



SEKMUN

General Assembly Fourth Committee

Topic 1: Funding of the United Nations Mission to organise a referendum in
Western Sahara

President: Victoria Benito

Moderator: Sabela Aguión



Note from the committee authorities

Hello, welcome to the GA Fourth Committee meeting! We are Sabela Aguión and Victoria Benito. We will be your authorities for this committee over the SEKMUN meeting. We will be helping you, informing you and instructing you, not only about the topics that we will be tackling, but also about the rules and motions within the committee. Sabela and Victoria have experience of both United Nations models and debate tournaments. Attaining outstanding results and winning prizes. We are delighted to have them as delegates and to be your authorities and to be able to help you. Good luck!

Fourth Committee of the General Assembly

The General Assembly, created in 1945, is the main body of the United Nations for deliberation, adoption of policies and representation. It is made up of the 193 Members of the United Nations and constitutes a forum for multilateral negotiations on international issues.

The following are some of the functions of the General Assembly:

- Examine and approve the UN budget and establish Member States quotas.
- Consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including disarmament, and making recommendations in this regard.
- Recommend measures for the peaceful settlement of any situation that may harm friendly relations between countries.

The General Assembly is divided into six main committees. The Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth Committee) is responsible for dealing with a wide range of issues, including some such as: five issues related to decolonization, the effects of atomic radiation, issues related to public information , a comprehensive review of the issue of peacekeeping operations as well as special political missions, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), Israeli settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories, and International Cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space.

The objective of the first issue is to reach an effective resolution that establishes the bases for the financing of a referendum that allows for a decision, through a process of citizen self-determination, the future and the sovereignty of the territory of Western Sahara.

Below, we attach a brief explanation of the situation so that you can start your inquiry.

Background: Western Sahara situation

The Western Sahara is a territory of Africa located in the western end of the Sahara desert, on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. It is one of the seventeen Non-Self-Governing Territories under the supervision of the United Nations Committee on Decolonization. It was added to the list of non-autonomous territories in 1960 in Resolution 1542 (XV) of the UN General Assembly, on December 15 of that year, when it was a Spanish colony. Its decolonization process was interrupted in 1976 when its colonial power, Spain, left Western Sahara in the hands of Morocco and Mauritania (in accordance with the provisions of the Madrid Agreements, illegal under international law). The territory is currently occupied almost entirely by Morocco, although Moroccan sovereignty is not recognized by the United Nations or by any country in the world. In reality, Morocco does not control the entire territory. Its eastern strip is in the hands of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguía el-Hamra and Río de Oro (Polisario Front), a Saharawi independence movement that, since its creation in 1973, has been fighting for the independence and self-determination process of the Western Sahara. The Polisario Front has established the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), which is recognized by eighty-two countries, and which rejects Moroccan sovereignty and claims sovereignty over Western Sahara. After Spain abandoned Saharawi territory, a long armed conflict began between Morocco and the Polisario Front. In 1988 the Moroccan authorities and the

Polisario Front signed a Settlement Plan, approved by the UN in 1991. It agreed to hold a referendum in which the Saharawi population would be asked to choose between independence or integration into Morocco. In order to carry out said agreement, MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara) was established, which aimed to supervise the ceasefire and implement a referendum, the holding of which has been postponed since then due to the refusal of the Government of Morocco to allow it.

Morocco, instead of holding the referendum, opted for the option of giving Western Sahara some autonomy, under Moroccan sovereignty, based on the possible solution that the United Nations had presented in 2007. However, this solution is not accepted by the Polisario Front.

Funding for peacekeeping missions

The financing of United Nations peacekeeping operations is based on the fact that the financing of said operations is the obligation of all United Nations Member States, and therefore they must bear their expenses, in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations. On the other hand, this obligation is carried out in an equitable manner among the members, expecting the more economically developed countries to make higher contributions than those with relatively less capacity. MINURSO is financed through an independent account approved annually by the General Assembly.

Given the above, the measures that the General Assembly must adopt, according to the report of the Secretary General, in relation to the financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, are to decide which functions of the mission will be allocated the funds raised by the members of the United Nations and apportion the amount necessary for it among the member states.

Prior actions

On the referendum in Western Sahara, the United Nations has proposed numerous reports and resolutions about it that should be considered.

One of the most relevant is Security Council Resolution 690 of April 29, 1991, which established the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara with the aim of giving its citizens the option to decide about the sovereignty of its territory. The Security Council was the UN body that approved the settlement plan, and established a transition period for holding the referendum.

On the other hand, the Secretary General, in his report presented to the General Assembly on September 29, 2020, affirmed, among other things, that the Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth Committee) of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on the Status of Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Countries and Peoples should deal with the question of Western Sahara as a non-autonomous region and as a question of decolonization.

The role of the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly regarding the financing of the referendum includes the distribution of the funds contributed by the Member States with the aim of holding the referendum in Western Sahara.

Links of interest

UN resolutions on Western Sahara

https://www.usc.es/es/institutos/ceso/res_onu_ag.html

Western Sahara situation

<https://www.es.amnesty.org/en-que-estamos/blog/historia/articulo/sahara-occidental-un-conflicto-vivo-en-una-zona-olvidada/>

Information about MINURSO

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/es/mission/minurso>

Report of the Secretary General on the budget of MINURSO <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/256/74/PDF/N2225674.pdf?OpenElement>