

Delegation from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
Position Paper for the United Nations Economic and Social Council

The topics before the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) are: Education in Post-Conflict Situations; Implementing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All; and Promoting the Political, Socioeconomic, and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela recognizes the need for strong international cooperation to monitor and implement access to vital human rights, and looks forward to discussing these topics at the upcoming conference.

I. Education in Post-Conflict Situations

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is disturbed by the harmful, severe and widespread impact of armed conflict on children and the long-term consequences this has for durable peace, security, development and education. In countries like the Syrian Arab Republic, the spreading of civil war leads to a devastating increase of out-of-school children and adolescents. Additionally, most out-of-school children live in a small number of countries. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, more than 50% of the 59 million children of primary school age who were out of school in 2013 lived in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, according to the costing analysis of the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report team, there is an annual funding gap of US\$7.5 billion for primary education until 2030.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms that the rights of children require special protection and calls for continuous improvement of the situation of children and their development and education in conditions of peace and security in Post-Conflict Situations. Venezuela strongly supports the *Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* (1949), especially Article 24, which states that children under 15 years should be granted education under all circumstances. Additionally, Venezuela renews its commitment to the goals of the *Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts* (Protocol II, 1977). Furthermore, Venezuela notes the adoption of the *Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts* (OPAC), in particular Article 2, stating that conscripting children under the age of 18 is a war crime. Moreover, Venezuela expresses its support to the proposed SDG4 to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all”.

Necessary approaches to alleviate this gap include the revitalization of the economy, the institution of the rule of law, and the improvement of basic services, all of which are commonly inefficient or inexistent in post-conflict scenarios. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela invites those Member States (MS) that have signed, but not ratified *Protocol II*, to intensify their work towards ratifying it. Additionally, young demobilized soldiers must be supported to go back to school or university and must benefit from skill training that fits the needs of the labour market. Furthermore, donations of MS must prioritize education in their aid programming and focus on those poorest countries unable to mobilize sufficient domestic resources to meet the education targets of SDG4.

II. Implementing SDG7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

Renewable Energy represents a possible solution to two major global issues: global warming and diminishing fossil fuel reserves. It is sustainable and clean, generally emitting no or very little CO₂. These factors have led the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to shift its focus toward the development of renewable energy sources. Still, more than 2.9 billion people lack access to modern energy sources and 1.1 billion people have no access to electricity. But although the times are favourable for developing countries to install clean energy sources, the current streams of public climate finance like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) are far away from meeting the demand for clean energy infrastructure. However, the most important challenge in the deployment of renewable energy is that these are more expensive than conventional fuels. In order to make sustainable energy competitive, it is necessary to provide support in the form of favourable policies and incentives. Therefore, it is very important to have in mind that renewable and non-renewable forms of energy are complementary.

Venezuela is strongly committed to the goals of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda), especially SDG7. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela applauds the “*The future we want*” - *Outcome document* of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) in 2012. In this document, the MS committed to improve the implementation of renewable sources of energy policies

to integrate more sustainable energy systems that improve lives, promote inclusive and resilient societies, and provide sustainable development in order to combat climate change and eradicate poverty. Regionally, Venezuela has signed the *Declaration of Panama: Energy for Sustainable Development* and the *Declaration of Margarita: Building the Energy Integration of the South*. Nationally, renewable energy plays a large role in the energy mix of Venezuela. In 2015, hydropower plants provided 64% of domestic electricity. Additionally, the “Development Plan for the National Electric System” sets the development of renewable energy resources as a long-term goal until 2033. Furthermore, in 2016, Venezuela had been one of the first countries to present its voluntary national review, in which it had indicated the progress made on integrating the *2030 Agenda* into the national plan and the zero-poverty plan for 2019.

The Venezuelan Government is determined to work towards an inclusive and resilient agenda that strengthens the commitments of all to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. In order to prevent a huge spreading of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Venezuela asks the MS to increase their donations to the GCF. Governments and international financial institutions should use public funds to take the lead in developing renewable energy systems. Nevertheless, the sovereign management of natural resources must be an effective and legitimate instrument of governments for the development of the peoples that own them, as is the fair distribution of the benefits of natural resources among citizens.

III. Promoting the Political, Socioeconomic, and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Peoples

About 370 million indigenous people live in the world today, spread across 90 countries. Their contribution to sustainable development is noticeable and diverse. They have ancestral knowledge of alternative health treatments, possess strategies for reducing the risks associated with natural disasters and climate change, and contribute an enormous cultural richness of approximately 4,000 languages. Still, indigenous communities represent about 15% of the world's poor and 33.3% of the rural poor. Their culture is endangered, and their rights are challenged, especially those concerning access to land and resources due to factors like urbanization or large-scale farming. With a number of 750,000 indigenous people living in Venezuela, the protection of their rights is of utmost importance for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

In 2002, Venezuela ratified the *Convention on the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, No. 169* (1989), which recognizes Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination within a nation-state, while setting standards for national governments regarding indigenous peoples' economic, socio-cultural and political rights, including the right to a land base. Venezuela also strongly supports the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP). Nationally, in 1999, the Preamble of the *Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela* recognized the multi-ethnic, pluricultural, and multilingual character of Venezuelan society. Since then, Venezuela has enacted a set of laws to develop the specific rights of indigenous peoples, such as the “Law on Demarcation and Guarantee of the Habitat and Lands of Indigenous Peoples” (2011), the “Organic Law on Indigenous Peoples and Communities” (2005) and the “Indigenous Languages Act” (2007). Additionally, Venezuela has created institutions devoted to overseeing public policy formulation in indigenous affairs, such as the Ministry of Popular Power for Indigenous Peoples.

For the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a topic of great importance is the data collection and disaggregation for indigenous peoples. The process of data collection is crucial for the empowerment of indigenous communities and for recognizing their requirements and must respond to the priorities and desires of the indigenous communities themselves. This data collection could help to address the problems of indigenous people in a more adequate way. The ECOSOC should request the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) to extend its work on this issue. Therefore, it is critical at both the country and international levels to include the indigenous communities as equivalent partners in all parts of the process. These include conceptualization, implementation, reporting, analysis and dissemination of data collected. Additionally, indigenous peoples should be coached and engaged by data-collection institutions at the national and global levels. Data collection concerning indigenous peoples should follow the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), which allows them to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect them or their territories. Concerning indigenous peoples living in voluntary segregation, data collection may not be used as an excuse for establishing constrained contact. To strengthen the confidentiality of such data, and because this process of data collection addresses indigenous peoples that have participated in procedure, they should be granted the right to have the data returned to them.