

**Dear Colleagues,**

**As the year 2013 is coming to an end and as the holiday season commences, I want to thank you once again for your continued service and support to the Mission and the cause of peace. I know the year has not been all easy, especially because of budgetary pressures that affected our Organisation in general and MINURSO in particular. However, I am glad that difficulties could be overcome through daily commitment of all, dialogue and a spirit of openness.**

**The year 2013 was good for MINURSO. The mission is recognized by the international community as an important contribution to stability in the region as can be seen by the increased attention paid to MINURSO with visits by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Christopher Ross, the Assistant Secretary-General for Operations, Mr. Edmond Mulet, three United Nations Special Rapporteurs as well as diplomats from key capitals.**

**The value of MINURSO is grounded in the implementation of its mandate, which is the direct result of the solid, reliable and professional work you do to help maintain the ceasefire through military observation and alleviating the effects of conflict through the de-mining activities and supporting the family visits programme. This work is made possible, in an operationally harsh landscape, by the Mission Support and the Security Section which create the conditions for it. By working together, each section serving the other, we are implementing our mandate.**

**In my meetings with the Secretary-General and Security Council in October, your hard work and professionalism was once again recognized by all. While there are differing views on the Western Sahara as such, there is unanimity on the positive role of MINURSO.**

**I am very proud to be the Head of this exceptional Mission. I wish you all peaceful end-of-year holidays and success in your endeavours for the new year.**

**Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber**

**SRSG and Head of Mission**

**23 December 2013**