

ADVANCE QUESTIONS TO VENEZUELA – Add.2

CANADA

Consolidating Progress

- Canada recognizes the advances Venezuela has made in terms of poverty reduction, education and universal health care. What plans are underway to develop a national health care system and corresponding legal framework to unify the various programs and policies?
- Venezuela has adopted a progressive legal and institutional framework to promote equality and protect the rights of vulnerable groups such as women and the LGBT community. What practical steps is the government taking to prevent violence against these vulnerable groups, to protect those at risk, and prosecute those responsible?
- Recognizing the extent to which Indigenous rights are enshrined in the 1999 Constitution and corresponding legal framework, how is Venezuela consolidating these rights through consultation processes to address issues affecting indigenous peoples?

Human Rights Defenders and Civil Society

- Canada would be grateful for an explanation of how Venezuela will ensure human rights defenders and non-governmental organizations continue to effectively access international funding to carry out their legitimate work under the Law on Defence of Political Sovereignty and National Self Determination.
- With respect to the draft law on International Cooperation, will the Government be consulting with international donors given the potential impact on our activities in support of human rights?
- Reports indicate an increase in the number of cases of attacks and threats against human rights defenders perceived as being critical of the government, which have yet to be addressed by the legal system Canada would be grateful if the Government of Venezuela could explain the delay in addressing the outstanding cases and share its plan to address them.

Freedom of Expression and Association, Space for Legitimate Criticism

- While Venezuela experiences a public debate where political opponents are equally critical of each other, Canada would like to know how Venezuela will ensure equal treatment of all under the various laws against defamation, including la Ley de Resorte.
- How is the protection of freedom of association and expression guaranteed under the relevant legal framework, including new and recently modified legislation?

- The use of the regulatory and judiciary system to silence or intimidate critics of the Government (including NGOs, private enterprise, unions and media) has been reported by numerous observers and in submissions to the UPR process. What steps is the Government taking to ensure legitimate criticism is not silenced?

Rights of Prisoners

- The events of el Rodeo in June 2011 highlight the urgent need for reform of the Venezuelan prison system. With the creation of a new Ministry for Prisons, how does Venezuela plan to address the basic abuses of prisoner rights such as overcrowding and gang violence? What institutional changes does it foresee to address this chronic problem?

Cooperation with the UN

- The Government of Venezuela indicates it is building relations with all the organs and special procedures related to human rights instruments. Canada welcomes this move and would like to know what plans Venezuela has to address the outstanding reports to the UN and requests for invitations by special procedures of the UN and the OAS?

SLOVENIA

- How will Venezuela improve the juvenile justice system?
- What measures have been taken by the Government to implement the CRC recommendations that Venezuela a) ensures that all children with disabilities receive education and encourage their inclusion in regular schools, b) undertakes an in-depth study on prevention of disabilities and c) promotes and expands community-based rehabilitation programmes, including parent support groups?