

**STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED DURING THE DEBATE ON AGENDA
ITEM 168, ENTITLED “REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS
WITH THE HOST COUNTRY”, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE
SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York, 07 November 2022

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 associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the honorable Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), while taking note of the Secretary-General’s report, contained in document A/77/XXX, and presented pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/122.

Mr. President,

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 for addressing the complex, emerging and common challenges faced in these days by humanity, while, on the other, for ensuring the realization of the three pillars of our Organization.

Mr. President,

6. 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.

7. 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 remain unresolved, despite having being on the agenda for many years. We refer, among others, to the issues of visas and their timely issuance, travel and movement restrictions, banking issues, and the inviolability of diplomatic properties.
8. For over three years, the General Assembly has been vocal in demanding that, if the issues previously mentioned – all of which have 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”.
9. In this context, allow us to 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 recognize the efforts of the Chair of the Host Country Committee to bring greater transparency and inclusivity to said process this year, including through the extension of an invitation to non-Committee members, particularly those that are facing issues included in the agenda of this Committee, to partake in the consultations on its annual report.

Mr. President,

10. Despite our efforts and continued commitment to engage in good faith, including through the Host Country Committee, it has not been possible to make progress and resolve all those outstanding issues. As a matter of fact, the ongoing challenges with regards to the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement have resulted in recurrent and even systematic episodes that have at the same time turned into obstacles that continue to deliberately limit the ability of certain Member States to effectively discharge their responsibilities and, thus, fulfill the purposes of the Organization.



11. This is not only an abuse of the Host Country from its role, but also a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the principle of sovereign equality of States, taking into account that this situation is not affecting the wider membership of the UN, but only a limited number of Member States, with whom, not by coincidence, the government of the Host Country has political differences at the bilateral level.
12. 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 such engagements have not yielded the outcome we would have all desired, which is why, in absence of concrete, practical, comprehensible, real or tangible solutions to **all** the outstanding issues before the Host Country Committee after what has been more than a reasonable period of time, we consider that 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, as well as an end to selective policies, while allowing us all, in line with the provisions of Section 27 of the very same Agreement, to fully and efficiently discharge our responsibilities, without any discrimination or limitation.
13. Therefore, in light of this cumulative situation that is now threatening the integrity of the Host Country Agreement, 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 already provided to him in General Assembly resolutions 74/195, 75/146 and 76/122. Proceeding in a different manner would only embolden the continued violation of the Host Country Agreement.
14. 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 demand from the Host Country not only its respect for diplomatic customs, norms of international law and the principles enshrined in the founding Charter of our Organization, irrespective of the bilateral differences that there may exist, but that it fully complies and abides by its legally binding international obligations, including those derived from the Host Country Agreement. This would, in turn, ensure the integrity of that instrument, in both its letter and spirit, while enabling us all to fulfilling the promise of the UN Charter.

I thank you, Mr. President.