



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 GENERAL DEBATE ON AGENDA ITEM 53, ENTITLED
“QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION”, WITHIN THE
FRAMEWORK OF THE FOURTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

New York, 17 October 2023

Madam 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. Allow us to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the presentation of his report under this agenda item, contained in document A/78/294, of which we have taken due note.
3. Also, from the very outset, we would like to recognize the work of the Department of Global Communications (DGC) in promoting a broader and better understanding of the objectives and achievements of the United Nations, as well as of the documents adopted by its various principal organs. We emphasize, however, that this work will be more representative and will have greater reach insofar as all these messages are effectively disseminated in the six (06) official languages, taking into account the fact that multilingualism is a guarantee both of the preservation of our linguistic and cultural diversity and of the achievement of the very purposes and values of the United Nations, as foreseen in its founding Charter.
4. In this context, we welcome the work of the DGC to continue to raise awareness, among others, on the consequences of climate change and the centrality that the international community attaches to the struggle of the heroic Palestinian people, as well as to the promotion of both the contributions of Peacekeeping Operations and greater awareness of the need to put an end to colonialism and to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We encourage it to continue to spread the word about our Organization's efforts for advancing all of these critical issues.

Madam President,

5. Although more than forty (40) years have passed since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 34/182, there is still a long way to go in order to effectively achieve “the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order, intended to strengthen peace and international understanding”, and based on universal, inclusive and non-discriminatory access to information and knowledge related to such technologies.
6. Access to information and communication technologies continues to face major challenges today. The digital divide between the North and the South is not only a reality, but, despite major developments in this field, it continues to widen day by day. It is necessary to make real, significant and tangible progress, in order to achieve greater democratization of efficient and affordable access to these technologies, including the Internet, especially considering that they have the potential to contribute to accelerating the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
7. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us, for instance, the important role played by information and communication technologies in an increasingly interconnected world. In this regard, while we agree that these tools should be available to all our countries, without discrimination, the reality is that the policies of aggression advanced by some governments, in the form of the illegal application of unilateral coercive measures, undermine national efforts to advance in the development of such technologies and thus hamper efforts to ensure a better connectivity between our peoples.
8. Therefore, we cannot overemphasize emphasize the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures, which, apart from flagrantly violating the Charter of the United Nations and all norms of international law, pose restrictions on access to such technologies, thus, limiting national efforts towards sustainable development. This reality, among other things, is detrimental to international efforts in favor of digital cooperation and connectivity, while negatively affecting any efforts to access most updated technology, including for updating national telecommunications platforms. We, thus, renew our call for their immediate, complete and unconditional termination.

Madam President,

9. We recognize the emergence of non-traditional domains that may pose threats to the maintenance of international peace and security and, in that regard, we stress

the importance of engaging with a spirit of cooperation and inclusivity, particularly under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to jointly address, among others, issues related to countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes and strengthening security in the use of ICTs. In this context, we reject the misuse of ICTs with subverting and destabilizing aims against independent and sovereign nations and stress the importance of ensuring that new and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, be used for peaceful purposes, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

10. We express our support to the work of the “Ad Hoc Committee (AHC) to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communication Technologies for Criminal Purposes”. We also support the work of the “Open- Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Security of and in the Use of Information and Telecommunications Technologies (2021-2025)”. We further reaffirm our commitment to participating in an active and constructive manner in both processes, with a view to fulfilling their respective priority tasks of further developing rules, norms and principles of responsible behavior of States, including of a legally binding nature.
11. In this context, we are of the view that the Open-ended Ad Hoc Committee of Governmental Experts on the Elaboration of a Comprehensive Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes should strictly implement its mandate, under General Assembly resolutions 74/247 and 75/282, and, as such, it shall therefore submit a draft convention for the consideration of the General Assembly before the conclusion of the current 78th session. We emphasize that the comprehensive nature of such a treaty, with broad criminalization of criminal acts and proactive procedural measures, together with the collection and exchange of electronic evidence on a wide range of offences, would meet the objectives of combating ICT crimes.

Madam President,

12. Similarly, we express grave concern over the proliferation of disinformation campaigns, particularly in online platforms, including on social media, created, disseminated and amplified by certain governments and non-State actors for political or ideological motives, and we note that such practices may undermine the political sovereignty of and disrupt the social cohesion of States, while also fostering hate speech, racism, xenophobia, stigmatization, superiority, including fascism, Nazism, neo-Nazism and other similar ideologies, and further inciting



violence, intolerance, discrimination and hostility, in violation of the tenets of the Charter of the United Nations.

13. Therefore, we firmly condemn and reject such manifestations, as they infringe upon the fundamental rights, dignity and value of the human person, among others, and call upon responsible members of the international community to urgently adopt measures to both prevent and counter this trend that is currently growing at an alarming scale, while redoubling efforts towards the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence.
14. This brings us to the question of protecting information integrity and the need for taking urgent measures for addressing the malicious use of information and communication technologies, including for the dissemination of false or biased information. We concur, in this regard, with the assessment of the Secretary-General that, ensuring information integrity, will enable us to better tackle a wide range of global issues, many of which are at the core of the current global multifaceted crisis.
15. In this context, we note the development of a “Code of Conduct for Information Integrity on Digital Platforms” by the United Nations, which could serve as an important reference for Member States for their respective practices in this field, based on their individual national conditions. We also appreciate the efforts of the Department of Global Communication for hearing views of Member States and other stakeholders during the preparatory process of said Code of Conduct. However, we emphasize that such a document should not serve as a basis for discussions within the framework of the forthcoming “Summit of the Future”, mindful of the fact that it was not the product of a States-led intergovernmental process.
16. Similarly, we note that effective access to information from different sources and media is fundamental, including for the promotion of the rule of law, and, in particular, within the framework of ensuring the full enjoyment of the right of access to information. We therefore welcome those initiatives aimed at promoting alternative, truly independent, pluralistic and responsible media and communication outlets, which aim to reflect the realities and interests of the peoples of the developing world, as well as to promote common values of humanity; such as, peace, development, equity, justice, freedom, solidarity and international cooperation, among others.

Madam President,

17. In conclusion, in reiterating that the use of information and communication technologies must be in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, our Group of Friends expresses its most categorical rejection of the malicious use of these technologies, including the Internet and social media, to interfere in the internal affairs of States or to promote destabilization, including based on disinformation, or even to carry out attacks with the use of ICTs against critical infrastructures.
18. Likewise, we renew our call to the United Nations and the responsible members of the international community to advance in the adoption of measures conducive to closing the digital divide, which must necessarily include, on the one hand, raising awareness, including from the Department of Global Communications, about the pernicious effects of the so-called unilateral sanctions and, on the other hand, insisting on the call for their complete and immediate repeal, certain that increased connectivity and access to information and communication technologies will be a critical factor for building back better in this new post-pandemic era and for efficiently overcoming the current global multifaceted crisis.

I thank you, Madam President.