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Chair: Mr. Biang (Gabon)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 80: Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its fifty-first session (*continued*)
([A/C.6/73/L.11](#), [A/C.6/73/L.12](#), [A/C.6/73/L.13](#) and [A/C.6/73/L.14](#))

Draft resolution [A/C.6/73/L.11](#): Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its fifty-first session

1. **Ms. Kalb** (Austria), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that Mexico, the Russian Federation, Seychelles and Switzerland had also become sponsors. In the resolution, the text of which largely reiterated General Assembly resolution [72/113](#), with some changes and additions, the General Assembly would stress the importance of international trade law and recall the mandate, work and coordinating role of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law. In paragraphs 2 and 3 thereof, the Assembly would highlight the progress made by the Commission in finalizing the draft Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation, finalizing and adopting two model laws, and finalizing the Legislative Guide on Key Principles of a Business Registry. In paragraph 4, it would note with appreciation the event held to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (New York Convention of 1958).

2. Paragraphs 14 and 15 concerned the importance of the full participation of all Member States, including least developed and developing countries, in the Commission's sessions and working groups and, in paragraph 15, the General Assembly would commend the States and international organizations that had contributed to the trust fund established to provide travel assistance. The draft resolution also contained new references, in paragraph 11, to proposals to enhance the efficiency of the Commission's work and streamline and focus the Commission's agenda and preparation for each session.

Draft resolution [A/C.6/73/L.12](#): United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation

3. **Ms. Kalb** (Austria), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Bureau, said that in the draft resolution, the General Assembly would adopt the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation, as finalized by the Commission. It would also authorize a ceremony for

the opening for signature of the Convention to be held in Singapore on 7 August 2019, recommend that the Convention be known as the "Singapore Convention on Mediation", and call upon States and regional economic integration organizations to consider becoming parties to the Convention.

Draft resolution [A/C.6/73/L.13](#): Model Law on International Commercial Mediation and International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

Draft resolution [A/C.6/73/L.14](#): Model Law on Recognition and Enforcement of Insolvency-Related Judgments of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

4. **Ms. Kalb** (Austria), introducing the two draft resolutions on behalf of the Bureau, said that, in the draft resolutions, the General Assembly would express appreciation to the Commission for finalizing and adopting the Model Law in question, request the Secretary-General to disseminate the text, and recommend that States give favourable consideration to it when revising or adopting relevant legislation.

Agenda item 167: Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country ([A/73/26](#))

5. **Mr. Korneliou** (Cyprus), speaking as Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country and introducing the report of the Committee ([A/73/26](#)), said that, during the reporting period, concerns had been raised in connection with the implementation of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations, and the question of privileges and immunities, including in connection with entry visas and travel regulations; the security of missions and the safety of their personnel; and banking issues. The Committee would continue in its efforts to address all issues under its mandate in a spirit of cooperation and in accordance with international law.

6. The report's recommendations and conclusions contained new language concerning, inter alia, the privileges and immunities applicable to the premises of permanent missions to the United Nations, the issuance of entry visas to representatives of Member States and Secretariat staff, travel regulations adopted by the host country that affected mission and Secretariat staff from certain States, and the role of the Secretary-General in the work of the Committee.

7. As stated in the recommendations and conclusions, he stood ready to help address all issues

raised in the Committee, in a spirit of compromise and with full regard for the interests of the Organization.

8. **Mr. Chaboureau** (Observer for the European Union) speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the observance of the privileges and immunities of diplomatic personnel was important and based on solid legal principles. It was therefore necessary to safeguard the integrity of the relevant body of international law, in particular the Headquarters Agreement, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country played a vital role in addressing issues that arose in the context of the relationship between the host country and the United Nations community, ensuring that all aspects of that relationship were in full compliance with the aforementioned instruments and preserving the legal regime that defined the status of the United Nations and the rights and obligations of diplomatic agents.

9. During the reporting period, the Committee had continued to serve as a valuable forum for dealing with issues concerning the activities of permanent and observer missions to the United Nations and their staff, in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation. The European Union welcomed the steps taken by the host country to accommodate the needs, interests and requirements of the diplomatic community in New York, resolve difficulties that arose and promote mutual understanding among the diplomatic community, the local authorities and the people of New York. It appreciated the host country's efforts to implement the Headquarters Agreement and encouraged it to go even further in that regard, bearing in mind that the maintenance of appropriate conditions for the delegations and missions accredited to the United Nations was in the interest of the Organization and all Member States. The European Union fully endorsed the recommendations and conclusions contained in the report.

10. **Mr. Al Arsan** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation welcomed the recommendations made in the report (A/73/26). Unfortunately, in the light of the actions of the host country, there was little prospect of their being implemented. His delegation commended the work of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, which had been characterized by professionalism and transparency. However, not all members of the Committee had responded earnestly or

effectively to the concerns of certain Member States. His delegation was grateful to the authorities and personnel of the City of New York for helping the staff of his Permanent Mission and their families to live a normal and stable life in the city without restrictions or discrimination. It also appreciated the efforts of the officials at the United States Mission to the United Nations to address its concerns and discuss them in a direct, clear and professional manner. The problem did not originate in New York; it resulted from politicized decisions adopted in the capital, which were intended to harass certain permanent missions and United Nations staff members who were citizens of countries that had political disagreements with the Government of the host country.

11. Bank accounts of diplomatic staff at the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be closed under the pretext that United States sanctions were in place against Syria and its citizens. Until recently, TD Bank had been the only bank, alongside the United Nations Federal Credit Union, to allow Syrian diplomatic staff to open bank accounts. However, it had abruptly decided not to open any new accounts, citing the need to comply with United States Government sanctions. The representative of the host country would no doubt argue that United States banks were private companies and that the Government could not impose any decision or obligation on them. However, the banks had made it clear that they were complying with sanctions imposed by the United States Department of the Treasury. The Permanent Mission had provided the banks with a copy of General Licence No. 1 issued by the Department of the Treasury, which excepted Syrian diplomats in the United States from the sanctions. Representatives of the bank had responded explicitly that they wanted to avoid disputes with the Department of the Treasury or the Office of Foreign Assets Control.

12. A growing number of shops and online retailers were refusing to enter into transactions with Syrian diplomats and had closed their accounts or cancelled their subscriptions. Once again, the retailers had cited United States Government sanctions against the Syrian Government. Recently, the online retailer Amazon had closed the accounts of Syrian diplomats and local staff, some of whom were United States citizens, on the pretext that they were connected with the Syrian Government. In official correspondence, Amazon had informed the Permanent Mission that the Department of the Treasury had declined to certify a copy of General Licence No.1. The Permanent Mission therefore could not accept the argument that the private sector in the United States acted independently from the Government.

13. Visas for Syrian diplomats continued to be issued for a period of six months and generally took at least one month to renew. Moreover, in December 2017, the Government of the host country had decided to prevent Syrian diplomats and Government representatives from travelling beyond a 25-mile radius measured from Columbus Circle, New York. Representatives of the United States Mission to the United Nations had written to the Permanent Mission encouraging it to apply for any exemptions that might be needed. The Permanent Mission had submitted many such applications. Most of them involved official travel to visit Syrian diplomatic premises in Washington D.C. that had been closed. In one instance, Syrian diplomats had applied to attend a conference on counter-terrorism convened in New Jersey by the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan. The applications had been rejected in all but two cases. The first involved a compulsory class trip for the children of a Syrian diplomat. In the second case, Syrian diplomats had been allowed to travel to the closed premises in Washington D.C., but only because those premises were so dilapidated that Department of State officials had themselves asked the Permanent Mission to arrange for repairs.

14. His delegation regularly expressed similar concerns, as had those of Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation. Every year, the Sixth Committee adopted a report and a resolution by consensus. In practice, however, the situation had steadily worsened because the Government of the host country persisted in imposing sanctions and restrictions. It sought to interpret the Headquarters Agreement and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations unilaterally in accordance with its own policies, which were plainly political. At a meeting of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, in early 2018, the representative of the United States had defended the travel restrictions by saying that the Headquarters Agreement merely obligated the host country to ensure that the representatives of Member States could reach United Nations Headquarters, but had no bearing on their personal or family lives. He hoped that the representatives of the United States Mission to the United Nations would send a clear message to their Government that the relevant Member States would not be deterred from their policies or their positions.

15. His delegation believed that the time had now come to consider some practical proposals. First, with regard to the host country's unilateral interpretation of the Headquarters Agreement, his delegation suggested recourse to article VIII, section 20 and section 21 (a) and (b), of that Agreement, which set forth actions to be

taken by the Secretary-General. Second, the Sixth Committee could establish a working group which, in parallel with the work of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, would consider the proposals of States and report to the Sixth Committee. Third, the Secretary-General could be requested to submit an annual report on the state of relations between the United Nations and the host country, including the positions and responses of Member States regarding the agenda item. Fourth, the meetings of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country could be broadcast on United Nations Web TV. Although its meetings were held in a spirit of transparency, the fact that they were not broadcast was not conducive to genuine solutions. Those proposals would help to uphold justice and equality among all permanent missions and all United Nations staff members, regardless of their nationality and irrespective of any political considerations.

16. **Ms. Guardia González** (Cuba) said that the host country's continued failure to comply with the obligations it had assumed under international law, as reflected in the report, gave cause for concern. The reason that some concerns expressed by Member States remained unresolved was that the host country had not taken action or provided responses grounded in international law that would enable concrete solutions to be found.

17. The policy of restricting the movement of accredited diplomats and international civil servants of certain nationalities, including Cubans and Syrians, was unjust, selective, discriminatory and politically motivated, and constituted a blatant violation of the host country's obligations under the Headquarters Agreement and customary norms of diplomatic law. Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations clearly provided for freedom of movement, and nowhere in the Convention was a distinction drawn between official and recreational travel. Yet the host country had taken no action to eliminate the unjustifiable measures in place that prevented staff of certain missions from travelling beyond a 25-mile radius measured from Columbus Circle. That arbitrary restriction was contrary to international law and should be lifted immediately.

18. Cuba unequivocally rejected any violation of the immunity of diplomatic premises and agents and supported the adoption of all relevant measures aimed at preventing such violations. The treatment of diplomats and the diplomatic pouch was an extremely important issue, and it was vital for the authorities of the host country to honour the terms of the Headquarters Agreement and fulfil their obligations to safeguard the privileges and immunities of diplomats. Other issues

that gave cause for concern included continuing discrimination in the issuance of visas, the unjustified expulsion of mission staff, the impossibility of opening bank accounts and the blocking of banking channels, which prevented certain missions from paying their contributions to the United Nations. All of those problems concerned matters that could not be subject to any restrictions arising from the bilateral relations of the host country.

19. The host country had an obligation to take all possible measures to comply with its international obligations. In that connection, her delegation supported the recommendation contained in paragraph 111 (p) of the report, in which the Committee encouraged the Secretary-General to actively engage in the work of the Committee, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI), with a view to ensuring the representation of the interests concerned. The Secretary-General, as custodian of the Headquarters Agreement, had a responsibility to ensure that the Agreement was strictly observed by the host country and should therefore see to it that a serious review of the host country's non-compliance with its international legal obligations to the United Nations was conducted. Her delegation was committed to working with all members of the Committee to ensure respect for the relevant legal provisions, and to enhancing the Committee's work through discussion, negotiation and collaboration among its members and the active involvement of other States.

20. **Mr. Musikhin** (Russian Federation) said that during the reporting period the Committee on Relations with the Host Country had continued to deal with unprecedented violations by the host country of its obligation to respect the privileges and immunities of permanent missions to the United Nations. The situation concerning a portion of his Mission's premises in Upper Brookville, Long Island, New York State, had still not been resolved. The host country authorities had taken temporary possession of the property in December 2016 and had barred Mission staff from entering the facility, including to perform preventive maintenance. The Department of State had rejected requests to enter the premises countless times without explanation. The host Government had been unwilling to return the facility, notwithstanding his delegation's entreaties, the recommendations of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the stipulations contained in General Assembly resolution 72/124 and all other efforts undertaken in the context of the United Nations to address the problem.

21. The host country's failure to comply with its obligations had created serious difficulties for the

functioning of the Mission and amounted to an openly arbitrary and discriminatory approach driven by a general policy to intentionally worsen relations with the Russian Federation. It also constituted an abuse of the position of host country of the United Nations and a gross violation of the Headquarters Agreement, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. The host country authorities therefore bore full responsibility for any damage that had already been caused to the property or that might be caused while the wrongfully imposed restrictions were in place, and also for any losses incurred in that connection. According to its report, the Committee on Relations with the Host Country would remain seized of the matter. His delegation understood that the Committee would work to resolve the situation concerning the premises in Upper Brookville until all unlawful restrictions were lifted.

22. In addition, in March 2018, the host country authorities had demanded that 12 members of the Mission's staff and their families leave the United States, claiming that the Mission had abused its privileges and immunities and asserting that the measure served to demonstrate the host country's "unbreakable solidarity" with the United Kingdom. That decision directly contravened the prohibition against the use of restrictions arising from the bilateral relations of the host country set out in paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 72/124. Furthermore, the decision had been taken based on false accusations against Russia and in contravention of section 13 (b) (1) of the Headquarters Agreement. The General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Member States needed to take note that, to please an ally, the host country was preventing the staff of a permanent mission from representing their country's interests at the United Nations.

23. Russian nationals coming to New York on official business at the United Nations had also faced protracted delays and rejections of their visa applications. It was clearly stated in section 12 of the Headquarters Agreement that transit to or from United Nations Headquarters of such persons must be assured irrespective of the relations existing between their Governments and the Government of the United States. One Russian representative who had been scheduled to take part in the work of the First Committee was still waiting for a visa, even though the application had been submitted in July. Such delays raised the possibility that the host Government was intentionally trying to undermine the work of the Russian delegation in the First Committee. Visa processing delays of up to three months had also disrupted the rotation schedule of the

staff of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation. Such delays were in violation of the requirement set out in section 13 (a) of the Headquarters Agreement that the host country must grant visas as promptly as possible.

24. Moreover, a visa had not been granted to a Russian national hired by the Secretariat through a competitive selection process. Such interference by the host country in the appointment of Secretariat staff was a gross violation of Article 100, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations, according to which each Member of the United Nations, including the host State, undertook to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff of the Organization. It was also in contravention of Article 101, paragraph 1, which stipulated that staff were to be appointed by the Secretary-General under regulations established by the General Assembly.

25. The staff of certain other permanent missions and some Secretariat staff were facing similar problems, including travel restrictions limiting their movement to an area within a 25-mile radius measured from Columbus Circle. Some delegations were experiencing difficulties entering the United States, as well as visa restrictions and problems with banking services that had in some cases even prevented them from making contributions to the Organization. Any permanent mission could be subjected to such unlawful restrictions, since they stemmed from the host country's view of its bilateral relations and its dislike of independent-minded views espoused at the United Nations. The host Government cared nothing for – and routinely violated – the Headquarters Agreement, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, relevant General Assembly resolutions and the recommendations of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

26. The General Assembly, through the Sixth Committee and the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, should, with the assistance of the Secretariat, strengthen the monitoring of compliance by the United States authorities with their obligations regarding the privileges and immunities of permanent missions, including their property and premises, in order to respond appropriately to any violations or abuses. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country should be granted greater authority, and the Secretary-General and all Member States should actively engage in a discussion of the future of the United Nations Headquarters and related matters.

27. **Mr. Nasimfar** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, while the work of the Committee had produced some

positive results, several long-standing problems remained unresolved, including travel and visa restrictions and banking difficulties. The lack of progress made it clear that the mandate and powers of the Committee were not suited to its objectives.

28. Furthermore, the working methods of the Committee should be improved. It was a matter of concern that, while all Member States had a great interest in the work of the Committee, only a small portion of them were members of it, and there was no meaningful interaction between the Committee and non-members in the negotiation and preparation of its recommendations and conclusions. There had been no serious effort to enhance the work of the Committee and its effectiveness, as requested by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, his delegation believed that the Committee had potential that, if properly utilized, would enable it to effectively address the issues referred to it. The Secretary-General was a party to the Headquarters Agreement and should ensure that its provisions were implemented consistently and in full. In its resolution 2819 (XXVI), the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to bring to the attention of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country issues of mutual concern relating to the implementation of the Headquarters Agreement and the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations. However, that practice had not been followed in recent years and should be revived. His delegation would welcome the presentation to the Sixth Committee of regular reports by the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of the Headquarters Agreement.

29. The rules governing the privileges and immunities of the United Nations were politically neutral and should not be affected by political considerations or bilateral issues between the host country and other States. Even the privileges and immunities of representatives whose Governments were not recognized by the host country had been guaranteed. The principle of reciprocity had been set aside to ensure the proper functioning of the United Nations on the basis of the sovereign equality of all of its Member States. Moreover, the General Assembly had affirmed that the maintenance of appropriate conditions for the normal work of the delegations and the missions accredited to the United Nations and the observance of their privileges and immunities could not be subject to any restrictions arising from the bilateral relations of the host country. However, the issuance of single-entry visas by the host country to mission and Secretariat staff of certain nationalities was hindering the proper functioning of missions, in addition to preventing staff from returning to their home countries for important

family events. The single-entry visa system for resident diplomats must be adjusted to allow representatives to leave the United States and return immediately. His delegation was also concerned about the application of discriminatory secondary screening procedures to diplomats of certain nationalities at airports during the journey to and from New York and supported the recommendation of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country that the host country should continue to take appropriate action, such as the training of police, security, customs and border control officers, with a view to maintaining respect for diplomatic privileges and immunities.

30. **Mr. Bukoree** (Mauritius) said that a number of diplomats had had their cars towed in the early hours of the first day of the high-level segment of the General Assembly, owing to confusing information from the local authorities on street closures, and the fact that the security sweeping exercise at the Headquarters parking facilities had been scheduled to take place at a time when parking restrictions imposed by the local authorities were in force in the vicinity. His delegation urged the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the administrators of the Headquarters parking facilities, the New York Police Department and the Office of the Mayor of the City of New York to coordinate with one another to ensure that such a situation was not repeated. The local authorities also seemed to be very quick to issue traffic tickets for alleged driving or parking infractions involving diplomatic vehicles. While diplomats did not have licence to ignore local traffic laws, the authorities could exercise more restraint when dealing with incidents.

31. His delegation also requested the relevant authorities to ensure that diplomatic tax exemption cards were duly recognized by businesses. It was worth bearing in mind that the United Nations Economic Report 2016, produced by the host country authorities, had found that the United Nations community contributed approximately \$56 million in net fiscal benefits to the city.

32. **Ms. Pierce** (United States of America) said that her country was proud to serve as host to the United Nations. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country was a valuable forum in which to discuss issues relating to the presence of the dynamic diplomatic community in New York and to address its concerns. The host country greatly valued the Committee's cooperation and constructive spirit and appreciated the participation of numerous observer delegations in its meetings. The fact that non-members could participate in the Committee's meetings had helped make its

deliberations open and more representative of the United Nations diplomatic community.

33. The Host Country Section of the Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations had issued 5,000 visas to members of the diplomatic community in 2018. During the high-level segment of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, it had assisted Member States with arrangements for continuous security details for Heads of State, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and their spouses, provided by the United States Secret Service and the Diplomatic Security Service of the United States Department of State. Over the past year, it had also issued more than two thousand credentials, facilitated employment authorizations and provided various other services. It looked forward to continuing to work closely with delegations over the following year.

34. Restrictions on private non-official travel of members of certain missions did not violate the Headquarters Agreement because they did not interfere with travel to the Headquarters district. In line with the Headquarters Agreement, the United States provided representatives of Members and others covered by the Agreement with unimpeded access to the Headquarters district. It was not required to permit all the individuals concerned to travel to other parts of the country unless they did so for official United Nations meetings or official United Nations business. Neither the Headquarters Agreement nor any other international agreement required the United States to permit travel to unofficial events or for recreational purposes.

35. With regard to the Russian property in Upper Brookville, delegations should refer to the detailed comments on the matter made by her delegation during the Sixth Committee's deliberations at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly (see [A/C.6/72/SR.27](#)). The Russian Federation had provided no evidence that it had ever notified the United States Mission to the United Nations or the Secretariat of the United Nations that it intended that property to form part of its diplomatic mission, as required under article 12 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The property had never enjoyed inviolability under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations or the Headquarters Agreement. There was no international law obligation to allow members of a diplomatic mission to reside in any particular property, and no diplomatic or consular mission had a right to recreational property.

36. The expulsion of 12 Russian diplomats and the actions taken by the United States leading up to those expulsions had been fully consistent with section 13 of

the Headquarters Agreement. The Deputy Secretary of State, acting under the authority of the Secretary of State, had first made a preliminary determination that the 12 individuals had abused their “privileges of residence”, as the term was used in section 13 (b) of the Headquarters Agreement, by using their positions at the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation as cover to engage in intelligence activities prejudicial to the national security interests of the United States. Subsequently, the United States Mission had engaged in consultations with the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation on 26 and 27 March. Those two meetings between the missions constituted consultations under section 13 of the Agreement, which did not elaborate on what constituted consultations. The Deputy Secretary of State had then made his final determination, taking into consideration the consultations and all of the relevant facts and circumstances. The fact that the host country had on the same day also expelled Russian intelligence officers from the Russian bilateral mission to the United States did not prevent the United States from also utilizing the process provided for under the Headquarters Agreement. The expulsion of the 12 staff from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations was carried out in response to their abuse of their privileges of residence; the Deputy Secretary of State had determined that they had engaged in intelligence-gathering activities prejudicial to the national security interests of the United States. The actions of the Russian Federation in the United Kingdom and elsewhere did not give it a free pass to use its Permanent Mission as a platform for espionage activity in the United States. The United States categorically rejected the assertion that its actions had been inconsistent with the Headquarters Agreement.

37. As for the matter of visas, her delegation was not in a position to disclose the details of individual cases but wished to reiterate that the United States took its obligations as host country very seriously and continued to consult and cooperate with missions and the United Nations on individual cases, as appropriate. The United States looked forward to continuing to work closely with all Member States to resolve issues that might arise in the coming year.

38. **Mr. Musikhin** (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the aforementioned restrictions on travel by members of certain permanent missions beyond a 25-mile radius from Columbus Circle had prevented them from attending events concerning the work of the United Nations organized by other permanent missions.

39. With regard to the issuance of visas, the obligations of the host country in that regard were

clearly set out in the Headquarters Agreement, which stipulated that visas must be granted without charge and as promptly as possible. Therefore, nothing could justify delays in the issuance of visas, including for Secretariat staff reporting for duty at Headquarters.

40. The issue of the status of the official premises of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation in Upper Brookville had been raised repeatedly in the Committee on Relations with the Host Country. The documents in which it had been clearly stated that the Permanent Mission used the premises for official purposes had been provided to the host country authorities many years previously by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and could be provided to the Committee on Relations with the Host Country on request. Furthermore, when unlawful restrictions on access to the facility had first been introduced, the host country authorities had stated that the facility had lost its privileges and immunities, thus acknowledging that the facility had previously benefited from such privileges. Any assertions to the contrary were not based in fact.

41. Although the representative of the United States had argued that her delegation had followed all necessary procedures when it had compelled staff members of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to leave the host country’s territory in March 2018, it had in fact ignored those procedures altogether, having delivered the note demanding the departure of the Mission staff by hand, without engaging in any meaningful prior consultations with his Government. It was unclear what connection there was between the host country’s “unbreakable solidarity” with a third country, cited by the Department of State as the reason for that decision, and permanent missions to the United Nations and their staff.

42. **Mr. Al Arsan** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation supported the points made by the representative of the Russian Federation. The representative of the host country had merely confirmed that her Government sought to interpret the Headquarters Agreement unilaterally for plainly political purposes. It was now clear that a dispute existed between the host country and the United Nations. Article VIII of the Headquarters Agreement, particularly section 21 (a) and (b), should therefore be invoked. The Secretary-General, the Government of the host country and, if applicable, the President of the International Court of Justice should appoint arbitrators for a final decision regarding the dispute. If those arbitrators found that the restrictions imposed on diplomats and the disparities in the issuance of visas were consistent with the Headquarters

Agreement, his delegation would let the matter rest. His delegation had not raised its concerns in order to seek a quarrel; it wanted to find genuine solutions.

43. **Ms. Guardia González** (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the assertion by the representative of the host country that there was no provision in the Headquarters Agreement or any other agreement concerning recreational travel was incorrect. Reiterating that article 26 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations did not distinguish between different types of travel, she said that it was a principle of law that where the law made no distinction, no distinction should be made. Moreover, it bore repeating that no privilege granted to Member States under the Headquarters Agreement could be limited as a result of the state of bilateral diplomatic relations. Requiring staff at certain missions to apply for travel authorizations was discriminatory, selective and politically motivated. Such restrictions were not imposed on all diplomats accredited to the United Nations; her delegation could therefore see no justification for their application.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.