



# Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

**8518**<sup>th</sup> meeting  
 Tuesday, 30 April 2019, 10 a.m.  
 New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Heusgen . . . . . (Germany)

*Members:*

Belgium . . . . .	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
China . . . . .	Mr. Yao Shaojun
Côte d'Ivoire . . . . .	Mr. Ipo
Dominican Republic . . . . .	Mr. Trullols Yabra
Equatorial Guinea . . . . .	Mr. Elé Ela
France . . . . .	Mrs. Gueguen
Indonesia . . . . .	Mr. Djani
Kuwait . . . . .	Mr. Almunayekh
Peru . . . . .	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
Poland . . . . .	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Safronkov
South Africa . . . . .	Mr. Matjila
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Hickey
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Hunter

## Agenda

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara  
 (S/2019/282)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### Adoption of the agenda

*The agenda was adopted.*

### The situation concerning Western Sahara

#### Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2019/282)

**The President:** The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/282, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2019/349, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

#### *In favour:*

Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

#### *Against:*

None

#### *Abstaining:*

Russian Federation, South Africa

**The President:** The draft resolution received 13 votes in favour, none against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2468 (2019).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

**Mr. Hunter** (United States of America): We are pleased with the Council's strong statement of support for the efforts of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler, to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. We are disappointed,

however, that some members of the Council still chose to abstain in the voting, despite our sincere efforts to underscore the Council's unity towards the ongoing political process.

With this mandate renewal, the United States sought to maintain the Council's focus on that political process. The Security Council's objective should be to advance a timely and mutually acceptable political solution. As the Council has clearly stated today with this mandate, it is crucial that the parties and the neighbouring States cooperate more fully with each other and build additional trust, which is needed to achieve a political solution.

We believe that the Council's close attention to this issue been instrumental to the political progress made over the past year. In December, Morocco, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), Algeria and Mauritania met under United Nations auspices in Geneva for the first direct talks since 2012. In March, the delegations met again and began in-depth discussions on how to achieve a mutually acceptable political solution. Those ongoing consultations between the Personal Envoy, Morocco, the Frente POLISARIO, Algeria and Mauritania, which aimed at achieving a realistic, practicable and enduring solution for the Western Sahara, are crucial to laying the groundwork for a negotiated settlement.

As we have said before, United Nations peacekeeping operations must support political solutions, and we will continue to assess the performance of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara against that principle. We express our full support to Personal Envoy Köhler and his team. We stand ready for his briefings to the Council as he deems appropriate. We also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Colin Stewart, and the members of MINURSO for their efforts.

**Mrs. Gueguen** (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2468 (2019), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and supports the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara. My delegation thanks the American penholder for its in-depth consultations and its high-level engagement.

First, I wish to reiterate France's full support for the efforts of the Personal Envoy. This new resolution

reaffirms the Security Council's support for the political process it launched in Geneva, bringing together Morocco, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), Algeria and Mauritania for the first time in six years, in December. Personal Envoy Horst Köhler has all our support in moving forward and organizing a third meeting in Geneva in that format when he deems the conditions to be appropriate.

It is important for the four delegations to continue their discussions in a constructive spirit of compromise with a view to achieving a realistic, pragmatic, just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, in accordance with the Council's resolutions. The two previous round tables allowed Morocco, the Frente POLISARIO, Algeria and Mauritania to agree on the special responsibility of the region and the need to develop trust. It is now necessary to build on those achievements. I take this opportunity to reiterate that France considers the 2007 Moroccan autonomy plan to be a serious and credible basis for discussions.

Secondly, I would like to recall France's full support for the work of MINURSO and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara. The latest consultations with Special Representative Colin Stewart on 10 April have served as a reminder of the essential role played by that peacekeeping operation in ensuring respect for the ceasefire and thereby contributing to regional stability. The return to normalcy in Guerguerat, to which the Secretary-General refers in his latest report (S/2019/282), is proof of this and will remain the subject of vigilant attention. In that regard, I commend the outstanding work of the MINURSO teams, whose presence helps to ensure calm, reduce the risk of escalation by effectively preventing tensions on the ground and thus create the conditions necessary for the continuation of the dialogue among Morocco, the Frente POLISARIO, Algeria and Mauritania.

It is in the light of that essential role of MINURSO that I recall France's commitment to the return to a 12-month mandate, which must remain the norm, while six-month mandates should be the exception. A one-year mandate ensures continuity and greater predictability in the management of this mission, while reducing uncertainties about its future. The existence and mandate of that peacekeeping operation should not be conditional on the progress of the political discussions or the good performance whereby

MINURSO contributes by creating the right conditions on the ground. In that regard, we regret that the Council has not been able to commit itself to the fact that it will consider returning to a one-year term in due time, and we express the wish that it be renewed for one year in October.

**Mr. Matjila** (South Africa): South Africa wishes to reiterate its unequivocal and strong support for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which was established by the Council under resolution 690 (1991). That was the beginning of the issue. We recall that MINURSO was created primarily to facilitate the holding of a referendum in Western Sahara to enable its people to realize their right to self-determination.

We also wish to emphasize our firm support for the political process facilitated by the Secretary-General's good offices through his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Mr. Horst Köhler. We express our appreciation for the work he is undertaking, as well as for the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO, Mr Colin Stewart. The role of the Security Council in supporting the Personal Envoy and the Special Representative in the discharge of their respective mandates is critical in seeking a solution to the situation in Western Sahara.

Although resolution 2468 (2019) contains numerous paragraphs with which South Africa can agree, there remain several elements of concern to our delegation. These include the following.

First, the current text as it stands is not balanced and does not provide a true reflection of the efforts undertaken by the two parties, Morocco and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which are both States members of the African Union. The mandate as approved tends to favour one party over the other, which is not conducive to a neutral political process.

Secondly, the use of terms such as "realistic" and "realism", as well as additional references to "compromise", are of concern to us. It is unclear as to what is meant by these terms as the principle of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara is well established by numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as I said earlier. We should not in any way dilute that principle through unclear and ambiguous terms and language. The Council must reaffirm its commitment to the right to

self-determination for the people of Western Sahara in an unqualified manner.

Thirdly, the resolution should not try to unduly influence the direction of the political process or to pre-empt any final status of the negotiations.

Fourthly, South Africa regrets that the Council continues to resist a human rights monitoring mandate for MINURSO, despite the fact that many around this table eagerly propose such mechanisms in other mandates, without exception. We have not seen the same vigour or determination in terms of MINURSO, which creates the impression that the human rights of the people of Western Sahara are not held in the same regard as those of other peoples elsewhere in the world. That lack of consistency undermines the Council's credibility. Lastly, we want to note that the text must differentiate between the parties to the conflict, which are Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, and the neighbouring States of Algeria and Mauritania.

We want to reiterate that the Council's working methods on this matter, whereby it delegates responsibility to the Group of Friends of Western Sahara, remain a serious source of concern for South Africa. We have consistently raised this issue as problematic, particularly given the unrepresentative nature of the Group, which does not include a single African member of the Council, despite the fact that this is an African issue. This is yet another example of an African issue being decided by non-Africans. It is unjust.

South Africa would like to reiterate its principled position on the situation in the Western Sahara, which remains the last colony on the African continent, listed by the United Nations as a non-self-governing territory. Our own national experience has taught us the value of the international solidarity that brought down the repressive system of apartheid. Similarly, it is international solidarity that will ultimately realize the foremost aspiration of the people of Western Sahara, which is to eventually be independent and free. That is why the Southern African Development Community recently hosted a solidarity conference with the Sahrawi people. As long as the Sahrawi people do not enjoy their basic right to self-determination, they will continue to be denied the opportunity to develop, prosper and enjoy a brighter future. People who have to live with uncertainty, whether under colonialism

or in refugee camps, are severely disadvantaged. The Security Council must take responsibility for ensuring, through a neutral, balanced approach, that it can assist the parties in progressing towards a mutually acceptable settlement of the situation.

In considering the draft before us, South Africa seriously considered not supporting resolution 2468 (2019), which is why we abstained in the voting. As we have stated, the Council's resolutions on MINURSO continue to address the issue in an opaque and non-inclusive manner. Council members are not given enough time or opportunity to meaningfully negotiate on the texts. They are a *fait accompli* by the penholders and their supporters. That prevents Council members from effectively exercising the mandate entrusted to us by the General Assembly to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is significant, though, that the draft before us does renew MINURSO's mandate for the next six months, and we endorse that and the political process that the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General has embarked on.

Finally, we wish the people of Morocco and Western Sahara a very fruitful, constructive and, hopefully, happy ending to their political negotiations through the third, fourth, fifth and sixth rounds of talks in Geneva. The Council's role is to support and assist them in reaching such a settlement. As South Africans, we hope that there will be a settlement one day in Western Sahara. Morocco is a very substantial African Member State. We need it to play its role in the political and economic integration of Africa so that the people of Western Sahara can live in freedom like the rest of us.

**Mr. Ipo** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the adoption of resolution 2468 (2019), on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 October. In that regard, we commend the excellent work done by the United States penholders to reach the resolution that the Council has just adopted. In accordance with the position we expressed clearly expressed in October (see S/PV.8387), as well as during the recent negotiations, my country would have liked MINURSO's mandate to have been renewed for a full year. We believe that extension would have enabled us to lay the groundwork for the long-term planning and organization of the Mission, whose effectiveness is also crucial to making the progress in

the political process that the international community so desires.

Resolution 2440 (2018) established a framework for relaunching the political process on Western Sahara and urged stakeholders to fully commit to it. We are pleased that today's resolution confirms this new momentum, as evidenced by the holding of two round-table discussions between the parties and the neighbouring States in order to identify the points convergence likely to lead to a sustainable political solution under the auspices of the United Nations. In that regard, through today's resolution the Security Council reiterates its full support to the efforts and dedication of Mr. Horst Köhler, Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara. We should encourage his good offices, which have given the process new impetus, for which the Council's continued support will be crucial. It is equally important that the stakeholders continue to commit to it in good faith in order to reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution based on compromise. In that regard, Morocco's efforts to contribute to a final resolution of this dispute, including through the autonomy initiative, appear serious and credible, as today's resolution emphasizes, and in our view constitute a good basis for discussion.

Lastly, my delegation particularly welcomes the commitment of Mr. Colin Stewart, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO, whose action on the ground in a difficult environment has made it possible to ensure compliance with military agreements and relevant obligations, and to maintain peace in the region. In conclusion, my country would like to urge all the stakeholders, the neighbouring States and the international community to unite their efforts with a view to finding a definitive solution to the problem of Western Sahara and ensuring the happiness of the people of the region.

**Mr. Safronkov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation welcomes and supports the efforts of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Köhler, including through his initiative to hold round-table talks in Geneva.

For the first time in many years, a chance has emerged for achieving a just and mutually acceptable solution to this long-standing problem that aligns perfectly with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Two rounds of negotiations have already been held, and we hope that they have laid the foundation for further progress in the political process. We trust that the next meeting, which all of the parties are prepared to take part in — Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), and their neighbours, Algeria and Mauritania — will result in substantive progress.

The international community generally, and the Security Council, in particular, must assist the Special Envoy in his work. For our part, we are working with Morocco, the Frente POLISARIO, Algeria and Mauritania. We have close, friendly relations with all of them, which we cherish, especially since our multifaceted ties have stood the test of time. We believe that the African Union also has a potentially significant role to play. We are supporting the activities of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which counts Russian military observers among its ranks. It plays a crucial stabilizing role in the region, and its effective work enables us to maintain an environment conducive to advancing a settlement for Western Sahara on the basis of the relevant Council resolutions. However, while we recognize the continued importance of implementing the tasks that are part of the Mission's mandate, we believe it is wrong to create an artificial commotion about the extension of its mandate, to attempt to use the resolutions on it to define the direction that the negotiations will take under the auspices of the United Nations, or to change previously agreed approaches. We believe that even if a settlement is achieved, the Mission will inevitably be needed for a long time after that.

Regrettably, in recent years amendments have been introduced into the resolutions extending MINURSO's mandate that in our view undermine the Security Council's impartial and objective approach to the issue of Western Sahara. Eroding previously approved parameters is unacceptable. We must keep in mind that they define the parties to the Western Sahara conflict and provide for ultimately reaching a mutually acceptable solution that guarantees the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara through procedures that are in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We have disagreed with the artificial modification of those parameters in prior years and have said so directly, and we were unable to support such an approach on this occasion with regard

to resolution 2468 (2019). Our arguments for correcting the imbalance were blatantly ignored, although what we were asking for was a restoration of the previously agreed wording. That has once again raised questions about the penholdership system on country-specific subjects in the Council.

Replacing the fundamental principles of the Western Sahara settlement with abstract wording about the importance of maintaining a realistic approach or seeking compromises leads to ambiguity, undermines trust in our work and dims the prospects for the political process. Moreover, such an approach does not help to create a constructive atmosphere for negotiations. We well remember that at many meetings with the Council Mr. Köhler has asked us to express our united support through a consensus public response from the Security Council. And there was a window for compromise.

Russia will continue to be an impartial, balanced player with regard to the Western Sahara settlement and will maintain contact with all the regional stakeholders. We will work actively to support the negotiation process launched by Mr. Köhler with the aim of arriving at a mutually acceptable solution. We urge our colleagues to contribute constructively as well. It is vital that we act in order to disrupt the status quo, which is not viable. We must keep in mind that the vacuum in the political process and the unresolved issue of Western Sahara could be exploited by a number of terrorist entities, which would have a negative impact on the military and political situation in the entire region.

**Mr. Elé Ele** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the United States penholder for this dossier for submitting resolution 2468 (2019), which we feel can contribute to a final and lasting solution to the Western Sahara conflict.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea voted in favour of the resolution, which renews the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 October. Our vote affirms our full support for MINURSO, for Mr. Colin Stewart, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO, and for the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, former President Horst Köhler.

Equatorial Guinea has given clear and consistent support to MINURSO as a mission with a mandate

and adequate capacity to carry out its tasks and main objective. However, for important reasons of form and substance, the parties to the conflict have complicated the situation and prolonged this United Nations Mission for more than a quarter of a century. We were therefore pleased with the renewed momentum generated for the mandate by the meetings held in Geneva on 5 and 6 December 2018 and in Addis Ababa on 21 and 22 March 2019, at which Morocco, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, Algeria and Mauritania committed to participating in a United Nations-driven political dialogue on Western Sahara, with a view to arriving at a solution that is lasting and mutually acceptable to everyone, based on the established agreements and in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Equatorial Guinea welcomes these efforts to conduct negotiations with a view to ensuring respect for the principles of international law in accordance with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Equatorial Guinea encourages the parties to continue along this path of negotiation in an atmosphere of good faith and without conditions, with a view to identifying areas of convergence, pursuing strategic approaches to maintaining peace and finding a peaceful political solution to the conflict. We would also like to encourage the neighbouring countries and other countries of the region to bring their influence to bear on the parties in the political process, working together with the United Nations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In conclusion, Equatorial Guinea would have preferred a 12-month renewal of MINURSO's mandate, but since this did not happen, we hope that in October that request will be taken into account in order to give the Mission and the Personal Envoy time to continue their work without interruption.

**Mr. Almunayekh** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Kuwait voted in favour of resolution 2468 (2019), which extends the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara until 31 October. We had hoped for a unanimous renewal by the Security Council for one year. We stress the importance of the role of the Mission and of ensuring that it can fully implement its mandate. We renew our support for the Head of the Mission and for the work of Mr. Köhler, Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western

Sahara, in implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions and developing confidence-building measures with a view to reaching a realistic, lasting, practical and accepted political solution.

We reaffirm our support for continued negotiations, backed by the United Nations. We welcome the continued participation by all stakeholders in the round tables, without preconditions and in good faith, with the aim of maintaining the pace of the meetings, breaking the deadlock and bringing views closer together. We appreciate everyone's concern about the future of the Arab Maghreb and about the economic and social gains that promote security, stability and development in the region.

The State of Kuwait reaffirms its support for the Moroccan initiative for the autonomy of Western Sahara and for reaching a constructive solution acceptable to all the parties. We stress the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Morocco and welcome the credible and serious steps and initiatives it has taken, as well as the role played by the two committees of the National Council of Human Rights in Dakhla and Laayoune under the auspices of the United Nations bodies concerned with human rights.

**Mr. Yao Shaojun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Recently, thanks to the mediation efforts of Mr. Horst Köhler, Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, and the bona fide engagement of the parties concerned and of neighbouring countries, two round-table meetings on Western Sahara have been successfully held. The prevailing atmosphere has been constructive. The parties who attended the events articulated in no uncertain terms their willingness to continue the conversation, which China commends. We hope that mutual trust will gradually increase on both sides and enable the current positive momentum to continue. The Council should continue to support the work of Mr. Köhler and create the conditions necessary to enable the Western Sahara political process to move forward.

By working conscientiously under the Council mandate, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has been contributing positively to the recent progress made in the Western Sahara political process and the overall stability of the situation in Western Sahara. China supports the renewal of MINURSO's mandate and will continue to

play a constructive role in properly resolving the issue of Western Sahara.

Resolution 2468 (2019), which the Council has just adopted, extends the Mission's mandate by six months and expresses the Council's full support for Personal Envoy Köhler's mediation efforts, which signifies the Council's resolve to uphold MINURSO's mandate and push for a political solution of the Western Sahara issue. Going forward, we hope the Council will have more thorough consultations on a future MINURSO mandate-renewal resolution. The consultations should be more thorough and more inclusive, with a view to achieving consensus.

China's long-held stance on the issue of Western Sahara is consistent. We shall continue to maintain an impartial and objective position and support United Nations efforts aimed at finding a political solution of the Western Sahara issue and encourage the two sides to use the relevant Council resolutions as a basis and seek a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution through negotiation.

**Mr. Djani** (Indonesia): I would like to begin my statement by reiterating our delegation's full support for the good offices of the Secretary-General through the political process led by his Personal Envoy, President Horst Köhler.

We underscore the pivotal role played by the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in maintaining peace and stability in the region, a condition conducive for the peace talks that include all parties. For that reason, my delegation welcomes the renewal of the MINURSO mandate and voted in favour of resolution 2468 (2019).

Understanding the sensitivity of the issue, we believe that resolution 2468 (2019) very carefully reflects a delicate balance. We thank the United States, the penholder, for its efforts aimed at arriving at such a balance through the engagement with the parties, Member States and other relevant stakeholders. We also commend the constructive engagement of all parties with the political process and call on them to remain committed to the process and to extend their fullest support and cooperation to the Personal Envoy to achieve progress towards a political solution.

**Mr. Hickey** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom was pleased to vote in favour of resolution

2469 (2019) resolution today. We believe the resolution sends a strong signal of our support for the valuable work of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, ex-President Horst Köhler, in his efforts to find a mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. We encourage the parties and the neighbouring States to continue their constructive engagement with the Personal Envoy and with one another, in line with the spirit of the resolution.

We call on all concerned to refrain from any activity that could undermine negotiations or escalate tensions on the ground. At the second round table meeting, the participants themselves recognized the importance of working to build additional trust away from the negotiation table. We encourage them to continue to do so to support progress towards an enduring political solution.

The text of the resolution also reflects the strong support of the Council for the continuing work of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Colin Stewart, in carrying out his duties. We regret that we were unable to speak with one voice on the text before us today. However, we remain convinced of the Council's unanimous support for ex-President Köhler's efforts. Our support and the support of the region and the international community will be essential for a successful outcome to the process.

**Mr. Trullols Yabra** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to express our satisfaction for the adoption of resolution 2468 (2019), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), thanking the United States for the work done in drafting a resolution that we consider balanced. The Dominican Republic voted in favour of the resolution because we consider it necessary to support the political process to resolve the situation in Western Sahara, emphasizing the importance of the role of MINURSO.

We understand that a 12-month renewal would allow more certainty in the management and planning of MINURSO's resources, so we hope that the next negotiation can embark on a discussion that will highlight the benefits of a longer period. The Dominican Republic considers that the autonomy plan presented

by Morocco represents a serious and credible basis for a negotiated solution.

Finally, the Dominican Republic reiterates its support for the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and urges all actors present in the negotiation process to continue to work constructively, always maintaining the spirit of compromise that must prevail in this process. We are convinced that it is possible to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution in Western Sahara in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Germany.

We too welcome today's adoption of the mandate renewal of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). We consider the work of the Mission to be vital to ensuring stability on the ground and providing the space for the political process to move forward. We want to explicitly thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Mr. Stewart, for his commitment to de-escalating tensions in the area of operations and in closely coordinating with the parties and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara. He and his Mission must be granted all rights and the freedom to fulfil their mandate, which includes being able to meet with the parties without restrictions.

The fact that resolution 2468 (2019) could not count on the unanimous support of the Security Council is regrettable. This should not discourage us from standing united behind the political process and the Personal Envoy. I welcome the unanimous support given to the Personal Envoy in all statements heard in the Council this morning, including the statements made by the representatives of South Africa and the Russian Federation. The Council, its Member States and other countries with influence should demonstrate that they are willing to use their weight and that influence to support President Köhler in his efforts aimed at bringing to this conflict a realistic, practical and lasting solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

Personal Envoy Köhler was very clear in his last briefing to the Council. He expects gestures of good faith by the parties before he convenes a third

round table. In this context, I am also grateful that the mandate now to clearly include the demand for additional trust to be built up between the parties. It is now up to Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) to demonstrate political will and engage in confidence-building measures. The Frente POLISARIO's destroying its remaining stockpile of landmines was an encouraging sign. The resumption of family visits or granting access to independent human rights observers could also be gestures that would facilitate dialogue and create trust. This list is anything but exhaustive.

In the end, we must not forget that Western Sahara is not an abstract conflict to resolve. It is a conflict that has affected the lives of thousands of people every day for many decades.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

*The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.*