



*Statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Joaquín A. Pérez Ayestarán,
Ambassador, Deputy 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 Arria Formula Meeting of the Security Council of the United Nations on

“Penholdership”

New York, 11 August 2022

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Mr. Chairman,

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.
2. At the outset, allow us to convey our appreciation to the Delegation of the Russian Federation – a fellow member of our Group of Friends – for the convening of this informal meeting to address a matter to which we all attach great importance; namely the efforts to ensure greater effectiveness, efficiency, inclusiveness and transparency in the works of the Security Council.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of Friends acknowledges the authority, functions and powers of the Security Council of the United Nations for maintaining international peace and security, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. In this context, we cannot overemphasize that transparency, openness and consistency are key elements that the Security Council should observe in all its activities, approaches and procedures, in line with the provisions of Presidential Note 507.
4. With regards to the question of penholdership within the Security Council, we express our concern at attempts to misuse this mechanism to advance agendas, positions and visions that, instead of advocating for a collaborative environment that could lay the grounds for finding solutions – in an inclusive manner – to the many items in its agenda, including conflicts of a protracted nature, through consultative and consensus-oriented approaches, usually result in the further deepening of divisions.
5. We stress, in this context, that pen-holders and co-pen-holders shall exercise utmost responsibility and impartiality in the discharge of their role, including when drafting Council documents, while avoiding any resort to sources of a secondary, tertiary or other nature that may be either biased or lack credibility. Similarly, we consider of utmost importance the improvement of the effectiveness of the Security Council and ensuring both an equal opportunity and the meaningful participation of *all* its members in its works.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Member States of the Group of Friends insist that we are currently at a juncture in which the strengthening of the rule of law, multilateralism, diplomacy and political dialogue are needed more than ever. We therefore urge all Member States of the Security Council to fulfill their primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations; to both seize and rise to the moment; to reach out and engage with each other; to show greater flexibility and reach compromises that truly serve the purpose of maintaining international peace and security and of ensuring the wellbeing of all of our peoples, without double standards, politicization of any kind or selective approaches that ultimately undermine the important tasks entrusted to that body.

7. At last, we conclude by renewing once again our firm commitment to spare no effort in preserving, promoting and defending the prevalence and validity of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

8. If you allow us very briefly, in our national capacity, and building from our relatively recent experience as non-permanent member of the Security Council during the 2015-2016 term, we would like to highlight the importance of thoroughly reviewing the selection process of pen-holders and co-pen-holders, taking into account that the current arrangements have allowed for an uneven distribution of responsibilities, which – not by coincidence – only serves the interest of those who have dubious agendas when it comes to certain portfolios.
9. For instance, and in the interest of bringing greater dynamism, as well as of incorporating their particular knowledge and perspectives, a greater role should be provided to non-permanent members on agenda items referred to their specific regions. Here we cannot overemphasize the key role that the A-3 countries could play within the Security Council, as pen-holders or co-pen-holders, especially if we truly believe the premise of “African solutions for African problems”, which account for over 70% of the items in its agenda.
10. This approach would also apply for the Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council, whose delegations follow very closely the developments in a given nation that is part of the agenda of that body.
11. We therefore conclude by insisting on the pressing need to both restructure and bring greater transparency to the penholdership selection process, in order to ensure an equal distribution and a meaningful and fair opportunity for all Security Council members to collectively engage and contribute to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of that important body in the fulfillment of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.