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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Réseau Unité pour le Développement de Mauritanie, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[28 January 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



The Use Of Natural Resources as a tool for Prosperity and developments Of The people In Western Sahara.

The issue of natural resources is of a great importance to human rights defenders, since it is one of the main gates for protecting social, economic and environmental rights of people. This situation pushes us to deal with it with kind of agreement and insistence because natural resources for countries represents a matter of sovereignty and they are the basis of any economical and social development. At the same time, they are the reason of enhancing social justice and prosperity, as every person has the right to benefit directly or indirectly from his natural resources.

As far as I am concerned, as a human rights defender from Sahara, the question of natural resources is related to the core of political conflict of Western Sahara .Thus , defending the right of exploiting and benefiting from the natural resources and its distribution in a way that guarantee the maximum amount of social justice and economic prosperity for the citizens in the area , makes us in a great need for a positive agreement between the state and the citizens and all the interveners to stop the suffering of Sahrawi people in Tindouf s camps because this political conflict is interrupting directly the wheel of development and progress in the area .

I must mention to this point, that the issue of natural resources as its importance to the question of sovereignty, has become a useful card to be played out of human rights universal context , as a result ,it has been used to gain political space, this fact is actually stopping and interrupting people's prosperity and dignified future .This takes me to talk about the necessity of using best practices in defending human rights in relation to the natural resources ,because of its absence after 40 years of conflict , UN still asks for understanding of the situation of human rights.

However, in this region a significant global awareness of human rights and establishing institutions to defend human rights hand in hand to independent human rights defenders, we still need effective and transparent legal space which enhances credibility and transparency.

Our goal is to achieve a great amount of justice and equal opportunities in benefiting from natural resources which Morocco is trying his best to achieve that through national initiative and promoting competencies and building social institutions (hospitals,schools,universities) and all this comes from the philosophy of winner-winner between the state and the Sahrawi society in the region .That's where come the role of the human right defender to encourage all initiatives towards people prosperity and social justice and fight any one who tends to stop the process of development and progress in the area .We, as human right defenders in Sahara , are concerned with a whole society's future ,so we must work hand in hand to achieve its dignified living ,prosperity and security away from using the natural resources as a stick in its way.

Therefore, We call upon The European Union:

- To continue its trade treaty with Morocco that include Western Sahara since Saharawi people are benefitting directly and indirectly from agreement which guarantee prosperity ,developments and human rights to the people of Western Sahara .
