



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

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE BOLIVARIAN  
REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE  
HIGH-LEVEL OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON  
“FAMINE AND CONFLICT-INDUCED GLOBAL FOOD INSECURITY”**

*New York, 03 August 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 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognizes that everyone has “the right to an adequate standard of living (...), including to adequate food”.
3. Consequently, and respectful as we are for the provisions of international human rights law, we consider the right to food and the right of everyone to be free from hunger an inalienable human right of each human being and, therefore, seize this opportunity to reiterate, from the very outset, our firm commitment to sparing no effort towards ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture, in line with our relevant international commitments, including those derived from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with our respective national programs on this field.

**Mr. President,**

4. It is no secret that the world is currently experiencing a multifaceted crisis. Food security is, as a matter of fact, one of the dimensions of that global crisis. Multiple reports, many of them produced by the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, indicate that, over the past three years, there has been a significant increase in the number of severely food insecure people around the world and that, at present time, there is a real risk that multiple famines may be declared in the near future. As of last year, for instance, 9.2% of the world population was facing chronic hunger, while 29.6% were either moderately or severely food insecure, meaning they did not have access to adequate food.



5. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, though, food insecurity was already on the rise, passing from 22.4% in 2014 to 25.9% in 2019. This reality has now been exacerbated, among others, by the worst pandemic humanity has faced in the past century, by the ongoing climate catastrophe, by growing inequalities and by conflicts, including those of a protracted nature.

**Mr. President,**

6. There is, however, yet another element that has and continue to deliberately exacerbate famine, hunger and food insecurity at the local, national, regional and international levels, as has been even recognized recently by the World Health Organization (WHO); that is, the continued, systematic and relentless promulgation, application and even expansion of unilateral coercive measures.
7. These measures, which are cruel, inhumane and have no legal basis within the scope of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, are an affront, among others, to the right to food and development. They clearly seek, among others, to deprive entire populations from their own means of subsistence, in flagrant violation of the most basic norms of international law.
8. In addition, they are part of the means included in the toolbox used by certain governments to advance their national interests and agendas of dubious nature abroad. The weaponization of the economy and the international financial system, particularly through the application of unilateral coercive measures – which, as facts demonstrate, can be as lethal as weapons used in conventional warfare –, are part of those means to either induce, escalate and prolong conflicts worldwide.

**Mr. President,**

9. We ought to be clear: unilateral coercive measures, given their wide scope, extraterritorial implications and systemic nature, are deliberately exacerbating the multifaceted crisis humanity is facing today and will continue not only to negatively impact global economy as a whole, but also to cause and prolong human suffering around the world, unless a complete, immediate and unconditional end is put to all these illegal measures, that would then allow all nations, without discrimination or limitation of any sort, to fully pursue their productive potentials and to therefore contribute to overcoming current challenges, including through the stabilization of certain commodity prices, including food and fertilizers.
10. It is worth recalling, in this context, that just over a year ago the Heads of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the



World Bank Group, the World Food Programme (WFP), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) affirmed that these kinds of restrictive measures only contribute, precisely, to the rise of food prices, as well as to a rise in hunger and malnutrition.

11. Moreover, the continued application of unilateral coercive measures makes it nearly impossible, among others, to purchase equipment, software or hardware and spare parts or to ensure the proper transfer of technology needed for the agricultural and food industry development and production of nations subjected to such measures. Their consequences also have, as said before, extraterritorial implications and an impact on other nations, which have reduced legal trade with those nations, in fear from being subjected to secondary-sanctions, as registered in the 2023 Global Report on Food Crisis; a reality that has ultimately further exacerbated the current global food insecurity crisis.

**Mr. President,**

12. We concur with the affirmation included in the Concept Note prepared for this Open Debate: global food insecurity is a generational challenge and we must call for an ambitious goal to rid the world of famine. One initial, and perhaps the easiest, step towards that direction would be putting an end once and for all to unilateral coercive measures, which today affect over thirty countries around the world – many of whom are part of our grouping –, and that not only are ready, but have the potential to greatly contribute in this common endeavor, including in the field of production and export of grains and fertilizers, among others. We cannot overemphasize, in this regard, that we shall all be engaged alike, in order to be part of the solution, for we are more than able and willing to do our part and be both reliable and responsible suppliers of commodities, goods, services.
13. The solution to this generational challenge passes through the urgent adoption of collective strategies and decisive measures that must necessarily be rooted on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We do not need “humanitarian interventions” but, instead, greater cooperation, capacity-building and solidarity, as well as an expansion and deepening of South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation for the sake of strengthening national capacities. A good example, in this context, is the Global Development Initiative (GDI), presented by the People’s Republic of China, as well as the most recent offering of the Russian Federation to provide tons of grain to those most affected by the current global food crisis, particularly in Africa. We look forward to additional long-term initiatives aimed at meeting the needs and ensuring the food security of the peoples of the Global South.



14. Any sort of assistance in this field, though, particularly if of a humanitarian nature, must strictly adhere to the guiding principles for the provision of humanitarian assistance, as outlined in General Assembly resolution 46/182, and count on the consent of the concerned State.

**Mr. President,**

15. We conclude by stressing that the path for successfully addressing and overcoming the current challenges that humanity is facing as a whole, including with regards famine, hunger and food insecurity, is not the continued application of unilateral coercive measures or their expansion, nor the imposition of unjustified and arbitrary trade restrictions, including tariff and non-tariff barriers, but the adoption of joint, effective, inclusive and innovative measures that, in strict adherence to the very tenets of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, allow us together to surpass this current multifaceted crisis that, be it for scarcity or inflation, threatens us all today, particularly hundreds of millions of people in the developing world. It is our moral responsibility with present and future generations to correct the path, and to do it now.
16. At last, as many have said, food shall indeed never be used as a weapon of war. Similarly, we also emphasize that unilateral coercive measures shall never be used as a tactic of warfare, including those of a fourth-generation nature, for the purpose of inflicting starvation or the extermination of entire peoples, including through the deprivation of access to food, as a direct result of the application of such illegal measures.

I thank you, Mr. President.