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STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE

AMBASSADOR & PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

74TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONISATION COMMITTEE,

ON THE AGENDA ITEM:

“QUESTION OF WESTERN SAHARA”

NEW YORK

7-16 October 2019

**Mr. Chairperson,**

1. Allow me to congratulate you on your assumption as Chair of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, together with your Bureau. My delegation assure you of our full cooperation and support during the 74th session of the General Assembly.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

1. The question of Western Sahara has been with the UN for over 40 years.
2. This Committee has called numerous meetings on the question of Western Sahara, yet it appears as if we are taking steps back, instead of moving forward. As a country previously colonized, Namibia holds dear the principles and the rules and the fundamentals of international law to human rights, and human dignity. Namibia is deeply concerned about the continued denial of the right to self-determination for the people of the Western Sahara. In our view, this constitutes a challenge to the principles of the UN Charter and the authority and credibility of the General Assembly.
3. In the 21st century, and as we endeavor to implement the Agenda 2030, and on the eve of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, Western Sahara remains left behind.
4. As a child of international solidarity, we implore upon the Member States, particularly the parties to this negotiation process, to seek an end to the impasse and to work together in good faith for the immediate and unconditional implementation of the UN Settlement Plan.
5. Namibia continues to be concerned that the 1991 UN-brokered referendum in the Western Sahara remains outstanding, and that Security Council Resolution 658 of 1990, is yet to be implemented. The occupation of Western Sahara, is an outstanding case of colonialism which needs to be resolved with utmost urgency. My delegation would welcome the expressed wishes of the Saharawi people, in conformity with the clearly defined principles contained in the Resolution calling for the Referendum.
6. The course that we are supporting is a settlement for the people, and by the people of Western Sahara. Namibia offers any support to the process that would allow the implementation of the relevant UN resolutions and particularly the holding of a referendum in order for the people of Western Sahara to determine their own future.
7. Next year, the third international decade for the eradication of colonialism will come to an end. The decade calls upon administrating powers to cooperate fully with the Special Committee on the full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples through the exercise of the right to self-determination and independence. It is our hope that we would have reached some middle ground by then.
8. We as the United Nations, should collectively support the will of the people of Western Sahara and ensure they are liberated, away from the refugee camps that have become a norm to so many women, children and men.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

1. We, therefore, reiterate our call for the unconditional implementation of all UN resolutions and AU decisions, in particular the 1991 Settlement Plan with the aim of holding a free and fair referendum in Western Sahara that will allow for the positive, peaceful and permanent solution that meets the aspirations and will of the Sahrawi people.
2. Namibia applauds the efforts of His Excellency Mr. Hörst Köhler, former UN Personal Envoy to Western Sahara and regret his resignation. We encourage the Secretary-General to finalize the appointment of a new Special Envoy at the earliest.
3. The resolve of the long standing struggle of the people of Western Sahara would finally complete the full decolonization of the African continent, and Namibia continues to reaffirm its unequivocal support and commitment to the people of Western Sahara in their quest for freedom and self-determination.
4. The mandate of MINURSO will be determined in about three weeks on 31 October, and it is our hope that the Security Council would act in the interest of the Saharawi people, and chart a clear path incumbent of self-determination and peace.
5. My delegation holds a very special place for the important work of this Committee. It is because of the work of this Committee that the people of Namibia enjoys today, the freedom of self-governance, the right to life, peace, prosperity and socio-economic development.
6. Namibia, therefore, sympathizes with those who are denied their right to self-determination. Namibia reaffirms full and unequivocal support for the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and national independence.

**I thank you.**