

GENEVA SUPPORT GROUP FOR WESTERN SAHARA

STATEMENT UNDER AGENDA ITEM 2

Interactive Dialogue with the UN High-Commissioner

44TH SESSION OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

30 JUNE 2020

Madame President,

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

We urge the Secretary General to appoint a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara; and we express our deep concern on the Human Rights situation in the Occupied Western Sahara, as asserted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Committee Against Torture². We also express our deep concern on the serious breaches to International Humanitarian Law, including the continuing transfer of Moroccan settlers into the occupied territory.

We deeply deplore the continuing illegal exploitation of the Sahrawis natural resources.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, no reliable information has been provided about the pandemic incidence on the Sahrawi people and the High Commissioner's calls related to the pandemic and human rights have been ignored.

We urge the High Commissioner to resume the technical mission to Western Sahara that was last on the ground in 2015 and to report on the Human Rights situation in the Occupied Western Sahara to the Council in both her annual report and oral updates and we urge her to implement a technical assistance and capacity-building programme for the *Frente Polisario*, the sole legitimate representatives of the Sahrawi people.

In conclusion, Madame President, we remain committed to ensuring that the Sahrawi people are enabled to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, in conformity with all relevant UN resolutions, including resolution 1514 (XV).

I thank you.

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

² A/HRC/WGAD/2013/19, A/HRC/WGAD/2017/11, A/HRC/WGAD/2018/31, A/HRC/WGAD/2018/60, A/HRC/WGAD/2019/23, A/HRC/WGAD/2019/67, CAT/C/59/D/606/2014