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THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade
for the Eradication of Colonialism: goals and expected accomplishments

Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
31 May to 2 June 2011

STATEMENT

BY

The Representative of

The Kingdom of Morocco

CARIBBEAN REGIONAL SEMINAR

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

31 May – 2 June 2011

STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE

OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

Mr. Chairman

Allow me at the outset to convey my delegation's gratitude to the Government and the people of Saint Vincent and Grenadines for their warm welcome and hospitality.

I would also like to congratulate you, Mr Chairman, for your election as a chair of the Special Committee and to assure you of our support and our readiness to work closely with other delegations to ensure the success of this seminar.

My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau and to the Secretariat of the Committee for the excellent arrangements they made for us.

The Kingdom of Morocco has the pleasure to take part to this regional seminar and is keen on clarifying its position regarding the regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara and sharing with the Committee the recent developments related to this issue.

Mr. Chairman

For the Moroccan people, in its unanimity, the Sahara issue is a question of territorial integrity and national sovereignty

The Kingdom of Morocco had a particular place in the history of colonization as well as in the process of decolonization, which deviates from the usual format applied to other countries.

Accordingly, the recovery by Morocco of its independence in 1956 did not materialize by the immediate retrieval of the whole of its national territory. Having been subject to a triple colonization, French in the central part, and Spanish in the North and South of the country, in addition to an international administration over the city of Tangier, The Kingdom had to negotiate by stages, over periods of time stretching from 1956 to 1976, the return of the different parts of its national territory in full conformity with to the principles and objectives of the UN Charter.

In 1976, Morocco recovered peacefully its Sahara and moved on to complete the recovery of its territorial integrity. The process was formalized by a negotiated agreement by virtue of which Spain returned the Southern provinces to Morocco, as it did with Tarfaya in 1958 and Sidi Ifni in 1969.

Before recovering its full independence, my country fought for the freedom of all the peoples under colonial occupation and lent its diplomatic and logistical support to genuine liberation movements, especially in our continent, Africa.

With the same determination, Morocco has actively supported in the United Nations the codification process of the Declaration on granting independence to countries and peoples under occupation.

That Declaration has defined the essence and scope of the Principle of self-determination and provided clearly that this principle has never been, neither in its conception, nor in its implementation, a tool to break up the unity and territorial integrity of States or a pretext to deprive the States of integral parts of their territory, while the contiguity, language, religion, tradition and culture show that these lands belong to the same Nation, as it is the case for the Moroccan Sahara.

It's worthy to recall that these same parameters enabled all the North African States, including Algeria, to keep the Saharan part of their national territory.

Mr. Chairman

For 36 years, a regional dispute is maintained due to the hostile attitude of a neighboring country, Algeria, and its insistence on countering the inalienable right of Morocco in preserving its territorial integrity and national unity.

Following the United Nations conclusion as to the inapplicability of the settlement Plan and the lack of agreement among the parties regarding the implementation of the Baker Plans I (2001) and II (2003), and the rejection of the Algerian proposal to the effect of partition, the Security Council has not ceased, since 2004.

Responding to UN Security Council calls upon the parties to “put an end to the impasse and to make progress towards a negotiated and mutually acceptable political solution”, Kingdom of Morocco has undertaken an important effort which is participatory nationally and consultative internationally, that enabled my country to table and submits to the UN, in April 2007, an autonomy Initiative, as a framework for a political, negotiated and final settlement.

Through this courageous Initiative, the Kingdom of Morocco guarantees to the region's populations to run their affairs democratically, through legislative, executive, and judicial bodies. They will be endowed with the financial resources needed for the region's development, in all fields, and will participate, actively, in the nation's economic, social and cultural life.

Based on a spirit of compromise and sense of realism (By the way the concept of spirit of compromise and realism was first reflected by the Secretary general himself in his report dated on April 2008) this Initiative is in accordance with the international legality. In fact, the Sahara region's autonomy statute will be subject to negotiations and will be submitted to the relevant populations for a free referendum consultation

This process which was qualified as serious and credible by the Security Council has generated a dynamic and was a turning point in the search for a political solution, since it has allowed for the launch of long desired talks (4 formal rounds of and 6 informal meetings).

By qualifying as serious and credible Morocco's efforts in six successive resolutions it adopted since 2007, the Security Council has deemed it necessary to call upon the parties to show realism and the spirit of compromise so as to maintain the momentum in the negotiations process.

Mr. Chairman

Unfortunately, since then, the other parties engaged in a surprising strategy of manipulation of the human rights issue so as to deflect the international community's attention from the strategic goal which is finding a realistic and final political solution and to undermine the dynamic launched by the autonomy proposal.

In this context, allow me Mr. Chairman to remind this august Committee that Morocco has launched, ten years ago, far-reaching reforms aimed at consolidating its multi-cultural identity and preserving human dignity. It has thus embarked on ambitious reform process, mainly in the fields of human rights for women, human development, transitional justice and the effective exercise of political, economic, social and cultural rights by Moroccan citizens in the whole country.

The Constitutional reforms announced by His Majesty King Mohammed VI last March will consolidate these meaningful reforms, and initiate a new one including increased further rights for women and youth, reforms of political institutions and socio-economic development and the far reaching project on the advanced regionalization.

Morocco has nothing to hide with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights. The democratization process in which it has engaged in the last decade is unprecedented in the region, and the great progress it has made in the field is recognized by all. Mr Chairman It's worth mentioning that these reforms paved the way for Morocco to be granted an advanced status by the EU.

The Security Council, while stressing in its last resolution, the importance of promoting human rights within national institutions, welcomed the efforts made by Morocco with regard to the establishment of the National Council on Human Rights and its regional component in the Moroccan Sahara.

In this connection, my delegation would like to recall the call made by UN Secretary General in his last report on the Sahara (par 101) that human rights allegations and counter-allegations by the parties should be transformed into mutual acceptance in order to generate confidence

The Kingdom still regrets the refusal of the other parties to talk about the issue of the human rights during the 6th informal meeting in Malta (report par §39), initially introduced by the Polisario during the 5th informal talks. This has proven that the issue of Human Rights is a media oriented manoeuvre aiming at jeopardizing the whole process of negotiations.

Mr. Chairman

Let me turn now to the negotiation process which was launched thanks to the Moroccan autonomy Initiative in 2007. During the course of last year, four informal meetings were held under the auspices of the UN Secretary General Personal Envoy, during which the parties discussed the content and the scope of the innovative approach proposed by the Personal Envoy.

Morocco has showed its commitment to steering the negotiations and advancing them through the innovative proposals, such as representativeness and good governance, presented by the Moroccan delegation during the last round of informal talks.

The other parties continued to adopt a radical attitude characterized by the attachment to rigid and past solutions whose inapplicability was clearly established.

Resolution 1979, adopted unanimously by the Security Council on April 30th, 2011, confirmed the centrality of the political process as the only way to solve this regional dispute, by welcoming the intensification of the rhythm of the informal meetings and commending the innovative approach, as a way to give new breath to the negotiation process.

Furthermore, the Security Council consolidated the fundamental parameters that must guide the process, by calling upon the Parties once again to continue negotiations on the basis of realism and a spirit of compromise, by taking into account the efforts deployed by Morocco since 2006.

The preeminence of the Moroccan initiative of autonomy and the appreciation of the Council for the serious and credible Moroccan efforts to move the process forward towards resolution were again reaffirmed

In this connection, the resolution consolidated the constructive proposals of Morocco during the informal meetings, by calling the parties to devote further attention to the ideas in paragraph 120 of the report of the Secretary-General's concerning:

- A wider contribution of representatives of the populations of the Southern provinces, to allow them to express their real aspirations. This proposal concurs with the strategic choice made by Morocco to encourage the effective participation of representatives of the Sahrawi populations in the discussions during the negotiation, through the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS), which representative is today a member of my delegation ;
- The deepening of the debate related to the governance, for a better presentation of the substantial contents of the Moroccan autonomy plan and its conformity with the international legality.
- The accommodation of the referendum option by the Moroccan initiative of autonomy that confirms its conformity with the right to self-determination.

Similarly, the new resolution called the neighboring states to become more involved and make a constructive contribution to the negotiation process so that it can move towards the desired political solution.

Regarding the human dimension, the Security Council has, for the first time, included a provision requiring a census of population in the Tindouf camps, as it holds Algeria responsible for the situation in those camps.

Thus, the Security Council resolution and the Secretary General support provided the UNHCR with necessary and clear provisions to urgently take the needed steps with the Algerian authorities to implement, as soon as possible, an action plan aimed at conducting a census and registering of this population.

Mr. Chairman

Within the context of the recent changes in the Arab and North Africa region, it is my delegation strong belief that time has come to find final political solution to this regional dispute to allow for the return of the Tindouf camps population to their families, thereby contributing to the efforts of building modern Morocco as well as the promotion of prosperity for the Sahara region and for the five Maghreb States to find unity and solidarity.

Keen on maintaining good neighborly relations and considering the prospects of building the Maghreb Arab Union, Morocco welcomed the UNSG Personal envoy's appeal for the establishment of a methodology of normalizing relations between Morocco and Algeria, as a significant step to facilitate and develop their friendly and cooperation relations, in the interest of the two peoples and Region as a whole

For this purpose, Morocco's welcomes the start of exchange visits between both countries officials during the last months.

Mr. Chairman

Morocco reiterates its readiness to cooperate with the other parties, as well as the UN Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to achieve a political, final and negotiated solution. To this end, Morocco reaffirms its sincere and determined commitment in order to contribute effectively to the promotion and success of a negotiated and consensual solution.

The Kingdom of Morocco wishes the other parties to be animated by the same desire to end this dispute and to combine efforts to build a prosperous and democratic Maghreb - an active actor of the African solidarity and a credible negotiator of the various Partners of the Region

At the eve of a new informal meeting in Manhasset, we hope that the other parties will display a genuine willingness to join Morocco efforts and participate seriously and responsibly in the negotiations process under the auspices of the United Nations.

Morocco will approach the next steps with optimism and the political determination to move forward and meet the expectation of the international community for a prompt settlement of this regional dispute.

Thank you.