



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 ON THE “REPORT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL”, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PLENARY OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 31 October 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.
2. We take note of the most recent report of the Human Rights Council, presented to the General Assembly pursuant to the provisions of resolution 60/251.

Mr. President,

3. The Group of Friends considers that the Charter of the United Nations is a milestone and a true act of faith in the best of humanity. Its purposes and principles remain timeless and represent the foundation of an international system that pursues the establishment of a world where human rights, sustainable development and peace and security become a reality for all our peoples. Full respect for and adherence to these principles, which form the basis of modern international law, represent the path for the establishment of a more peaceful and prosperous world and a truly just and equitable world order.
4. In this context, human rights are, precisely, the broadest and most comprehensive expression of such noble aspirations. The Universal Declaration and the Universal System of Human Rights are historic achievements of humanity that we have an ethical and political duty to both preserve and strengthen.

Mr. President,

5. The Member States of our Group of Friends attach the utmost importance to the promotion and protection of **all** human rights, both individual and collective, without distinction of levels or categories, and also consider that their promotion and protection are strengthened on the basis of dialogue and cooperation, in



accordance with the principles of impartiality, objectivity, transparency, non-selectivity, non-politicization and non-confrontation, and also taking into account the respect for the principle of sovereignty and for all other obligations derived from the Charter of the United Nations, including the obligation to refrain from intervening in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State; all of it within a framework of equality and mutual respect among States.

6. In this regard, we regard the Human Rights Council as an institutional effort of the first order to efficiently bring the United Nations System closer to sustainable and advanced solutions, balanced and in line with the context of today's world for addressing issues related to human rights, giving priority to dialogue and cooperation with States, and steadily preventing its use by external actors that seek to advance interests of a dubious nature. In this respect, we recall that the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is the most appropriate mechanism for constructive discussions of human rights situations worldwide.
7. Moreover, we consider it necessary that the Human Rights Council continuously review and update its very own mechanisms and working methods, within the framework of the relevant provisions of its resolution 5/1, entitled "Institution-building of the United Nations Human Rights Council", in order to preserve the ideals that inspired its creation.

Mr. President,

8. We seize this opportunity to reiterate our categorical rejection to double standards concerning human rights, bearing in mind that such an approach prevents a harmonious environment and progress in this area. Likewise, we also express our serious concern at the continued and growing proliferation of mechanisms and procedures that pretend to make "impartial" assessments of the human rights situation in certain States and that, in most cases, lack not only the due consent and participation of the State in question but also base their reports on secondary, tertiary or other sources that may be partial or lack credibility, which ends up turning such documents into mere propaganda pamphlets, while granting them a purported legitimacy, simply because of the fact that they are issued by bodies of our Organization. We cannot overemphasize, in this context, the importance of avoiding that the name of our Organization and the spirit that should guide its efforts be misused to advance objectives that are contrary to the purposes and principles enshrined in its very own founding Charter.
9. For its part, the Group of Friends wishes to reaffirm its strong condemnation to the sustained and increasing application of unilateral coercive measures aimed at



advancing interventionist and destabilization agendas, both of a political and economic nature, which dramatically impact the full enjoyment of the human rights of more than a third of humanity, preventing and hindering access, among others, to food, medicines and medical treatments or equipment, financial services, education, technological advances, energy sources, among other basic goods and services, while at the same time providing an alleged legal cover for the confiscation of sovereign resources that may be deposited within the national banking system of those nations that apply these criminal measures. These are cruel and inhumane aggressions that are severely impacting the policies, capacities and programs of the governments of over thirty countries around the world, including with regards to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); a reality that, in addition, mainly affects those in vulnerable situations and that is contrary to our collective promise of leaving no one and no country behind.

10. In this connection, we must also emphasize that it is immoral and completely contradictory for some governments to pretend to present themselves as champions and supposed guardians, defenders or promoters of human rights when, at the same time, with their deliberate and systematic policies, particularly through the illegal application of unilateral coercive measures, they commit mass violations – and even crimes against humanity – against the human rights of billions of people around the world, on a daily basis. It is simply incompatible.

Mr. President,

11. The Member States of the Group of Friends reiterate their conviction that there is no other option than dialogue, cooperation, engagement and national ownership in every process that has as its real objective the strengthening of human rights, both at the national and international levels, while reaffirming their firm determination to continue working in an active and constructive manner to improve the effectiveness and scope of the Universal System of Human Rights, including the institutional strengthening of the Human Rights Council, in order to preserve, promote and defend the prevalence and validity of the Charter of the United Nations, and most especially of one of its main pillars, both in letter and spirit.
12. We also welcome the adoption of the Human Rights Council of its most recent resolution on the Right to Development, within the framework of its 54th session, and in which it was decided to submit to the General Assembly the draft international covenant on the right to development for its consideration, negotiation and subsequent adoption. The adoption of a legally binding international instrument on the Right to Development, within the framework of the United



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Nations, we cannot overemphasize, will constitute a historic milestone for humanity, to which we are fully prepared to actively and constructively contribute. We make vows for the entire membership of our Organization to join constructively, in order to realize this goal without further delays after almost forty (40) years of patiently awaiting on this covenant.

13. Against this background, we insist that it is essential to achieve a normative and institutional context in which the practices of politicization of human rights are not reproduced, confident that this will be key in preventing, among other things, the Human Rights Council from being condemned to the same fate as its predecessor. We therefore conclude by reaffirming our firm determination and willingness to continue contributing to an approach that promotes multilateralism, and that is complemented and multiplied in a transparent manner with other United Nations bodies. Only through measures that foster mutual and genuine trust, including despite differences that may exist, that it will be possible to advance in the promotion, protection and full guarantee of all human rights and in favor of a more just, democratic and inclusive international and global society, with full guarantee for the ideals that inspired the establishment of the United Nations and that today, as never before, all our peoples equally demand.

I thank you, Mr. President.