



**Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the United Nations**

135 East 36<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10016

Tel: (212) 685-2003 . Fax: (212) 685-1561 . E-mail: [namibia@un.int](mailto:namibia@un.int)

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE**

**AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

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

**NEW YORK  
12 JUNE 2017**

Mr President,

I would like to congratulate you on being elected once again, as Chairperson of the Committee of Twenty Four, together with your Bureau.

Mr President,

Esteemed delegates,

As you know, Namibia is a child of this august Committee and we have been independent, peaceful and developing for twenty seven years. On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1988, the colonizing and apartheid government of South Africa, which annexed the country in 1948, signed the Tripartite Agreement with Cuba and Angola calling for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 leading to the independence of Namibia.

Less than five months before, on 30 August 1988, the Kingdom of Morocco, together with the Frente Polisario (Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro) accepted an outline of the plan provided by the Secretary-General “on the holding of a referendum or self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and on ways and means to ensure the organisation and supervision of such a referendum by the United Nations in co-operation with the Organisation of African Unity” (UNSC Resolution 658 of 1990).

Twenty six years later the people of Western Sahara continue to wait for the holding of this referendum.

It is a mystery to my country, which was expecting to celebrate implementation of two important resolutions within months of each other, why UNSC Resolution 658 (1990) was not implemented and the UN supervised referendum was not held. This question remains unresolved to this date.

Mr President,

Namibia has been a firm believer of the UN system. In 1999 Namibia and Botswana had a dispute over an island on our border. In order to prevent a return to the horrors of war, we agreed that we would take the matter to the International Court of Justice. The ICJ decided in favour of Botswana and Namibia accepted the decision of the Court. This speaks to the fundamental principle of our foreign policy, namely, to seek peaceful settlement to conflict situations. In this context, Namibia attaches highest importance to the role of the United Nations and relevant international bodies for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

We applaud the UN, in particular the Security Council for its focused attention to finding and facilitating internationally acceptable solutions to strengthen peace and security in the world.

We, therefore, note with deep concern 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. We appreciate the latest efforts of the Security Council in Resolution 2351 extending the mandate of MINURSO till next April, and the call for full respect of the military agreements reached with MINURSO regarding the ceasefire and adherence to those agreements.

Mr President,

Namibia has taken note of the Secretary-General's intention to appoint the former German President, His Excellency Mr H<sup>o</sup>rst K<sup>o</sup>hler, as the next UN Special Envoy to Western Sahara. We encourage the Secretary General to finalise the appointment at the earliest. Namibia further 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. Such a decision will resolve ambiguity around the issue.

Mr President,

In conclusion, Namibia reaffirms full and unequivocal support for the inalienable rights of the People of Western Sahara to self-

determination and national independence. In this context, we once again call upon the United Nations and in particular, the Security Council, to assume its full responsibility by implementing all its resolutions and decisions on Western Sahara, with no pre-conditions. Namibia fully supports the work of this Committee and remains positive that the issue of Western Sahara will be resolved soon, once and for all.

I thank you.