

nexion, to give consideration to the subject the following year.

On 2 December 1969, the Chairman informed the Special Committee that the Secretary-General had received from the Permanent Representative of Spain a reply dated 17 November to his note of 10 January 1969. In his letter, the Permanent Representative stated that his Government was firmly in favour of applying the principle of self-determination to the Sahara and reiterated the offer concerning the possibility of a visit to the territory. He added that this offer must, however, be interpreted in the same terms in which it was made and without forgetting that the express desires of the Saharan population ought to take priority over any other consideration.

CONSIDERATION BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The questions of Ifni and Spanish Sahara were considered by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth (1969) session, where the discussion took place primarily in the Fourth Committee.

IFNI

During the discussion of Ifni, Spain and Morocco noted that Ifni had been returned in full sovereignty to Morocco as a result of the Treaty of Fez concluded between the two countries. The representatives of Barbados, Lebanon, Mauritania, Pakistan, Sudan, and Trinidad and Tobago, among others, expressed their satisfaction that the question had been amicably resolved between the two parties.

On 16 December 1969, at a plenary meeting, the General Assembly on the recommendation of its Fourth Committee took note of the retrocession of Ifni, on 30 June 1969, to the Government of Morocco.

SPANISH SAHARA

With regard to Spanish Sahara, the representative of Mauritania stated that the territory, which was situated within the geographical limits of Mauritania, was inhabited solely by Moorish tribes whose culture and customs were similar to those of other tribes living in north-western Mauritania.

As early as 1957, he observed, reference had

been made to the concept of an economic and spiritual greater Mauritania, a term not in contradiction to the application of the principle of self-determination to the people of the region.

Mauritania urged the administering power to hold prior consultations in order to determine the procedures for a referendum in the territory which, he thought, should take into account all those procedures mentioned in the United Nations decisions and, in particular, the dispatch of a United Nations mission to participate in the referendum.

The representative of Morocco rejected the Mauritanian representative's assertion that Spanish Sahara was part of a greater Mauritania. In fact, he said, Mauritania had put forward territorial claims only after Morocco had laid claims to the territory. The question of Spanish Sahara was a dispute that Spain and Morocco were trying to settle by peaceful means, and which Morocco wished to solve without wasting time, he said. In this connexion the representative of Morocco regretted that the Spanish Government, which had endorsed the principles contained in a General Assembly decision of 20 December 1966,²⁸ had since made several reservations with regard to its implementation, in particular with respect to the sending of a United Nations mission to the territory. In the view of the Moroccan representative, there was a contradiction between Spain's vote in favour of the above-mentioned resolution and the administrative, military, political and legal measures it was taking in the territory. Consequently, Morocco urged Spain to implement the resolution in good faith and to apply the principles that would ensure the self-determination of the people of the Sahara.

In reply, the representative of Spain said that such measures as had been taken by Spain in the territory were designed to increase the inhabitants' awareness of their political destiny and to encourage them to play a more active part in the management of their affairs. To that end, he said, elections had been held in order to improve the representative character of public institutions. The Spanish Government firmly

²⁸ See Y.U.N., 1966, p. 592, text of resolution 2229(XXI).