

just adopted, he had been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:⁴⁶

It is the understanding of the members of the Council that the Secretary-General will consult the Council on the number of observers he has the intention to deploy from time to time.

Decision of 10 September 1992: statement by the President

By a letter dated 9 September 1992 addressed to the Secretary-General,⁴⁷ the representative of South Africa submitted a memorandum issued by his Government on the events that had taken place at Bisho, Ciskei, on 7 September 1992, resulting in the death of 28 people and injury of approximately 190. In the memorandum, the Government urged the Secretary-General and the members of the Security Council to demand that the ANC/Communist Party alliance abandon any further provocative actions which put at risk the lives of innocent South Africans. It also appealed to the Secretary-General to consider sending his representative to South Africa, as soon as possible, in order to assist in the strengthening of the National Peace Secretariat and its regional structures. The Government suggested, further, that the Secretary-General's representative attend the proposed meeting of the signatories of the National Peace Accord as an observer, and enter into discussions with the main political players with a view to assisting in bringing violence to an end and in removing the remaining obstacles to the resumption of negotiations.

On 10 September 1992, following consultations held on the same day, the President (Ecuador) made the

following statement to the media on behalf of the Council:⁴⁸

The members of the Security Council deplore the killing of 28 demonstrators and the wounding of nearly 200 others by security elements in South Africa on 7 September 1992. They reiterate their grave concern at the continued escalation of the violence in South Africa. They emphasize once again the responsibility of the South African authorities for the maintenance of law and order and call on them to take all measures to end the violence and to protect the right of all South Africans to engage in peaceful political activity without fear of intimidation or violence. They urge all parties in South Africa to cooperate in combating violence and to exercise maximum restraint in order to help break the spiralling cycle of violence.

The members of the Council emphasize the need to put an end to the violence and create conditions for negotiations leading to the establishment of a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa. They note in this regard that the Council, in its resolution 772 (1992) of 17 August 1992, authorized the Secretary-General to deploy United Nations observers in South Africa, in coordination with the structures set up under the National Peace Accord, to provide a framework and basis for putting an end to violence in the country. They welcome the Secretary-General's decision to deploy an advance party of 13 United Nations observers in South Africa on 11 September 1992 as part of the complement of 50 observers to be deployed within one month.

The members of the Council call upon the Government of South Africa, parties and organizations, and the structures set up under the National Peace Accord, to extend their full cooperation to the United Nations observers to enable them to carry out their tasks effectively. They reiterate their call to other relevant regional and inter-governmental organizations to consider deploying their own observers in South Africa in coordination with the United Nations and the structures set up under the National Peace Accord in order to facilitate the peace process.

⁴⁶ S/24456.

⁴⁷ S/24544.

⁴⁸ S/24541; recorded as a Security Council decision in *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1992*, p. 106.

8. The situation concerning Western Sahara

Decision of 27 June 1990 (2929th meeting): resolution 658 (1990)

On 18 June 1990, pursuant to resolution 621 (1988) of 20 September 1988, the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council a report on the situation concerning Western Sahara.¹ It contained the text of the settlement proposals made by the Secretary-

General and the current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as accepted in principle on 30 August 1988 by the parties to the conflict in Western Sahara, namely, Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente Polisario). The report also contained the outline of an implementation plan proposed by the Secretary-General for giving effect to those proposals. The main elements of the settlement

¹ S/21360.

plan were a ceasefire and the holding of a referendum without military or administrative constraints to enable the people of Western Sahara, in the exercise of their right to self-determination, to choose between independence and integration with Morocco. The implementation plan was based on recommendations made by the Technical Commission established on 30 June 1989 and the responses of the parties to the Commission's draft timetable. It provided, inter alia, for a ceasefire monitored by United Nations military personnel, followed by an exchange of prisoners of war; a substantial and phased reduction by Morocco of its troops in the Territory; the confinement of the combatants on each side to designated locations monitored by United Nations military personnel; the organization and conduct by the United Nations of a referendum 24 weeks after the ceasefire had come into effect; the monitoring by the United Nations of other aspects of the administration of the Territory, especially the maintenance of law and order, to ensure that the necessary conditions existed for the holding of a free and fair referendum; and the return of refugees, other Western Saharans living outside the Territory and Frente Polisario members found eligible to vote.

Under the implementation plan, during a transitional period lasting from the entry into force of the ceasefire to the announcement of the results of the referendum, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General would have sole and exclusive responsibility over all matters relating to the referendum. He would be assisted by an integrated support group of United Nations civilian, military and civil police personnel, to be known as the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The Secretary-General expressed the belief that the proposed implementation plan — to be carried out by the United Nations in cooperation with OAU, whose representatives would act as official observers — provided an effective means of holding a referendum and permitting the people of Western Sahara to determine their future without military or administrative constraints. He accordingly commended it to the Council for such action as the latter might consider appropriate to facilitate its implementation at the earliest possible date. He stressed that the United Nations operation would be large and complicated, and noted that, owing to a number of unknown factors, it was impossible at that stage to present to the Council even a preliminary estimate of costs. He therefore intended to dispatch, in the immediate future, a

technical mission to the Territory and neighbouring countries, to refine the administrative aspects of the plan and to obtain the information — especially about the availability of logistic supplies and support in the Territory — which was required to prepare a further report to the Council containing an estimate of the cost of MINURSO. In that report, he would recommend to the Council that it authorize the immediate establishment of MINURSO.

At its 2929th meeting, held on 27 June 1990 in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations, the Council included the report of the Secretary-General in its agenda. After the adoption of the agenda, the President (France) drew the attention of the members of the Council to a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.² The draft resolution was thereupon put to the vote and adopted unanimously as resolution 658 (1990), which reads:

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolution 621 (1988) of 20 September 1988, by which it decided to authorize the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative for Western Sahara and to request the Secretary-General to transmit to it as soon as possible a report on the holding of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and on ways and means to ensure the organization and supervision of such a referendum by the United Nations in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity,

Recalling also that, on 30 August 1988, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro gave their agreement in principle to the proposals of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in the framework of their joint mission of good offices,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara,

1. *Expresses* its full support to the Secretary-General in his mission of good offices, pursued jointly with the current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, with a view to settling the question of Western Sahara;

2. *Approves* the report of the Secretary-General, transmitted to the Council in accordance with resolution 621 (1988) with a view to settling the question of Western Sahara, which contains the full text of the settlement proposals as accepted by the two parties on 30 August 1988 as well as an

² S/21376, adopted without change as resolution 658 (1990).

outline of the plan provided by the Secretary-General in order to implement those proposals;

3. *Calls upon* the two parties to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in their efforts aimed at an early settlement of the question of Western Sahara;

4. *Welcomes* the intention of the Secretary-General to dispatch, in the immediate future, a technical mission to the territory and to neighbouring countries, in particular to refine the administrative aspects of the outlined plan and to obtain the necessary information for the preparation of a further report to the Council;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit to the Security Council as soon as possible a further detailed report on his implementation plan, containing, in particular, an estimate of the cost of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, on the understanding that this further report should be the basis on which the Council would authorize the establishment of the Mission.

**Decision of 29 April 1991 (2984th meeting):
resolution 690 (1991)**

On 19 April 1991, pursuant to resolution 658 (1990), the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council a further report on the situation concerning Western Sahara.³ Taking account of the work of the technical mission and the views of the two parties, the report contained detailed proposals with regard to the composition, strength and timetable of MINURSO,⁴ and an estimate of the overall cost of the mission. The mission would consist of three units: (a) a civilian unit, which would include an Identification Commission, charged with the central task of identifying and registering all Western Saharans eligible to vote in the referendum; a Referendum Commission, to assist the Special Representative in all aspects of the organization and conduct of the referendum; and a component under the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to implement the repatriation programme and facilitate the voluntary return of identified eligible voters; (b) a security unit; and (c) a military unit.

With regard to timing, the Secretary-General proposed that D-Day (the day on which the transitional period would begin and the ceasefire come into effect) be scheduled for 16 weeks after the approval of the

MINURSO budget by the General Assembly. With regard to the duration of the operation, he envisaged that the referendum could be held 36 weeks after the approval of the Mission's budget by the General Assembly, although MINURSO would continue to discharge its monitoring responsibilities arising from the referendum results for a period of some four to six weeks thereafter. He cautioned, however, that the duration stipulated for the various processes in the timetable were estimates and might require adjustment.

With regard to the financial aspects of the operation, the Secretary-General estimated that its overall cost, including the repatriation programme, would be approximately \$200 million. He recommended that the expenditures of MINURSO be considered as expenses of the Organization to be borne by the Member States in accordance with Article 17 (2) of the Charter except for the repatriation programme, estimated at some \$35 million, which would be funded through voluntary contributions. He stressed, however, that the programme should not be considered solely as a humanitarian activity: it was a political element crucial to the success of the operation. Consequently, he recommended that MINURSO not be deployed in the mission area on D-Day unless, by that date, the voluntary contributions needed for the implementation of the repatriation plan had been paid in full. The Secretary-General was confident that his proposals constituted a balanced and equitable way of achieving the goal of the holding of a free, fair and impartial referendum for the people of Western Sahara. However, he stressed that, for MINURSO to be effective, the following four essential conditions must be met: (a) it must at all times have the full support of the Security Council; (b) it must operate with the full cooperation of the two parties, particularly with regard to the comprehensive cessation of all hostile acts; (c) the cooperation and support of the neighbouring countries (Algeria and Mauritania) must be assured; and (d) the necessary financial resources must be made available by Member States in a full and timely manner. The Secretary-General concluded by recommending that the Security Council should decide to authorize the establishment of MINURSO and link the beginning of the transitional period to the appropriation action by the General Assembly.

At its 2984th meeting, on 29 April 1991, the Council included the report of the Secretary-General in its agenda. The President (Belgium) drew the attention

³ S/22464 and Corr.1.

⁴ For details concerning the establishment and operation of MINURSO, see chapter V.

of the members of the Council to the statement the Secretary-General had made at the Council's informal consultations on 24 April 1991,⁵ recommending the establishment of MINURSO as soon as possible in order to hasten the restoration of peace and stability in the region. He also drew their attention to a draft resolution that had been prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.⁶ The draft resolution was thereupon put to the vote and adopted unanimously as resolution 690 (1991), which reads:

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolution 621 (1988) of 20 September 1988, by which it, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to transmit to it a report on the holding of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and on ways and means to ensure the organization and supervision of such a referendum by the United Nations in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity,

Recalling also that, on 30 August 1988, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro gave their agreement in principle to the proposals of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the current Chairman of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in the framework of their joint mission of good offices,

Recalling further its resolution 658 (1990) of 27 June 1990, by which it approved the report of the Secretary-General of 18 June 1990, which contains the full text of the settlement proposals as accepted by the two parties on 30 August 1988, as well as an outline of the plan provided by the Secretary-General in order to implement those proposals, and by which it requested the Secretary-General to transmit to it a further detailed report on his implementation plan, containing in particular an estimate of the cost of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara,

Desirous of reaching a just and lasting solution of the question of Western Sahara,

Having examined the report of the Secretary-General of 19 April 1991 on the situation concerning Western Sahara,

1. *Approves* the report of the Secretary-General, transmitted to the Council in accordance with resolution 658 (1990);

2. *Expresses its full support* for the efforts of the Secretary-General for the organization and the supervision, by the United Nations in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, of a referendum for self-determination of the

people of Western Sahara, in accordance with the objectives mentioned in his report;

3. *Calls upon* the two parties to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General in the implementation of his plan as described in his report of 18 June 1990 and amplified in his report of 19 April 1991;

4. *Decides* to establish, under its authority, a United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara in accordance with the report of 19 April 1991;

5. *Also decides* that the transitional period will begin no later than sixteen weeks after the General Assembly approves the budget for the Mission;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council regularly informed of the implementation of his settlement plan.

Decision of 4 September 1991: letter from the President of the Security Council to the Secretary-General

By a letter dated 8 July 1991 addressed to the President of the Council,⁷ the Secretary-General informed the Council that, in accordance with paragraph 12 of his report of 18 June 1990,⁸ he had written to Morocco and the Frente Polisario on 24 May 1991, proposing that a formal ceasefire should commence on 6 September 1991, and that the two parties had accepted that date.

By a letter dated 3 September 1991 addressed to the President of the Council,⁹ the Secretary-General transmitted a note regarding the implementation of the ceasefire. Expressing concern at recent developments along the international frontier, he stated that he had decided that United Nations efforts should be concentrated, at that stage, in the areas specified in the note. He intended to deploy about 100 military observers in those areas, as from 6 September 1991, to verify compliance with the ceasefire. Full deployment of MINURSO would not begin until the activities set out in the timetable for the plan were well under way. By a letter dated 4 September 1991,¹⁰ the President informed the Secretary-General that the members of the Council endorsed his action.

⁷ S/22779.

⁸ S/21360.

⁹ S/23008.

¹⁰ S/23009.

⁵ S/22532.

⁶ S/22525, adopted without change as resolution 690 (1991).

Decision of 17 September 1991: letter from the President of the Security Council to the Secretary-General

By a letter dated 13 September 1991 addressed to the President of the Council,¹¹ the Secretary-General informed the Council that, in the context of the deployment of military observers to verify the ceasefire in the areas referred to in his letter of 3 September, he intended to deploy about 100 additional military observers and the staff necessary for command and control functions, logistical support, communications, air transport and medical support. By a letter dated 17 September 1991,¹² the President informed the Secretary-General that the members of the Council endorsed his action.

Decision of 31 December 1991 (3025th meeting): resolution 725 (1991)

On 19 December 1991, pursuant to resolution 690 (1991), the Secretary-General submitted to the Council a report on the implementation of his settlement plan for Western Sahara.¹³ He reported that, during the three months following the acceptance by the parties of the date of the ceasefire, it had become apparent that it would not be possible to carry out a number of tasks that were supposed to be completed before the ceasefire came into effect on 6 September 1991. It had also become clear that, notwithstanding the parties' earlier acceptance of the settlement plan, substantial areas of difference between them remained. Consequently, one party had not been able to agree that the transition period should begin on 6 September 1991, as envisaged in the plan. Meanwhile, hostilities had broken out in the Territory, interrupting an informal ceasefire that had been in effect for more than two years. In those circumstances, the Secretary-General said he had decided that the ceasefire should come into effect on 6 September as agreed, on the understanding that the transition period would begin as soon as the outstanding tasks had been completed. There was no doubt, in his view, that the United Nations military and civilian presence in the area had contributed significantly to a calming of the situation, although both parties had complained about violations of the ceasefire.

The Secretary-General regretted that slow progress in the accomplishment of certain tasks had made it necessary to adjust the timetable of the settlement plan, largely because of the complexity of the identification process, aimed at establishing the list of those who would vote in the referendum, and the parties' different interpretations of the plan in that regard. The parties also differed in their interpretation of the plan in relation to the confinement of troops and the return of refugees and other Saharans living outside the Territory. There was likely to be a further delay of some months while consultations continued on those issues. The Secretary-General stressed that everything would be done to reduce costs. In conclusion, he noted that serious efforts would have to be made at the political and technical levels in order to keep the process going.

At its 3025th meeting, on 31 December 1991, the Council included the report of the Secretary-General in its agenda. After the adoption of the agenda, the President (Russian Federation) drew the attention of the members of the Council to a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.¹⁴ He also drew their attention to three letters addressed to the President of the Security Council relating to the item on the agenda: a letter dated 23 December 1991 from the representative of Ghana; a letter dated 24 December 1991 from the representative of Morocco; and a letter dated 26 December 1991 from the representative of Algeria.¹⁵

The draft resolution was thereupon put to the vote and adopted unanimously as resolution 725 (1991), which reads:

The Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 621 (1988) of 20 September 1988, 658 (1990) of 22 June 1990 and 690 (1991) of 29 April 1991,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 19 December 1991 on the situation concerning Western Sahara,

Noting with concern the difficulties and delays encountered in the implementation of the settlement plan regarding the question of Western Sahara, as adopted by resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991),

1. *Approves* the efforts of the Secretary-General for the organization and the supervision, by the United Nations in

¹¹ S/23043.

¹² S/23044.

¹³ S/23299.

¹⁴ S/23330, adopted without change as resolution 725 (1991).

¹⁵ S/23315, S/23321 and S/23323, respectively.

cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, and therefore welcomes the report of the Secretary-General of 19 December 1991 on the situation concerning Western Sahara;

2. *Reiterates its support* for further efforts by the Secretary-General for the organization and the supervision, by the United Nations in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in conformity with resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991), by which the Council adopted the settlement plan for Western Sahara;

3. *Calls upon* the two parties to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General in the implementation of the settlement plan, which has been accepted by them;

4. *Invites* the Secretary-General to submit a further report to the Security Council as soon as possible, but in any event within two months of the date of passage of this resolution.

**Decision of 25 March 1992: letter from the
President of the Security Council to the
Secretary-General**

On 28 February 1992, pursuant to resolution 725 (1991), the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council a report on MINURSO.¹⁶ He underlined that the primary function of the Mission in its current limited deployment was to monitor the ceasefire. He reported that the ceasefire had held: there had been no exchanges of fire between the two sides and no deaths as a result of hostile action. However, there had been a worrying number of lesser violations of the ceasefire, the great majority of which had been attributable to one of the parties. Recalling that the referendum in Western Sahara should have been held in January 1992, the Secretary-General said that it had not been possible to proceed in conformity with the original timetable in view of persistent differences of interpretation with regard to the implementation of the plan. The fact that the United Nations had never before organized a referendum of this kind also contributed to the delay. The Secretary-General stated that he was not in a position at that stage to propose a revised timetable for implementation. However, he believed that a target date should be set for resolution of all outstanding issues that blocked implementation of the plan. He accordingly proposed to report further to the Council not later than the end of May 1992. In the meantime, he recommended that MINURSO be maintained for the

¹⁶ S/23662.

next three months at its current level of activity, on the grounds that its continued presence helped to maintain the ceasefire and thus created conditions for the remaining obstacles to be removed.

By a letter dated 25 March 1992,¹⁷ the President of the Council informed the Secretary-General that the members of the Council had taken note of his report of 28 February and reiterated the Council's support for his efforts and those of his newly appointed Special Representative to accelerate the implementation of the settlement plan. Taking into consideration the urgency of the situation, the members of the Council looked forward to a further report from the Secretary-General on the progress made in the implementation of the plan.

**Decision of 3 June 1992: letter from the
President of the Security Council to the
Secretary-General**

On 29 May 1992, pursuant to the Council's expressed interest and his stated intention, the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council a further report on the status of the implementation of the settlement plan.¹⁸ He reported that, although ceasefire violations had continued with somewhat increased frequency since his last report, the incidents had generally not been of a violent nature and that, since the deployment of MINURSO the previous year, there had not been a single casualty. Furthermore, the parties had assured his Special Representative that they would make every effort to adhere to the provisions of the ceasefire agreement and to cooperate with MINURSO within the framework of the settlement plan. In the light of the foregoing and bearing in mind the critical role the MINURSO observers were playing in the maintenance of peace and tranquillity, the Secretary-General recommended that the Council extend the mandate of MINURSO for a further period of three months, until the end of August 1992. He added that if, by that time, the peace process remained deadlocked, the Council might wish to consider a different approach.

By a letter dated 3 June 1992,¹⁹ the President of the Council informed the Secretary-General that his report of 29 May had been brought to the attention of

¹⁷ S/23755.

¹⁸ S/24040.

¹⁹ S/24059.

the members of the Council who reaffirmed their support for the efforts he and his Special Representative were making to reactivate the settlement plan. The President added that the members of the Council shared the Secretary-General's views on the necessity of maintaining in place the MINURSO personnel currently deployed in Western Sahara in order to monitor the ceasefire. In view of the increasing urgency of the situation, the members of the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit, at the earliest possible date, a further progress report on the implementation of the plan.

Decision of 31 August 1992: letter from the President of the Security Council to the Secretary-General

On 20 August 1992, pursuant to the last paragraph of the President's letter of 3 June, the Secretary-General submitted to the Council a further progress report on the situation concerning Western Sahara.²⁰ He reported that, since his last report, there had been a marked decline in the number of ceasefire violations confirmed by MINURSO observers. In accordance with the agreement reached with the two parties, his Special Representative had embarked on a series of talks with each of them, focusing initially on the formulation of safeguards to protect the rights and liberties of the losing side in the referendum, whatever the outcome. Each party had submitted proposals for such safeguards. The parties had been reminded that, in the interest of restoring confidence in the peace process, they should abide scrupulously by the ceasefire and abstain from any provocative behaviour endangering the settlement plan. The Secretary-General stated that the talks had achieved their principal objective of creating a climate in which obstacles to the holding of the referendum — primarily, disagreements over the criteria for eligibility to vote²¹ — could be overcome. He also reported on the discussions his Special Representative had had with the Government of Morocco concerning the latter's reported intention of holding, in the coming months, municipal and legislative elections, as well as a plebiscite on constitutional reform, in which the inhabitants of Western Sahara would be eligible to

²⁰ S/24464.

²¹ For the criteria for eligibility to vote, see the annex to the Secretary-General's report of 19 December 1991 (S/23299).

vote. While reluctant to consider postponing the intended elections, Morocco had expressed its readiness to give a written commitment to the Secretary-General to the effect that those elections would be independent of, and separate from, the United Nations referendum and that it would abide by the results of the latter. In concluding, the Secretary-General stated his intention to submit a further report to the Council before the end of September, focusing on the results of the next round of talks between his Special Representative and the parties which would concentrate on the interpretation of the criteria for eligibility to vote. In the meantime, he proposed to maintain the existing deployment and staffing of MINURSO.

By a letter dated 31 August 1992,²² the President of the Council informed the Secretary-General that his report of 20 August had been brought to the attention of the members of the Council and that they had agreed to his proposal to maintain the existing staffing and deployment of MINURSO. They also shared the Secretary-General's views on the necessity of the parties abiding by the ceasefire and abstaining from any provocative behaviour endangering the settlement plan. The members expressed the hope that both parties would cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in their efforts to achieve speedy progress in the implementation of the plan, and strongly urged the parties themselves to make extraordinary efforts to ensure the success of the plan. They looked forward to receiving a further progress report on the implementation of the plan, as indicated, before the end of September.

Decision of 8 October 1992: letter from the President of the Security Council to the Secretary-General

By a letter dated 2 October 1992 addressed to the President of the Council,²³ the Secretary-General stated that the results of the talks of his Special Representative with each of the parties on the interpretation of the criteria for eligibility to vote had been inconclusive. He had therefore authorized his Special Representative to undertake further consultations with a view to clarifying certain unresolved questions and also to determining whether a

²² S/24504.

²³ S/24644.

meeting of tribal chiefs, such as that organized by the United Nations at Geneva in June 1990, could help solve the problems impeding the implementation of the settlement plan. Pending the completion of those consultations, the Secretary-General proposed to postpone the submission of his report to the Council by six to eight weeks. In the meantime, he recommended maintaining the existing deployment and staffing of MINURSO.

By a letter dated 8 October 1992,²⁴ the President of the Council informed the Secretary-General that his letter of 2 October had been brought to the attention of the members of the Council. They reiterated their full support for the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General and the Special Representative to resolve the problems impeding the implementation of the settlement plan, welcoming, in particular, the Secretary-General's intention to explore the possibility of a further meeting of tribal chiefs. The members of the Council emphasized the urgency of settling the pending questions, especially those which related to the interpretation of the criteria for inclusion in the voters' lists, so that the implementation of the plan might begin as soon as possible. They also approved the Secretary-General's proposal to maintain the existing deployment and staffing of MINURSO, and awaited his further report in due course.

²⁴ S/24645.

By a letter dated 22 December 1992 addressed to the President of the Council,²⁵ the Secretary-General referred to his letter of 16 November²⁶ in which he had expressed the need to postpone the presentation of his report until the second week of December in order to await the results of the consultative meeting of tribal chiefs, scheduled to be held at Geneva earlier in the month. He regretted to inform the Council that it had not been possible to hold the meeting, owing to discrepancies regarding the notion of tribal chiefs — discrepancies which were themselves linked to the persisting divergences on the criteria for identification and their interpretation. The Secretary-General recalled that it had been his hope that the referendum in Western Sahara could be organized on the basis of agreements among all concerned on the major aspects of the settlement plan. However, he had to conclude with much regret that the considerable efforts made by his Special Representative over the past several months to reach such agreements had not achieved the desired results. He now felt obliged to take concrete steps towards the holding of the referendum, in the expectation that both parties would fully cooperate with him pursuant to their commitment to abide by the provisions of the settlement plan. In his forthcoming report, which he would submit to the Council in the second half of January 1993, he intended therefore to set forth the various steps which would need to be taken in order to hold the referendum at the earliest possible date.

²⁵ S/25008.

²⁶ The letter was not issued as a document of the Council.