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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.

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* 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 Development Model as a Good Practice in Western Sahara

The question of sovereignty in traditional law is built around the relation among states. However, the concept of sovereignty also relates strongly to exercises power by state in certain territory. For international law, the development of natural resources is governed by the doctrine of permanent sovereignty over natural resources which back up what I mentioned about the question of sovereignty in the start. This doctrine, as it is generally understood, provides that every state has the right to dispose of its natural resources in accordance with its national interest. Every state, therefore, possesses sovereignty rights over national resources located within boundaries of its territory. I made this introduction because where I come from the Western Sahara is an area of conflict between independent state Morocco and supported militia called Polisario which has no sovereignty but it exist in foreign territory called Tindouf provided by another state to affect internal Morocco.

Because of this conflict, the question of natural resources has always been raised there, but one must know the most challenging truths or how natural resources in Western Sahara are oriented to the well-being of local population.

At this point, I think Morocco has made unexpected efforts in the area. Not only Morocco has invested 2.5 billion dollar in infrastructure and social services in Western Sahara, but also it has launched new development model in the region of Western Sahara with the cost of 7.7 Billion dollar and a promise to invest 18 billion in the next ten years.

This means opportunities in infrastructure projects, transport facilities, manufacturing in general among others.

The south of Morocco is a major part of the government program of investment in renewable energies as a pillar of the development model for Western Sahara region which is fully oriented to well-being of the local communities. Laayoune, for example, where I come from is better than some African capitals, how can that be true? It is because the Moroccan state, to say the truth, has done great efforts to develop the Saharawi area. Ten years ago, we were asking for universities, hospitals and stadiums in Western Sahara, now the Saharawi provinces as I said enjoy a sustainable development which reflects on people life by national program of INDH National Initiative of Human development.

This program in Western Sahara guarantees a stable income for thousands of families. Second, in 2015 the king has launched a huge plan of regional development which consists building CHU University central Hospital which will cover the region of Sahara. Moreover, hundreds of post has been given to Saharawi youth in the mine of phosphates. As far as the field of education is concerned, every Sahrawi student has a seat at school freely. More importantly, University Mohamed 6 has been founded; it will be one of the biggest in Morocco. The city of Dakhla, as well has become an international destination for its touristic reputation. All these achievements are the reflection of the natural resources in Sahara.

Moreover, real efforts have been done in Western Sahara to cover rural area and urban area by electricity and drinkable water. Besides, to fight unemployment many programs has been launched in order to train qualify and insert youth in job market which encourage job seeker in Western Sahara to start their own jobs projects instead of relying on what is called employment campaign. Also, health care in Western Sahara has known a great progress especially the increasing number of hospitals and health centers.

As far as, policy of settlement in Western Sahara, the state has always launched programs to provide home for people with reasonable prices and for free when it is given to returnees from Tindouf camps to help their social integration.

Most Importantly, Morocco has adopted a policy towards governing Western Sahara with the objective to give local people fully Autonomy. This policy is centered on orientating the Western Sahara resources especially mines like phosphates, and fisheries towards the well-being of Saharawi people, in addition to enhancing the culture of human rights at all levels of societies starting from founding clubs to worker communities and respecting the ethnic diversities. This provided the

Idea of regional commission for human rights which works according to Paris principals in independent from state.

This policy is also based on reinforcing participatory democracy model which must have input of local stakeholders and potential beneficiaries for the use of off shore natural resources. The European Union Morocco agreement and joint declaration of principles regarding energy exploration and production both of which commit to returning benefits to the local population.
