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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 PAPUA NEW GUINEA**



STATEMENT

BY

MR. FRED SARUFA

DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

PAPUA NEW GUINEA PERMANENT MISSION

TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE

**2023 PACIFIC REGIONAL SEMINAR OF THE SPECIAL
COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES
AND PEOPLES: "INNOVATIVE STEPS TO ENSURE THE
ATTAINMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
IN NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES":
AGENDA ITEM 2 (a)(iii)**

ON THE QUESTION OF WESTERN SAHARA UNDER

25 MAY 2023, BALI, INDONESIA

"Check against delivery"

Madam Chair, Excellencies and distinguished participants;

My delegation is pleased to note the continued commitment and constructive engagement for a lasting solution on the important question relating to Western Sahara from all relevant stakeholders, particularly the distinguished delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania and the “polisario” and we, again, welcome their participation in this Seminar.

We further encourage inclusive dialogue at all levels as it nurtures mutual understanding and helps build bridges for a pathway forward to an amicable durable political settlement of this important issue.

Madam Chair, my delegation believes that for a lasting political settlement on this complex issue should be guided by the practical realities of the situation and a spirit of good faith and negotiated compromise.

It is also our considered view that the Autonomy Initiative of Morocco is in that spirit, as it provides a sound and solid basis to build on and go forward towards a lasting solution. It also draws on the important provisions of the UN Charter and the respective relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions over the years.

We are encouraged by the increasing momentum of international support of over 100 countries for this credible compromise proposal that could lend to assisting all relevant stakeholders in this dispute to find an amicable, peaceful and durable solution.

Madam Chair, we reaffirm our support for the noteworthy political process under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, through his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Mr. Staffan De Mistura, geared towards enabling a mutually acceptable, negotiated and durable political solution to the Question of Western Sahara. We further encourage this important momentum to be sustained and further strengthened.

We therefore welcome Mr. De Mistura’s commendable efforts including his two visits to Rabat, the Tindouf camps in Algeria, Algiers and Nouakchott, last year, as well the informal bilateral consultations with Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania and polisario convened in March 2023 in New York.

We, once again, urge Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania and Polisario to resume the roundtable process, in the same format and in accordance with the Security Council resolution 2654.

In the spirit of further encouraging this political process, my delegation notes with interest Western Sahara's democratically re-elected representatives' attendance of the two round tables held in Geneva, Switzerland as well as their laudable fifth consecutive participation in the regional seminars as well as the annual sessions of the Special Committee on Decolonisation.

Furthermore, we welcome efforts for peace, stability and security in Western Sahara and particularly recognise the full respect shown by Morocco of the ceasefire and its full and continued cooperation with MINURSO. We also urge other parties to do likewise, including ensuring MINURSO's work as well as operational supplies are not hindered.

Madam Chair, it is also noteworthy and commendable that there is remarkable empowerment of the populations and improvement of the Human Development Indices in the Western Sahara region arising from the expanding socio-economic investment and development under Morocco's framework of the New Development Model for Western Sahara, launched in 2015.

This has also spurred increasing number of Consulate-General establishments in Laayoune and Daklah by various countries around the world and also regional organisations.

In closing, **Madam Chair**, the respect for and the protection of human rights of the people of Western Sahara is fundamentally important. All concerned parties involved must not derogate from this responsibility.

While we respect and commend Morocco's substantive efforts in ensuring the human rights of the people of Western Sahara are protected and advanced, as recognized by Security Council resolution 2654, we continue to remain concerned with the serious violations of fundamental human rights in the Tindouf Camps, particularly for women and children, which continue to be underscored by the international community. This must not be allowed to fester any further.

We therefore, once again, call for the UNHCR to be permitted to carry out the registration of the populations of the Tindouf camps and to provide support, as necessary and in accordance with the mandate of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and also in accordance with international humanitarian law, and within the ambit of all relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2654, as well as the UN Secretary-General's Recommendations.

I thank you.