



GROUP OF FRIENDS
IN DEFENSE OF THE
CHARTER OF THE
UNITED NATIONS

**STATEMENT IN EXPLANATION OF POSITION DELIVERED BY H.E.
MR. JOAQUÍN PÉREZ AYESTARÁN, AMBASSADOR, DEPUTY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF
VENEZUELA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, BEFORE ACTION ON DRAFT
RESOLUTION A/78/L.1, ENTITLED “POLITICAL DECLARATION OF
THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT CONVENED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS”**

New York, 29 September 2023

Mr. President,

1. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honor to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, which associates itself to the statement delivered by the Delegation of Cuba, on behalf of the Group of the 77 plus China.

Mr. President,

2. The very Preamble of the founding Charter of this Organization states “We, the Peoples of the United Nations, determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom” and it goes on to express that, among the purposes of our Organization, the achievement of “international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character (...)” is essential.
3. Today, once again, we will fail in that endeavor. We will consciously and voluntarily dishonor our pledge of leaving no one behind, once again. We will adopt a document that disregards the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on over one third of humanity. This is, perhaps, one of the reasons why our peoples feel frustrated with the United Nations and fail to understand why, despite its convening power and authority, our decisions in this very General Assembly do not have an impact on their daily lives; on easing their burdens and on ensuring that we, as their representatives, be in a position to effectively provide for their most basic needs.
4. Under these conditions and with this nefarious approach that pretends to continue with business as usual, how could we, for instance, Mr. President, realize your

vision of “Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability”? If we continue along the same path, allowing for the very same supremacist mentality to prevail in these chambers, we ought to say it: we are doomed to fail over and over again.

5. The question of unilateral coercive measures, we cannot overemphasize, can no longer be ignored or swept under the carpet, especially in the midst of the current juncture, when we are facing a growing trend towards the continued, systematic, relentless, unprecedented and ever-increasing resort to the promulgation, implementation and even expansion of these so-called sanctions, which is having an impact not only on targeted nations, but also on the global economy as a whole, as well as on supply chains, food and energetic security, among other fields. Thus, unilateral coercive measures deliberately exacerbate the current global multifaceted crisis that currently confronts humanity.

Mr. President,

6. Unilateral coercive measures are illegal. They violate the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the most basic norms of international law. They are tools of coercion used to advance foreign policy aims and are used as means for exerting political, economic and financial pressure on independent and sovereign nations, particularly from the developing world.
7. Unilateral coercive measures are cruel and inhumane. They seek to capitalize on the pain and suffering they cause on entire peoples for advancing interventionist and destabilization agendas. Not only are they mass violations of human rights, including to food, health or development, but they also constitute themselves in crimes against humanity, as they clearly seek to deprive entire populations of their means of subsistence. Their negative impact, in many instances, is rather incommensurable. It is a proven fact that they can be even as lethal as weapons used in conventional warfare.
8. Unilateral coercive measures are a direct and deliberate attack on development and are applied, precisely, by those very same countries that disown the very existence of the right to development as a universal, indivisible and inalienable human right. As such, they are the main obstacle, not by mere coincidence, to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the attainment of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
9. That is, an obstacle to very 2030 Agenda which, needless to say, calls upon States “to refrain from promulgating and applying unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United



Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries”.

Mr. President,

10. Since the very beginning of this process, back in February, our delegations stressed, both individually and as a group, the critical importance they attached to the inclusion of the question of unilateral coercive measures in the draft Political Declaration that we will be formally adopting later this morning. We say it is of “critical” importance because many of the Member States of our grouping are subjected to the illegal application of such measures and know, first hand, the negative impact they have on their entire peoples.
11. We decided, as has always been the case, to participate in an active and constructive manner throughout the negotiations, committed to reaching compromises that would ultimately allow us to reach a consensus outcome. We engaged at all times in good faith and showed, as usual, a great deal of flexibility.
12. Consensus, nevertheless, is forged on a daily basis. It presupposes engaging in good faith, understanding and respecting different points of views. It implies a process of mutual accommodation. Consensus cannot be imposed and that is, indeed, what the Office of the former President of the General Assembly attempted to do. We trust such a mistake will never be committed again, while stressing that the shortcomings of this process that concludes today shall in no way set a precedent for future processes, especially as we will be embarking later this year in preparations for the Summit of the Future.

Mr. President,

13. Moreover, throughout the almost five months of extensive negotiations, across the table, we never found the same spirit and eagerness to engage. Quite the opposite. Since the very beginning there was an attempt to impose a sort of veto on any sort of discussion related to the inclusion of the question of unilateral coercive measures into the text. This, we have to say emphatically, is no way to conduct intergovernmental negotiations in the United Nations, and we regret that the co-facilitators failed to discourage such an approach throughout negotiations.
14. We proposed many options, alternatives and out-of-the-box formulations, even beyond the very consensual and previously agreed language from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on this matter, which should have been the easiest to accommodate. Yet there was never a single attempt to even try to

modestly accommodate into the text the question of unilateral coercive measures, neither implicitly, much less explicitly.

15. Out of our flexibility and interest in ensuring the success of the SDGs Summit – to which we attach great importance –, we then discussed, both with you and your predecessor, about the possibility of working on a political package that could serve as a basis for reaching compromises that would then finally lead us to adopting all outcome documents by consensus. In this context, we have to point our surprise at one of your letters of 15 September 2023, in which you stated that you had not heard “nothing that would constitute sufficient basis on which to reopen and revisit” the texts, which gave the impression that consensus had somehow emerged, while ignoring – once again – the concerns of a large number of delegations, including those from our grouping.
16. This very plenary meeting, for instance, caught many of us by surprise. Contrary to the assurances we had been provided on 17 September 2023, that the formal adoption of the Political Declaration resulting from the SDGs Summit would take place in early October, we have been convened in a rather short notice, in order to take action on this draft resolution, as if it was premeditated, in order to ensure that there be no sufficient time for holding consultations and coordinating amongst concerned or like-minded delegations on the way forward. We ought to express our disappointment at such a course of action.

Mr. President,

17. On behalf of the Member States of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, we conclude with the following five (05) points:
 - a. First, we regret that consensus could not be achieved on this Political Declaration, as has become evident today. The text to be shortly adopted, needless to say, remains incomplete, as it lacks a crucial element for the realization of development in its three dimensions in over thirty countries around the world: the urgent call for the urgent elimination of unilateral coercive measures.
 - b. Second, we make vows for the shortfalls of the process, both on the substance and the procedure, be urgently redressed, including to ensure greater transparency and avoid undue exclusions, particularly of key stakeholders, such as those who may have broken silence on draft documents. The imposition of either political agendas or consensus, we



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insist, cannot be normalized, neither can it become the new trend, nor can it be assumed as an accepted practice.

- c. Third, we reiterate our firm support and unwavering solidarity with nations and peoples subjected to unilateral coercive measures and renew our strong call for their complete, immediate and unconditional lifting.
- d. Fourth, we reserve the right, in strict adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and the Rules of Procedure of this body, to carry out the actions we may deem appropriate, in order to prevent that this situation ever repeats in this General Assembly.
- e. And, fifth, we request that our position be duly reflected in the official records of this plenary meeting.

I thank you, Mr. President.