

at Rabat, Morocco, on 13 May 1969 and that the transfer of powers to the Government of Morocco would take place within a period of three months from 13 May 1969.

The Chairman subsequently drew the attention of the Special Committee to a letter dated 9 July 1969 in which the Permanent Representative of Spain informed the Secretary-General that the retrocession of Ifni to the Government of Morocco had been effected on 30 June 1969. The Special Committee concluded its consideration of the territory of Ifni by taking note of that development.

#### SPANISH SAHARA

With regard to Spanish Sahara, the representative of Morocco pointed out that although Spain had given its support to the principle of self-determination for the inhabitants of the territory, and had stated its acceptance of a visiting mission to Spanish Sahara, these provisions of various Assembly resolutions remained to be implemented by the administering power. In addition, he said, the Spanish authorities in the territory were taking steps, such as the establishment of provincial bodies and of a local assembly, which seemed openly designed to establish a kind of referendum of the people of the Sahara in a sort of *tête-à-tête* with Spain. Such measures, he thought, were in contradiction to the spirit of self-determination and to the measures envisaged by the General Assembly to ensure that self-determination would be exercised as soon as possible.

Mauritania favoured a solution that would uphold the rights of the population of Spanish Sahara; it was hoped that such a solution could be found in harmony with the administering power and in co-operation with all countries interested in maintaining peace in the area. Mauritania felt that the elements for a satisfactory solution of the problem were to be found in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 1968<sup>26</sup>—which, *inter alia*, invited the administering power to determine the procedures for holding a referendum. The Government of Mauritania had exerted considerable effort in accepting that solution, its spokesman said, but it would continue to hold the same attitude, respectful of the rights of the people of the territory.

The representative of Spain stated that the Spanish Government was deeply concerned by the annexationist aspirations that were emerging concerning the area and could not fail to heed the appeal for protection it had received from the elected representatives of the inhabitants. It was not the fault of the Spanish Government, he said, that press and radio campaigns had aroused concern in the people of the territory, nor was it its responsibility that foreign agents were constantly being introduced into the area. For its part, he said, the Spanish Government was doing its best to improve the living conditions of the people of the Sahara, and it was trying to facilitate the implementation of the General Assembly's resolution of 18 December 1968.<sup>27</sup>

With respect to the visit of a special mission, which the Spanish Government had agreed to receive, the representative of Spain said that he had nothing to add to the content of the letter he had sent to the Secretary-General on 17 October 1968, which had stated that his delegation was ready to start talks with the Secretary-General to discuss the dispatch of observers to Spanish Sahara so that they could observe, analyse, and form a judgement on the situation. Finally, he said that the population of the Sahara would have complete freedom to exercise self-determination at the proper time and when Spain was so requested.

In response to the Spanish representative's statement that foreign agents were being introduced into the Sahara, the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania said that the only foreigners in the territory were the numerous Spanish troops, whose presence hindered the implementation of the General Assembly resolution on this territory.

On 25 September 1969, the Special Committee decided to transmit to the General Assembly the relevant working paper by the Secretariat in order to facilitate the consideration of the question by the Assembly's Fourth Committee, and, subject to any directives which the General Assembly might give in that con-

<sup>26</sup> See Y.U.N., 1968, pp. 754-55, text of resolution 2428 (XXIII).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*