

100. **Mr. Gutiérrez Blanco Navarrete** (Spain) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it supported the principle of self-determination for the Territories to which it applied. It recalled, however, that that was not the only principle relevant to decolonization. In certain cases the principle of territorial integrity applied, as in Gibraltar. As mandated by the General Assembly, Spain was ready to settle the dispute over Gibraltar once and for all. That could be done only through direct negotiations with the United Kingdom, in which the interests and aspirations of Gibraltar would be heard.

101. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina), expressing his country's support for the right to self-determination of the peoples in all 11 Territories considered in draft resolution VII, said that the United Nations, the administering Powers and the Governments of those Territories must ensure that their populations were made aware of that right through civic education. However, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), self-determination was not the only principle applicable to decolonization; the principle of territorial integrity also applied in certain cases, such as that of the Malvinas Islands, explicitly defined in all resolutions on the question as a special and particular colonial situation. In that context, Argentina reiterated its willingness to resume negotiations with the United Kingdom to settle the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

*Draft resolution VIII: Dissemination of information on decolonization, submitted under agenda item 63 (A/70/23, chap. XIII)*

102. *A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea,

Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Against:*

Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*Abstaining:*

Democratic Republic of the Congo, France.

103. *Draft resolution VIII was adopted by 159 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions.*

104. **Mr. Sherry** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had voted against the draft resolution because it considered that the obligation placed on the Secretariat to publicize decolonization issues represented an unwarranted drain on the scarce resources of the United Nations.

105. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that Argentina, while fully supporting the right to self-determination of colonized peoples under resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2625 (XXV), had voted in favour of draft resolution VIII on the understanding that it would be interpreted and implemented in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Special Committee, all of which subsequent to resolution 2065 (XX) had defined the question of the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia Islands and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas explicitly as a special and particular colonial situation in that it involved a sovereignty dispute between two parties, Argentina and the United Kingdom, which had been requested to resume bilateral negotiations in order to find as soon as possible a peaceful solution to the question, bearing in mind the interests of the population of the Islands.

*Draft resolution IX: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, submitted under agenda item 63 (A/70/23, chap. XIII)*

106. **The Chair** said that in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, a statement by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution had been issued as document [A/C.4/70/L.6](#).

*Statements made in explanation of vote before the voting*

107. **Mr. Laassel** (Morocco) said that his delegation wished to express its deep concern and reservations and its rejection of on the opaque and malevolent manner in which the report of the Special Committee ([A/70/23](#)) had been prepared and submitted to the Committee, particularly with regard to annex II containing the report on the regional seminar held in Managua, which was completely contrary to the spirit of dialogue and consensus that had always reigned during the drafting and adoption of previous reports. On 26 June, at the closing meeting of the 2015 session of the Special Committee, the then Chair had submitted for consideration by that Committee the document [A/AC.109/2015/CRP.1](#), which contained the conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar. Based on that document, the Special Committee had adopted only those recommendations and conclusions, in a break from previous practice according to which the report also contained a procedural report of the seminar for consideration and adoption. The Chair had therefore resorted to trickery because he knew perfectly well that several members of the Special Committee were opposed to the insidious inclusion of a clearly politically-motivated reference, unprecedented in the procedural report. The Chair's premeditated action had deprived members of the customary right to express their position. His and other delegations had publicly rejected Section II of the report and six members of the Special Committee had addressed a letter to the outgoing Chair, which had been referred to by the Rapporteur at the 2nd meeting of the Committee, expressing their reservations and recalling that only the recommendations and conclusions had been adopted. In it, they had requested that the text of Annex II must be as adopted on 26 June. However, the Chair and secretariat of the Special Committee, in a manifest show of partiality and completely ignoring the formal and express request of a large number of members, had

illegally included the section on proceedings, in violation of rules of procedure of the General Assembly. They had then gone so far as to mislead the Assembly in Chapter II, para. 65 of the report (A/70/23) by stating that it was in keeping with established practice. Several members of the Special Committee had addressed a second letter to the interim Chair, expressing their reservations and surprise at the inclusion of the procedural report of the seminar despite their opposition. He therefore requested that both letters should be published as an addendum to A/70/23.

108. Despite his and other delegations' efforts during both the Seminar and the 2015 session of the Special Committee, the outgoing Chair had gone back on his word to retain the language used in previous reports, ignoring principle of neutrality which all Chairs should uphold, and had not allowed members to express their opposition. Furthermore, the secretariat had given erroneous information to several delegations, in flagrant breach of the core values of impartiality and neutrality required of all United Nations staff. His delegation therefore rejected Annex II of the report and considered it null and void. Morocco, which had always worked to preserve consensus and harmony in the work of Special Committee, was thus obliged to reveal a reality that damaged the credibility of that Committee and called into question its working methods. The interim Chair and member States must endeavour to restore consensus and take into account the interests of all Member States, without partiality or politicization. For those reasons outlined above, Morocco would vote against the resolution.

109. **Mr. Cousiño** (Chile), expressing his great surprise at the statement and at the language used by the Moroccan representative, which lacked the mutual respect shown both in the Committee and the Special Committee, said that as Rapporteur of the regional seminar in question, he could confirm that the facts recounted by the Moroccan representative were inaccurate. The text in the resolution had been adopted at the seminar, in the presence of the Moroccan representatives. If — for some inexplicable reason — they had not been paying attention, it was not the fault of the Special Committee. Morocco had not effectively defended its cause; its main objection, raised subsequently, had been to the presence of a member of the Frente Polisario in the delegation from Western Sahara. Furthermore, in June, a member of the Moroccan delegation had repeatedly accosted him as it

sought to have the secretariat modify the text adopted in Managua. No delegation had contested the text during the seminar, not even Morocco. Despite the objections subsequently raised by a few delegates on 26 June, the report of the seminar had been approved in Managua without a vote. There could be no claims of its invalidity because delegates had expressed doubts only after its unanimous adoption. Each member of the Committee could vote in line with its position, but the reasons expressed by the Moroccan representative lacked any truth.

110. **Mr. León González** (Cuba) said he had not intended to take the floor and had hoped that the resolution would have the support of the whole Committee. The successful seminar in Managua, which had enjoyed record participation, had been an additional opportunity to advance the decolonization work of the United Nations. As the Chilean representative had said, the procedural report had been considered and adopted at the 5th meeting of the Special Committee, as outlined in subheading C of the procedural report. The list of participants could be readily checked in the Annex and he could affirm that no delegation had challenged the text at the time. As Vice-Chair, Cuba could attest to the fact that the outgoing Chair and bureau of the Special Committee had done excellent work that was in line with United Nations resolutions on decolonization.

111. **Mr. Proaño** (Ecuador) said that he had not intended to take the floor, but confirmed that his delegation would vote in favour of the resolution, which reflected the substance of the Committee's work and advanced the decolonization cause, because to do so was to vote for an end to an anachronistic situation in the 21st century. As the outgoing Chair of the Special Committee, he underscored that the procedural report of the seminar had been adopted in Managua without any objection, including by the three representatives of Morocco there present. During considering of the report at the 2015 session of the Special Committee, only one delegation had expressed reservations. All members had had the opportunity to express their positions during the seminar and the session of the Special Committee, but no concerns had been raised. Now that certain delegations had realized that they had missed something, they were exerting pressure on other countries to achieve their political ends. He rejected the allegations levelled against him, for it was clear who was guilty of politicization.

112. **Mr. Jiménez** (Nicaragua) said that his delegation would vote in favour of the resolution as it contributed to the work of the Committee, and concurred with previous speakers that the report of the seminar had been adopted unequivocally. The regrettable statement made by the Moroccan representative did not reflect the demonstrated professionalism and work ethic of the outgoing Chair of the Special Committee.

113. **Ms. Rodríguez Silva** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her delegation aligned itself with the previous statements and also commended the excellent work of the outgoing Chair of the Special Committee. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supported that Committee's methods of work and would vote in favour of the resolution.

114. *A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:*

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

*Against:*

Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Israel, Morocco, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

*Abstaining:*

France.

115. *Draft resolution IX was adopted by 153 votes to 6, with 1 abstention.*

116. **Mr. Sherry** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation continued to find some elements of the draft resolution unacceptable, and had therefore voted against it. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom remained committed to modernizing its relationship with its Overseas Territories, while fully taking into account the views of the peoples of those Territories. He also expressed disappointment at the presentation of a statement of programme budget implications stemming from the resolution. The budget had not yet been agreed on and it seemed pointless to attempt to re-prioritize 2016-2017 activities to accommodate the conference-related costs incurred under the resolution. He emphasized that its adoption in no way prejudged discussion in the Fifth Committee of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for the upcoming biennium.

117. **Mr. Testot** (France) said that his delegation had not changed its traditional position on the resolution and had abstained as in previous years. However, he expressed concern with regard to the programme budget implications of certain articles of the resolution.

118. **Mr. Takeda** (Japan), expressing his delegation's regret and disappointment at the unexpected programme budget implications related to the resolution, said that the information given to Member States to judge those implications was insufficient. However, Japan remained committed to continuing to work with all stakeholders in implementing all relevant decolonization resolutions.

119. **Mr. Ordeman** (United States of America) said that his country's well-known concerns regarding the resolution had been compounded by dissatisfaction at receiving programme budget implications from the Secretariat for the amount of \$269,000. His delegation did not consider the activities presented in paragraphs

18 and 19 to be appropriate functions for the mandate, but rather ineffective and inappropriate use of limited resources. Given global fiscal constraints, even members who supported the underlying premise should minimize as much as possible the need for additional resources for the Special Committee.

120. **Ms. Green** (Canada) said that while Canada continued to support the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, it had serious concerns about the programme budget implications of the resolution. The Secretary-General had just presented his proposed biennial budget to the Fifth Committee; it had therefore come as a surprise that the Secretariat was seeking to increase the financial request for 2016-2017 to support routine activities that were foreseeable and could, therefore, reasonably fall within the existing request. Canada would be examining the programme budget implications closely in the Fifth Committee. They however served as a reminder that Committees should review mandates periodically and not simply roll them over from one session of the General Assembly to another.

121. **Mr. Gutiérrez Blanco Navarrete** (Spain) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it supported the principle of self-determination. It recalled, however, that self-determination was not the only principle relevant to decolonization. In certain cases the principle of territorial integrity applied, as in Gibraltar. Spain also emphasized that visiting missions could be dispatched only to Territories to which the principle of self-determination applied, and not to Territories in respect of which there was a sovereignty dispute. That requirement was fully in line with the practice of the Special Committee and with General Assembly resolution 850 (IX), which also established the requirement that any visiting mission must be approved by the General Assembly.

122. **Mr. Díaz Bartolomé** (Argentina) said that visiting missions could be sent only to Territories to which the right of self-determination applied, meaning Territories where there was no dispute over sovereignty. That requirement was fully in line with General Assembly resolution 850 (IX), which also established the requirement that any visiting mission must be approved by the General Assembly. It was also in line with the practice of the Special Committee, as evidenced in its regional seminars and declarations that visiting missions

must be sent on a case-by-case basis and carried out in compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*