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## Sixth Committee

### Summary record of the 35th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 6 November 2023, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Chindawongse ..... (Thailand)

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Agenda item 161: Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 161: Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country (A/78/26)**

1. **Mr. Hadjichrysanthou** (Cyprus), speaking as Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country and introducing the report of that Committee (A/78/26), said that during the reporting period, the Committee had discussed issues regarding the implementation of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, particularly in connection to entry visas and travel restrictions. The Committee would continue its efforts to address all issues on its agenda in a spirit of compromise and with full regard for the interests of the Organization and the integrity of the Headquarters Agreement.

2. In its report, the Committee on Relations with the Host Country had sought to reflect in full the issues raised and the differing views expressed. In its recommendations and conclusions, the Committee had, inter alia, reiterated its expectation that the host country would ensure the issuance of entry visas to all representatives of Member States and members of the Secretariat, in line with the Headquarters Agreement, and addressed the treatment of diplomats transiting to and from the United Nations Headquarters district and the tightening of travel restrictions that were being applied to a certain mission. It had also noted that bringing problems to the attention of the host country could help to resolve them expeditiously and had taken note of the discussions that had been formalized since 2019 between the United Nations Legal Counsel and the competent authorities of the host country regarding unresolved issues and the reports on the outcome of those discussions.

3. During the reporting period, there had been intense discussions on several issues of great importance to the affected Member States related to the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement, in particular with respect to entry visas and travel restrictions. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country had continued to grapple with the differing views as to whether progress had been made by the host country in the context of the recommendations and conclusions that that Committee had adopted the previous year, in particular that if certain issues raised in its report remained unresolved following a reasonable and finite period of time, the Secretary-General should give most serious consideration and take any appropriate steps under section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement and to

enhance efforts to resolve the issues. It was his belief that the recommendations and conclusions contained in the current report, on which the members had reached a consensus through extensive but constructive negotiations, accurately reflected that situation.

4. He reiterated his commitment to help address all outstanding issues raised in that Committee, in a spirit of compromise and with full regard for the interests of the Organization.

5. **Mr. Aref** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Movement reiterated its principled position to not only uphold and defend the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations but also to promote and preserve multilateralism. It was therefore vital to maintain appropriate conditions for delegations and missions accredited to the United Nations and support the Organization to fully and efficiently discharge its responsibilities and fulfil its purposes. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries underlined the critical role that countries hosting United Nations headquarters and offices played in preserving multilateralism and facilitating diplomacy and intergovernmental norm-making processes. In that regard, it called upon those States to facilitate the presence of representatives of Member States in relevant meetings of the United Nations, in accordance with their obligations under the relevant headquarters agreements and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The Movement recalled that the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement were applicable irrespective of the status of the bilateral relations between the United States and other Member States.

6. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had serious concerns regarding the denial or delayed issuance by the host country of entry visas to representatives of its member countries. Political considerations should not interfere with the provision of facilities that were required, under the Headquarters Agreement, for Member States to participate in the activities of the Organization. Furthermore, the imposition by the host country of arbitrary restrictions on the movement of the diplomatic officials of the missions of some member countries of the Movement constituted a flagrant violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Headquarters Agreement and international law; the host country should therefore take all measures necessary to remove those restrictions immediately.

7. In line with the decisions adopted by their Heads of State and Government at their eighteenth Summit, held in Baku on 25 and 26 October 2019, the States

members of the Movement had announced their resolve to present to the General Assembly a short, action-oriented draft resolution demanding the fulfilment by the host country of its responsibilities, including the timely issuance of entry visas and the removal of arbitrary travel restrictions, in order to ensure that the delegations could fully exercise their right to participate in multilateral meetings and could properly discharge their diplomatic duties and official responsibilities.

8. **Ms. Popan** (Representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia, and, in addition, Andorra and Georgia, said that the Committee on Relations with the Host Country remained an efficient, open and transparent forum for discussion of all matters arising in connection with the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement. Delegations and missions accredited to the United Nations enjoyed privileges and immunities in line with the Headquarters Agreement and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations so that they could function efficiently and independently. As the indicated in the Committee's report, the observance of privileges and immunities was of great importance and could not be subject to any restrictions arising from the bilateral relations of the host country.

9. The European Union acknowledged the progress that had been made by the host country during the reporting period on the issuance or renewal of entry visas to representatives of certain Member States. It stressed the importance of the full participation of all delegations in the work of the United Nations and the unrestricted right of the persons mentioned in section 11 of the Headquarters Agreement to enter the United States for the purpose of proceeding to the Headquarters district. However, the Headquarters Agreement and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations applied only to the exercise of functions in connection with the United Nations.

10. The European Union welcomed the easing of travel restrictions of the missions of two Member States and the increase in ports of entry for Secretariat staff. It recalled the long-standing position of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country that there was no room for the application of measures based on reciprocity in the treatment accorded to permanent missions accredited to the United Nations in New York. It noted the view of the host country and some Member States that the Committee had made significant progress on outstanding issues, including on visas, as well as the

views and concerns of some other members of that Committee and the affected Member States.

11. For the fifth consecutive year, the Committee on Relations with the Host Country had engaged in difficult negotiations for the adoption of its recommendations and conclusions. The European Union welcomed the successful conclusion of the current year's consultations and the adoption of a compromise text following the constructive engagement of all the members of the Committee. The European Union supported the commitment and actions of the Office of Legal Affairs to find solutions to issues that had arisen under the Headquarters Agreement and that affected certain permanent missions and Secretariat personnel. It welcomed the increased active engagement of the United Nations Legal Counsel with the authorities of the host country, the affected permanent missions and the Secretary-General.

12. The European Union acknowledged the commitment of the United States to engage on all matters related to its status as host country and to uphold its obligations under the Headquarters Agreement. It encouraged all concerned parties to work with the authorities of the host country to find solutions in an expedient manner. The European Union encouraged the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Secretariat and the authorities of the host country to continue their efforts to resolve outstanding matters, in a spirit of compromise and with full regard for the interests of the United Nations. It urged the Secretary-General and the Legal Counsel to continue to engage with those authorities in consultation with the permanent missions of the affected Member States and the Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

13. **Mr. Pérez Ayestarán** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, said that although the Committee on Relations with the Host Country had shown its effectiveness in addressing certain issues, in particular those related to protection and security of United Nations Headquarters, many others issues remained unresolved or had even worsened, including those related to visas, including the timely issuance and renewal of thereof and the limitations of single-entry visas; the discriminatory application of secondary screening procedures to some diplomatic officials and their belongings; restrictions concerning travel and movement, including those applied to heads of delegations during official visits to United Nations Headquarters; banking services; and the inviolability of diplomatic property.

14. For more than four years, the General Assembly had emphatically called for those issues, which had long been on the agenda of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country and were systematically included in its annual reports, to be resolved in a “reasonable and finite period of time” and had even recommended serious consideration of taking steps under section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement.

15. Despite the Group’s efforts to hold good-faith discussions, many issues, all of which were of equal importance, remained unresolved. The host country continued to systematically, routinely and deliberately impose obstacles that limited the ability of certain Member States to fulfil their functions effectively, in violation of not only its duties as a host country, but also of the principle of sovereign equality of States, since that situation affected only a small number of Member States with which – not coincidentally – the host country had difficult bilateral relations. The privilege of hosting the United Nations Headquarters should not be abused to gain advantages or to promote political agendas against specific countries. Bilateral differences between the host country and other Member States should not lead to selectivity or interference in the application of the Headquarters Agreement.

16. While the Group welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to resolve those issues with the authorities of the host country, it felt that those efforts had not produced the desired effect. In the absence of concrete, practical and tangible solutions to all outstanding issues before the Committee on Relations with the Host Country after a more-than-reasonable period of time, the Group considered activation of the arbitration procedure provided in section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement to be the only way to ensure the integrity of that Agreement and to put an end to selective policies, in order to allow all Member States to discharge their responsibilities fully and efficiently without any discrimination or limitation. Although apparent improvements had been made with regard to visas, many other equally important issues remained unresolved. All issues should be addressed in a comprehensive, balanced, equitable and non-selective manner, so as to avoid erroneous conclusions that suggested a relatively positive general application of the Headquarters Agreement and other relevant legally binding instruments.

17. The Group respectfully urged the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps to activate section 21, without delay, in the interest of the United Nations and in accordance with his mandate pursuant to General Assembly resolutions [74/195](#), [75/146](#), [76/122](#) and [77/114](#). The Group reiterated its demand that the host

country should respect diplomatic customs, international legal standards and the principles of the Charter, independently of its bilateral relations, and comply with its international obligations, including under the Headquarters Agreement and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

18. **Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore) said that, as the United Nations was at the centre of the rules-based multilateral system, all aspects of its work must be consistent with international law, including the relationship between the host country and the Organization and between the host country and other Member States. His delegation hoped that the host country’s ironclad commitment to the rule of law, to which its representative had referred at the sixteenth meeting of the Sixth Committee at the current session, would extend to those issues raised in the Committee on Relations with the Host Country. The relevant body of international law, which encompassed the Charter, the Headquarters Agreement and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, must be respected and implemented.

19. His delegation was particularly concerned that issues regarding entry visas persisted, including for members of several working groups and subsidiary bodies of the United Nations, as noted in the report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country ([A/78/26](#)). Indeed, entry visas remained an issue for some delegations, especially capital-based representatives, who were not always able to attend meetings in time. His delegation appreciated the actions that had been taken in 2023 that had led to a relative reduction in processing times for visas for certain delegations and noted the relative decrease in the percentage of visas not issued.

20. However, the recommendations and conclusions of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country showed that serious concerns in relation to entry visas remain unresolved. It was worth recalling that the issuance of entry visas was not a favour granted by the host country, but rather a responsibility derived from its international legal obligations under the Headquarters Agreement. Any failure by the host country to issue entry visas that was contrary to its obligations undermined the rule of law at the international level. The inability of delegations to be fully represented in meetings of the United Nations could affect the proper functioning of the Organization and lead to the weakening of the rules-based multilateral system, which would not be in the interest of any delegation. His delegation called on the host country and other relevant countries to resolve issues regarding entry visas as a priority, in accordance with international law and in a spirit of cooperation. In that regard, it noted that the host

country had facilitated visas for officials from the Russian Federation to attend a meeting between those two countries at deputy permanent representative level during the year and encouraged the host country to continue such engagement.

21. His delegation expressed appreciation for the Secretary-General's leadership on and personal involvement in host country issues, meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the United States Secretary of State in April 2023 to discuss those issues. Such leadership was welcomed and necessary, given the central role which the Secretary-General, as the representative of the United Nations, must play in ensuring the effective implementation of the Headquarters Agreement. His delegation expressed its appreciation to the host country for shouldering the immense burden of hosting the United Nations and to the Permanent Mission of the United States for its assistance to the diplomatic community in New York, including to his own mission.

22. **Ms. Ershadi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that there had long been an expectation that resolutions of the General Assembly and calls from the international community might lead to the full and effective implementation of the host country's obligation to ensure an appropriate environment to enable all representatives to discharge their functions. Nevertheless, the United States remained intransigent and continued to erect roadblocks and impose unlawful discriminatory measures, including restrictions on movement, secondary screening procedures, the denial or delayed issuance of visas or the issue of single-entry visas, against Iranian representatives, which hindered the efficient and independent exercise of their functions. It was regrettable that those issues arising from the host country's non-compliance with its clear legal obligations remained unresolved and had also been exacerbated.

23. As a case in point, on 24 September 2023 at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, three Iranian representatives who had participated in the high-level week of the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, after receiving boarding passes and prior to boarding their flight, had been inspected through the unlawful and discriminatory secondary screening procedure, during which one representative had been subjected to an unprecedented inspection procedure in total disregard for the status of representatives of Member States of the United Nations. Following the incident, the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran had brought the matter to the attention of the host country and the Committee on Relations with the Host Country and had made every effort in good faith to

ensure that the host country provided reparations for the unlawful conduct of its authorities and that those authorities refrained from imposing unlawful measures and directing affront to the dignity of Iranian representatives.

24. Nevertheless, the host country had refused to comply with its obligations and had conducted the same procedure against another representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 28 October 2023. Such unlawful procedures and degrading treatment violated the host country's international legal obligations, were in contravention of the inviolability of the person of representatives and constituted a gross violation of the obligation of the host country to treat representatives with due respect.

25. Her delegation wished to recall that the International Court of Justice had noted in a contentious case in 2008 that the host country had the obligation to protect the honour and dignity of representatives. However, the United States had failed to observe and fulfil that obligation with regard to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Her delegation urged the host country to ensure that Iranian representatives were treated with the utmost respect, to refrain from imposing secondary screening procedures against them and to provide appropriate reparations, including for the internationally wrongful acts committed against them.

26. As stipulated in the Charter, the host country must act in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality of States and must fulfil its obligations without discrimination. It was therefore axiomatic and undebatable that the host country could not discriminate between Member States or derogate from its obligations due to bilateral considerations. However, the host country had derogated from its obligations owing to political considerations and had discriminated between Member States in the fulfilment of its obligations, as that be in violation of applicable international law. The unlawful measures and impediments imposed by the host country against Iranian representatives constituted a gross violation of international law, including customary law governing the privileges and immunities of representatives, Article 105 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the Headquarters Agreement and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Those measures had detrimental impacts on the independent exercise and efficient performance of representatives and must end.

27. The invocation of section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement by the Secretary-General with a view to ensuring the fulfilment of the obligations of the host

country regarding affected Member States and the termination of all unlawful measures imposed by the host country was in the interest of the Organization in its entirety, as it could not function properly if representatives of Member States were prevented from performing their functions or from travelling to and from meetings.

28. **Mr. Shaev** (Belarus) said that his delegation stood with the delegations that had faced issues such as rejection of visa applications, delays in the issuance of visas, restrictions on movement, the blocking of financial transactions, impediments to the use of property, searches of diplomatic officials and inadequate security for diplomats, members of their families and diplomatic staff. It was regrettable that despite regular appeals to the host country, those issues remained unresolved. The formalistic approach to efforts to remove such impediments was unacceptable. Swift response and intervention were required to overcome such issues, which were affecting the effective functioning of foreign missions. The existing difficulties were artificial, overtly political and went beyond legal and ethical standards. His delegation called on the host country to unswervingly uphold the Headquarters Agreement.

29. **Mr. Proskuryakov** (Russian Federation) said that it was noteworthy that the same types of violations by the host country were included in the reports of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country every year. It was clear that that Committee was in crisis and, unable to influence that deeply abnormal situation, was staying on the side lines, acting almost as an indifferent observer. That Committee's consensus-based decision-making meant that the situation on the ground was reflected in an "airbrushed" or "embellished" form in its recommendations and conclusions. It was obvious from the current report that the violations continued to affect only the delegations of the same Member States, constituting unabashed discrimination on the part of the United States based on its bilateral relations with those Member States. His delegation expressed its solidarity with those who had suffered from the unfair and illegal treatment of the host country.

30. For more than five years, the delegation of the Russian Federation had faced unprecedented problems due to the failure of the United States to fulfil its obligations under the Headquarters Agreement. While the host country had always violated the Agreement in relation to his delegation, those violations were now beyond the pale. There were systematic refusals or delays in issuing visas to capital-based officials, and, owing to artificially created visa problems, Russian nationals who had passed competitive examinations for

filling vacancies for international employees in the Secretariat had been forced to wait for years to enter the United States and begin their work. The staff of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation and members of their families continued to face long visa processing times, having to wait on average five months to have their visas renewed. The issue of the illegal seizure of diplomatic property remained unresolved, and restrictions on movement had been tightened, leading to a de facto ban on travel outside a 25-mile radius zone. Regular attempts by the United States intelligence services to recruit Russian representatives, including high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, amounted to psychological pressure. The reasonable period of time to allow the host country to correct the deteriorating situation had clearly passed.

31. There could be no justification for the new types of serious violations by the host country, including the denial of visas to attend official United Nations events, in flagrant breach of its unconditional obligation under the Headquarters Agreement to issue visas. Without such an obligation, figures such as the leaders of the Soviet Union, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez would have been prevented from entering the United States and addressing the General Assembly.

32. It was difficult to understand why section 21 was included in the Headquarters Agreement at all if the United Nations, through the Secretary-General, continued to artificially delay the triggering of the arbitration procedure, ignoring its obligations to ensure that the host country provided appropriate conditions for the functioning of the missions of Member States. The continuous postponement of the arbitration procedure called into question the credibility and effectiveness of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the United Nations as a whole and increased the conviction of the United States that it could act without accountability.

33. **Mr. Gala López** (Cuba) said that it was regrettable that certain delegations remained unable to carry out their functions vis-à-vis the Organization on an equal footing with others as a result of the failure of the United States to fulfil its host country obligations. The United States was committing a number of violations of the relevant agreements, including arbitrarily imposing restrictions on the movement of the diplomats of some countries and their families; delaying and denying entry visas to the United States to allow diplomats to proceed to the Headquarters district; unjustifiably expelling accredited diplomats; seizing properties; preventing Member States from accessing their bank accounts and

conducting transactions to fulfil their financial commitments, causing some to lose their right to vote; and the secondary screening of the diplomatic officials of some delegations.

34. The testimonies contained in the report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country (A/78/26) reflected the host country's disregard for international norms, disrespect for sovereign Member States and open abuse of power by using its status as host country to pursue its own political agenda. In the case of Cuba, since November 2020, the authorities of the host country had repeatedly failed to take adequate measures to control hostile demonstrations outside the Permanent Mission of Cuba so that Cuban diplomatic staff could fulfil their functions without fear, in violation of the requirement to provide security established in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Furthermore, Cuban diplomats continued to encounter delays in the issuance or renewal of their visas, and the reinstatement of the restrictions limiting the movement of Cuban diplomatic officials to within a 25-mile radius of Columbus Circle constituted discriminatory treatment and a violation of the legal obligations of the host country. Cuba condemned the selective and arbitrary use of the Headquarters Agreement by the United States to impede or limit the participation of certain delegations in the work of the Organization, in flagrant breach of the principle of sovereign equality of all Member States.

35. The repeated violations committed by the host country, in shameful disregard for the rules of international law, must not be allowed to continue. It was unfortunate that the procedures of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country allowed the United States to be a judge in cases to which it was a party, thus constituting the primary impediment to that Committee carrying out its work objectively. As long as that Committee was unable to address situations with determination, the Organization would not be able to ensure that its Member States participated and were represented in its activities on an equal footing.

36. As an active member of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, Cuba was firmly committed to cooperating in order to ensure that the decisions and recommendations of that Committee were implemented in a transparent manner and in keeping with the sovereignty of Member States and the purposes and principles of the Charter. Cuba would continue to work constructively for that Committee to fulfil its mandate through broad-based processes of debate, consultation, negotiation and collaboration among its members, and to promote the active participation of

other Member States, whether or not they were affected by the failure of the host country to fulfil its obligations.

37. **Mr. Li Linlin** (China) said that his delegation supported the adoption by consensus of the annual report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country (A/78/26) and hoped that all parties would continue to demonstrate a spirit of cooperation and reach a consensus on the draft resolution under the current agenda item. As the report made clear, issues relating to visas and travel restrictions had remained unresolved for some time, affecting the participation of the Member States concerned in the work of the Organization. His delegation hoped that the host country would take seriously the legitimate demands of Member States, effectively observe the principles and spirit of the Headquarters Agreement, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and refrain from preventing representatives of Member States from obtaining visas on the basis of bilateral relations and political considerations. Those representatives should enjoy privileges and immunities such as personal inviolability and protection from the opening or seizure of personal baggage during the performance of their duties and travel to and from meetings of the United Nations.

38. His delegation appreciated the efforts by all parties, including the Committee on Relations with the Host Country and the Secretariat, to facilitate the resolution of outstanding issues. However, it was worth noting that the Headquarters Agreement set out the methods and steps for settling disputes that remained unresolved for a prolonged period of time.

39. **Mr. Khaddour** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation welcomed the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country (A/78/26). However, the response of the host country to such recommendations remained disappointing. His delegation hoped that the recommendations would lead to further engagement by the Secretariat, represented by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Legal Counsel, in reaching a final decision on disagreements regarding the interpretation and application of the Headquarters Agreement and in putting an end to the discriminatory, politicized, selective and coercive measures unjustly imposed by the host country on representatives of certain Member States, who had done nothing to deserve such treatment. It appeared that the host country no longer considered hosting United Nations Headquarters to be a privilege, but rather a right to impose whatever measures it chose against delegations of other Member States. The silence of the Organization regarding such



abuses and violations by the host country was no longer acceptable.

40. All delegations, particularly those that were members of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, should consider what it would be like to have arbitrary measures imposed against them, to be issued only with single-entry visas valid for six months despite having resided in the United States for many years, to see family members abused, mistreated and subjected to discrimination, be subject to a 25-mile radius movement restriction, and to feel lesser than delegations that could move freely across the United States. Such measures restricted the ability of delegations to attend United Nations events convened outside New York and constituted unjustified and unacceptable harassment and humiliation. The Organization must ensure that representatives of Member States could discharge their duties fully.

41. It had been the long-standing position of the United Nations that the bilateral relations between the host country and any other State should in no way affect the treatment afforded to the representatives of that State by the host country. It was therefore important to reach a final decision as to the disagreements regarding the interpretation and implementation of the Headquarters Agreement and thus end the unjust imposition of coercive measures.

42. The failure of the representative of the host country to provide, in meetings of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, any legal basis on which the measures of the host country were taken was likely due to a lack thereof. Such measures constituted arbitrary abuse of authority and the bad faith implementation and interpretation of the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement.

43. **Ms. Idres** (Sudan) said that respect for the Headquarters Agreement, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations was vital, as those instruments identified the key rights and obligations of all parties. Her delegation hoped that the host country would settle all issues raised in the report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country (A/78/26), particularly those related to entry visas, travel restrictions and banking, in a spirit of cooperation and in line with international law. The representatives of the Sudan had been affected by delays in the issuance and renewal of visas and restrictions on movement. All delegations should enjoy the same rights without distinction or discrimination, and the host country should assume its legal obligations without any consideration of bilateral relations.

44. **Ms. Patton** (United States of America) said that her Government did its utmost to fulfil its obligations under the Headquarters Agreement and to be welcoming and supportive to all permanent missions in New York. The City of New York also devoted tremendous resources and attention to supporting the United Nations, and the staff of the Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations worked tirelessly to assist the permanent missions with any and all issues. Missions with concerns or questions should contact the Host Country Section immediately in order to expedite their resolution.

45. Throughout the past year, senior United States officials had engaged with the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, with representatives of States and with the Office of Legal Affairs to address the concerns raised by some Member States. The United States continuously worked to improve processes, respond efficiently to questions and resolve outstanding issues. The impact of its efforts was evident.

46. Over the past year, the vast majority of visas requested for work related to the United Nations had been issued, including 99 per cent of those requested for the high-level week of the General Assembly. There had also been a noticeable reduction in processing times owing to streamlined procedures. Over the past several years, the United States had improved visa-related procedures, devoted more resources to visa processing and had improved processing times, despite major hurdles. To ensure timely issuance, Member States should continue to submit applications well in advance, include all requested information and note any concerns about a particular visa in the application, especially regarding emergency travel. Member States should also refrain from applying for diplomatic visas when they intended to engage in unauthorized activities that were unrelated to United Nations business.

47. Although travel control policies in no way affected the ability of representatives to transit to and work at the United Nations, in 2023, her Government had modified travel policies pertaining to certain permanent missions and had expanded particular port-of-entry and -exit policies. The report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country contained the position of her Government with regard to other issues raised at the current meeting. In view of the ongoing constructive dialogue between senior United States officials and the Office of Legal Affairs, the responsiveness of the Mission of the United States to the concerns of Member States and the strength of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, calls for more formal dispute resolution were inappropriate, unjustified and counterproductive.



48. Her delegation was pleased that the Committee on Relations with the Host Country had once again adopted the recommendations and conclusions contained in its report by consensus, following intensive negotiations. Hopefully, the Sixth Committee would continue its practice of folding the recommendations of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country into its own draft resolution and adopting that resolution by consensus. Her Government was honoured to have the privilege of hosting United Nations Headquarters in New York and did not take its responsibilities lightly. In its capacity as host country, the United States had a special responsibility towards each and every international civil servant at the United Nations.

*The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.*