

Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country



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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on Relations with the Host Country was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI) of 15 December 1971. The General Assembly, by its resolution [67/100](#) of 14 December 2012, decided to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-eighth session the item entitled “Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country”. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution [67/100](#).
2. The report consists of four sections. The recommendations and conclusions of the Committee are contained in section IV.

Chapter II

Membership, composition, terms of reference and organization of the work of the Committee

3. The Committee is composed of 19 members, as follows:

Bulgaria	Iraq
Canada	Libya
China	Malaysia
Costa Rica	Mali
Côte d'Ivoire	Russian Federation
Cuba	Senegal
Cyprus	Spain
France	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Honduras	United States of America
Hungary	

4. The Bureau of the Committee consists of the Chair, the three Vice-Chairs, the Rapporteur and a representative of the host country who attends Bureau meetings *ex officio*. During the reporting period, the Bureau was composed as follows:

Chair:

Nicholas Emiliou (Cyprus)

Vice-Chair:

Boyan Belev (Bulgaria)
Giles Andrew Norman (Canada)
Théodore Dah (Côte d'Ivoire)

Rapporteur:

Carol Viviana Arce Echeverría (Costa Rica) — Georgina Guillén-Grillo (Costa Rica)

5. At its 263rd meeting, the Committee, having been informed that its Rapporteur, Carol Viviana Arce Echeverría (Costa Rica), was on maternity leave, welcomed Georgina Guillén-Grillo (Costa Rica) to assume the functions of Rapporteur during her absence.

6. The terms of reference of the Committee were determined by the General Assembly in its resolution 2819 (XXVI). In May 1992, the Committee adopted, and in March 1994 slightly modified, a detailed list of topics for its consideration, which is set out in the annex to the present report.

7. During the reporting period, the Committee held the following meetings: the 260th meeting, on 31 January 2013; the 261st meeting, on 30 April 2013; the 262nd meeting, on 31 July 2013; the 263rd meeting, on 7 October 2013; and the 264th meeting, on 1 November 2013.

Chapter III

Topics dealt with by the Committee

A. Entry visas issued by the host country

8. At the 263rd meeting, the observer for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expressed her concern about selective actions and lack of guarantees by the host country to safely ensure the participation of all interested Heads of State or Government in the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. She stated that those selective actions by the host country constituted a flagrant violation of the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations (the “Headquarters Agreement”), in particular article 13 (a). She stated that owing to those actions, the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, had not been able to attend the high-level segment of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. She stated that the United Nations should guarantee universal participation to Member States in all its activities, based on the principles of sovereignty and equality as reflected in article 2, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations. She reiterated the importance of the work of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country and hoped that the issue would be addressed with the host country in a manner that prevented such selective actions in the future. She urged the Committee to request the host country to adhere to its obligations under the Headquarters Agreement.

9. The observer for Nicaragua stated that the actions of the host country with regard to the issuance of entry visas undermined international legal norms. She expressed her concern about the negative attitude of the host country when considering the issuance of entry visas to representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. She explained that Nicaragua had experienced similar difficulties in the past and that the attitude of the host country had a negative impact on the diplomatic and friendly relations between nations. She condemned the arbitrary conduct of the host country and requested that the practice of the host country be examined more closely. She emphasized that that practice was not in accordance with international law guaranteeing the sovereignty of, and respect for, all Member States.

10. The representative of Cuba stated that Cuba supported the intervention of the observer for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and expressed her concern that a number of actions by the host country had affected the participation of the Venezuelan delegation in the high-level segment of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. As a member of the Committee, she wished to condemn those actions and note that it was not acceptable for the host country to prevent in any way the proper functioning of diplomatic missions accredited to the United Nations. She emphasized that the host country had a responsibility to comply with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Headquarters Agreement. She stated that it was the host country’s obligation to adopt measures to ensure compliance with international law and she requested that the necessary action be taken in order to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the future.

11. The observer for the Sudan stated that the host country had an obligation to assist Member States and their representatives to perform their responsibilities vis-à-vis the United Nations and that that included the issuance of entry visas. He

expressed his deep concern about the future of the United Nations and the principles stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations because of what he claimed to be serious violations of the Headquarters Agreement by the host country. He informed the Committee that his delegation was supposed to have been headed by His Excellency Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, President of the Sudan, but claimed that the host country had deliberately violated the Headquarters Agreement by not issuing a visa to President Al-Bashir. He further stated that President Al-Bashir had been democratically elected in 2010 and that the election had been supervised and observed by several international and regional organizations. He reiterated that not issuing a visa to President Al-Bashir was a violation of the Headquarters Agreement and resulted in a general lack of confidence towards the host country, and therefore the United Nations would have to protect itself and the Charter. He expressed his view that there was increased concern that the United Nations was not able to protect its Member States from the political concerns of the host country. He called upon all Member States to put an end to those practices.

12. The representative of the host country assured the Committee that the United States took its obligations as the host country very seriously. She stated that the host country had worked very closely with the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, D.C., and Permanent Mission in New York, and had made extraordinary efforts to accommodate President Maduro and his delegation's continuously changing arrival plans. She informed the Committee that, between 18 and 24 September 2013, the United States had approved five separate requests from the Venezuelan Embassy for overflight and landing rights for the aircraft carrying President Maduro and his delegation. She stated that some of those requests had been made at the last minute, not 72 hours in advance as required, and that those requests were nonetheless approved within hours. She further stated that on 24 September 2013, the Venezuelan Embassy had informed the Department of State that it wished to withdraw the request for the President's aircraft to land in New York. The request for overflight clearance was made after President Maduro had decided to return to Caracas from Canada on a Cuban aircraft. She noted that the host country was not aware of the reason why President Maduro decided not to attend the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly. She also wished to point out that the Venezuelan delegation had requested a total of 244 entry visas and that the host country had issued all 244 visas even though some of them had been requested within less than the required three business days in advance.

13. The representative of the host country emphasized that the process of issuing visas was complex. She informed the Committee that the host country had received hundreds of applications for entry visas and had made every effort to issue those visas promptly. She stated that all applications had to be reviewed and that that process was complicated and took time. She explained that the proposed travel of President Al-Bashir had presented a number of issues that had to be considered by the host country, including the possible legal implications of the outstanding arrest warrant against President Al-Bashir, the provisions of Security Council resolution [1593 \(2005\)](#), the Secretary-General's guidance on contacts with persons who are the subject of arrest warrants or summonses issued by the International Criminal Court, and the letter from the pretrial chamber of the Court requesting the competent authorities of the United States to arrest President Al-Bashir and surrender him to the Court in the event that he entered the United States. The representative of the host country stated that that was not to say that the host country agreed or disagreed

with that request, but that it clearly added to an already confused and difficult situation.

14. The observer for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela noted that even though the plane that was carrying President Maduro was a rented Cuban aircraft, in accordance with international law it was to be accorded all the privileges and immunities of a plane of a head of State and commander in chief. In addition, she also wished to clarify that while the visas for her delegation had been granted by the host country, they had been issued after the delegation's travel had begun.

15. The observer for the Sudan expressed his surprise that the Secretary-General's guidance had been mentioned by the host country and at the latter's reference to "wanted individuals". He reiterated that President Al-Bashir was the President of a United Nations Member State. To the knowledge of his Mission, the International Criminal Court did not exercise authority over who could participate or not in United Nations meetings, and referencing the Court in granting an entry visa was a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Headquarters Agreement.

16. The representative of the host country stated in response to the observer for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that because President Maduro was travelling on a commercial aircraft and not a State aircraft, the Government of Cuba had sought assurances that the aircraft would not be subject to United States legal processes in connection with various private civil lawsuits pending against Cuba. She stated that the host country was not in a position to provide such assurances to Cuba owing to the independence of the judiciary from the Government. She wished to reiterate that every effort had been made to facilitate President Maduro's participation in the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

17. The Chair wished to remind the host country of its obligations under the relevant international agreements and international law in general with respect to the issuance of entry visas. The Chair stated that he recognized that there was a large volume of applications for entry visas, particularly during the high-level segment of the General Assembly. While that did not absolve the host country of its obligations, he advised delegations to make their requests for entry visas well in advance in order to facilitate the process.

B. Exemption from taxes

18. At the 263rd meeting,¹ the representative of Spain said that he wished to raise the issue of real estate tax with the host country, and the City of New York in particular. He noted that the main residence of the Spanish Mission was exempt from real estate tax, however that did not seem to be the case for the residences of the diplomatic staff of missions. He requested the host country to clarify whether or not such residences were exempt from real estate tax.

19. The Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs informed the representative of Spain that the question was settled law through the United States courts and that the City of New York was in the process of updating its records of properties that were eligible for such tax exemption. She stated that she

¹ The Chair informed the Committee that the discussion that was held on this matter would be reflected in the Committee's report to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

would be happy to assist the Spanish Mission if there was a problem with a particular residence of its diplomatic staff.

C. Question of the security of missions and the safety of their personnel

20. At the 261st meeting, the representative of Cuba stated that he wished to bring to the attention of the Committee a serious situation that had occurred at the Cuban Mission. The incident was set out in the note verbale from the Cuban Mission circulated to the Committee on 18 April 2013 (A/AC.154/404, annex). On 6 April 2013, approximately 30 demonstrators had taken photos and videos of the Mission building, blocked Mission security cameras and projected lights, images and recordings onto the walls of the Mission. He stated that those actions had jeopardized security, disturbed personnel and disrupted activities at the Mission. He further stated that his Mission had immediately reported those actions to the New York City Police Department and had been informed that police officers would be sent to the Mission. Unfortunately, that had not happened. The Mission had also notified the diplomatic security services of the New York City Police Department Intelligence Division of the incident via voice and text messages, but had received no response. He also stated that the Mission had not received any advance notice about the demonstration.

21. The representative of Cuba called upon the United States to comply with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the Headquarters Agreement, the procedures established in note verbale HC-33-95 of 9 June 1995 and its obligations generally as the host country. He also called upon the United States not to permit impunity for individuals or groups whose acts violated the dignity, functioning and security of the Mission.

22. The representative of the host country stated that the New York City Police Department had informed the United States Mission that the Cuban Mission had made a 911 call for assistance with regard to the demonstration in front of the Cuban Mission. The representative of the host country further stated that he had been informed that the police had arrived on the scene five minutes after the emergency call was made and that, at that time, there were no demonstrators outside the Cuban Mission or in its environs. He wished to note that the host country was therefore of the view that the police response had been rapid, appropriate and satisfactory.

23. The representative of the host country also noted that, following the incident, members of the New York City Police Department and the Diplomatic Security Branch of the Department of State had met with members of the Cuban Mission to discuss the incident and future coordination of the response by host country authorities during impromptu demonstrations. He wished to assure the representative of Cuba that the projection of images onto the Cuban Mission's building was not permitted and that every effort would be made by the relevant host country authorities to prevent such an occurrence in the future.

24. The representative of Cuba thanked the representative of the host country for his explanation and consideration, and for the host country's recognition that the activities reported by the Cuban Mission constituted a security violation. He reiterated his Mission's concern that such actions were a danger to the civilian population, the staff of the Mission and, more generally, to diplomatic staff accredited to the United Nations.

25. The representative of Cuba wished to recall the assassination of a Cuban diplomat, Félix García Rodríguez, on 11 September 1980 in New York City, as well as the bombings of the Cuban Mission in New York in 1968. He reiterated his Government's request that the United States comply with its international obligations as the host country and ensure the safety of diplomats accredited to the United Nations.

26. The Chair noted the concerns expressed by the representative of Cuba and the positive response by the representative of the host country with respect to the efforts made by the host country to ensure the security of the missions to the United Nations and the safety of their personnel.

27. The representative of China stated that he wished to express his Mission's concern about the occasional blocking of the Mission's front entrance by persons seeking shelter, who would refuse to leave. He stated that it seriously affected the safety and functioning of the Mission. He requested that the host country ensure that security patrols around the Mission were increased.

28. The representative of the host country stated that his Mission, in consultation with the Chinese Mission, would work with the relevant officials of the City of New York to find an appropriate solution to the issue.

D. Host country activities: activities to assist members of the United Nations community

29. At the 259th meeting,¹ the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic reminded the Committee that the problem relating to securing appropriate diplomatic bank accounts for the Syrian Mission in New York had not been resolved. He added that his Mission had been reduced to making cash-only transactions for the previous six months. He expressed dismay that despite the fact that the Syrian Arab Republic had made every attempt to resolve the issue, including raising it with the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, it still remained unresolved. His Mission had been forced to contemplate whether the inability to obtain the required banking services was part of the sanctions package of the host country against the Syrian Arab Republic. He stated that his Mission could not properly function without a bank account and requested that the Chair raise the matter again with the Secretary-General and keep the Committee engaged.

30. The representative of the host country reminded the Committee of the background to the diplomatic banking problem. He noted that after JP Morgan Chase decided to close its diplomatic banking division two years previously, the Department of State had assisted many missions, including the Syrian Mission, in obtaining accounts with another bank, but unfortunately the second bank had decided to close its diplomatic banking division as well. He assured the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic that the United States authorities had not stopped working at the highest levels to resolve the situation, and further assured the Committee that, although Hurricane Sandy had temporarily halted their ongoing efforts to secure appropriate banking services for the missions, those efforts had now been resumed.

31. At the 260th meeting, the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic again raised the long-standing issue of securing appropriate banking services for the Syrian Mission in New York. He explained how his Mission was severely constrained in

properly carrying out its functions and that his Mission continued to have to pay salaries and meet other financial obligations in cash. In that regard, he wished to recall his previous statements to the Committee on the matter and, in particular, his request to the Chair to intervene with the host country and the United Nations Secretariat to find an appropriate and satisfactory solution. He requested the Chair to inform the Committee of any measures taken and any results achieved.

32. The representative of the host country stated that members of his Government were continuing to seek a solution regarding the issue. His Mission had been in close consultation with the Syrian Mission to try to resolve the matter and would continue working with the Syrian Mission and the Chair to find a bank that would be willing to provide the necessary banking services.

33. The Chair stated that he had raised the serious concerns expressed by the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic with the United Nations Secretariat at a high level and with the host country, and that he had offered his assistance in finding a solution to the situation. He stated that he fully appreciated the difficulties faced by the Syrian Mission in trying to carry out its functions under the current circumstances and pledged his assistance in finding an appropriate solution to the matter.

34. At the 261st meeting, the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic expressed his condolences for the recent Boston marathon bombings and condemned terrorist actions wherever they occurred. In that regard, he wished to thank the representative of the host country for the efforts deployed to guarantee the safety, security and smooth functioning of diplomatic missions in New York. However, he regretted that despite the considerable amount of time that had passed and the various efforts made, his Mission still did not have access to appropriate banking services. As he had stated in previous meetings of the Committee, the lack of appropriate banking services had severely hampered his Mission's ability to function and had adversely affected the living conditions of the diplomatic and local personnel of the Mission. He wished to again urge the host country and the United Nations Secretariat to find a solution to that long-standing problem.

35. The representative of the host country thanked the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic for his comments regarding the bombing and his Government's efforts to ensure the security of diplomatic missions in New York. His Mission fully sympathized with the very difficult banking situation being faced by the Syrian Mission and he wished to reiterate to the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic that the host country took the issue extremely seriously and had been addressing it at the highest levels, including with other United States Government agencies, industry associations and the banks themselves. He regretted that a solution had not yet been found, but wished to assure the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic that his Government would continue its efforts to resolve the issue.

36. The observer for the Sudan stated that he too wished to thank the host country for its efforts in helping missions to run smoothly. However, he also wished to express his frustration over the lack of appropriate banking services for his Mission and hoped that a speedy solution would be found.

37. The Chair stated that the matter remained serious and that the Committee would remain seized of the issue until an appropriate solution had been found. He wished to inform the Committee that, following its last meeting, he had raised the matter and the concerns expressed in the Committee in a letter to the Secretary-General.

38. At the 262nd meeting, the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic stated that he was hopeful that a solution would be found regarding the long-standing issue of banking services for the Syrian Mission in New York. The resolution of that matter was taking a long time and there had been negative consequences from the lack of willingness of United States banks to open accounts for permanent delegations. He expressed hope that the issue would be resolved promptly through the authorities of the host country and the United Nations Secretariat.

39. The representative of the host country thanked the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic for his comments and stated that the host country shared the frustration that the matter had not yet been resolved. She assured the observer for the Syrian Arab Republic that the host country was working at the highest levels to find a solution to the problem as soon as possible. The representative of the host country also gave assurances that she would keep the Chair of the Committee and the Secretary-General informed of any development in that regard.

40. The representative of China stated that he wished to seek the assistance of the host country in addressing the problem of low voltage at his Mission's premises. The low voltage had resulted in numerous cases of elevator malfunction and, as a result, the personnel of the Chinese Mission were afraid of taking the elevator. He noted that ConEdison had conducted some tests and had concluded that the relevant electricity line was positioned too low. He requested the host country to assist in resolving that problem.

41. The representative of the host country thanked the representative of China for his comments and stated that the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs had offered to act as a liaison between the Chinese Mission and ConEdison regarding the issue of low voltage, although ConEdison was a private company.

42. The Chair thanked the representative of China and the representative of the host country. The Chair expressed his gratitude to the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs for her offer to mediate between the Chinese Mission and ConEdison to find a solution.

43. At the 263rd meeting, the observer for the Sudan stated that his Mission had been prevented from opening a bank account for more than two years and he hoped that the Committee was aware of the Mission's difficulties. The functioning of his Mission was seriously impaired by the lack of a bank account in New York City and it was unacceptable that that situation had not yet been resolved. It was the hope of his Mission that the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly would assume their responsibilities to protect the rights of the Member States and protect them from political sanctions and punishment by the host country. He called upon the host country to comply with the Headquarters Agreement and to immediately remove all measures that impeded the proper functioning of several permanent missions and delegations. The observer for the Sudan wondered whether the fact that the issue was a long-standing and now recurring one was an indication that the working methods of the Committee should be re-evaluated.

44. The Chair thanked the observer for the Sudan and assured him that the Committee, and he himself as its Chair, had made every effort during the previous few months to find a solution to that problem and continued to do so. The Chair stated that the Committee had raised the issue with the Secretariat and the host

country at the highest levels. The Chair stated that he would continue to work hard to resolve the matter.

45. The representative of the host country stated that the United States had been working very hard at the highest levels to obtain banking services for the Mission of the Sudan and others, and that it was continuing to make every effort to resolve the matter.

46. The representative of China stated that he had the pleasure to report that with the help of the host country and the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs, the Chinese Mission had resolved all the issues that it had reported at previous Committee meetings. He noted that the Chinese Mission did have continuing difficulties with its telephone lines and requested the host country to liaise with the telecommunication company Verizon to speed up repairs to the Mission's telephone lines.

47. The Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs stated that she would be happy to take up the issue with Verizon and that she would contact the Chinese Mission directly.

48. The Chair stated that he was pleased to hear that a number of issues had been resolved with the assistance of the host country and he expressed his gratitude to the host country and the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs.

E. Transportation: use of motor vehicles, parking and related matters

49. At the 261st meeting, the representative of China stated that he wished to seek the host country's assistance with respect to certain parking and related matters. The parking signs in front of the Chinese Mission were not clearly marked, which led to other diplomatic vehicles using the spots designated for the Chinese Mission. He proposed that the parking signs be amended to read "D/S decals only for Chinese Mission" and invited other suggestions. He also noted that his Mission's vehicles had been wrongly ticketed by the New York City authorities. He requested the host country authorities to ensure that the relevant city authorities familiarize their staff with the diplomatic parking programme and diplomatic decals in particular. He also requested that the host country assist his Mission in having the wrongly issued parking tickets voided. Finally, he wished to request that the Mission's non-diplomatic staff, such as drivers and cooks, be treated in the same way as diplomatic staff with respect to the issuance of drivers' licences. He explained that currently, non-diplomatic staff were required to take a test in order to obtain a driver's licence, which had caused delays that, in turn, had impeded the functioning of the Mission.

50. The representative of the host country thanked the representative of China for his comments and assured him that the United States Mission was there to help all missions to the United Nations and, further, that it would work through the issues raised by the representative of China. It was his understanding that the parking tickets in question had been submitted to an appeals process established under the diplomatic parking programme and that a response was expected in the coming weeks. He explained that he would have to consult with the relevant bodies on the questions raised regarding the parking signage in front of the Chinese Mission. He suggested that all of the issues raised by the representative of China should be discussed bilaterally between their Missions.

51. The Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs also thanked the representative of China and stated that her office would be happy to work with the Chinese Mission on the question of signage. She wished to point out, however, that the current practice of not indicating the name of the Mission on parking signage was due to security concerns.

52. At the 262nd meeting, the representative of China stated that he wished to seek the assistance of the host country with regard to the application procedure for drivers' licences for non-diplomatic staff of the Chinese Mission. The process for the non-diplomatic staff of the Chinese Mission to apply for drivers' licences was very protracted and required a test, which had a negative impact on the work of the Chinese Mission, in particular with regard to the drivers of the Ambassador. The representative of China therefore wished to propose that the host country consider applying to non-diplomatic staff of the Chinese Mission the same procedure for applying for drivers' licences as that applied for diplomatic staff.

53. The representative of the host country thanked the representative of China and recalled that the issue had been raised in a previous meeting. She stated that she would follow up with her colleagues in the Office of Foreign Missions in the Department of State and that the host country would contact the Chinese Mission directly to discuss possible solutions.

F. Other matters

54. At the 259th meeting,¹ the representatives of Honduras, China, Iraq and the Russian Federation, and the observers for the Syrian Arab Republic and Serbia expressed their solidarity and sympathy to the host country and the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs on the loss of life and damage to property caused by Hurricane Sandy. They all expressed their sincere thanks to the government authorities for all that had been done to restore services to the residents of the City of New York. Several representatives and observers stated that they had close ties to the City of New York. The observer for Serbia offered assistance and proposed that individual diplomats might wish to consider setting up a fund for donations.

55. The observer for Serbia wished to express his Mission's concern with regard to the restrictions on access to fuel. His Mission was located in Manhattan and the drivers for the Mission found it very difficult to get to petrol stations to refuel the Mission's official vehicles. He requested that the City of New York consider reserving a gas pump or fuel tanker truck to assist United Nations delegations that were in desperate need of gasoline.

56. The representative of China expressed solidarity with the City of New York on the impact of Hurricane Sandy, but also raised the obligation of the host country to accord full facilities for the performance of the functions of her Mission. She reported that it was not satisfied with the response it had received when it contacted the United States Mission to report that it had been without electricity and heat for five days and was almost entirely without the ability to communicate with its capital. She also stated that her Mission had done everything it could to mitigate those problems but needed assistance from the host country. She hoped that her Mission would receive a more positive response in the event that such a disaster reoccurred in the future.

57. The representative of the Russian Federation joined the observer for Serbia in requesting that the City authorities look at possibilities for the diplomatic missions to gain access to fuel without disrupting other activities. He stated that his Mission had to ensure that its buses commuting from a residential compound in the Bronx to offices in Manhattan continued to operate.

58. The representative of Iraq requested further information on when electricity and water services would be restored, since several of his staff with children lived in buildings that were without those utilities.

59. The representative of the host country thanked the delegations that empathized with the City of New York and the host country, and also those that had raised issues relating to Hurricane Sandy. The representative of the host country read out the letter from Ambassador Rice that had been sent to the missions to the United Nations, and reiterated that the first priority for the local, federal and State authorities was protecting lives. He assured the Committee that other issues would be resolved as soon as possible and that he would report on the comments made in the Committee. The representative of the host country further noted that the City of New York and the power companies had been working diligently to restore the services affected by Hurricane Sandy.

60. The Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs also expressed her appreciation to the delegations for their understanding and support at a difficult time. She expressed her sympathy to the delegations for the inconvenience experienced, but emphasized that the first priority of the City of New York was protecting life and safety. She promised to disseminate the Mayor's daily press conferences to the United Nations and its membership to ensure that delegations were kept informed. She also invited interested delegations to visit the City's website, which described opportunities to contribute to the recovery effort.

61. The Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for International Affairs explained that the authorities of the City of New York and the State of New York had had to impose extraordinary measures, including restrictions on fuel supply and vehicle access, while the various facilities and services were being restored to full capacity. She further stated that those restrictions were necessary and it was not feasible to implement exemptions to such restrictions. She noted that everyone in the city was affected by the devastation caused by the hurricane and that she was confident that the diplomatic community would adapt to those extraordinary circumstances, as the rest of the inhabitants of the City were doing. She wished to assure the Committee that the authorities of the City of New York had done their very best to restore all essential services and that her Office continued to be available to assist missions as best as it could under the circumstances.

62. The Chairman stated that, on behalf of the Committee, he wished to express sorrow to the host country authorities for the loss of life and injuries suffered, as well as the destruction of property resulting from Hurricane Sandy. He praised all the authorities for their tireless efforts to deal with the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy.

63. At the 261st meeting, the representative of China stated that he wished to seek the assistance of the host country with respect to the issuance of identity cards for the spouses of non-diplomatic staff. The host country authorities currently registered the spouses of non-diplomatic staff, but did not issue identity cards to them, which

had caused some inconvenience to those spouses when travelling. He also wished to inform the host country that since Hurricane Sandy, his Mission had been experiencing interruptions to its communications facilities, which had made it difficult at times for the Mission to function properly. He hoped that the host country authorities would expedite any necessary repairs as a matter of priority.

64. The representative of the host country stated that he would have to consult with the Office of Foreign Missions in the Department of State on the question of identity cards, and suggested that discussions on that matter and the communications issue be taken up directly between the Chinese and the United States Missions.

65. At the 262nd meeting, the representative of China stated that he again wished to seek the assistance of the host country with regard to the issuance of identity cards for the spouses of non-diplomatic staff, the lack of which continued to cause inconvenience to those spouses when travelling.

66. The representative of the host country stated that she would follow up on the recommendation that identity cards be given to the spouses of non-diplomatic staff and would contact the representative of China in due course to discuss the matter further.

67. The Chair thanked the representative of China and the representative of the host country and noted their comments. He recalled that the issue had been raised in a previous meeting and he hoped that a solution to the problem would be found soon.

68. At the 263rd meeting, the representative of Honduras stated that he was pleased to learn that a number of issues had been resolved with the assistance of the host country. However, there appeared to be issues that had been less successfully addressed, one of which was the topic raised by the observer for the Sudan of obtaining a bank account for the Mission. The representative of Honduras noted, nevertheless, that any problems that might be encountered by the Mission of the Sudan were not related to the working methods of the Committee.

69. The observer for the Sudan thanked the representative of Honduras for his statement and pointed out that he was grateful for all the efforts undertaken by the Chair to resolve the issues that his Mission had faced, but that a discussion about working methods might in any case be pertinent. He noted that it was important for the Committee to remain in contact with the Member States that continued to face issues with the host country, with a view to resolving them.

70. The Chairman thanked the observer for the Sudan for his intervention and stated that he was open to suggestions as to how to improve the working methods and effectiveness of the Committee. He assured the members of the Committee and the observers that he always welcomed discussions to facilitate the resolution of any matter on the Committee's agenda.

Chapter IV

Recommendations and conclusions

71. At its 264th meeting, on 1 November 2013, the Committee approved the following recommendations and conclusions:

(a) The Committee reaffirms the Headquarters Agreement, the provisions of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations;

(b) Considering that the maintenance of appropriate conditions for the delegations and missions accredited to the United Nations is in the interest of the United Nations and all Member States, the Committee appreciates the efforts made by the host country to that end and anticipates that all issues raised at its meetings, including those referred to below, will be duly settled in a spirit of cooperation and in accordance with international law;

(c) The Committee notes that the observance of privileges and immunities is an issue of great importance. The Committee emphasizes the need to solve, through negotiations, problems that might arise in this regard for the normal functioning of the delegations and the missions accredited to the United Nations. The Committee urges the host country to continue to take appropriate action, such as training of police, security, customs and border control officers, with a view to maintaining respect for diplomatic privileges and immunities. If violations occur, the Committee urges the host country to ensure that such cases are properly investigated and remedied, in accordance with applicable law;

(d) Considering that the security of the missions accredited to the United Nations and the safety of their personnel are indispensable for their effective functioning, and noting in this regard the concerns reported, the Committee appreciates the efforts made by the host country to this end and anticipates that the host country will continue to take all measures necessary to prevent any interference with the functioning of the missions;

(e) The Committee notes that permanent missions continue to implement the Diplomatic Parking Programme and shall remain seized of the matter, with a view to continuously ensuring the proper implementation of the programme in a manner that is fair, non-discriminatory, effective and therefore consistent with international law;

(f) The Committee requests the host country to continue to bring to the attention of New York City officials reports about other problems experienced by permanent missions or their staff in order to improve the conditions for their functioning and to promote compliance with international norms concerning diplomatic privileges and immunities, and to continue to consult with the Committee on those important issues;

(g) The Committee recalls that, in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 2819 (XXVI), the Committee shall consider and advise the host country on issues arising 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;

(h) The Committee anticipates that the host country will continue to enhance its efforts to ensure the issuance of entry visas to representatives of Member States pursuant to article IV, section 11, of the Headquarters Agreement in a timely manner to enable travel to New York on official United Nations business, including to attend official United Nations meetings, and notes that a number of delegations have requested shortening the time frame applied by the host country for the issuance of entry visas to representatives of Member States, since this time frame poses difficulties for the full-fledged participation of Member States in United Nations meetings; the Committee also anticipates that the host country will continue to enhance efforts to facilitate the participation, including visa issuance, of representatives of Member States in other United Nations meetings, as appropriate;

(i) Concerning travel regulations issued by the host country with regard to personnel of certain missions and staff members of the Secretariat of certain nationalities, the Committee urges the host country to remove the remaining travel restrictions and, in that regard, notes the positions of the affected Member States, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, and of the host country;

(j) The Committee stresses the importance of permanent missions, their personnel and Secretariat personnel meeting their financial obligations;

(k) The Committee expresses concern over the difficulties that continue to be experienced by some permanent missions in obtaining suitable banking services, which is having a deleterious effect on the ability of those missions to perform their functions, and welcomes the continuing efforts of the host country to facilitate the opening of bank accounts for permanent missions with other financial institutions;

(l) The Committee welcomes the participation of Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Committee in its work. The Committee also welcomes the contribution of the Secretariat to its work and emphasizes its importance. The Committee is convinced that its important work has been strengthened by the cooperation of all concerned;

(m) The Committee wishes to reiterate its appreciation to the representative of the United States Mission in charge of host country affairs, to the Host Country Affairs Section of the United States Mission to the United Nations and the Office of Foreign Missions, as well as to those local entities, in particular the Mayor's Office for International Affairs, that participate in its meetings and contribute to its efforts to help accommodate the needs, interests and requirements of the diplomatic community and to promote mutual understanding between the diplomatic community and the people of the City of New York.

Annex

List of topics for consideration by the Committee

1. Question of the security of missions and the safety of their personnel.
2. Consideration of and recommendations on issues arising 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, including:
 - (a) Entry visas issued by the host country;
 - (b) Acceleration of immigration and Customs procedures;
 - (c) Exemption from taxes.
3. Responsibilities of permanent missions to the United Nations and their personnel, in particular the problem of claims of financial indebtedness and procedures to be followed with a view to resolving the issues relating thereto.
4. Housing for diplomatic personnel and for Secretariat staff.
5. Question of privileges and immunities:
 - (a) Comparative study of privileges and immunities;
 - (b) Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and other relevant instruments.
6. Host country activities: activities to assist members of the United Nations community.
7. Transportation: use of motor vehicles, parking and related matters.
8. Insurance, education and health.
9. Public relations of the United Nations community in the host city and the question of encouraging the mass media to publicize the functions and status of permanent missions to the United Nations.
10. Consideration and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly.

