

36th Session of the Human Rights Council
General debate - Item 2
Statement by a cross-regional group of states
12 September 2017

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of a cross-regional group of 14 states¹.

The violation of the fundamental freedoms and rights of the Sahrawi people in the occupied part of the Non Self-Governing Territory of Western Sahara remains of grave concern.

The right to development, which will be one of the major topics discussed during this session, implies, *inter alia*, the participation of the people to the control over natural resources. This aspect of the right to development takes on an even greater dimension in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in particular in the light of the responsibilities of the administering or of the occupying Powers under the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

We also deem it of utmost importance to consider the violations of the right to development of a population forced into exile in the desert for more than forty years.

Mr. President,

Last June's session, we welcomed the High Commissioner's announcement to relaunch the technical human rights missions in Western Sahara. Regrettably, according to our sources, the OHCHR has not yet contacted the concerned authorities, East of the Berm, in order to relaunch this mission.

Once more, we urge the High Commissioner to include the human rights situation in Western Sahara in his regular future reports to the Council, to formulate appropriate programmes of assistance to the peoples of the Non Self-Governing Territories in the field of Human Rights and to relaunch the technical human rights missions in Western Sahara.

I thank you Mr. President.

¹ Algeria – Angola - Bolivia – Cuba – East Timor - Ecuador – Mozambique - Namibia – Nicaragua – Nigeria – South Africa – Tanzania – Venezuela – Zimbabwe