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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF AN ADDITIONAL ITEM
IN THE AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER
SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISING THE CHARTER OF THE
UNITED NATIONS

Letter dated 21 November 1969 addressed to the
President of the General Assembly by the
Permanent Representative of Colombia to the
United Nations

I have the honour to request Your Excellency to make appropriate arrangements concerning this request for the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly of an additional item entitled "Establishment of a Special Committee to consider suggestions for revising the Charter of the United Nations".

My Government, on whose instructions I am transmitting this letter, considers that it is an item of an "important and urgent" character.

I enclose an explanatory memorandum relating to the new item and a draft resolution which contains the substance of this proposal.

I should like in advance to thank Your Excellency for giving prompt attention to this request.

(Signed) Joaquín VALLEJO
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. There is an obvious and growing concern about the need to bring the Charter of the United Nations up to date, which has been expressed on several occasions by the representatives of many States Members of the United Nations.
2. This concern was expressed, on behalf of Colombia, by the President of the Republic in the Security Council in June 1969, and by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, on 26 September 1969, in the General Assembly.
3. It has been said, with more than ample justification, that the Charter was concluded in particular circumstances that no longer exist and that the conditions in which the United Nations now operates are altogether different from those that prevailed twenty-five years ago.
4. In view of the foregoing, my delegation requests you, after the formalities prescribed in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly have been complied with, to arrange for the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Establishment of a Special Committee to consider suggestions for revising the Charter of the United Nations". The relevant draft resolution is attached.
5. This is obviously a question "of an important and urgent character", to quote from rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. There is nothing more important in the juridical and political context than the organic law which governs the United Nations, nor is there any question of greater urgency than the need to bring it up to date in order to ensure its effectiveness; and no effort can be spared in trying to reflect, in our constitutional instruments, situations and circumstances which did not exist at the time the Charter of the United Nations was adopted. My delegation considers that these facts are so self-evident that it would be superfluous to advance in this memorandum any further arguments in support of the proposal we are now submitting, either as regards the level at which the matter should be studied or as regards the urgency with which it should be taken up.
6. On other occasions the delegation of Colombia has voiced concern about certain particular points pertaining to the revision of the Charter, but it believes that any specific suggestion would be obviously premature in the context of the procedure it has proposed, namely, that a Special Committee should be

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established to collect and analyse the suggestions of all States Members of the United Nations concerning possible amendments to the Charter. Those who think that certain provisions of the Charter have now become obsolete, or that there are gaps or omissions in its text, or that outdated procedures or arrangements or inoperative entities or institutions are being established, would make their opinions known to this Committee. Those who consider that it is not necessary to change the Charter, that its effectiveness depends on good faith and loyalty to the principles which inspired it and that its revision would entail more dangers than advantages, would also communicate their views to the same Committee.

7. Article 109, paragraph 3, of the Charter provides that, if the General Conference envisaged for revising it, has not been held before the tenth annual session of the General Assembly, the proposal to call such a conference shall be placed on the agenda of that session of the General Assembly. Hence, it would seem that a proposal such as that made by my delegation is compatible with the situation which was foreseen when the Charter of the United Nations was drafted.

8. Lastly, the delegation of Colombia wishes to point out that there would be no better occasion than the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations on which to undertake a revision of the principles of the Charter in the light of present circumstances, of the experience gained since the inception of the United Nations and of the need to provide it with adequate juridical instruments with which to tackle, more effectively, the problems of the present and of the future.

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DRAFT RESOLUTION

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Establishment of a Special Committee to consider suggestions for revising the Charter of the United Nations",

Bearing in mind that several delegations have expressed themselves in favour of the revision of some provisions of the Charter,

Noting, further, the general concern at the non-implementation of many resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, which may be attributed to the lack of effective instruments,

Recalling that the circumstances in which the Charter was concluded have obviously changed, so that certain of its provisions are manifestly out of date and need to be brought up to date,

1. Decides to establish a Special Committee to consider suggestions for revising the Charter of the United Nations, composed of twelve States Members of the United Nations, appointed for the purpose by the President of the General Assembly, to collect and analyse the suggestions submitted by Member States concerning possible amendments to the Charter;

2. Requests the Special Committee to submit to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session, not later than 20 September 1970, a report on the work assigned to it in the preceding paragraph;

3. Decides that, after completing the work referred to in the preceding paragraph, the Special Committee shall be dissolved;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit the text of this resolution to the Governments of all Member States, so that, prior to 30 June 1970, they may submit any suggestions they may consider appropriate on the subject, which may be amplified and explained by the representatives of the respective countries in the Special Committee.
