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Agenda items 55, 83, 84, 98, 99, 105 and 148

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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Letter dated 6 July 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write to you in order to inform you that we are aware that the document entitled “Santiago Ministerial commitment: cooperating for democracy” began circulating within the United Nations on 25 May 2005, as an annex to document A/59/814.

With regard to that document, we wish to inform the Secretariat of which you are the head that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, through its ambassador to the Republic of Chile, informed the convening group of the Community of Democracies of its reservations with regard to this Santiago commitment, the final document of the third ministerial conference of the Community of Democracies held in Santiago, Chile, this past April.

My country’s reservations concerning the document are as follows:

Firstly, we wish to place on record that Venezuela does not share the views expressed on single democratic models and that, while we recognize the existence of representative democracy, in our view there can be no questioning of the importance of participatory democracy which ensures that the peoples of our countries are

genuinely able to exercise their rights and duties in a setting of totally shared responsibility with public and private institutions.

Secondly, we wish to place on record that participation in democracy is not the prerogative of political parties and civil society. Rather, social and popular movements of our nations are beginning to demand that they, too, should have a say in decision-making; this, in our view ensures a genuine system of social participation and inclusion.

Thirdly, Venezuela wishes to place on record that the reference to free media is not sufficient on its own in a context of building solid democratic institutions, and any allusion to the media has also to incorporate a reference to an ethical responsibility for the information, which is a prerequisite for safeguarding the right of every citizen to be well informed.

Fourthly, Venezuela wishes to place on record its reservation regarding any suggestion that market-oriented policies are a means for strengthening democratic societies, and it maintains the principle of solidarity in the implementation of public policies aimed at the elimination of poverty.

Fifthly, without minimizing the responsibility that every country has for its own economic and social development, we wish to point out that the international financial architecture and the inappropriate role played by the multilateral lending agencies are part of the cause for the exclusion of our peoples. Venezuela, as a democratic country, will take action to help eliminate the unjust concentration and distribution of wealth and limit the impact of unilateral and unfair protectionist measures.

Sixthly, Venezuela wishes to place on record that we will not support any action designed to establish and strengthen democratic institutions in any country unless such action is guided by due respect for sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention in a country's internal affairs, as stipulated in the Warsaw Declaration. In this context we intend to continue to promote democratic progress and, with the approval of the constitutionally elected governments concerned, we shall encourage the emerging democracies to reinforce and develop their adherence to international principles of protection of and respect for human rights.

Seventhly, we wish to place on record that we will contribute to the strengthening of consultation and coordination processes within the United Nations and other regional organizations on issues relating to democracy and human rights, by way of informal groupings and caucuses working in these fields; to this end we consider it indispensable that those States that have not yet done so should ratify the international instruments dealing with the fight against terrorism, human rights and international humanitarian law, as a sign of their genuine commitment to international peace.

We would be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 55, 83, 84, 98, 99, 105 and 148.

(Signed) **Fermín Toro Jiménez**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative