



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

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. MR. JOAQUÍN PÉREZ AYESTARÁN,
AMBASSADOR, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,
DURING THE DEBATE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY UNDER
AGENDA ITEM 14, ENTITLED “CULTURE OF PEACE”**

New York, 14 June 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.

Mr. President,

2. The year 2023 looms with immense challenges for the global agenda, mindful of the current multifaceted crisis the world is currently facing: the economic and financial crisis, inflation on a worldwide scale, unequal food production and distribution, rising energy prices, the high cost of post-COVID reconstruction and the threat of new pandemics, increasing natural catastrophes due to climate change, all of which exacerbate human suffering and accentuate poverty and exclusion, coupled with an alarming increase in the application and expansion of the scope of unilateral coercive measures, which ultimately threatens multilateralism as a whole.
3. All these tragedies have human origins, with a lack of dialogue and cooperation at their core, as well as the prevalence of selfish interests. The only possible way to overcome them is the consolidation of a solid tradition of Culture of Peace and Solidarity, which will in turn lead to peaceful coexistence, respect for differences and mutual accommodation in the fight against common challenges.
4. The Members States of our Group believe that the promotion of a Culture of Peace shall therefore be a top priority in our common endeavors. Its meaning and intrinsic values compel us, both States and other global actors, to actively promote and encourage the creation of spaces of political trust and the consolidation of a truly inclusive economic development, as well as to actively promote dialogue, based on mutual respect; tolerance and peaceful coexistence; active non-violence; intercultural and interreligious dialogue; to implement policies that foster more egalitarian and equitable societies, in which policies of inclusion in favor of those



potentially most vulnerable populations are put in place; to ensure broader and greater access to health and education, which shall always be conceived as a human right and *not* as a commodity; to ensuring a world without hunger and to achieving a truly just and equitable New International Order, without racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, extremism or any other form of intolerance, in which people lives in permanent harmony with nature, and where cultural diversity is both embraced and granted the status of historical value, as it enriches and strengthens our societies.

Mr. President,

5. The Culture of Peace is synonymous to and encompasses, among others, the self-determination and sovereignty of our peoples, their egalitarian economic and social development, human rights without distinction of classes or categories, as well as without politicization, weaponization or double standards of any kind, universal social justice, health and education for all, non-interference in internal affairs, cultural diversity, and believing in a world based on the values and ideals that inspired the establishment of the United Nations and which today are at risk of being diluted by extremist tendencies.
6. In this context, we seize this opportunity to reject the hegemonist and unilateral policies that affect international peace, security and stability, in a clear attempt to threaten the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as to undermine ongoing efforts towards the democratization of international relations and the strengthening of multilateralism and of a multipolar system, based, among others, on mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, as well as on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, for the rule of law, diplomacy, political dialogue, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, respect for diversity, inclusiveness, a culture of peace and non-violence, and due consideration for existing differences, all of which are essential for constructively and effectively working together on issues of common interest and concern.
7. It is the firm conviction of the Group of Friends that, in order to achieve these great value-based aspirations, it is imperative to firmly promote, preserve and defend the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, on the basis of a spirit of inclusivity, respect for national sovereignty, for the legal equality of States, for the peaceful resolution of disputes, for social progress, and for the promotion of a revitalized and truly inclusive multilateralism. It is therefore an international political priority to defend the institutional essence provided by those tenets contained in the founding Charter of our Organization, which have



preserved global peace during the past 77 years, and which are currently subjected to systematic attacks by those who insist on weakening the multilateral system, including the United Nations, while fostering, instead, unilateral tendencies.

8. We believe that only with the promotion of confidence-building measures and continued constructive and genuine dialogue among all actors in society, will it be possible to sustain the foundations that will ultimately lead us towards the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous world for future generations. Climate change, endemic poverty and inequality, uncontrolled human mobility, transnational organized crime and terrorism, will never be overcome without a vigorous multilateralism, in which exceptionalist and unilateral agendas are dismantled, mindful that all these scourges do not distinguish borders, nor do they exempt the elites from their dramatic consequences. Hence, a global consciousness in favor of dialogue and understanding between cultures, political ideologies, religions, civilizations, that will lead us to a real and sustained peace, based on justice and coexistence, is urgently needed.

Mr. President,

9. The Culture of Peace is based, among others, on the sovereign equality of States, who are the international actors *par excellence* in the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among nations. For this reason, the repeal of any unilateral coercive economic or political measure is an urgent demand that cannot be postponed, which affects the individual and collective rights of millions of people, increases poverty and inequality, restricts access to essential goods, and fosters perpetual conflict, in contravention of the very tenets contained in the Charter of the United Nations.
10. Moreover, we consider that it is rather urgent to actively counteract disinformation, counter-information and hate speech, which in recent times have been used by unscrupulous groups to incite discord, social conflict and permanent anxiety, through the dissemination of false news, the exacerbation of ideological or religious differences, and the promotion of attacks on potentially vulnerable groups and sectors, thereby creating a breeding ground for violent extremism leading to terrorism and for the promotion of expressions of fascism, Nazism, neo-Nazism and racial supremacy, as well as discrimination against Africans and Asians and their descendants, all of which are extremist ideologies that we all thought had already been overcome by humanity.



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11. In conclusion, our Group of Friends reaffirms its commitment to continue working towards the generation of formulas and effective ways to combat intolerance, and to also continue working with the United Nations in order to promote the values of and the effective implementation of the Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace. We remain committed to resolutely promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue, active non-violence, to condemn hate speech, and to continuously promote dialogue and peace diplomacy, as a concrete means to achieve the ideal of a world of genuine coexistence; an ideal on which we shall never give up, despite the adversities of today's world.

I thank you, Mr. President.