



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 HIGH-LEVEL FORUM OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON
THE CULTURE OF PEACE, UNDER THE TEMA “CULTIVATING AND
NURTURING THE CULTURE OF PEACE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE
GENERATIONS”**

New York, 02 August 2024

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. At the outset, allow us to convey our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this annual high-level forum to reflect on the Culture of Peace, particularly on the auspicious occasion of the 25th anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 53/243 on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which has guided a generation on this critically important issue.
3. At the same time, our group recognizes the timeliness and relevance of the theme chosen for this year's forum, conscious that only through genuine dialogue and cooperation, aimed at overcoming historical inequalities and imbalances between the Global North and the Global South, can we truly develop inclusive policies for both present and future generations, which will no doubt foster the effective realization of a culture of peace worldwide.

Mr. President,

4. Having said that, allow us now to first and foremost reaffirm that, in order to truly advance, consolidate and retain global commitment and faith on a Culture of Peace, it is essential to achieve an immediate, unconditional, permanent and fully respected ceasefire in Gaza.
5. We take this opportunity to further reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people, as well as our unequivocal condemnation of the ongoing carnage in the Gaza Strip, along with all other crimes that have been – and



continue to be – committed by the Occupying Power against the Palestinian people, with total impunity, and in clear disregard for the UN Charter and the norms of international law.

6. We underscore, in this regard, the urgent need of redoubling international efforts to effectively advance in a much-needed process of accountability for the commission of atrocious crimes by Israel, confident that this will contribute to the attainment not only of a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on the internationally-recognized legal basis, including relevant UN resolutions, but also of durable peace, including in the Middle East as a whole.

Mr. President,

7. The Group of Friends considers that the Culture of Peace is synonymous to and encompasses, among others, the development of friendly relations among nations, based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination, as well as for the sovereignty of our peoples, their equal economic and social development, human rights without distinction of any kind, as well as without politicization, weaponization or double standards of any kind, social justice, health and education for all, non-interference in internal affairs, cultural diversity, and believing in a world based on the values and ideals that inspired the establishment of the United Nations almost 80 years ago and which today are at risk of being diluted by extremist tendencies.
8. In this context, we seize this opportunity to reiterate our rejection to the hegemonistic and unilateral policies that affect international peace, security and stability, in a clear attempt to threaten the principles and purposes enshrined in the founding Charter of our Organization, as well as to undermine ongoing efforts towards the democratization of international relations and the strengthening of multilateralism and of a multipolar system, based, among others, on mutual respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, as well as on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, for the rule of law, diplomacy, political dialogue, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, respect for cultural diversity, inclusiveness, a culture of peace and non-violence, and due consideration for existing differences, all of which are essential for constructively and effectively working together on issues of common interest and concern.
9. The Culture of Peace is based, among others, on the sovereign equality of States, who are the international actors par excellence in the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among nations. For this reason, the repeal of any unilateral coercive



economic or political measure is an urgent demand that cannot be postponed, which affects the individual and collective rights of millions of people, increases poverty and inequality, restricts access to essential goods, and fosters perpetual conflict, in contravention of the very tenets contained in the Charter of the United Nations. It is an active call that the Group of Friends reiterates today as part of its permanent commitment to achieve a true culture of peace that is a reality for all, as, otherwise, it will never be a reality for anyone.

Mr. President,

10. Discussing the future compels us to reflect on the system of injustices and inequalities that have persisted for the past 79 years since the founding of our Organization. Today, the gap between the rich and the poor remains significantly wide. Overcoming unjust economic relations that favor the elites, foreign interference, political destabilization, and the double standards in addressing crucial issues on the international agenda represents the true path to ensuring that the Summit for the Future is not just another meeting filled with empty promises and lacking real commitments to structural changes. While we all share responsibilities in achieving this, the so-called “Global North”, which monopolizes economic resources obtained at the expense of the Global South, bears a special and historic responsibility.
11. This occasion is equally relevant to reiterate that the Group of Friends strongly condemns the rise in instances of discrimination, intolerance, and violence directed against members of various religions in different parts of the world, including cases motivated by Islamophobia and persecutions of the canonic Orthodoxy. We strongly deplore all acts of violence and hatred directed against religious symbols and holy books, recognizing such actions as violations of international law.
12. We are alarmed at instances of seizure of property, including churches and monasteries, of religious communities. In this regard, we also condemn the decisions taken by authorities in certain European countries to authorize demonstrations insulting the Holy Quran, as well as the continued instances of hatred against Islamic symbols under the pretext of the right to freedom of speech.
13. Similarly, we are also seriously concerned over the growing trend of State interference in Church affairs, in particular by forcing religious communities to transit to a different religious jurisdiction. We strongly condemn national initiatives, including legislative ones, aimed at banning traditional religious denominations.



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14. In conclusion, we emphasize that a true “Pact for the Future”, which transcends ceremonies and protocols, must explicitly condemn inequalities without euphemisms or reservations. It must clearly denounce their true and root causes. Only through diplomacy, political dialogue and negotiation, rooted in the Charter of the United Nations, would we be able to achieve a far-reaching and sufficiently solid peace, which represents an inescapable and obligatory challenge that we have the duty to face responsibly and coherently as a legacy for both present and future generations.

I thank you, Mr. President.