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Amid Demands for Ending Unilateral Coercive Measures, Speakers in General Assembly Urge United States to Repeal Embargo Against Cuba

Speakers overwhelmingly called on the United States to end its economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba as the General Assembly began its annual debate on the issue amid demands for the cessation of unilateral coercive measures.

Throughout the morning, representatives said the nearly six-decades-long blockade imposed on the Caribbean island by Washington impedes its right to development and its ability to participate fully in the global economy. They stressed that the United States must heed the Assembly's repeated calls to lift its restrictive policies.

"From April 2017 to June this year, the impact of the United States embargo on Cuba's foreign trade amounts to more than \$4 billion," said Egypt's delegate, speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China. Limited foreign investment "translates directly into economic hardship and humanitarian impact," he said, warning that if the embargo is to continue, Cuba's development potential will be unfairly undermined.

Nicaragua's delegate said that the "obsolete policy" has cost \$933.6 billion in economic losses and violates the human rights of an entire people. Bolivia's representative agreed, saying that through the embargo, States can observe a systematic violation of human rights and a flagrant disregard of the desire to resolve conflict through the rules-based order.

The representative for the Bahamas, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), added that the embargo has caused undue hardship on nearly two generations of Cubans and it conflicts with the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States.

The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines said every attempt to justify the embargo has failed to convince 191 Member States, referencing previous votes on the resolution on the matter. Every country is obligated by the United Nations Charter to oppose violations of international law and sustained disregard for sovereign equality and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States, he stressed.

Kenya's delegate said that the time to end the sanctions and blockade is long overdue. "It is not justifiable to apply sanctions in perpetuity," he said. That applies even more so if they are imposed on a State for not adhering to particular cultural values or political ideals. "Let the people of Cuba be free to enjoy the same unhindered social, economic and political freedoms that the rest of us enjoy," he stressed.

Speakers also voiced concern over recent policy shifts in Washington that are undoing progress made in 2015 and 2016 to normalize bilateral ties with Cuba. The current United States Administration is pursuing efforts to strengthen the blockade, they warned.

The representative of Venezuela, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, noted that the United States is the only country pursuing an illegal policy of economic sanctions against Cuba. "The embargo is the main obstacle to Internet access, the exchange of ideas and cultural relations in Cuba," he said, reaffirming that the blockade is "totally unjustifiable".

El Salvador's representative, speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the United States Congress has the authority to completely end the blockade and the President can substantially modify its application.

Addressing the Assembly today were States who said they are also victims of unilateral coercive measures. The era of sanctions must come to an end, they said, stressing that only positive dialogue can resolve international disputes.

Among them was the representative of Syria who acknowledged that Cuba has stood with the people of his country as they face ongoing conflict. "Syria is also suffering from unilateral coercive measures," he said, asking how some States can call for speeding up implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while they impose coercive economic measures against countries like his as well as Cuba, Iran, China and Palestine.

Iran's representative said the United States is addicted to sanctions as a means for achieving bilateral goals and has subjected his country to 37 years of unilateral coercive measures. Its blockade against Cuba is a vivid example of the unilateral way in which the United States acts in the world. The United States withdrawal from international agreements like the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its re-imposition of sanctions on Iran demonstrates that Washington is not trustworthy.

The era of coup d'états, invasions, destabilization, walls, sanctions and aggression is over, he said, adding that it is unfortunate that some world leaders think they can better secure their interests by fomenting extremist nationalism and racism, trampling on global rules and undermining international institutions.

Viet Nam's representative said his country suffered trade sanctions from the United States for 19 years and fully understands the difficulties and damages that the embargo is causing to Cuba. The reality of Viet Nam-United States relations shows that only constructive dialogue and engagement will foster mutual trust and make positive changes. Embargoes only make matters worse while contravening the desire of all countries to build sound and equal international relations, he said.

Also speaking today were the representatives of Morocco (on behalf of the African Group), Singapore (on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Bangladesh (on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Jamaica, India, South Africa, Namibia, Russian Federation, Mexico, China, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Belize, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Angola, Gabon, Suriname and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The General Assembly will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 1 November, to conclude its consideration of the agenda item.

Statements

OMAR HILALE (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said economic sanctions against Cuba have caused great hardship, particularly on the most vulnerable people in the country. He encouraged dialogue to resolve the issue and allow Cuba to continue effectively contributing to global development. "The issue is of great importance to Africa," he said, regretting recent setbacks in Cuba-United States relations. He urged Washington to lift the unjust blockage imposed on the Cuban people and expressed full support for the resolution titled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (document A/73/L.3). A diplomatic and political solution is possible and will benefit Cuba, the United States and the international community.

MOHAMED FATHI AHMED EDREES (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, regretted that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba remains in full effect. He said it was unfortunate that the new United States Administration reversed the positive steps taken by the country in 2015 and 2016, effectively strengthening the embargo. The Group of 77 reiterates its commitment to the principles of sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference, as well as the freedom of international trade and navigation. "It is the duty and responsibility of every Member State to strictly comply with these principles," he said.

He expressed deep concern over the “prolonged negative effects” that the economic sanctions and travel restrictions have on Cuba. “From April 2017 to June this year, the impact of the United States embargo on Cuba’s foreign trade amounts to more than \$4 billion,” he noted, adding that limited foreign investment “translates directly into economic hardship and humanitarian impact”. If the embargo is to continue, Cuba’s development potential will be unfairly undermined. He said that for decades, Cuba has contributed to the international community, particularly through its supply of medical assistance to countries in need and emergency assistance to African States affected by Ebola. He reiterated the call that the embargo against Cuba must cease and urged the international community to take steps towards that end.

SAMUEL MONCADA ([Venezuela](#)), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that over the past 27 years the General Assembly has expressed its support to Cuba through its resolution calling for an end to the embargo imposed by the United States. He reiterated calls to the United States to put an end to the six-decades-long illegal blockade, an action that violates the United Nations Charter and Cuba’s right to interact fully with the international community. The Movement rejects on principle unilateral coercive measures, he said, noting that the embargo is a clear example of such coercive action. Direct and indirect damage caused by the embargo is enormous, he said, warning that it affects all sectors of Cuban society.

“The embargo is the main obstacle to Internet access, the exchange of ideas and cultural relations in Cuba,” he said, reaffirming that the embargo is “totally unjustifiable”. The blockade impairs Cuba’s ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and its impact has cost more than \$4 billion over the past year. The implementation of the embargo is unchanged and remains a setback for the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States. Warning that Washington is moving to strengthen the embargo, he said that the fact that 191 Member States voted in favour of the resolution on the matter last year is a clear indication of the inevitability of lifting the embargo. The United States is the only country pursuing an illegal policy of economic sanctions against Cuba, he said, calling for an immediate end to the blockade.

RUBÉN ARMANDO ESCALANTE HASBÚN ([El Salvador](#)), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), welcomed steps taken between 2015 and 2016 between the United States and Cuba to normalize bilateral relations. However, the blockade remains a reality for the Cuban people and impedes the country’s development. The embargo causes unjustifiable damage to the Cuban people and stands against the quest for peace in the region. He regretted new policy announced by Washington that seeks to strengthen the blockade and is a setback to normalization of relations. “The Blockade is contrary to the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law,” he said.

He said the United States Congress has the authority to completely end the blockade and the United States President can substantially modify its application. He reiterated the need to end the embargo against Cuba and said return of the territory of Guantanamo to that country will help normalize relations. “The United Nations Charter enshrines principles that are part of the legal heritage of international law and of human kind,” he said, adding that the text must not be impaired by any Member State. He said that from 2015 to 2017 the draft resolution was adopted with 191 votes in favour, reaffirming its universality. CELAC will once again support the resolution as part of efforts to bring an end to the embargo.

BURHAN GAFOOR ([Singapore](#)), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, said this is the fourth year that ASEAN has delivered a statement in the General Assembly calling for the unilateral embargo against Cuba to be lifted as soon as possible. ASEAN member States have also voted unanimously in favour of the resolution for the past 17 years. Noting that it has been three years since the United States and Cuba restored diplomatic relations, he said ASEAN encourages both countries to chart a path forward towards normalization of relations.

“Ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba will be a significant and historic step in the right direction,” he said. It would significantly improve the quality of life and living standards of the Cuban people and contribute to economic development in both countries. Ending the embargo would also advance the General Assembly’s efforts towards achieving an inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Acknowledging that much remains to be done, he encouraged the United States and Cuba to stay committed to open and constructive dialogue, underpinned by mutual respect.

SHEILA GWENETH CAREY ([Bahamas](#)), speaking on behalf of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and associating herself with the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement and CELAC, reiterated CARICOM’s unequivocal opposition to the United States imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which has been in place for nearly six decades. The embargo has caused undue hardship on the Cuban people for nearly two generations. CARICOM views these

sanctions as a contravention of the precepts of international law, including humanitarian law, inconsistent with the policies of free trade and conflicting with the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States.

CARICOM saw progress with the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States. This was an important positive step towards normalizing bilateral relations between the two States. CARICOM is concerned with the proposed rollback of the positive step taken in recent years. While understanding that each country has a responsibility to undertake its own bilateral relations, CARICOM understands the international community is guided by a set of principles that provide an overarching framework in which friendly relations amongst nations are pursued. The United States is an important player in international affairs and CARICOM hopes it will be open to considering the opinions and concerns of its friends and traditional partners on this issue. The Group welcomes the recent visit to Cuba by United States Senator Bob Corker, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, to discuss relations between the two countries. CARICOM continues to enjoy friendly relations between Cuba and the United States and unstintingly supports the draft resolution.

TAREQ MD ARIFUL ISLAM (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said “the suffering of the Cuban people has been far too long and unfair”. The embargo imposed by the United States harms the Cuban economy and the wellbeing and basic human rights of the Cuban people. “The Organization of Islamic Cooperation believes that such unilateral actions run counter to the principles of the United Nations Charter,” he said, adding that the unilateral blockade also affects third countries and companies doing business with Cuba. The situation remains a source of deep concern.

He said Member States have committed to the Sustainable Development Goals and “to leave nobody behind”. However, he warned that the embargo impedes Cuba’s achievement of the Goals and risks marginalizing some 12 million people. “The United States has the largest responsibility in ensuring the full benefits of the 2030 Agenda reach the entire Cuban people,” he said, joining the call for Washington to put an end to the embargo against Cuba. He concluded by noting that the OIC firmly supports the resolution on the matter.

Mr. OPIMAH (Belarus) said his country continues to object to the imposition of unilateral sanctions. “Such activities constitute an egregious violation of international law and must be repudiated,” he said. He regretted that positive measures to normalize bilateral relations taken by the United States and Cuba in 2015 and 2016 were not duly built upon and fell hostage to a “new high-handed policy against Havana”. Restrictive measures against Cuba chip away at progress made to normalize relations and adversely impact all Cubans. He called for a solution founded on mutual respect. “Boldness, wisdom and courage” are needed to bring an end to the embargo imposed against Cuba. Belarus supports genuine active dialogue to counter economic pressure and calls for a full cessation of the embargo.

DANG DINH QUY (Viet Nam), associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and ASEAN, said the United States’ renewed sanctions on Cuba represent a serious setback that creates more bilateral tension while causing grave damage to the Cuban people. As a country that suffered trade sanctions from the United States for 19 years, Viet Nam fully understands the difficulties and damages that the embargo is causing to Cuba, including its impact on efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. The reality of Viet Nam-United States relations shows that only constructive dialogue and engagement will foster mutual trust and make positive changes. Embargoes only make matters worse while contravening the desire of all countries to build sound and equal international relations, he said, stating that Viet Nam will vote in favour of the draft resolution and urging the Government of the United States to reverse its current policy on Cuba.

SONG KIM (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea), expressing his delegation’s support for the draft resolution, strongly condemned the blockade against Cuba as an infringement of that country’s sovereignty, a crime against humanity and a violation of human rights that breaches the United Nations Charter. Adoption of “L.3” by an overwhelming majority of Member States will reflect the international community’s support and solidarity with the struggle of the Government and people of Cuba, he said.

E. COURTENAY RATTRAY (Jamaica), associating himself with the Group of 77, CELAC, Non-Aligned Movement and CARICOM, expressed profound disappointment that the Assembly has to again meet to discuss the issue of the United States embargo against Cuba. Jamaica has consistently argued against the imposition of the embargo in violation of international law. It is an affront and the international community has asked for it to be lifted. Jamaica is concerned with recent steps towards strengthening of the embargo. He referred to restrictions on the Cuba’s international financial transactions. Tourism between the two countries remains illegal. The embargo was affecting the health and the existence of ordinary Cubans. The embargo is the principle obstacle to Cuba’s development. Jamaica, he stressed, will support the draft resolution.

TANMAYA LAL ([India](#)), associating himself with the Group of 77 and Non-Aligned Movement, said that for over two and half decades the General Assembly has rejected the imposition of laws with coercive economic measures that hurt the prosperity of people all around the world. The General Assembly has also called on Governments to repeal laws and measures that affect the sovereignty of States. “There can be little doubt that the continuation of the embargo runs counter to multilateralism,” he said, adding that “India stands in solidarity with the General Assembly in its opposition of laws which hinder the full enjoyment of human rights.” Successive Secretary-General reports have established that the embargo has adverse effects on the Cuban people. He noted Cuba’s high Human Development Index ranking and its early achievement of several Millennium Development Goals. Cuba, despite the embargo, has made great strides in health services and was able to assist African States affected by Ebola. “India hopes the embargo will be lifted at the earliest,” he said, supporting the draft resolution on the matter.

JERRY MATTHEWS MATJILA ([South Africa](#)) associated himself with the Group of 77, the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, said there was a need for all members of the international community to stand united against all forms of hatred and violence. There was a need to end the injustice of the embargo against Cuba. Cuba continues to show its support of other countries through South-South cooperation. The ties between Cuba and South Africa are deep-rooted and have endured for many years, he said, stressing that South Africa has opposed the embargo for many years. The imposition of this blockade has caused immeasurable damage to Cuba. It is unjustified. It is a testament to the Cuban people’s strength that the country continues to make much progress, such as with their health system.

NEVILLE MELVIN GERTZE ([Namibia](#)), associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Union and the Group of 77, said that in 2016 Jamaica welcomed the change in the United States Government’s tone in relations and hoped the blockade would end. Instead, there have been heightened tensions. Not because Cuba demonstrated any ill will towards the United States, but because Cuba continues to exercise its sovereign and democratic right to have a government of its choice. He reminded the General Assembly that the blockade is contrary to international law and the United Nations Charter, and it violates the right to health and food, the right to education, sports and culture and the right to the development of the Cuban people. The blockade is a violation of the human rights and the dignity of the Cuban person, he said, urging the United States to lift it.

VASSILY A. NEBENZIA ([Russian Federation](#)) said he supports the draft resolution on the embargo and is undertaking efforts to assist Cuba. The Russian Federation’s legislature has condemned the destructive embargo. The persistent embargo is a “relic of the cold war and egregious example of unilateral sanctions”. The embargo is unjustified, anachronistic and runs counter to the principles of international development. It wreaks havoc on the Cuban economy and prevents its citizens from realizing their fundamental rights and freedoms. Cuba’s inability to work with international credit institutions obstructs its access to loans and cripples its purchasing power. The embargo imposes stringent restrictions on technological products which deals a blow to the procurement of equipment for myriad industries. He called for the normalization of relations and said he would vote in favour of the resolution calling for the lifting of the blockade.

JUAN JOSÉ IGNACIO GÓMEZ CAMACHO ([Mexico](#)) supported the normalization process of the relationship between the United States and Cuba. He rejected any unilateral actions against Cuba and the embargo of five decades that violates international law as well as discriminatory trade laws that have had a negative effect on that country. The relations between neighbors on the American continent should benefit all countries. There is a need for a greater flow of trade and technology to Cuba. The elimination of the embargo would benefit Cuba and its people and help the entire region achieve the 2030 Agenda, he said.

MA ZHAOXU ([China](#)) associated himself with the Group of 77 and noted the international efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda. All countries should uphold the process of mutual understanding and development for all peoples. The international community must tackle issues together, he said. The United States embargo against Cuba should cease. The Assembly has adopted resolutions repeatedly to have the embargo dropped, yet it still has not ended. The blockade is contrary to the principle of the United Nations Charter and creates huge financial and economic damages for Cuba. It hinders Cuba’s ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. China and Cuba have a friendly and mutually beneficial relationship.

SACHA SERGIO LLORENTTY SOLÍZ ([Bolivia](#)), associating himself to the Group of 77, Non-Aligned Movement and CELAC, said the embargo against Cuba “is one of the most important issues on the agenda of the United Nations”. Through the embargo against Cuba, States can observe a systematic violation of human rights and a flagrant disregard of the desire to resolve conflict through the rules-based order. For the twenty-seventh time the General Assembly meets to ask the United States to refrain from applying unilateral measures. It is time for that State to respect the decision of

the overwhelming majority of Member States and lift the embargo. The blockade affects Cuban development, foreign trade and industry and is amoral as it has negative effects on the health of the Cuban people. He said attempts to distort the principle of the draft resolution on the matter are cynical. Cuba has stood up against colonialism, assisted States during natural disasters and serves as a guide for all States. He urged Member States to acknowledge the embargo's "deliberate and planned attack" against multilateralism. "We must fight to defend multilateralism, the United Nations and international law to achieve a brighter future," he said. Quoting Che Guevara, he closed by saying "the people of Cuba are stirred when injustice is committed anywhere in the world".

SABRI BOUKADOUM ([Algeria](#)), associating himself with the Group of 77, the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement, said the consecutive annual adoption, by an overwhelming Assembly majority, of a resolution calling for the lifting of the blockade against Cuba is a message not to be ignored. It reflects the international community's support of Cuba and wish to put an end to the unjustified and unnecessary embargo imposed on that country for six decades. Algeria considers Cuba more than just a friend who stood by Algeria during dire times. Cubans have expressed such solidarity in many parts of the world. He acknowledged the commitment and expertise which Cuban doctors have always demonstrated far beyond their borders. It is important to rebuild the momentum and positive achievements witnessed in recent years between Cuba and the United States.

INGA RHONDA KING ([Saint Vincent and the Grenadines](#)), associating herself with CARICOM, the Non-Aligned Movement, Group of 77 and CELAC, said no country has the right to tell the United States how to conduct its foreign policy, who its friends should be or how to determine its national interests. But every country is obligated by the United Nations Charter to oppose violations of international law and sustained disregard for sovereign equality and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States. Every attempt to justify the embargo has failed to convince 191 Member States, she said, adding that it is an affront to all when the legislature of one country adopts a decree on the trade matters of another, thereby affecting third countries. She cautioned against invoking the Sustainable Development Goals to score geopolitical points. Noting that Cuba has been a staunch and abiding partner in her country's development, she said the lifting of the embargo is a prerequisite for any meaningful rapprochement between the United States and Cuba, not a negotiated end result. She concluded by reiterating Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' unequivocal call for the removal of "this absurd embargo".

GHOLAMALI KHOSHROO ([Iran](#)), associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, Group of 77 and OIC, said the blockade is a vivid example of the unilateral way in which the United States acts in the world. Rather than drawing lessons from their short-sighted and disastrous policies towards Cuba and the Middle East, United States officials have intensified the blockade against the island to put more pressure on the Cuban leadership under far-fetched pretexts. Emphasizing that Iran has been subjected to American unilateral coercive measures for more than 37 years, he said the United States is addicted to sanctions as a means for achieving bilateral goals. Its withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is a good example of the fact that it is a perfidious player on the international scene, he said, adding that the re-imposition of sanctions on Iran demonstrates that the United States is not trustworthy. The era of coup d'états, invasions, destabilization, walls, sanctions and aggression is over, he said, adding that it is unfortunate that some world leaders think they can better secure their interests by fomenting extremist nationalism and racism, trampling on global rules and undermining international institutions.

KUMBIRAYI TAREMBA ([Zimbabwe](#)), associating herself with the Group of 77 and the African Group, said considerations of the embargo two years ago seemed promising. At that time, Zimbabwe joined many Member States in commending what it hoped was a step towards normalizing Cuba-United States relations. Sadly, she said, events since 2017 "dashed the optimism of that time". It is disheartening that as States join hands to promote the eradication of poverty and the 2030 Agenda, some countries are preventing others from realizing their right to development. She said that progress is spurred by collaboration and asked why some countries would devote so many resources towards isolating a small developing country and its people. "Zimbabwe reaffirms its condemnation of the promulgation and application of unilateral coercive measures that have extraterritorial impact," she said. Such measures undermine trade and interfere with the rights of third-party countries and private entities. "The embargo is the single biggest threat to the socioeconomic progress in Cuba," she said, calling for increased dialogue on the matter for the benefit of all.

BASHAR JA'AFARI ([Syria](#)), associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, acknowledged that Cuba has stood with the people of Syria as they face ongoing conflict and that Syrians receive educations in Cuban institutions despite the ongoing United States-imposed blockade. Syria fully supports the draft resolution on the matter as it accurately reflects the United Nations position rejecting coercive unilateral measures. Such measures hinder achievement of the 2030 Agenda and are an obstacle to international cooperation and human rights. "Syria is also

suffering from unilateral coercive measures,” he said, asking how some States can call for speeding up the 2030 Agenda while they impose coercive economic measures against countries like his as well as Cuba, Iran, China and Palestine. “The economic embargo directly impacts the goal of achieving socioeconomic equality,” he said, noting that Member States continue to call for an end to the unjust policy. He said the United States and its “minion” Israel continue to be the only States supporting the embargo, while Cuba continues to aid countries in need. The Secretary-General’s report must prompt States to call for implementation of relevant United Nations recommendations on the matter, including on the compensation of victims of the embargo. The time has come to put an end to the damaging economic policies imposed by some States, he concluded.

LAZARUS OMBAI AMAYO ([Kenya](#)), associating himself with the Group of 77, Non-Aligned Movement and Group of African States, said the United Nations should not uphold sanctions or blockades that fail to meet the threshold of precise, swift and determinative action. “It is not justifiable to apply sanctions in perpetuity,” he said, adding that is true even more so if they are imposed on a State for not adhering to particular cultural values or political ideals. “Let the people of Cuba be free to enjoy the same unhindered social, economic and political freedoms that the rest of us enjoy,” he said, emphasizing that the time to end the sanctions and blockade is long overdue.

JANINE ELIZABETH COYE-FELSON ([Belize](#)), associating herself with the Non-Aligned Movement, CELAC and CARICOM, said that through its consistent and overwhelming rejection of the unilateral embargo imposed against Cuba, the General Assembly affirms that international law affords no exceptions to violations of the rule of law. Belize is constructively engaging with Cuba through medical cooperation that includes the deployment of Cuban doctors across Belize. She said that since 1999, over 200 Belizeans have received degrees from Cuban universities and are now applying their skills at home. These cases point to the integral role that Cuba plays in the Caribbean. “The blockade is failing to pressure the Cuban Government into submission,” she said, adding that, as a fellow small island developing State, “Belize stands in solidarity with Cuba”.

KHIANE PHANSOURIVONG ([Lao People’s Democratic Republic](#)), associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and ASEAN, said his country has consistently viewed that in an interdependent world, unilateral measures with extraterritorial implications taken by one country against another are contrary to the principles of the Charter and international law. Moreover, such measures also impact the livelihood of the people and hinder the economic and social development of the country upon which they are being imposed. The United States embargo against Cuba restricts the economic and social development of Cuba and creates hardship for the Cuban people. He called for it to be lifted.

MARIA DE JESUS DOS REIS FERREIRA ([Angola](#)), associating herself with the African Group, Non-Aligned Movement and Group of 77, said the persistent unilateral embargo imposed against Cuba for 56 years is unjust and inflicts serious damage on the country’s economy. “The embargo impedes the full realization of economic and social development, and the full enjoyment of basic human rights,” she said. Angola hopes the normalization of relations will encourage the United States to adopt new measures aimed at ending the blockade. However, recent months have been marked by a series of setbacks that have led to the tightening of United States-led restrictive measures. She said the embargo has inflicted enormous damage on the Cuban economy and has resulted in the financial persecution of third-country banks and institutions.

MICHEL XAVIER BIANG ([Gabon](#)), associating himself with the Non-Aligned Movement, Group of 77 and African Group, expressed alarm over the consistent embargo imposed against Cuba. The blockade has consequences for Cubans outside the island. It also impacts the abilities of the country and the entire region to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Gabon calls for the lifting of the embargo. This action would let Cuba engage in international trade. The draft resolution aligns with the realities on the ground, he said, adding that dialogue and cooperation will restore an environment of calm and trust.

Ms. CHEN ([Suriname](#)), associating herself with the Group of 77, Non-Aligned Movement, OIC, CELAC and CARICOM, disapproved in the strongest terms the continuation of the embargo imposed on Cuba and its people. The blockade, with its extraterritorial nature, is not in line with principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It causes “unnecessary hardship on the people of Cuba, and gravely undermines its efforts in achieving sustainable development. She regretted the renewed continuation of the economic and financial embargo which has negatively impacted the normalization of bilateral relations. She said Suriname would vote in favour of the draft resolution on the matter and join the call for the United States to put an immediate end to its obstructive policy.

MODEST JONATHAN MERO ([United Republic of Tanzania](#)) said the economic and commercial embargo curtails any nascent development and economic prospects for Cuba and its people. The embargo denies opportunities to communities to address poverty and to access opportunities in

trade, investment and commercial activities. The Cuban people wish for good economic relations with the United States and these hopes lie with the new generation forming the majority. Many world leaders gathered in New York at the General Assembly in 2015 welcomed the restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. Over time, the international community has seen minimum efforts to meet these expectations for lifting the embargo which has condemned the Cuban people for many years. The United Republic of Tanzania hopes a new dawn of cooperation will follow, not only between the two countries, but among them and the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean.

JAIME HERMIDA CASTILLO (Nicaragua), associating himself with the Group of 77, Non-Aligned Movement and the CELAC, condemned the unjust embargo imposed on its Cuban brothers and sisters, people known for their solidarity. The embargo has created extreme hardship. This obsolete policy has cost \$933.6 billion in losses. These measures are senseless, especially when the international community is trying to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Nicaragua has called for the immediate end of the embargo against Cuba. Cuba is not alone and Nicaragua is unconditionally at Cuba's side. Together they can build a better world. Cuba has resisted the imposition of these laws for nearly 60 years, he stressed. It is inconceivable that Cuba is prevented from developing because of this embargo, which violates international law, principles of non-intervention, and the Charter of the United Nations. It is a violation of the human rights of an entire people. The path forward must be multilateralism, he stressed.