



STATEMENT BY MRS. NEERU CHADHA, COUNSELLOR, ON AGENDA ITEM 157:  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RELATIONS WITH THE HOST COUNTRY AT THE  
SIXTH COMMITTEE OF THE 62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 12, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Committee on Relations with the Host Country for its Report. This Committee provides a useful forum for addressing issues relating to the functioning of Missions of Member States and for enabling their representatives to perform their functions without hindrance.

This year the Committee had examined a number of problems related to transportation, acceleration of immigration and customs procedures, privileges and immunities of diplomatic personnel, entry visas and host country travel regulations. The open and transparent exchange of views in this forum helps in addressing the issues in question in a spirit of cooperation and in accordance with international law.

We appreciate the host country's commitment to fulfill its obligations under the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the Host Country Agreement, to accord facilities to missions accredited to the United Nations to ensure their smooth functioning.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue relating to imposition of municipal taxes on diplomatic missions is one such issue to which the host country must give due attention. The City of New York has imposed taxes on the premises of the Indian Permanent Mission to the UN that is used to house its diplomats. India is presently pursuing the case on merits in a New York District Court. However, we continue to believe that under international law and Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, my government, being a sovereign, is immune from the jurisdiction of US Courts and is not liable to pay property tax in respect of the portion of the building of the Permanent Mission owned by it and occupied by its diplomats for residential purposes.

We understand that many Permanent Missions are facing a similar problem. We are interested to know what the host country is doing to resolve the situation that has arisen from a given interpretation of its law. We hope that the host country

will devote urgent attention to the matter and take steps to remove the ambiguity in its laws so as to ensure that it grants to the UN Member States and their staff the same privileges as are granted to other diplomats accredited to it. This is a requirement under the Headquarters Agreement between the UN and the United States.

As regards entry visas, immigration and customs procedures, we recognize that the host country has a right to monitor and control entry into its territory and to adopt the requisite security measures it deems necessary. This has to be balanced, on the one hand, with the right of delegations to participate in the work of the UN and, on the other, to ensure that delegations do not misuse their privileges and immunities. Nevertheless, security and immigration officials must also be made aware of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by diplomats and their families with a view to maintaining respect for them.

We also welcome the steps taken to address the parking problems of diplomatic missions and hope that the residual issues in this respect, including the request for parking slots by the Indian Mission, would also be addressed soon.

Thank You Mr. Chairman

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