



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

799 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017-3505

**Statement at the 78th General Assembly Sixth Committee
Agenda Item 161: Report of the Committee on Relations
with the Host Country
Dorothy Patton, Attorney Adviser
United States Mission to the United Nations
November 6, 2023**

Thank you, Chair.

The United States takes great pride in serving as the host country of the United Nations Headquarters. We are dedicated to fulfilling our obligations under the Headquarters Agreement and strive to be welcoming and supportive hosts to all Permanent Missions and Observer Offices to the UN in New York.

We would like to thank the Mayor's Office of International Affairs, the Governor's Office, and all the public servants in New York who have worked to keep the UN community safe this year and to provide them necessary services. Those who attended High Level Week can attest to the tremendous resources and attention that this City devotes to supporting the UN.

The United States Mission's Host Country Section works countless hours to assist your missions with an array of issues ranging from routine administrative questions to emergency situations. If your mission has any concerns or questions, we urge you to contact the Host Country Section right away. The sooner we know of an issue, the more quickly we can help address it.

Our leadership has also engaged throughout this year with the members of the Host Country Committee, representatives of interested states, and with the UN's Office of Legal Affairs to address concerns. We continuously work to improve processes, respond efficiently to questions, and resolve outstanding issues. Our work has paid off.

Over the past year, we have issued the vast majority of visas requested for UN-related work. This year's High-Level Week is a case in point: we issued approximately 99 percent of visas. As noted in the report and at our meetings, this year there was a decline in visa-related issues. In addition, as some Missions recently acknowledged, there has been a noticeable reduction in processing times, a direct result of our continuing work to streamline procedures.

This year's success continues a clear trend. Over the past number of years, we have continued to improve visa-related procedures, devote more resources to visa processing, and speed up processing times, despite major hurdles.

To ensure timely issuance, we encourage all Member States to continue to apply for visas well in advance of their intended travel, include all requested application information, and share

with us in advance if you have concerns about a particular visa, especially when it comes to last minute travel. We must also remind member states to refrain from applying for diplomatic visas to engage in unauthorized activities that are unrelated to UN business. Abuse of UN visas is an affront to the UN and undermines its critical work.

Although our travel control policies in no way affect any Missions' ability to transit to and work at the UN, this year we modified our travel policies pertaining to certain Permanent Missions and expanded particular part of entry/exit policies. On other topics some delegations have raised today, I refer you to the summaries of U.S. statements included in the full report of the Host Country Committee.

Most importantly, I want to stress that the United States Mission and senior officials in the U.S. government continue to be in active dialogue with the United Nations' Office of Legal Affairs. Given the constructive and productive dialogue with OLA, consistent responses by the US Mission to concerns raised by member states, and the ability of the Host Country Committee to resolve issues, calls for more formal resolution are inappropriate, unjustified, and counterproductive.

The United States is pleased that the Host Country Committee has again adopted by consensus the recommendations and conclusions that appear at the end of its report. This was accomplished through intensive negotiations among the Members of the Committee. We hope that the Sixth Committee will continue to follow its prior practice, which is to fold the recommendations of the Host Country Committee into its own resolution, and to adopt that resolution by consensus.

Chair, we would like to particularly thank the Legal Counsel, Under Secretary General for Legal Affairs, Miguel de Serpa Soares, the Deputy Legal Counsel, Assistant Secretary General for Legal Affairs Stephen Mathias, and the Secretary of the Committee, Surya Sinha, for their valuable support of the Host Country Committee. We would also like to thank the Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Andreas Hadjichrysanthou, as well as Theo Pittakis and Ioanna Demosthemons of Cyprus, for facilitating productive discussions among Members of the Committee and for their leadership in achieving the completion of the Committee report.

The United States is honored to have the privilege of hosting the United Nations in this great city of New York. We do not take our responsibilities lightly. We know that in this capacity, as Host Country to this essential international organization, we have a special responsibility to each and every person in this room, to each and every delegate in the Halls of the United Nations, and to all of the international civil servants at the United Nations.

Thank you, Chair.