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PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BETWEEN STATES

DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF GOOD-NEIGHBOURLINES BETWEEN STATES

Letter dated 21 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative
of Bolivia to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Bolivia concerning the diversion of the waters of the river Lauca and the change of name of the Arica-La Paz international railway.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly under items 130 and 137 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Hugo NAVAJAS MOGRO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/43/50.

ANNEX

Press release issued on 14 April 1988 by the Ministry
of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Bolivia

On 14 April 1988 the Republic of Bolivia recalls an incident which demonstrates the arrogance and arbitrariness that the Chilean leaders showed against our country in 1962, when unilaterally and in total disregard of the norms of international law, they ordered the diversion of the waters of the river Lauca. This unwonted incident is part of the history of pillage and traditional hostility displayed by the ruling circles in Chile towards Bolivia, as first manifested in 1879 by the usurpation of our sea coasts and of Bolivia's sovereign rights of access to the Pacific Ocean.

Both acts demonstrate that, in its political conduct, Chile has once again been arbitrary and contemptuous of legal principles, leaving an abusive and perplexing legacy that affects the orderliness, morality and good faith that should govern relations in our continent and international practice.

On this date, in recalling yet another year of arbitrary diversion of the waters of the river Lauca, the constitutional Government of the Republic of Bolivia, echoing the sentiments of the entire Bolivian nation, the community of the hemisphere and other friendly countries which recognize Bolivia's legitimate demands, again reiterates its condemnation of this outrage. In the face of Chilean aggression and usurpation, it once again reminds the world conscience that Bolivia's loss of access to the sea and the unwarranted appropriation and use of the waters of the river Lauca are issues awaiting a solution with Chile, with a view to restoring Bolivia's sovereign rights, and declares that the dialogue with Chile may be resumed only when its Government agrees to negotiate in good faith and to resolve both problems, in order to face the future on a firm basis of peace, development and integration.

The river Lauca, which has always been part of the hydrographic system of the Bolivian uplands, was an important factor for regulating the climate of this zone and was a source of water for crops and cattle, thereby benefiting the farming communities in the zone. Its diversion does serious harm to the country and is a major factor for the unmistakable impoverishment of this rural zone.

Bolivia regrets, on this occasion, the need to condemn before the international community a new affront committed several days ago by the present Government of Chile, in defiance of the international agreements. Through a unilateral act, it has changed the name of the Arica-La Paz international railway to the so-called "Regional Railway of Arica", as a prelude to new action designed to reinforce Bolivia's isolation from the sea imposed on it since 1879. This act by the dictatorial régime in power in Chile is being brought to the attention of the Organization of American States, the United Nations and other international institutions in order to urge them to express their traditional solidarity with Bolivia and pronounce themselves publicly on this matter.

Lastly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to pay homage to the memory of the former Foreign Minister José Fellman Velarde for his decisive action in 1962 to protect the waters of the river Lauca, as an inalienable part of Bolivia's heritage, and for his historic legacy of not yielding in the face of this new act of spoliation; further, in compliance with the rule of law, with dignity and reason, we wish to regain access to the sea and to achieve the restoration of our rights over the waters of the river Lauca, which form an integral part of our historical and geographical legacy.
