

Feb 1st 2019

**Statement by Gareth Bynoe, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission
to the United Nations, at the UN Security Council meeting on
Venezuela, January 26th 2019.**

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the Security Council.

At the outset, permit me the opportunity to convey appreciation to Mrs. Rosemary Di Carlo, Under-Secretary General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for the briefing on the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been monitoring very closely the recent developments in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela at the bilateral and multilateral levels, and like many countries, we too are deeply concerned and apprehensive about the events unfolding in our neighbouring Caribbean country.

Let it be abundantly clear that St. Vincent and the Grenadines adheres to and upholds the fundamental principles of non-interference and non-intervention in the affairs of states; respect for sovereignty; adherence to the rule of law; and respect for human rights and democracy, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Cognizant of the complexity of the long-standing political crisis in Venezuela, exacerbated by recent events, we stress the need for meaningful dialogue among all stakeholders in the country to de-escalate the contentious and conflictive situation.

Mr. President, we are undoubtedly living in an unpredictable era and must categorically reject all attempts to aggravate dangerous situations or engender

change of democratically elected leaders through impositions, interventions and interferences that veer away from the basis of lasting peace and security. In the history of Latin America and the Caribbean, the imposition of the “*mighty*” against the “*meek*” is far too well known. The history of Latin America and the Caribbean is indelibly scarred by military interventions and imposition of dictator governments. That egregious history, and the need to triumph over its lingering remnants, drives the countries in the hemisphere to be viscerally abhorrent to any semblance of its re-emergence. In our Caribbean subregion, we have witnessed the “urgent fury” of military intervention, and our consciousness remains aware of the uninvited and illegal interference in electioneering and electoral processes of the cold war proxy battles.

Let us not lose sight of the forest for the trees and be mindful that the region of Latin America and the Caribbean remains a “Zone of Peace” as proclaimed by Heads of State and Government of CELAC in 2014. Let Venezuela not relive the systematic act of terror and attempted coup d’état that created bloodshed in the streets of Caracas of April 11, 2002.

Mr. President, St. Vincent and the Grenadines laments the convocation of this meeting today, especially since it emerges against the backdrop of an unambiguous irony. Constitutionally, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has a duly elected President in the person of H.E. Nicolas Maduro, who was officially inaugurated for a second term on January 10, 2019. Regrettably, however, an unconscionable crusade against the legally and legitimately elected president, orchestrated from within the bowels of the Organization of American States (OAS) – the oldest hemispheric organization, aims to erect, unilaterally and extra-territorially, a parallel unelected presidential government and destabilize order and the rule of law in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Presently, the OAS has abdicated its role of arbiter, and, indeed any serious leadership responsibility in the hemisphere to diffuse the impasse in Venezuela, especially since its revisiting the deplorable history of being a conduit for imperialist aggression and hegemonic ambition in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thankfully, many Member States within that Organization have not exhausted the option of dialogue, nor have they abandoned the bedrock principles of the OAS and UN Charters. Effectively, and more pointedly, Mexico and Uruguay have expressed their willingness to mediate the political crisis, whilst regional groupings such as the Caribbean

Community and the European Union have offered their good offices to serve as honest brokers to facilitate dialogue among all parties and resolve the crisis. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports these responsible initiatives.

Mr. President, unequivocally, Venezuela is not a threat nor represents a danger to international peace and security, albeit the Government is subjected to a systematic campaign of aggression. Undeniably, the country is confronted by a plethora of complex challenges which must be frontally tackled by democratic means and within the confines of the supreme law of the land – the Constitution.

As always, St. Vincent and the Grenadines stands ready to constructively assist our beloved brothers and sisters in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and bring about a rapprochement between the contending forces. We must not foreclose on dialogue as it is essential in multilateral diplomacy. History teaches us that the rejection of dialogue is often the precursor to unilateralism and war, an option that we cannot countenance in our Zone of Peace.

Let us be guided by the central tenets of this Organization and its Charter.

I thank you.