



*Statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Samuel Moncada,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations*

on behalf of the

“Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations”

during the 304th meeting of the

“Committee on Relations with the Host Country (HCC)”

New York, 23 February 2022

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Mr. President,

1. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is honored to take the floor on behalf of the delegations of Algeria, Angola, Belarus, Bolivia, Cambodia, China, Cuba, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Iran, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nicaragua, the State of Palestine, Russia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Syria, Zimbabwe, and its very own, all of which are members of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

2. Our Group of Friends was established in response to the increasing threats against the Charter of the United Nations and, thus, the urgent need to reaffirm and defend its very purposes and principles, which today remain as relevant as in 1945.

3. We refer, among others, to the growing resort to unilateralism; to the attacks against multilateralism; to the claiming of non-existent exceptionalisms; to the attempts to ignore and even substitute the purposes and principles contained in the UN Charter with a new set of so-called “rules” that have never been discussed in an inclusive or transparent manner; and to selective approaches or accommodative interpretations of the provisions of the UN Charter.
4. In this context, we consider that ensuring compliance with and strict adherence to both the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations is fundamental, on one hand to addressing the complex, emerging and common challenges faced in these days by humanity, while on the other ensuring the realization of the three pillars of our Organization.

Mr. President,

5. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country was established with the purpose of, among others, dealing with “issues arising in connection with the implementation of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations”, as defined in resolution 2819 (XXVI), adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1971.
6. While this Committee has proved to be successful in addressing certain issues, particularly those referred to ensuring the protection and security of the United Nations Headquarters, of the Permanent Missions accredited to it and of their personnel, there are many other issues that still remain unresolved, despite having being on the agenda for many years. We refer, among others, to the issues of visas and their timely issuance, including the limitations posed by those of a single-entry nature; travel and movement restrictions, including on senior heads of delegations during their official visits to the United Nations Headquarters; banking; and the inviolability of diplomatic properties.
7. For over two years, the General Assembly has been vocal in demanding that, if the issues previously mentioned – all of which are not new and have actually for long been included in a routinary manner in the annual reports of this Committee – are not resolved “in a reasonable and finite period of time, serious consideration should be given to taking steps under Section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement”. The Secretary-General has been even recommended in a very explicit manner to “now give most serious consideration and take any appropriate steps under Section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement”.

8. In this context, though, allow us to make a parenthesis and briefly refer to a procedural issue on the dynamics for the consultations and negotiations of both the report of this Committee and the draft resolution that is annually presented to the General Assembly on this very same matter. We seize this opportunity to express our serious concern at the lack of transparency in said process, and call for greater inclusivity, in order to ensure that the views of *all* Member States are taken into consideration, particularly of those that are facing issues included in the agenda of this Committee.

Mr. President,

9. The ongoing challenges with regards to the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement have resulted in obstacles that continue to deliberately limit the ability of certain Member States, including some from our Group of Friends, to effectively discharge their responsibilities and, thus, fulfill the purposes of the Organization. This is a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly of the principle of sovereign equality of States, taking into account that this situation is not affecting the wider membership of the UN. The privilege of hosting the Headquarters of the United Nations shall *not* be misused for taking advantages or advancing political agendas against a particular group of countries.
10. Consequently, while expressing our appreciation to the efforts of the Secretary-General to redress these issues with the competent authorities of the Host Country, we consider that, after what has been more than a reasonable period of time, and in absence of concrete, practical and tangible solutions to *all* the outstanding issues before this Committee, the activation of the arbitration procedure provided under Section 21 of the Host Country Agreement seems to be the only way forward to ensure both its integrity and that we can all, in line with the provisions of Section 27 of that very same Agreement, fully and efficiently discharge our responsibilities, without any discrimination or limitation, while effectively fulfilling the purposes of the United Nations. Therefore, we respectfully urge the Secretary-General to proceed accordingly, without further delays, in the interest of the United Nations and all that it embraces, and as per the mandate provided by General Assembly resolutions 74/195, 75/146 and 76/122.
11. To conclude, while renewing our commitment to sparing no effort to preserve, promote and defend the prevalence and validity of the Charter of the United

Nations, we seize this opportunity to stress that our request today is rather simple: we expect from the Host Country nothing more than a fair and equal treatment for each and every Member State of our Organization, irrespective of the bilateral differences that there may exist, and that it fully complies with and abides by its legally binding international obligations. This would, in turn, ensure the integrity of the Host Country Agreement, in both its letter and spirit, while enabling us all to fulfilling the promise of the UN Charter.

I thank you, Mr. President.