



Permanent Missions of Algeria, Angola, Belarus, Bolivia, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Iran, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nicaragua, State of Palestine, Russia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Syria, and Venezuela to the United Nations

New York, 10 March 2021

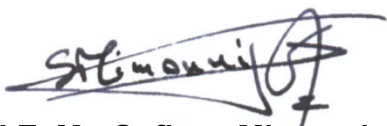
Distinguished Ambassador,

We have the honor to address Your Excellency in the opportunity of informing of our decision to initiate the establishment of a ***“Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations”***.

As indicated in the concept note that is attached herewith, the Group of Friends in reference will strive to preserve, promote and defend the prevalence and validity of the UN Charter, which, in the current international juncture, has a renewed and even more important value and relevance, particularly in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, while providing a platform for, among others, promoting the prevalence of legality over force and for both discussing and coordinating possible joint initiatives for fostering the respect to the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, as well as to the values of dialogue, tolerance and solidarity, mindful of the fact that these are all at the core of international relations and remain vital for the peaceful coexistence among nations.

In light of the above, we will be highly honored to count on your esteemed country amongst the founding members and therefore extend your honorable government a kind invitation to consider joining the “Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations”. Moreover, for the purposes of organizing an official launch of the Group of Friends in reference in the coming weeks, we would highly appreciate receiving an indication from your side on your potential willingness and interest in joining this timely and necessary initiative, ***preferably by 09 April 2021***, via email at gof.defense.uncharter@gmail.com.

While appreciating your positive consideration and looking forward to your response, we avail ourselves of this opportunity to renew to Your Excellency the assurances of our highest esteem and consideration.



H.E. Mr. Sofiane Mimouni
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the People's
Democratic Republic of Algeria to the
United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Sovann Ke
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Kingdom of
Cambodia to the United Nations
New York.-



**H.E. Ms. Maria de Jesus dos Reis
Ferreira**
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Republic of
Angola to the United Nations
New York.-



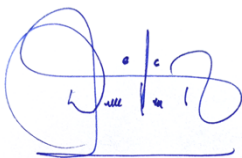
H.E. Mr. Zhang Jun
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the People's Republic
of China to the United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Valentin Rybakov
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Republic of
Belarus to the United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Pedro Luis Pedrosa Cuesta
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Republic of Cuba
to the United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Diego Pary Rodríguez
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Plurinational State
of Bolivia to the United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Song Kim
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Democratic
People's Republic of Korea to the
United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Ms. Sophia Tesfamariam
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the State of Eritrea to
the United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Riyadh H. Mansour
Ambassador, Permanent Observer of
the State of Palestine to the United
Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Majid Takht Ravanchi
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Islamic Republic
of Iran to the United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Vasily A. Nebenzia
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Russian
Federation to the United Nations
New York.-



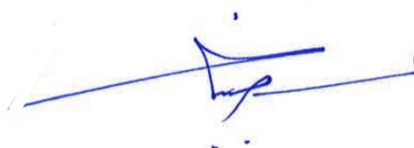
H.E. Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Lao People's
Democratic Republic to the United
Nations
New York.-



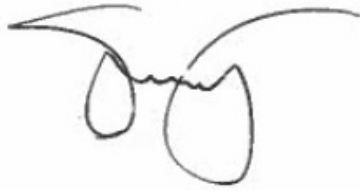
H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of Saint Vincent and the
Grenadines to the United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Jaime Hermida Castillo
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Republic of
Nicaragua to the United Nations
New York.-



H.E. Mr. Bassam Sabbagh
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Syrian Arab
Republic to the United Nations
New York.-

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a stylized, cursive script with two prominent loops and a horizontal line across the middle.

H.E. Mr. Samuel Moncada
Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the Bolivarian
Republic of Venezuela to the United
Nations
New York.-

CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE “GROUP OF FRIENDS IN DEFENSE OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS”

Background:

The 20th century was marked by conflicts between societies and nations for the control of areas of influence. Some of those conflicts even reached a global character, as are the cases of World War I and II. The level of destruction from those conflagrations led nations and leaders of the world from that time to work together towards the establishment of multilateral formulas that would allow to overcome the unsettled approach that had prevailed until then in international relations: large vs. small; strong vs. weak.

After the failed attempt of the League of Nations to establish an international order based on peace, cooperation and solidarity, the Organization of the United Nations emerged in 1945, from the ashes of World War II, with the firm purpose – as expressed in the Preamble of its founding Charter – of “saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, while ensuring the maintenance of international peace and security, the development of friendly relations among nations, the promotion of human rights, and the achievement of international cooperation.

The Charter of the United Nations, which contains the tenets and pillars of modern day international law, is not only the first international legally-binding agreement, of a multilateral nature, that expressly and definitely forbade war as an instrument of foreign policy, but also the code of conduct that has ruled international relations between States for the past 75 years, on the basis of respect for the principle of sovereign equality, self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, as well as for the territorial integrity and political independence of any nation.

The Charter of the United Nations is, therefore, both a milestone and a true act of faith that still today fills us with hope on the best of humanity and brings us together to ensure the common wellbeing of present and future generations. Its purposes and principles are indispensable in preserving and promoting peace and security, the rule of law, economic development and social progress, and all human rights for all.

Current Crossroads:

Throughout its history, the United Nations has registered significant achievements in the fields of peace and security and international cooperation; most notably are its contributions to the causes of human rights, decolonization, sustainable economic and social development, eradication of diseases and disarmament, among others.

Yet, we must also acknowledge that its record has not been exempt of flaws and that, at many times, the Organization has not been up to the expectations that “We the

Peoples of the United Nations” have on it. Nevertheless, the UN remains the best option we have to face, through peace and cooperation, the complex and emerging challenges and threats faced by humanity.

One of the key elements for ensuring the realization of the three pillars of the Organization and of the yearnings of our peoples, as well as of a peaceful and prosperous world and a just and equitable world order, is ensuring, precisely, compliance with and strict adherence to the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, for it is the consolidation of friendly relations and cooperation among States what will ensure peace, security, stability and development to the international community as a whole.

However, multilateralism, which is at the core of the UN Charter, is currently under an unprecedented attack, which, in turn, threatens global peace and security. Nowadays, the world is seeing a growing resort to unilateralism, marked by isolationist and arbitrary actions, including the imposition of unilateral coercive measures or the withdrawal from landmark agreements and multilateral institutions, as well as by attempts to undermine critical efforts to tackle common and global challenges.

In addition, the international community is struggling with both the continued attempts to disown the diversity of our world and the very basic principles of international relations, and with the systematic violations to the norms of international law and the tenets of the UN Charter, in particular detriment of developing countries, by certain powers who seem to claim a non-existent “exceptionalism” that disregards, for instance, the principle of sovereign equality of States.

Objectives:

- The Group of Friends, as part of our common quest for making further progress to achieving full respect for international law, shall strive to preserve, promote and defend the prevalence and validity of the UN Charter, which, in the current international juncture, has a renewed and even more important value and relevance.
- The Group of Friends shall strive to ensure full, permanent and effective – and not selectively or conveniently – fulfillment of obligations under the UN Charter and compliance with its letter and spirit, conscious of the fact that this is the legal instrument with the greatest scope and legitimacy of the world, which has prevented and shall continue to prevent humankind from suffering once again the horrors and untold sorrow of the scourge of war.
- The Group of Friends shall serve as a platform for, among others, promoting the prevalence of legality over force and for discussing, articulating possible means and coordinating joint initiatives for fostering respect to the principles of sovereignty, equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States,

peaceful settlement of disputes, and to refrain from the use or threat of use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, as enshrined in the UN Charter, as well as to the values of dialogue, tolerance and solidarity, mindful of the fact that these are all at the core of international relations and necessary for the peaceful coexistence among nations.

- The Group of Friends shall, therefore, coordinate the drafting and presentation of joint statements and proposals on issues of common interest and relevant or related to the aims of the Group, as well as the organization of side events, within the framework of the General Assembly of the United Nations, and with the participation of experts and high-level representatives from Member States, the UN System and civil society, for the purpose of realizing the objectives of the Group and ensuring the respect, promotion and defense of the UN Charter, in both its letter and spirit.

Format:

- The Group of Friends has an open-ended nature, and, accordingly, its composition shall be regularly updated, as Member States, Observers and UN entities indicate their willingness and interest in joining it, subject to the approval of its membership.
- The Group of Friends shall meet regularly, at the PR-level, at least every three (03) months. Extraordinary meetings can be convened to address/discuss specific questions, at the request of its members.
- The Group of Friends shall convene once a year at the Foreign Minister-level, situation permitting, in New York, on the sidelines of the High-Level Week of the General Assembly of the United Nations.
- The Group of Friends will be coordinated by one (01) of its members for a term of one (01) year and, upon completion of that term, the principle of geographical rotation will be observed for the transfer of the coordination.