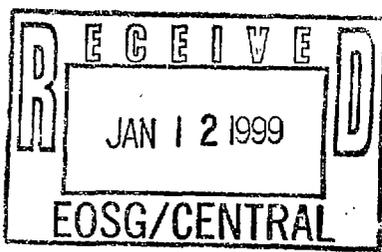


SG Statements
Tindouf Trip (11/98)
W. Sakara

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

**ADDRESS TO THE FRENTE POLISARIO,
SAHARAN TRIBAL LEADERS AND REFUGEES**
Tindouf, 30 November 1998



Excellencies,
Tribal leaders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for greeting us so warmly. I am happy to have come back so soon. I have looked forward to this as an occasion to listen and to learn from our exchange; and to give you an opportunity to raise your concerns. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Frente Polisario for the cooperation that it has extended to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.

This is a crucial time for all our efforts in Western Sahara -- ours and yours. It is a time when we must redouble our efforts to bring to conclusion the challenge of settling this long-lasting dispute and to implement the Settlement Plan and the Houston Agreement.

I am convinced that the strong wish of all of you and of the Sahrawi people is to follow this path and to witness its conclusion in a brighter, more peaceful future.

Let me also confirm to you that we at the United Nations are determined to pursue our mandate for Western Sahara, with energy, with initiative and with an unflagging commitment to helping you resolve all outstanding questions regarding this issue.

It is in this spirit that we are endeavouring to allay any of your concerns and, at the same time, those of the Moroccan party, over the procedures which the United Nations has proposed in order to move forward in the identification and recourse processes and in the implementation of other provisions of the Settlement Plan.

What I cannot pledge, and what I cannot deliver, is the will of the Parties, their courage, or their decision to set aside all alternatives to peaceful solutions. Only you and the Moroccan people can do that. You and the Moroccan authorities must continue down your chosen path, and must, when necessary, show flexibility, understanding, wisdom and vision if the difficulties are to be overcome.

I am confident that, with the help of the cooperation of the Parties, we can find a solution that will ensure your safe return, in safety and dignity, as well as the conduct of a free and fair referendum that we all desire. Thank you.