

39th session UN Human Rights Council

Item 2 –Oral update by the UN High-Commissioner for Human Rights of the Annual report of the OHCHR

General debate

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of a cross-regional group of 16 states¹.

Madame High-Commissioner, the members of the Geneva Support Group for Western Sahara and Uganda congratulate you for your nomination as the seventh UN High-Commissioner for Human Rights.

The human rights of the Sahrawi people and the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Territory of the Non Self-Governing Territory of Western Sahara remain of deep concern to us.

While the UN Secretary-General in his latest report to the Security Council underscored the gaps in human rights reporting and recalled that UN Security Council encouraged all parties to continue cooperating with your Office, no technical mission have followed the last one, held in 2015, although it was supposed to be renewed every six months.

Considering the closure of the Occupied Territory imposed by the Occupying Power to any independent observer, lawyer or journalist, we urge you to resume the technical missions to the two sides of Western Sahara and to the refugees' camps.

We welcome the acknowledgment by the Secretary-General that “during the reporting period, Frente Polisario expressed readiness to cooperate with United Nations human rights mechanisms.”

We note with concern that, the Polisario Front, as well as the Sahrawi National Commission for Human Rights and the Sahrawi NGOs are still waiting for a technical assistance and capacity building programme to be implemented by the OHCHR, in conformity also with the annually adopted ECOSOC resolution on the “Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations”.

In this regard, we urge once again the OHCHR to promptly implement such a programme.

I thank you for your attention.

11th September 2018

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