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REQUEST FOR THE INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA

Letter dated 16 August 1991 from the Permanent Representative of
Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cuba, I have the honour to request, under rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-sixth session of the Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", for consideration in plenary.

I attach the necessary explanatory memorandum (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and the explanatory memorandum distributed as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCON de QUESADA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Explanatory memorandum

For more than 30 years the Government of the United States has been pursuing an aggressive policy against Cuba with the declared aim of imposing on it the political, social and economic order which the United States authorities consider most fitting. This policy has included direct military intervention, the threat of nuclear annihilation, the instigation and carrying out of countless acts of sabotage and plans to assassinate Cuban leaders, all of which has been officially recognized by successive United States Administrations and documented in detail in the United States Congressional Record.

An essential element of this policy is the economic, commercial and financial embargo which the United States has imposed and applied against Cuba throughout the above-mentioned period and which is now being intensified and expanded.

The United States embargo has caused Cuba substantial material losses and has obliged it to make extraordinary efforts to change its economic relations, which in the past were entirely dependent on the United States market. This has entailed intensive readaptation of the structure of production, consumption and services to different types of technology, equipment, raw materials and consumer goods from other countries, in many cases obtained at short notice, all of which has caused enormous economic and social damage and hardship.

The discriminatory measures against Cuba in the world of finance - the ban on the use of the United States dollar, the denial of access to the United States banking system and the boycott imposed on it in international financial and credit institutions - have been a major additional obstacle for Cuba's international economic - and especially commercial - relations, and have limited even more the possibilities of external financing of the Cuban economy.

The United States Government has also tried to compel third countries to apply such a policy against Cuba, even seeking to impose its own discriminatory legislation beyond the confines of its national jurisdiction, thereby violating the sovereignty of other States. In its most recent legislative session, the United States Congress to that end adopted new measures which clearly are unlawful and violate international principles and norms.

It should be emphasized that the embargo continues to include a total prohibition on Cuba's acquisition of foodstuffs, medicine and medical supplies and equipment of United States origin. This criminal practice, applied totally and systematically for three decades, has caused and still causes appreciable additional harm to the Cuban people. Because of the inhuman character of this practice, a proposed amendment was even put forward at the

beginning of this year in the United States Congress itself. This amendment, which would permit a humanitarian exception for the export of medicine and certain medical equipment, has already encountered strong opposition from governing circles in Washington.

Although the far-reaching changes carried out in Cuba during this period have enabled the people to achieve incomparably higher living standards in terms of social progress - as seen in the notable achievements in such fields as health, education, food, employment, housing and social protection for the entire population - these results have obviously been achieved through the people's efforts and sacrifices, which have been unjustly and excessively compounded by the embargo.

At the present stage in international relations, when an attempt is being made to restructure them on the basis of cooperation and reduction of tension, it is particularly unjust, anachronistic and irrational to maintain and even intensify against Cuba a policy based on the most flagrant violation of the norms of coexistence among States, as set forth in the Charter and various General Assembly resolutions.

The United States Government is virtually alone in continuing to apply this policy against Cuba. The vast majority of those States which, in the past, joined in the embargo have gradually adjusted their position and today maintain normal relations with Cuba.

However, the decisive weight of the United States in the world economy and its renewed efforts to perpetuate and extend this policy have transformed the economic embargo into a serious obstacle for the independence and development of Cuba, causing continuing material damage and harm to the Cuban people.

The United States embargo against Cuba constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles of sovereign equality of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs, and is a constant source of tension that impairs the normal development of international relations.

Consequently, the Government of the Republic of Cuba deems it necessary for this question to be considered as a matter of priority by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, so that decisions may be taken which will help to end this unjust and illegal situation.
