

## **Speech of Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza during the Political High-level Forum on Sustainable Development 2020**

From the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we welcome the holding of this High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development.

We thank Secretary General Antonio Guterres for his presentation of the report regarding the progress and noncompliance of SDGs.

As we have always said and president Nicolas Maduro said as well in 2015 “fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals would be for humanity somewhat the equivalent to a social, economic revolution, a comprehensive revolution; that is why we abide by them”.

The impact of COVID-19 on humanity priorities is deep. There is a new priority and we must adapt to it; the consequences of the sanitary measures on the economy and the society are unfathomable and deep and we must know how to tackle and measure them. The responses cannot be strictly national or regional responses, they must be global responses, and they must be present at all levels. The United Nations has a big role to play; multilateralism has a paramount role to play in this historic moment we cannot let open windows for unilateralism we have to leave it behind and we have to move on.

The new emerging geopolitical and geo-economic order must be the product in which the core is made of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and also its goal and objectives, Precisely the 2030 agenda and the MDGs, an example of this new world that should emerge and this necessary coordination among all of us has been the role of the World Health Organization that with its authority and wisdom has had the capacity of guiding and leading the peoples and governments by the least painful path to carry out and to face this difficult time.

In Venezuela we have always taken into account the opinion of the agencies of the United Nations; particularly, during this pandemics of the WHO; we have faced the

pandemics under very difficult situations, economic attacks, permanent aggression, political, media aggression, all kind of aggression, but from our capacity, from our knowledge, putting technology at the service of people, with a strong public health system, we have been able to stop the worst, the disastrous predictions on Venezuela and COVID-19, have been totally defeated, and curiously enough from those power centers where these predictions were issued is where people have been suffering sanitary catastrophes; we are really sorry and we show solidarity towards those peoples.

In the midst of the pandemics we have heard the loud voices of the Secretary Antonio Guterres, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, the Rapporteurs of the Council of Human Rights and organizations and governments throughout the world to ask for the lifting of the coercive, unilateral measures, the sanctions. However, the United States has not only disregarded these calls, but it has also stepped up and today the persecution financial and commercial against Venezuela, the hindering our oil production, oil exports, trying to prevent national income, hindering the import of the inputs necessary for the basics of society to face the pandemic, has rather worsened over the last few months, a proof of the cruelty.

We face it with conscience, we face it with our capacities, with our social protection system, with friends in the world, with the solidarity and support of China, of Russia, of Cuba always present, of Turkey and of the United Nations. However, the structural solution must be in the hands of precisely that multilateral order, which must put a stop to this type of unilateral measures and aggressions, wars, and give way to the right of peoples to be free and happy.

You know that giving the profile of humanitarian aid to countries that are under economic sanctions can be a palliative, it can help in some way, but in reality it can structure the curriculum vitae of an official of the international bureaucracy but it does not go to the root of the problem, it does not solve the issue and the United Nations must raise its voice, must take truly rigorous and forceful decisions in accordance with its Charter to stop unilateral aggressions.

This is the time to act, if the new geopolitical, geo-economic order that is emerging, is part of this spirit of collaboration, we will see a strengthened multilateral system and a humanity with better and happier human development. If, on the contrary, the new order ignores multilateralism, the United Nations will be a victim of this process and will suffer the fate of the League of Nations and disappear without having taken root with its great historical need.

COVID-19 affects the compliance of the SDGs all over the world, we must readapt ourselves then, we must avoid excesses, we must put at the service of the peoples all the capacities and that the State-nations, the public within humanity have a strong role to play and that it does not happen as we saw in past months where in some countries the State does not exist, the State is not there and could not give an answer to the peoples.

In Venezuela the State exists and the private sector too, in Venezuela treatments are free, tests are free, hospitalization is absolutely free because it is a right of the people, and so it is in many countries of the world that have been able to contain the neo-liberal wave and also put a stop to the impositions of domination.

May the rule of international law, of international law, be imposed, and not the law of the empire, may any attempt at unilateralism go down in history, may this new world, which is so indispensable today, emerge and may we move forward.

Lastly, we appreciate the incorporation of Venezuela into the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

Thank you, Secretary-General; thank you delegations of the world.

Good afternoon from Venezuela.