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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

**Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism:
innovative steps to ensure the attainment of the Sustainable Development
Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories**

**Bali, Indonesia
24 to 26 May 2023**

**STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE SOUTH AFRICA**



South Africa's Statement at the C24 Regional Seminar in Bali, 25 May 2023 - The Situation in Western Sahara

Chairperson,

We thank Indonesia, our hosts for this segment of the C24 Regional Seminar. As a former colony, South Africa attaches great importance to the issue of decolonisation. Needless to add, our delegation would not be represented in the UN if it were not for the efforts of this Committee. Therefore, South Africa continues to stand in solidarity with those 17 Non-Self-Governing territories (NSGTs), which are yet to exercise their right to self-determination.

We remain committed to the work of the Special Committee on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples as we work towards realising this objective.

A key part of this objective is to call on the international community to ensure that the long-pending UN mandated referendum in Western Sahara takes place. In this regard, we reaffirm our support for the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara and their right to self-determination and independence in accordance with the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and the objectives of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and other relevant resolutions, the ICJ Advisory legal opinion (1975) and AU decisions.

We further call on the Special Committee on Decolonisation to assume fully and effectively its responsibility towards the people of Western Sahara. This entails ensuring the protection of the political, economic, social, and cultural rights of the Sahrawi people, including their right to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources, and regular reporting to relevant UN bodies on the situation in the Territory.

South Africa continues to support the work of MINURSO, to fully implement its mandate, as set-out in relevant UNSC resolutions. In this regard, we support the work of Mr Staffan de Mistura, the UN Secretary General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, in prioritising the resumption of a political process in bringing both parties, the Kingdom of Morocco and the FRENTE POLITSARIO, to engage in direct talks as well as develop new innovative solutions to overcome the current impasse.

From Houston to Baker to Manhasset, and everything in between, negotiations have ebbed and flowed through the years without producing a tangible result that is suitable to either party to this dispute.

South Africa, and no other external party, can force the parties to this conflict to enter into negotiations in good faith. Conflict resolution must begin with a desire from both parties to develop a resolution - this then requires compromise and an acceptance of the other party as an equal partner, not an enemy.

In conclusion, Chairperson, South Africa urges the international community to fully commit itself to the total elimination of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations, while calling upon the United Nations to contribute in a more effective manner towards this end.

I Thank you