

**STATEMENT BY HON. NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, MP,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA, TO THE 23RD SESSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ON THE ITEM “REPORT OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE SITUATION IN WESTERN
SAHARA” EX.CL/788(XXIII), 22 MAY 2013, ADDIS ABABA**

Your Excellency Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Chairperson of the African Union Executive Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,

Your Excellencies Ministers of Foreign Affairs,

Your Excellency Dr Nkhosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Namibia welcomes the Report of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights which graphically draws our attention to the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Western Sahara under the colonial occupation of the Kingdom of Morocco. Namibia fully endorses the proposals contained in that Report and supports the recommendations of the Permanent Representatives Committee(PRC). It is our strong view that the question of

Western Sahara should be inscribed on the Agenda of the African Union as a standing item, until the solution is found.

2. It is unacceptable that, as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the OAU/AU, the people of Western Sahara continue to be under colonial subjugation by another African country, the Kingdom of Morocco. Colonialism and oppression are unacceptable whether imposed by an African country on another African country. Namibia fully supports the call in the Report for our Organisation to focus its sustained political and diplomatic attention on the plight of the people of Western Sahara.
3. The African Union should exert political and diplomatic pressure on the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco to allow the unfettered implementation of UN Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions to allow the people of Western Sahara to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination. We are deeply disappointed that the efforts to implement the UN Plan and Referendum for Western Sahara have been frustrated by the occupying power, the Kingdom of Morocco. In the context of the 50th anniversary of the OAU, Namibia calls on the Kingdom of Morocco to allow the holding of an immediate referendum in order to complete the decolonisation process of the continent.

Mr Chairman,

4. The right to self-determination is indivisible and the right to independence of all the peoples under colonial occupation is inalienable. This is universally recognised under the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 of 1960.

5. Africa should provide leadership and resolve in assisting the people of Western Sahara to attain their freedom and independence. Africa should remain faithful to the founding principles of this Organisation. Namibia fully supports the urgent need for the African Union and the United Nations to adequately address the plight of the people of Western Sahara particularly those living in refugee camps. Namibia also supports the call on the Security Council to include human rights and humanitarian component in the mandate of the UN Mission in Western Sahara, MINURSO.

6. Finally, I wish to reaffirm Namibia's active solidarity with the Saharawi people under the leadership of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.

I thank you.