Letter dated 27 December 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement by the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on the interception by the Venezuelan Navy of a research vessel contracted by ExxonMobil to conduct seismic surveys in the exclusive economic zone of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana (see annex I).* I also enclose a copy of note verbale No. 1863/2018, dated 22 December 2018, which was dispatched to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela following that incident (see annex II).*

In view of the serious implications of this incident for the stability of peace in the region, I have the further honour to request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 66, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rudolph M. Ten-Pow
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.
Annex I to the letter dated 27 December 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on the interception of the research vessel Ramform Tethys by the Venezuelan Navy

22 December 2018

The Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana wishes to advise that Esso Exploration & Production, Guyana Limited (Exxon Mobil) has reported that a research vessel, the Ramform Tethys, was intercepted by the Venezuelan Navy at 10.30 hours on Saturday, 22 December 2018.

The vessel, flagged by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, was contracted to conduct seismic work by Exxon Mobil and had a total of 70 crew members on board, including the captain.

It was intercepted in the exclusive economic zone and continental shelf of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana at a position of N 09 degrees 17.19 minutes/W 058 degrees 16.20 minutes at an approximate distance of 140 Km from the nearest point to the provisional equidistant line with Venezuela.

The Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana rejects this illegal, aggressive and hostile act perpetrated by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela which once again demonstrates the real threat to Guyana’s economic development by its western neighbor, an act that violates the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be bringing this latest act of illegality and blatant disrespect for Guyana’s sovereignty by Venezuela to the attention of the United Nations. It is also in the process of informing the several Governments of the 70 crew members of the threat to their safety.

The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will also receive a formal communication from the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on this matter.
Annex II to the letter dated 27 December 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Guyana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Note No. 1863/2018

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana presents its compliments to the Ministry of People’s Power of External Relations of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and has the honour to inform that a research vessel, the Ramform Tethys, flagged by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas and conducting transitory seismic testing under contract to Esso Exploration and Production Guyana Limited (Exxon Mobil) with a total of seventy crew members on board, was intercepted at 10.30 hours on Saturday, December 22, 2018 by the Venezuelan navy well within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana at a position of N 09 deg 17.19 min/W 058 deg 16.20 min.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wishes to protest in the strongest terms and convey the complete rejection by the Government of Guyana of this hostile and unlawful act by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Venezuela’s threat and use of force to impede Guyana’s exercise of sovereign rights in its Exclusive Economic Zone is a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations and general international law.

In regard to Venezuela’s wholly baseless claim that it enjoys sovereign rights over this maritime area based on its purported sovereignty over the territory of “Guyana Essequiba”, Guyana takes this opportunity to remind Venezuela that pursuant to the decision of the United Nations Secretary-General dated 30 January 2018, further to his authority under Article IV(2) of the 1966 Geneva Agreement, choosing the International Court of Justice as the next means of settlement of the controversy that has arisen from Venezuela’s contention that the 1899 Arbitral Award is “null and void”, Venezuela is under an obligation to settle its contention of nullity and accompanying territorial and maritime claims before the Court, and not through threats or use of force that carry serious consequences.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs hereby notifies the Ministry of the People’s Power of External Relations of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that this latest violation of Guyana’s sovereignty and sovereign rights will be brought to the attention of the United Nations Secretary-General and the international community, including the several Governments of the seventy crew members whose safety has been endangered.

The Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana reserves the right to take all necessary measures to protect its sovereignty and sovereign rights against further hostile acts contrary to Venezuela’s fundamental obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and general international law.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of the People’s Power of External Relations of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela the assurances of its highest consideration.

GEORGETOWN
DECEMBER 22, 2018