**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 **REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 743**

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**Ms N R Mashabela (EFF) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

What role, if any, does South Africa continue to play in fighting for the sovereignty and freedom of Western Sahara? NW820E

**REPLY:**

South Africa pursues a pan Africanist foreign policy, which amongst others seeks to promote the decolonisation of the African Continent. To this end, since 2004 South Africa recognized the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as a full member of the African Union (AU). South Africa has been consistent in her support for the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence. South Africa’s support is consistent with the United Nations (UN) Declaration on Decolonization and in accordance with the UN Resolution 1514 of 1960 which emphasized on the inalienable right of the indigenous people of the Western Sahara to total independence as well as the AU Roadmap towards a speedy peaceful resolution to the conflict which was reaffirmed by the recent 30th AU Summit held in Addis Ababa in January 2018.

South Africa further supports the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination, first as a State and later SADR’s admission to the African Union. South Africa’s solidarity with the SADR is not only historical and principled but practical. Since South Africa’s recognition of the SADR, South Africa continues to provide technical assistance and humanitarian support to the people of Western Sahara.

Furthermore, the South African and SADR governments on 29th March 2018 in Pretoria signed the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) on Technical Assistance and Exchange of Notes on Humanitarian Assistance that will provide for the release of R10 million in humanitarian aid to assist in the provision of emergency shelter, nutrition, medical care, child protection and education in the Western Sahara refugee camps located in south-west Algeria as well as an annual R1, 771 000.00 for technical support to the SADR Embassy in Pretoria.

In addition, South Africa sponsored a decision for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to hold a solidarity conference on Western Sahara. The solidarity conference is expected to be convened during the course of this year.