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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE

AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

**DURING THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE
SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
GRANDING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL
COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES; WITH REGARD TO THE
QUESTION OF WESTERN SAHARA**

**NEW YORK
11 JUNE 2018**

Mr. President,

1. At the onset, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee of Twenty-Four, together with your Bureau.

Mr. President,

2. Since the United Nations was established in 1945, more than 80 former colonies have gained their independence. Among them, Namibia achieved independence 28 years ago, thanks to the work of this very Committee and following the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 435. This historical background underpins our foreign policy.
3. The Report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/277), on the situation concerning Western Sahara shows that tensions, including unresolved issues, as well as a tense security situation are some of the main concerns of the Secretary-General. These tensions hampers the efforts of the Personal Envoy to reach a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution that will allow the people of Western Sahara to determine their own future.
4. Namibia welcomes the efforts of the His Excellency Mr Horst Köhler, former President of the Federal Republic of Germany Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to Western Sahara. We offer our full support to your Committee and to the Personal Envoy for the forward movement of this peace process.
5. Namibia, however, notes with deep concern the latest efforts of the Security Council resolution 2414 of 2018, reducing the mandate of MINURSO from one year to six months. While we would be very happy if peace can be brought about within 6 months, it is imperative, we believe, that the United

Nations continues to lead the negotiation process fully supported by the African Union. This process should be fully supported until its natural conclusion. It would seem unlikely that a referendum could be arranged within six months, and the logic of such a decision evades us.

6. The continued denial of the right to self-determination for the people of the Western Sahara is not something to be taken lightly. We note with deep concern the continued exploitation of the natural resources of Western Sahara, as well as an ongoing stalemate in the political process which would, it appears, challenge the principles and credibility of the United Nations and its bodies.

Mr. President,

7. As President Hage Geingob stated during the recent visit by His Excellency, President Brahim Ghali of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic to Namibia last month, the 1991 Settlement Plan provided by the Secretary-General "on the holding of a referendum" for Western Sahara should be implemented unconditionally and without further delay. This situation has lasted for too long, and the denial of the right to self-determination for the Western Saharan people languishing on the sidelines of their own occupied territory denies them the right to sustaining peace and stability, the right to sustainable economic, social and cultural development, and the territorial integrity of States which we all here enjoy.
8. We wish to restate our full support to a peace process that will allow for the implementation of the relevant UN resolutions and particularly the holding of a referendum.

9. In conclusion, Namibia reaffirms full and unwavering support and solidarity with the people of Western Sahara for their inalienable rights to self-determination and national independence. In this context, we again call on the UN Security Council to live up to its responsibility by implementing all its resolutions and decisions, most importantly the UN Plan for Western Sahara unconditionally and with urgency. Namibia fully supports the work of this Committee and remains optimistic that the conflict over Western Sahara will soon come to an end for the sake and the dignity of the population of Western Sahara.

I thank you.