



General Assembly

Sixtieth session

45th plenary meeting

Tuesday, 8 November 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Eliasson (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 18

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/213)

Draft resolution (A/60/L.9)

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): I speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group of 77 and China is opposed to unilateral, coercive measures against developing countries. The most prominent example is the one we are discussing today: the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, an embargo that has been in place for over 40 years, despite overwhelming opposition in the international community.

At the Second South Summit, held in Doha in June of this year, heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China issued a strong call for the ending of the embargo. The leaders rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterated the urgent need to eliminate them immediately.

They called on the Government of the United States to put an end to the economic, commercial and

financial embargo against Cuba, which is unilateral and which is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, to international law and to the principle of good neighbourliness. They also recognized that the embargo has caused huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba.

The leaders therefore called for compliance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and rejected the new measures recently implemented by the United States Government aimed at tightening the embargo as a violation of Cuba's sovereignty and the rights of its people.

The Charter of the United Nations calls on all States to promote friendly relations and cooperation and to respect international law, the sovereign equality of States, the self-determination of peoples and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Adherence to those principles will contribute to the elimination of tension and confrontation between States. The United States and Cuba are two countries whose destinies are linked by history and geography and it should follow that the embargo and coercive measures should be replaced by dialogue and cooperation.

The people of Cuba are making great efforts to promote social and economic development in the face of considerable obstacles resulting from the embargo, which has caused them untold hardships. The oppressive measures against Cuba are contrary to commitments in the global partnership to support the development efforts of developing countries and are in contradiction with the principles of the multilateral

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trading system. They distort the normal flow of commercial transactions and investment and constitute a serious threat to the freedom of trade and navigation.

The difficulties facing Cuba have been compounded by severe losses and damage resulting from a series of hurricanes that struck the country last year, as well as this year, as well as even in recent weeks. The Government and the people of Cuba should receive the support of the wider international community to cope with these setbacks.

The Group of 77 and China calls on the United States to heed the voice of the international community to put an end to the embargo and to move towards a process of normalization of relations through peaceful negotiations with Cuba, based on the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

The Group of 77 and China supports the draft resolution contained in document A/60/L.9, which is now before the General Assembly, and we urge its adoption.

Mr. Hunte (Saint Lucia): The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) aligns itself with the statement just made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In the light of the importance of this issue to the Caribbean region, I address the Assembly on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community.

The relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations emphasize the importance of respect for the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, the self-determination of peoples, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of friendly relations among States. For small States such as those in the Caribbean region, those principles are paramount and, along with other important provisions, constitute the rule of law of the international community. These are principles that have been repeatedly reaffirmed, most recently in the 2005 summit of heads of State or Government.

It is from this principled perspective that we continue to oppose the imposition of unilateral punitive measures and, in particular, the extraterritorial application of legislation, which constitutes a violation of international law. In this vein, freedom of trade and navigation is a critical component of global commerce, and undue restrictions are inconsistent with the

promotion of free and fair trade, which is essential to the sustainable development of small States such as those in the Caribbean Community.

Cuba, as an integral part of the pan-Caribbean process, is a country with which CARICOM maintains close relations and well-established programmes of cooperation at various levels in trade and in the fight against HIV/AIDS, among other areas. CARICOM States look forward to further advancing our work programmes for CARICOM-Cuba cooperation. CARICOM relations with Cuba are based on a strong recognition of the need and the commitment to pursue the acceleration of the process of integration of the greater Caribbean, with the aim of increasing the international competitiveness and spurring the development of the entire region.

In this light, the Government of Cuba has continued its assistance to the Caribbean Community through the assignment of medical and other health-care personnel, who are able to lend important assistance during natural disasters. Further, Cuba continues to provide scholarships to many students in CARICOM countries, thus contributing significantly to the human resource development of the people of our region.

Cuba is an integral part of the Caribbean region and threatens no one. On the contrary, its commitment to the social and economic development of the Caribbean is unquestionable. CARICOM continues to reiterate its unwavering support for the right of the Cuban people to choose their own Government and for that Government to carry out the mandate of the people in a manner beneficial to their social and economic development.

The embargo imposed against Cuba has been with us too long. Let me underscore this again: the embargo imposed against Cuba has been with us too long, and serves no other purpose than to preserve a state of tension between two neighbouring countries, resulting only in the imposition of significant hardship and suffering on the people of Cuba.

It is all the more regrettable that such measures continue to be unilaterally applied and enhanced at a critical time when the people of Cuba, the wider Caribbean and parts of North America have suffered and continue to suffer from the devastation caused by several hurricanes which have struck in recent months. These disasters have underscored the need for regional

and international cooperation and solidarity and have created a heightened awareness of the fact that punitive measures such as the economic embargo are having a detrimental humanitarian effect on the people of Cuba.

The Caribbean Community enjoys friendly relations with the United States. In this spirit, we urge the United States Government to respect the will of the international community, to put an end to the embargo and to engage in constructive dialogue and a normalization of relations with Cuba. Such a step would remove a source of tension and conflict and significantly enhance the prospects for peace, poverty alleviation, development and cooperation within the hemisphere of the Americas.

Accordingly, CARICOM delegations support the content of the draft resolution before the General Assembly (A/60/L.9) and will vote in support of its adoption.

Mr. Berruga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Just a few weeks ago, heads of State or Government of the States Members of the Organization came to the General Assembly to reiterate the vital importance of an effective multilateral system and to reaffirm their commitment to promote and strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations through the implementation of its decisions and resolutions.

Mexico hopes that the renewed commitment to the future of our Organization will be genuinely translated into the implementation of such resolutions, especially those that have been consistently flouted in defiance of the majority view of the international community. It is important to acknowledge that the absence of progress and the failure to implement collective appeals harm the efforts to strengthen multilateralism to which we are all committed.

From this lofty international rostrum, Mexico reiterates its rejection of the application of unilateral laws and measures of economic blockade against any State, as well as the use of coercive measures without the authority embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. Along with their humanitarian consequences, such measures are contrary to international law and ultimately represent the gradual abandonment of diplomacy and dialogue as the means to settle disputes among States.

Mexico believes that all States should be able to rely on a system of norms that is fully respected and

agreed by all. The peaceful and orderly international coexistence to which we all aspire rests on that assumption. My delegation therefore reiterates that any political, economic and military sanction imposed on States can stem only from the decisions or recommendations of the Security Council or the General Assembly.

For those reasons, my delegation rejects the United States economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba and has consistently supported all General Assembly resolutions to put an end to it. In line with that objective, Mexico has taken and will continue to take national measures and has promoted regional actions to counteract the extraterritorial effects of any foreign law or regulation affecting free trade and violating international law to the detriment of any State.

Mexico actively promotes its economic ties with Cuba. As a matter of principle, but also in practice, we reject any extraterritorial attempt to apply national laws that affect the relations and transactions of third States.

The Mexican Government has also consistently opposed Cuba's economic and political-diplomatic isolation. Mexico has firmly supported the accession of Cuba to all regional integration mechanisms, including its participation in the Ibero-American Summits and its formal adherence to the Latin American Integration Association.

At this session of the General Assembly, Mexico will reiterate for the fourteenth time its support for the draft resolution on lifting the United States economic blockade of Cuba, since unilateral measures affecting the sovereignty and freedom of trade of States contravene our foreign policy principles and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

For all those reasons, Mexico will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/60/L.9.

Ms. Bai Yongjie (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation supports the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Not long ago, the heads of State and Government of the world gathered in New York, where they earnestly reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law and to the fulfilment in good faith of

the obligations assumed in accordance with the Charter, and reiterated their resolve to implement the decisions and resolutions of the United Nations in an effort to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organization.

Regrettably, however, in spite of the fact that our discussion of this agenda item has entered its fourteenth year, the previous 13 resolutions urging all countries to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and principles of international law and to withdraw or nullify any laws and measures with extraterritorial legal effects that infringe on the legitimate rights and interests of entities and individuals within the sovereignty and jurisdiction of other States and impede the freedom of trade or navigation, have yet to be implemented by the State concerned.

The 40-year embargo and sanctions imposed by the United States against Cuba have jeopardized the interests of Cuba and other countries and severely obstructed international development. Moreover, they also run counter to the principles of democracy, freedom, the rule of law and human rights and will never achieve the professed policy objectives for which they were imposed. We hope that the State concerned will heed the just calls of the international community and change its wrongful conduct as soon as possible.

The issue of development figures prominently in the outcome document of this year's summit. In order to ensure the timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the developing countries have undertaken to formulate and implement national development strategies, while the international community has promised to provide more support in such areas as finance, debt, markets and technology so as to help the developing countries in their development efforts. While the entire international community is mobilized to help the developing countries realize the Goals, the United States has made no move to change its policy of embargo. Cuba has never received any of the support it deserves from the largest developed country in the world and a so-called partner for development. Moreover, even its normal economic, business and financial contacts have been arbitrarily cut off. All of this has inflicted enormous economic damage on Cuba, seriously impeded its economic and social development, and directly affected the normal foreign economic exchanges of other countries.

The United States embargo of Cuba is a violation of the principles of democracy, freedom, the rule of law and human rights — principles of which the United States has always claimed to be a champion. First, any attempt to use embargoes and sanctions to coerce a country to abandon the development path it has chosen of its own free will, and even to overthrow its Government, constitutes a mockery of the principles of democracy and freedom. The United States embargo of Cuba is also a violation of the rules of international trade and contradicts the principle of trade liberalization advocated by the United States itself.

Secondly, the United States embargo of Cuba is a gross violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the fundamental norms governing contemporary international relations. Its extraterritorial nature is a violation of international law. That inevitably diminishes the credibility of the United States calls on other countries to strengthen the rule of law.

Thirdly, the United States embargo and sanctions against Cuba seriously impede and hamper the efforts of the Cuban people in nation-building, the elimination of poverty, and the improvement of living standards, and consequently jeopardize their rights to survival and development.

Lastly, in justifying the embargo, the representative of the United States has said on numerous occasions that the purpose of the embargo is to compel Cuba to promote democracy and human rights and to implement economic reforms because Cuba has made no substantial progress in those areas. If we follow the logic of that argument, we find only that the policy the United States has pursued for over 40 years has been ineffective. It is therefore advisable for the United States actively to develop economic exchanges with Cuba as a way to attain its policy objectives.

The United States representative once declared that this is an issue between the United States and Cuba and should not be subject to deliberation by the General Assembly. The truth is that nearly 80 countries have suffered economic losses due to the United States embargo and sanctions against Cuba. The international community therefore has every right to raise grave concerns over the embargo and sanctions and to demand an immediate end to those practices.

The Chinese Government has always upheld the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, stood for sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and striven to promote democracy and the rule of law in international relations. We firmly hold that countries should choose their own political, economic and social system, as well as their mode of development on the basis of their particular circumstances. We believe that differences and disputes between countries should be resolved through dialogue and cooperation based on equality and mutual respect.

Therefore, the Chinese Government is opposed to the economic, commercial and financial embargo and sanctions imposed by the United States against Cuba and supports the efforts of the Government and the people of Cuba to defend their national independence and sovereignty. We hope that the Government of the United States will go with the tide of the times, replacing confrontation with dialogue and replacing embargoes and sanctions with contacts and exchanges, thus effectively implementing the relevant United Nations resolutions. China therefore supports the draft resolution submitted by Cuba under this agenda item.

Mr. Manongi (United Republic of Tanzania): Tanzania associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Tanzania is concerned to note that the economic embargo against Cuba, which has been in place for more than four decades, has had a considerable negative impact on the economic, political and social life of the Cuban people. In our view, the continuance of the embargo against Cuba is contrary to the commitment to a wider global partnership in support of the development efforts of developing countries. The embargo has placed an enormous burden of sacrifice on the Cuban people and has caused the Cuban economy to lose more than \$70 billion, including lost export earnings and additional import costs. We are convinced that a lifting of the blockade against Cuba would help to improve the situation in the region and further integrate Cuba into the mainstream of international economic relations, thereby promoting the economic and social well-being of its people.

At a time when Africa was struggling for its independence and liberation and was struggling against apartheid, we counted Cuba as one of our strongest

allies. For us, the bonds forged during that struggle demand that we now stand in support of the Cuban people in their hour of need. The embargo against Cuba is a burden that the people of Cuba should not have to endure, and it is an undertaking whose termination we support.

Like many other countries, we are concerned that the sanctions imposed under the Helms-Burton Act exceed the jurisdiction of national legislation and encroach upon the sovereignty of other States that deal with Cuba. We therefore deem it incompatible with the principle of the sovereign equality of States. The extraterritorial nature of the embargo continues to cause considerable damage to Cuba, as well as to third countries that are prevented from taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by the Cuban economy.

In that regard, Tanzania reaffirms its continued support, cooperation and solidarity with regard to the people of Cuba and supports the draft resolution submitted to the Assembly for adoption. In view of the fact that the embargo has caused significant suffering on the part of the people of Cuba, we call on the United States Government to end the embargo and normalize its relations with Cuba, in the interests of all the people of Cuba and of the United States.

Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia): At the outset, Malaysia wishes to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his important report (A/60/213) on this agenda item.

Since its forty-seventh session, in 1992, the General Assembly has repeatedly declared its rejection of the use of unilateral measures by one Member State to effect political change in another — in this case, the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. The Assembly's adoption of resolution 59/11 on 28 October 2004, with 179 Member States voting in favour, once again unambiguously reflected the position of an overwhelming majority of members of the United Nations — a position that rejects the embargo and calls for its immediate termination.

The application by the United States of America of laws — in particular extraterritorial legislation such as the Torricelli Act and the Helms-Burton Act — and measures such as those implemented since 30 June 2004 based on the recommendations of the

Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, are clearly formulated with the sole intention of hurting Cuba and the Cuban people, including the most vulnerable among them: children, women, the elderly and the infirm. They are also clearly aimed at limiting Cuba's access to markets, capital, technology and investment in order to exert pressure on Cuba to change its orientation and its political and socio-economic systems.

We view those actions as not consistent with the universally accepted principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of the World Trade Organization and the relevant United Nations resolutions. In addition, they are provocative and extremely discriminatory in nature, and they undermine the principles of the sovereign equality of States, fundamental human rights and the spirit of peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourliness among States.

Malaysia remains fundamentally opposed to all forms of economic, commercial and financial sanctions and embargoes that contradict the norms of international law and run counter to the principles and purposes of the United Nations. Such actions also contradict the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (resolution 2625 (XXV), annex), adopted on 24 October 1970 by the General Assembly.

We are particularly opposed to the continued unilateral application of the coercive economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. The embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba is not only a violation of international law, but — as confirmed and documented by various reports — violates the rights of the people of Cuba and impedes their right to enjoy life, economic well-being and development itself. The embargo has caused tremendous socio-economic damage to the country. The direct cost to date to the Cuban people is estimated at more than \$82 billion. The embargo has further aggravated the hardship of the people of Cuba, more than two thirds of whom have lived all their lives under the dark cloud of the unilateral embargo and sanctions regime imposed by the United States.

In that regard, my delegation would like to appeal once again to the United States, as a staunch advocate

of free trade, human rights and good relations among nations, to respect the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles of international law. We thus call on the United States to rethink its overall approach towards Cuba and to change its policy from one of isolating its small neighbour to one of dialogue and accommodation. It is also our fervent hope that in the new spirit of the times — which promotes dialogue and understanding in a world of increasing interdependence and globalization — the United States of America will be able to reorient its policy on Cuba in a more realistic direction and place its relationship with its smaller neighbour on a new footing. We thus urge the United States of America to end its current policy and to engage in serious dialogue to resolve its problems with Cuba.

I believe that this will be the fifteenth consecutive year that the General Assembly will adopt the resolution by an overwhelming majority, reflecting once again the international community's total rejection of the unilateral measures imposed by the United States against Cuba. That rejection was reaffirmed in the Final Document of the thirteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Kuala Lumpur in February 2003 and also reiterated by the ministers of foreign affairs of NAM at its their fourteenth ministerial conference, held in Durban, South Africa, in August 2004. It was also reflected in the declaration of the Second South Summit in Doha in June 2005. We thus urge the international community to continue to make serious efforts to bring about an end to the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba.

Malaysia maintains excellent relations with both the United States and Cuba. Malaysia believes that its relations with Cuba, especially in the fields of economy and trade, would be further enhanced in the absence of the unilateral embargo imposed against Cuba. In that regard, Malaysia once again reaffirms its commitment to respecting the fundamental principles of sovereign equality among States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation. Malaysia thus joins the call of the international community for an immediate cessation of the embargo on Cuba, which violates all the fundamental principles of international and humanitarian law.

We note, however, that in spite of all the obstacles and impairments, including natural disasters and such catastrophes as hurricanes, drought and, most recently, the rising price of oil, as well as those that have been caused by the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed on Cuba for more than 44 years, Cuba, through its own tenacity and renowned resilience, and working under the permanent slogan "A better life for all with the support of all", has managed on its own to achieve three sets of targets in the Millennium Development Goals: universal primary education, the promotion of gender equality and the empowering of women, and a reduction in child mortality. Cuba has made significant progress on the other targets, too. We are confident that, without the embargo, Cuba would have been able to achieve all the targets of the Millennium Development Goals.

Malaysia once again reaffirms its strongest commitment to the full respect for the fundamental principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. In order to uphold those sacrosanct principles of international law, Malaysia, as in previous years, will not waver from its principled position and would like to reaffirm its solidarity with Cuba and its people by supporting and voting in favour of draft resolution A/60/L.9.

Mr. Mabhongo (South Africa): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

South Africa consistently opposes all aspects of the embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. We view the continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo as a violation of the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. We are guided by the norms of international law and conduct in our principled support for the need to eliminate economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion. We believe that constructive dialogue can foster mutual trust and understanding, as well as engender harmony and peaceful coexistence between nations.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

South Africa is committed to working towards a better world for all in which all nations, big and small,

coexist peacefully. The achievement of such peaceful coexistence amongst nations requires adherence to international law by all nations. The need to respect international law in the conduct of international relations has been recognized by most members of this body, as evidenced by the growing support for the draft resolution that we are considering today.

The United States action against Cuba has lasted for 47 years, with 70 per cent of Cubans having been born under the embargo. Yet the long-standing economic, commercial and financial embargo has been consistently rejected by a growing number of States Members of the United Nations to a point where opposition has become almost unanimous.

Furthermore, the heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China, meeting at the Second South Summit in Doha, Qatar, in June 2005, recognized that the embargo against Cuba has caused a high degree of economic and financial damage, which has negatively impacted on the welfare and well-being of the people of Cuba. In that regard, they condemned the use of coercive economic measures designed to prevent countries from exercising their right to decide their own political, economic and social systems, and they also called on all countries not to recognize unilateral, extraterritorial laws enacted to impose sanctions on other States and foreign companies.

In conclusion, South Africa will support draft resolution A/60/L.9 before us today. We do so because the United States relentless and unilateral action has caused untold suffering to the people of Cuba and is in contradiction of international law. In supporting the draft resolution, we also join the majority of States Members of the United Nations that have decided to take a common and principled stand on an issue of such importance.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): The Vietnamese delegation totally shares the views of the Group of 77 and China set out in the statement delivered by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group.

Every year for the past 14 years, the General Assembly, by a consistently overwhelming majority, has adopted a resolution calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. Last year, 179 Member States voted in favour of such a resolution. Unfortunately, the United States has not

only continued with the embargo, but also tightened it by introducing additional measures, such as restrictions on travel and money transfers to Cuba. The embargo, already the longest in history, is being prolonged, causing great damage to the economy of Cuba and untold suffering to the people of Cuba, and influencing third countries' decisions. In fact, as reported by the Government of Cuba, the accumulated direct damages to the Cuban economy brought about by the embargo over the past four decades amount to approximately \$80 billion. In their reports, the organs and agencies of the United Nations system point out the negative impacts of the embargo on almost every aspect of Cuba's economic and social life, from food and agriculture, technology transfers, health, education and culture, and the living conditions of children and women to scientific exchanges and commercial transactions.

Together with the overwhelming majority of Member States, Viet Nam has always opposed the imposition of any unilateral embargo and blockade by one State on another. We continue to maintain that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba serves no other purpose than aggravating tension between the two countries and that the differences between the United States and Cuba should be resolved through dialogue and negotiations based on the principles of respect for each other's independence and sovereignty, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, mutual respect and understanding. We believe that, on the basis of those fundamental principles, the two countries can settle their differences, thus positively utilizing their geographical proximity to develop useful economic, trade and investment relations in the interest of their peoples.

Once again, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I wish to express our sentiments of friendship and solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba and our commitment to work with other nations and international organizations in assisting the Government and people of Cuba to overcome the negative consequences of the embargo.

Consistent with its principled position, Viet Nam will vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/60/L.9) submitted by Cuba under this agenda item.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): The Second South

Summit, which took place in Doha, Qatar, last June, reiterated the appeal made to the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba more than four decades ago.

In such a complex and changing world, cooperation among States, regardless of their socio-economic regime, remains a crucial element in preserving peace as well as promoting socio-economic development around the world. We are pleased that such a trend towards international cooperation prevails and continues to dominate modern international relations. With this in mind, it is disappointing to note that there are still unilateral and discriminatory trade practices.

In accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions, a Member State can neither promulgate nor apply laws, regulations or measures whose extraterritorial effects will infringe upon the sovereignty of other Member States or upon freedom of trade. It is in this spirit, and in consonance with the will of the overwhelming majority of Member States, that my country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, will continue to work to bring an end to the economic, financial and commercial embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba.

It is a fact that this embargo, which has now been further strengthened, has caused untold suffering for the innocent Cuban people. It is also a fact that the blockade has not benefited either party but, on the contrary, has created tensions between these two neighbouring countries. In our opinion, it is time for the international community to step up its efforts and to do all within its power to put an end to this anachronistic blockade.

It is in this spirit that my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Cuba and contained in document A/60/L.9.

Mr. Abdelsalam (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I associate myself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. One of the main responsibilities of membership of the United Nations is to abide by the principles enshrined in the Charter to ensure fraternity, equality, justice, cooperation and respect for a people's choice of its own government. The time when force was a source of law has now passed. There must be

respect for law and for the right of peoples to choose their own path.

This is the fourteenth consecutive year that we here in the General Assembly is considering a draft resolution against the economic blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States. For the past 14 years, we have been adopting resolutions on the right of States to self-determination, urging others not to comply with blockade measures imposed by one State on another — measures which have negative consequences and are indeed a violation of territorial borders and international law.

Once again, we find ourselves considering the agenda item entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. Last year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/11 on this item with 179 votes in favour. This reflects the international community’s increasing awareness of the danger and illegitimacy of the blockade. The blockade imposed on Cuba is unilateral and is a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter and of international law and norms governing economic, financial and commercial relations among States. If the blockade is maintained, it will continue to run counter to the momentum prevailing within the international community in defence of human rights and, more specifically, of the right to development.

The danger of such unilateral actions and of their harsh negative impact on all aspects of life in Cuba can give us some idea of what has been lost by the Cuban people over the last 40 years and what it has cost them, *inter alia*, in terms of the suffering they have experienced and their having been deprived of basic necessities due to this illegal blockade.

My country and my people too are suffering from unilateral sanctions imposed by the same State that has imposed the economic blockade on Cuba. Other States also suffer from such illegal and unjustified policies. On 2 November the United States decided to renew its unilateral sanctions imposed on the Sudan for another year. Our position on those policies is based on established principles. We are against policies of exclusion, force and hegemony over peoples. Accordingly, we will vote — and we urge other States to vote — in favour of draft resolution A/60/L.9, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the

United States of America against Cuba”. We strongly condemn unilateral actions and measures that violate international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Yechury (India): We from India align ourselves with the statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77. The four-decade-old economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba is the subject of discussion for the fourteenth successive time in this forum. The embargo dates from 20 October 1960, when then President Eisenhower announced an embargo against Cuba under the Trading with the Enemy Act and the Export Control Act. The embargo has been reinforced by the Cuba Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996, through which the extra-territorial reach of the embargo encompasses foreign companies as well as foreign subsidiaries of United States companies doing business with Cuba.

The embargo means the imposition of economic sanctions. These do not appear to stand the test of international law. Jurisdiction outside national boundaries has to be based on acts that have “substantial or grave effects within the territory” of the State exercising such jurisdiction. Trafficking in nationalized property cannot be said to have a substantial effect on the United States or on its economy, and therefore the extra-territorial jurisdiction cannot be justified by the doctrine of grave effects. Similarly, the embargo’s limitations on the export and import of goods contravenes multilateral trading regimes and cannot be grounded on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) exception clause of “essential security interests”, since there is neither a state of war nor a military threat.

Sanctions, irrespective of their purpose, have to comply with the customary international law principle of non-intervention and proportionality. The American Association for World Health concluded that, in the case of the impact on the Cuban health system, the embargo

“caused a significant rise in suffering ... [with] patients going without essential drugs [and] doctors performing medical procedures without adequate equipment”.

The study found also that the embargo continued to have an impact on food aid deliveries. The impact

was greater in the eastern provinces, which continued to suffer the worst food insecurity, particularly in view of the 2004 drought. The negative impact of the embargo on the educational sector is linked to trade restrictions that prevent the purchase of needed inputs at more competitive prices. The difficulties imposed by the embargo have been recognized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), especially the deleterious impact on international trade, investment flow, loans and interest payments, as well as on scientific and technical cooperation.

Although the United States market represents the closest, most convenient and diversified trade area, and, in a normal situation, Cuba and the United States would be natural economic partners, obtaining mutual benefits from trade, the experience has been exactly the opposite. According to one estimate, the direct economic loss caused to the Cuban people on account of the blockade is greater than \$82 billion; these estimates exclude indirect economic losses. It is our understanding that a considerable part of the United States private sector would like the embargo ended, to take advantage of the Cuban market; according to some estimates, the potential loss to United States business ranges between \$1 billion to \$15 billion, and potential employment losses are in the range of hundreds of thousands of jobs.

While we take note of a step in the right direction — namely the 1999-2000 compromise in Congress which allowed the export of food and medicine, though excluding Government or private finance and, paradoxically, strengthening the travel ban — we look forward to the lifting of embargoes and sanctions against Cuba. Embargoes impede the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected country, affecting children and women in particular. They also hinder the full enjoyment of human rights, including the right to food, medical care and social services, among other things. We believe that not only is the creation and strengthening of an economic environment capable of providing equal opportunities to all countries required but also that the international community needs to redouble its efforts to promote an environment free from sanctions and embargoes.

India is opposed to unilateral measures by countries that impinge on the sovereignty of another country, including attempts to extend the application of

a country's laws extraterritorially to other sovereign nations. India recalls the Final Documents adopted by the Thirteenth Summit of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned countries, held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2003, and the call made at the Doha Summit of the G-77 countries in June 2005 on the subject and urges the international community to adopt all necessary measures to protect the sovereign rights of all countries.

Let me recall what the indomitable revolutionary Che Guevara once said: "A better world is possible".

The Acting President: I should like to propose that, in the absence of objection, the list of speakers in the debate on this issue be closed at this time.

It was so decided.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): It is indeed of great concern to us that we find ourselves today having to address once again the issue of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo which has been imposed on Cuba for more than four decades. In reflecting on this matter, Indonesia associates itself with the views expressed by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Having said that, we need to ask hard questions and find a real solution so as to resolve this issue once and for all. Therefore our gathering here today has to ask whether the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba is justifiable in today's globalized and interdependent world and in keeping with the spirit of multilateralism.

It is in this context that we have considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/213). That document has given us two important perspectives on the matter.

First, we note that there is disagreement and opposition from Governments, all of them Members of the United Nations, on the application of the unilateral and extraterritorial nature of the embargo on Cuba. That embargo runs counter to the Charter of the United Nations and goes against every recognized principle of international law. That is the main underlying consideration for Indonesia, made evident by its support for resolution 59/11, adopted by the General Assembly last year.

Secondly, the embargo imposed on Cuba has affected the economic and social life of the Cuban people, especially children and women, as revealed by the reports of various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. In our view, that situation is not in line with the spirit of global partnership for development, as set out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In fact, during the 2005 world summit in September, we strongly reiterated our determination to ensure the timely and full realization of development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, to eradicate poverty.

With that in mind, Indonesia will vote in favour of draft resolution A/60/L.9, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Indonesia urges that due respect be shown for the sovereign equality of all States, consistent with international legal instruments. The principles of non-intervention and non-interference in countries' internal affairs must also be upheld. Moreover, there should be no hindrance of the freedom of international trade and navigation.

Let me emphasize the fact that the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba will only serve to maintain the high tensions between the two neighbouring countries. That will certainly not bring us very far in our commitment to and our respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, which are indispensable foundations for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

Therefore, I will conclude by calling on the United States of America to end its current approach and policy towards Cuba and to take the path of dialogue and accommodation instead.

Mr. Kapoma (Zambia): I should like at the outset to fully associate my delegation with the statement made earlier by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

I express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for presenting the comprehensive report contained in document A/60/213, in which the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Cuba gives an account of the effects of the embargo imposed by the United States of America against the people of Cuba. The report states,

"In the last 12 months the situation did not change, as the measures introduced by the embargo were maintained, with their resulting negative impact. Such measures fundamentally affected the people of Cuba and in particular the most vulnerable groups." (A/60/213, *Part III, para. 2*)

Despite the numerous resolutions adopted by this body appealing to the United States to improve relations with Cuba, my delegation notes with concern that in the past few years, additional steps have been taken to strengthen the embargo. Those measures, which have been enforced during the period 2004-2005, have had serious negative consequences on the economic, political and social life of the people of Cuba.

My delegation reaffirms its call for United Nations Member States to support an immediate lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, as that embargo violates the norms of free trade and navigation. Indeed, measures such as the ones contained in the Helms-Burton Act violate international law. Those unilateral sanctions, apart from being a breach of international law, erode the principle of friendly and cooperative relations between States. It was for that reason that last year, as in previous years, the Assembly called on the United States of America to lift the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

My Government remains committed to strengthening universal respect for international law in the conduct of all forms of relations among sovereign States. In accordance with resolution 59/11 of 28 October 2004, 85 countries, including my own, have expressed their written opposition to the continuation of the embargo. In addition, the United Nations system has provided information regarding the negative impact of the embargo on the United Nations development programmes in Cuba. Since all United States technology and materials are covered by the embargo, the cost of providing United Nations developmental assistance to Cuba has become prohibitive. The end result is that such programmes, meant for the most vulnerable, are never implemented. There is an urgent need, therefore, to redress the situation without further equivocation.

In view of the Secretary-General's report, Zambia will once again vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/60/L.9 and urges other Member States to do likewise.

Mr. Aghazadeh (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report under agenda item 18, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/60/213). I also associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The contents of resolution 59/11, as well as the 179 votes in favour of it, clearly reflect the position of the international community towards the long-standing embargo against Cuba. It is crystal-clear that the blockade is in violation of internationally agreed principles governing relations among States, such as the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation. As my delegation has pointed out in various statements, such unilateral coercive policies and measures should be regarded as major impediments for the international community in pursuing its common causes and interests. Resorting to an embargo as a tool to achieve political objectives undermines the international environment favourable for economic growth and sustainable development that the United Nations system keeps trying to promote.

Paragraph 102 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation calls upon States to refrain from any unilateral measure that contravenes international law and the Charter of the United Nations and impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, in particular women and children. The same paragraph further indicates that any such unilateral measure hinders the well-being of the affected people and creates obstacles to the full enjoyment of their human rights, including the right of everyone to a standard of living adequate for their health and well-being and their right to food, medical care and the necessary social services.

Paragraph 101 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation stipulates that States should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that will lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries. It adds

that trade policy measures for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination in international trade.

In reviewing the report of the Cuban Government, which is supported by numerous figures, it is hard to imagine just how devastating the impact of the imposed embargo has been on all walks of life of that nation, including health, economy, education, trade, tourism, civil aviation, cultural activities and even sports. Such policies and measures, which stem merely from intolerance and enmity towards other political, economic and social systems, will continue to add silently to the disparities and gaps among nations and run counter to the policy of protecting human rights and dignity.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, resorting to unjustifiable economic coercive measures against other States on the basis of political observations is not acceptable to the international community. The fact is that the extraterritorial application of such internal laws as the Helms-Burton Act and the D'Amato Act create an antagonistic environment in international relations and adversely affect world peace and security. Such political acts with economic implications continue to restrict investment, trade, employment, technology transfer and the prospects for economic growth not only of the targeted countries, but also of third-party countries dealing with the affected country.

It is worth noting that, in the outcome document of the recently held summit, all countries reaffirmed their commitments to efforts designed to ensure that developing countries can participate fully in the world trading system in order to meet the needs of their economic development. Let us observe our new commitments and put an end to all unilateral economic coercive measures.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): It is with pride and bitterness that Belarus adds its voice to the demands of the international community that the United States lift the blockade on Cuba now.

We are proud to stand with the people of a friendly country at a difficult moment in its history. We are proud that we can stand with a country whose very name has long been the symbol of courageous resistance to gross pressure from foreign domination.

It is with bitterness, however, that we have come to understand that, at a time when the eyes of the

peoples of the world are turned to their Governments in genuine hope that the world community will be able to unite to combat real — not fabricated — threats, we are compelled to address the obsolete dogmas and approaches of the cold war. It is with bitterness and regret that we witness the ongoing attempts by the mightiest Power of the world to break by force the will of the Cuban people and force them to live in accordance with its laws and ways.

The nobility of strength lies not in blind insistence that one is right or in bullying those that are smaller and weaker. The true nobility of strength lies in demonstrating wisdom, acknowledging mistakes, and recognizing the new nature of the world around us — a world that is interconnected, interdependent, complex and fragile. Long live Cuba!

Mr. Shingenge (Namibia): While aligning Namibia with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to make a few comments on behalf of my own country.

Since 1991, the Assembly has, through its resolutions on the item under consideration, consistently rejected and called for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. The blockade is hurting both the economy and the people of Cuba, especially women and children. It is therefore unfortunate that, 14 years later, the blockade remains intact and that the General Assembly is still seized with this issue.

My delegation has always maintained the view that the embargo against Cuba runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter, international law and the Millennium Declaration. The blockade continues to cause irreparable damage to the economic, social and cultural development of the Cuban people as it deprives them of the opportunities and benefits emanating from free trade.

The Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts are extraterritorial in nature and thus interfere with the sovereign rights of Cuba and violate the principles and rules of the international trading system. The unilateral blockade cannot be called an exclusive bilateral affair because it also impacts numerous countries and the citizens and companies of third States.

We are convinced that the people of both neighbouring countries would benefit from the normalization of relations and the removal of restrictions between them. The United States Government should therefore heed the call by the international community to end the blockade and thereby promote good relations and good-neighbourliness with the friendly Government and people of Cuba.

In our view, all human rights — be they political, cultural or economic — are inseparable. They include the rights to food, medicine, education and, above all, development. Through the blockade, the people of Cuba are being denied those basic fundamental human rights just because they have chosen a different political system. It is against that background that Namibia will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/60/L.9 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. We do so in expression of our solidarity with the people of Cuba, who stood by us in our time of need when Namibia was struggling for its independence and still stand by us as we struggle with such issues as HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to associate myself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations uphold the right of States to exercise sovereignty over their territory and to conduct their domestic affairs without external interference. All Member States of the United Nations — including the most powerful — must respect the Charter, which is the Organization's basic law and its first and last reference. The unilateral embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba and the more recent measures aimed at strengthening that embargo contravene the principles of international law, including the principles of the Charter — particularly the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation.

The embargo, which has been imposed against Cuba for more than four decades, has caused Cuba to suffer immeasurable social, economic and political damage. Cuba's suffering has increased, affecting

especially children and the elderly. The embargo has hampered the tireless efforts of the Cuban people to achieve prosperity and well-being. It continues to have very adverse effects not only on the Cuban economy — which has sustained losses exceeding \$82 billion — but also on the social and cultural development of the Cuban people, who are deprived of the opportunities and benefits of trade. The embargo is a direct violation of the Cuban people's basic freedoms and human rights, namely, the rights to life and development.

My delegation is grateful that Cuba has never stopped trying to establish a constructive dialogue with the United States to resolve all outstanding issues between the two parties on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of each other and respect for the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the principle of good-neighbourly relations. My delegation believes that normalization of relations between the United States of America and Cuba would serve the interests of both countries.

My country reaffirms the right of peoples to choose freely their own political, economic, social and cultural systems, in accordance with international law. The fact that 179 States supported this draft resolution last year proves that the international community recognizes that there must be an end to the embargo and that we must respect the political, economic and social systems chosen by all countries of their own free will to serve their own national interests.

In that connection, I should like to draw the attention of Members to the statement of the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, who once again called upon the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. They also expressed deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo and over continuous new legislative measures aimed at intensifying it. We would also like to draw the attention of Members to the outcome document agreed by developing countries at the second South Summit of the Group of 77 and China, held at Doha in June 2005. The Summit firmly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures. The Summit also expressed deep concern over the negative effects of economic sanctions on a country's ability to develop

and called on the United States to put an immediate end to the embargo against Cuba.

The international community has on more than one occasion expressed its rejection of the unilateral sanctions imposed against Cuba and of the expansion of those sanctions through the Helms-Burton Act, which exceeds the jurisdiction of national legislation and encroaches on the sovereignty of other States that deal with Cuba. That is incompatible with the principle of the sovereign equality of States and with the principles of international law.

Despite repeated appeals, the Government of the United States of America has still not taken any positive measures in response to the requests of the international community. The United States knowingly and stubbornly continues to cling to its mistaken position and to disregard the just demands of the international community. Furthermore, the United States has adopted new measures to strengthen the embargo against the sovereign State of Cuba.

In that context, my delegation hopes that the embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba is lifted and that the opinion of the international community, as expressed in the General Assembly and in other forums, will be respected by the United States, which must accept it fully. Therefore, Syria will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Toro Jiménez (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are convinced that the maintenance of international peace and security requires that relations among States — regardless of their ideologies — be based on strict adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and to the principles of international law. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates that there is not, nor can there be, a single model of development or a single model of democracy for the world's peoples. Given that incontrovertible reality and the respect it deserves from the international community, the Member States of this intergovernmental Organization must constantly reaffirm the principles of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, respect for the self-determination of peoples and national sovereignty.

Many voices have been raised in indignation throughout the world since 3 February 1962, when the Government of the United States of America formally imposed a criminal blockade — an iniquitous aggression and a destabilizing and unjustified act of

war — against the people of Cuba, who were and are fully exercising the self-determination that we all know as the Cuban revolution. The purpose of that act — which could be considered genocidal — was nothing other than to weaken the Cuban people's support for the revolution by seeking to make them discouraged, through their suffering, at the difficulties encountered in the process of the revolutionary changes and unstoppable progress in Cuba for the past 44 years.

Today, in this universal forum, we will again adopt — as we have since 1992 — a draft resolution that expresses the international community's conscience and its rejection of the embargo. What other arguments can be offered by those of us who believe in freedom, justice, peace and multilateralism? How can we ensure that this illegal and immoral blockade, lethal and totalitarian in intent, yields to an international clamour that has been tirelessly demanding justice for years?

Perhaps a few examples that make clear the incredibly absurd nature of this blockade will enable us to appeal to the conscience of a new international humanism, so that international justice can finally prevail.

Forty-six years have elapsed since the United States Government began its policy of hostility against the Cuban people. More than 70 per cent of Cuba's people were born after that date and have lived under the strict economic sanctions that have been imposed on the country by successive North American administrations.

In the last four decades, the United States embargo has cost the Cuban people more than \$80 billion. Those numbers speak eloquently to the need for justice, and they do not even include the \$54 billion worth of direct damage caused by sabotage and terrorist actions incited and financed from United States territory.

The United States stranglehold on the Cuban economy and on Cuban society cost the country \$2.764 billion in the year 2004 alone.

Were it not for the blockade, over the past few decades the Cuban people would have had \$134 million more to spend on education alone.

The Republic of Cuba is denied access to its closest markets, which hampers its social and cultural development. The imports it requires for its

development carry a surcharge of 25 to 30 per cent in transport costs, because its suppliers are so far away.

The coercive and systematic embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba since 1962 is a unilateral act of force that is incompatible with the international legal regime and contrary to the framework that defines economic and trade relations among States as a fundamental right — a path to peace, cooperation, good faith and mutual respect.

Yet the Cuban people and their legitimate Government have not only survived that aggression with courage and with integrity; they have also become stronger and through adversity have intensified their revolutionary spirit. They have demonstrated great social creativity at all levels, showing solidarity to other peoples and bringing a sense of dignity to the international community.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela strongly and categorically rejects the promulgation and application by any State of laws that are extraterritorial in effect and that do not respect the sovereignty of States. Our delegation and our country — standing side by side with the Government and the people of the Republic of Cuba and inspired by the spirit of Bolívar and Martí, which made our achievements possible — reiterate our opposition to the coercive, unilateral embargo imposed against Cuba. We will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/60/L.9) that is before the Assembly.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Jamaica, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The will of the international community with regard to the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States against Cuba was clearly expressed when the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/11 by an overwhelming majority of 179 affirmative votes.

The Union of Myanmar is of the view that the promulgation and application by Member States of laws and regulations, the extraterritorial effects of which affect the sovereignty of other States and the legitimate interests of persons under their jurisdiction, as well as freedom of trade and navigation, violate both the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Charter and the universally adopted principles of international law.

Myanmar is one of the co-initiators of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and, as such, has scrupulous respect for the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and freedom of trade and international navigation.

Furthermore, the Union of Myanmar is of the view that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba adversely affects the Cuban people and can have only negative effects on children, women and the elderly in particular. We stand in full solidarity with the people of Cuba. Myanmar does not believe that these measures will in any way promote peace and stability in the region.

Myanmar wholeheartedly joins the call made by the international community on the United States to put an end to the embargo and sanctions on Cuba. My delegation will therefore vote in favour of the draft resolution, thereby demonstrating our firm opposition to rules and regulations which have extraterritorial effects, since these are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and to the provisions of international law.

Mr. Aburawi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I should like to express my full support for the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Sanctions and blockades have never been, and will never be, the best way of resolving differences between States. The Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions call for appropriate measures to be taken so as to resolve bilateral disputes or conflicts through dialogue and negotiations on the basis of total equality, mutual respect and non-interference in a State's internal affairs. That approach, reaffirmed on several occasions by Member States, must be heeded urgently, because it is based on the logic and norms of international legality and sends a clear message that global peace is not possible and that there cannot be friendly relations among States or progress in the area of development unless the international community operates on the basis of mutual respect for the sovereignty of States, regardless of their size, the number of their inhabitants, their level of socio-economic development or the nature of their political and economic system.

The Cuban people continue to suffer from an unjust blockade that has gone on for more than four

decades and that has done great damage. It has inflicted suffering on the Cuban people, sparing no sector of the Cuban population, neither children nor the elderly nor women. It has undermined the capacity of the Cuban Government to import foodstuffs, agricultural commodities, medicines and medical equipment.

The international community has categorically expressed its repudiation and rejection of the economic, commercial and financial embargoes imposed on Cuba and on other peoples and countries, through many international resolutions, adopted by the General Assembly in particular.

The continuation of these oppressive measures, whose effects, in many cases, go beyond the countries concerned and affect third countries, can only lead to greater human suffering by deepening differences and fuelling hatred between peoples whose interests are interlinked. As a result, we must rationally and realistically find the appropriate civilized solutions that would guarantee human rights and protect them from attack.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya supports draft resolution A/60/L.9, submitted by Cuba and entitled, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", and also supports international efforts aimed at abolishing these unilateral measures.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to introduce draft resolution A/60/L.9.

Mr. Pérez Roque (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today is a day of particular importance for the United Nations, whose General Assembly is voting for the fourteenth consecutive time on a draft resolution submitted by Cuba on the item "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/60/L.9). The General Assembly will not only be deciding on an issue of interest to Cuba; it will also be voting in favour of the principles and norms of international law, against the extraterritorial enforcement of laws and in defence of the human rights of Cubans, Americans and the citizens of all 191 States represented in this Assembly.

It is true that the Government of the United States has disregarded the continuous, almost unanimous appeal by the international community, and, most likely, President Bush will further tighten the blockade, which is already the longest-running and most ruthless in history. But that does not diminish the legal, political, moral and ethical importance of this vote. Never before has the blockade been enforced with so much viciousness and brutality (as it has been in the last 18 months). Never before have we seen such cruel and relentless persecution by a United States administration against the economy and the right of Cubans to a decent life, a life with dignity.

Since 6 May 2004, when the President of the United States signed his new plan for the annexation of Cuba, there has been a hysterical, unprecedented escalation in the enforcement of new and aggressive measures, including the threat to use military force against Cuba and the persecution of citizens and companies, not only from Cuba, but also from the United States and the rest of the world.

Thus, in May 2004, a \$100 million fine was imposed on the Swiss bank, UBS, the largest fine ever imposed on a banking entity, for allegedly violating the sanctions against Cuba.

On 30 September 2004, reaching new highs in delusion and absurdity, the so-called Cuban Assets Control Regulations were tightened and it was established that citizens or permanent residents of the United States cannot legally purchase Cuban-made products in a third country, including tobacco and alcohol — not even for personal use abroad. Penalties arising from violations can be as high as \$1 million in fines for corporations and \$250,000 in fines and up to 10 years in prison for individuals. For the first time in history Americans will be prevented from smoking a Cuban cigar or buying a bottle of the unrivalled Cuban rum, Havana Club, even if they do so while travelling in another country. In terms of insanity, this draconian prohibition should be inscribed in the *Guinness World Records*.

On 9 October 2004, in an unprecedented act of aggression in the history of international financial relations, the State Department announced the establishment of a Group for the Persecution of Cuban Assets. The very existence of a group so named should embarrass the President of the most powerful nation on Earth.

In January 2005, the Office of Foreign Assets Control reinterpreted travel regulations so as to prevent United States citizens from taking part in meetings which are held in Cuba and sponsored and organized by United Nations agencies headquartered in the United States, unless provided in advance with a license from the United States Government.

On 24 February 2005, in a blatant and brazen violation of international regulations on trademarks and patents, a legal scheme was orchestrated and implemented to deprive Cuba of the rights to the Cohiba brand name, the most prestigious brand of Cuban cigars.

On 13 April 2005, a guilty verdict was delivered against the United States citizen Stefan Brodie, former chairman of the Purolite Company, who was charged with selling ionized resins to Cuba for the treatment and purification of water in Cuban aqueducts.

On 29 April 2005, President Bush instructed the Treasury Department to hand over \$198,000 in Cuban funds illegally frozen in United States banks, in order to acquiesce to one of the most spurious demands ever filed against Cuba by the violent, Miami-based extremist groups which orchestrate terrorist plans against Cuba with utter impunity.

In April 2005, access to the United States was once again denied to the new directors of Canada's Sherritt International and to their relatives, under the provisions of the Helms-Burton Act. Also in April 2005, the Office of Foreign Assets Control toughened its persecution against groups — even against religious organizations — that possessed licences for travel to Cuba.

In 2004, the United States Government imposed fines on 316 citizens and residents of the United States for violating blockade provisions. The number had reached 537 fines by 12 October 2005.

In 2004, a total of 77 companies, financial institutions and non-governmental organizations from the United States and other countries were fined for violating the blockade on Cuba. Eleven of them are foreign companies or subsidiaries of United States companies in Mexico, Canada, Panama, Italy, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and the Bahamas. Another seven companies, including Iberia, Alitalia, Air Jamaica and Daewoo, were sanctioned because their subsidiaries in the United States, according to the

United States Administration, violated the blockade laws.

Travel by American citizens to Cuba from January to October 2005, has dropped by 55 per cent as opposed to the same period in 2003, prior to the new sanctions enacted by President Bush. In the case of the Cubans residing in the United States, there has been a 49 per cent decrease in those travelling directly to Cuba.

Cultural, sports, academic, student and scientific exchanges, as well as the linkages among Cubans on both sides of the Florida Straits, have been specially targeted by the anti-Cuban aggression undertaken by this Administration. Travels to Cuba by uncles and aunts and cousins, among others, have even been prohibited, with the argument that they are not family.

The blockade has cost the people of Cuba, throughout these nearly 47 years, over \$82 billion. There is no economic or social activity in Cuba that has not suffered its consequences. There is no human right of the Cubans that is protected from the aggression of the blockade.

Under the blockade, Cuba cannot export any product to the United States. Given its proximity, Cuba could be exporting to the United States every year more than 30,000 tons of nickel or 1 million tons of sugar at a price three times higher than what Cuba obtains today. It could also sell \$180 million worth of Ateromixol per year if it just captured 1 per cent of the sales of cholesterol-reducing drugs in the United States. According to the editors of the *Harvard International Review*, Ateromixol is the best cholesterol-reducing medicine available.

Furthermore, last year Cuba would have exported to the United States nearly \$30 million in Havana Club rum and over \$100 million in tobacco products. Similarly, Cuba cannot import from the United States goods other than agricultural products — and those only under extensive and renewed constraints.

Cuba cannot receive any tourism from the United States. In 2004, Cuba would have earned over one billion dollars if it had just received 15 per cent of the 11 million American tourists who travelled to the Caribbean. Several studies released in the United States foresee between 2 and 4 million travellers from the United States to Cuba if the blockade were lifted.

Because of the blockade, Cuba cannot use the United States dollar in its transactions abroad, nor does it have access to credit — and it cannot engage in operations with United States financial institutions, their subsidiaries or even regional or multilateral institutions. Cuba is the only country in Latin America and the Caribbean that has never received, in 47 years, a loan from the World Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank.

If the blockade were only a bilateral issue between Cuba and the United States, it would already be a very serious matter for our small country. But it is much more than that. The blockade is an economic war enforced with incomparable zeal on a global scale. The blockade is also the extraterritorial application of laws of the United States against the countries that delegates represent here in the General Assembly and is therefore a serious violation of international law.

Now, Cuba has two new obstacles to overcome: the imperial haughtiness of President Bush, which has taken him farther than anyone else in this madness, and the ever-increasing globalization of the world economy.

Why? Because the United States controls almost half of the transnational corporations on the planet, including 8 of the 10 largest ones. The United States also owns one fourth of foreign direct investments and imports 22 per cent of goods traded the world over.

The United States owns 11 of the 14 largest transnational corporations in information technology and communications, and represents about 80 per cent of the world's e-commerce. Out of the 10 pharmaceutical companies that are responsible for almost half of the worldwide sales of medicines, five are from the United States, and some of those products are one of a kind.

Cuba's external economic space is, thus, narrowed through investments by third-country corporations in the United States, as well as those undertaken by American companies abroad. Every merger or acquisition among companies brings about another challenge to our small country — a challenge that is often insurmountable because we have to find a new supplier or a new market for our products.

Let us recall the extraterritorial provisions of the blockade: under the Torricelli Act, subsidiaries of

United States companies based in third countries are prevented from trading with Cuba.

A portion of the equipment and materials for Cuba's biotechnological research centres, which are already producing therapeutic vaccines against cancer, was supplied by Sweden's Pharmacia. That company was bought up by Britain's Amersham, which, in turn, was taken over by General Electric of the United States, which then gave one week's notice to those companies to cancel all contacts with Cuba. When Brazil's Oro Rojo was bought up by an American company, it cancelled its sales of canned meat to Cuba that had been intended for HIV/AIDS patients as part of a project of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis.

Those were not weapons of mass destruction, those were not drugs or banned products, that was meat to be given to HIV/AIDS patients, as part of a United Nations programme. Those sales were banned and those companies that tried to have normal trade with Cuba were persecuted, thus violating a law of our country, as well as business laws of other countries. The Chiron Corporation has not sold any of its medical products to Cuba since last year's fine of \$168,500, because one of its European subsidiaries exported two children's vaccines to Cuba. These are not nuclear weapons, these are not strategic rockets — just two vaccines for children.

On 7 February 2005, the First Caribbean International Bank of the Bahamas cancelled its transactions with Cuba under the threat of the Government of the United States. The British company Barclays Bank recently announced that it would do the same, fearing United States sanctions. The Canadian company VECO, with United States capital investment, had to suspend its projected involvement in Cuba's development of fuel storage capacity.

Denmark's Sabroe was bought up by York of the United States, and they immediately cancelled the ongoing deal to sell to Cuba refrigeration compressors, which were needed by the Cuban programme to supply soy-based yoghurt to all children aged 7 to 13.

The blockade also prevents third-country companies from selling goods or services to Cuba, if they use American technology or consist of more than 10 per cent United States components. As a result, since 2004, the United States Government has prevented the Dutch company Intervet from selling

avian vaccines to Cuba, claiming that they contain an antigen produced in the United States.

The Mexican company Vafe S.A. had to suspend the sale to Cuba of a material required in the manufacture of household pressure cookers, because it contained raw material from the United States. In September 2004, Novair, an aviation company from Sweden, cancelled a lease for an Airbus 330 with Cubana de Aviación, because it could not receive any maintenance services — although the airplane is European-made, it uses several United States technologies. In October 2004, Japan's Hitachi High Technologies Corporation could not sell an electron microscope to a prestigious Cuban hospital for the same reasons already mentioned above.

The blockade also prevents companies from third-party countries that delegates to the General Assembly represent from exporting any product or piece of equipment to the United States if it contains any Cuban raw materials. Not one company in the world can export confectioneries to the United States if they contain Cuban sugar. No company in the world can export automobiles or other equipment to the United States, unless they certify first that the metals used in the manufacture do not contain any Cuban nickel.

The blockade prevents the entry into United States ports of vessels that have carried goods towards or from Cuba. Not United States vessels, but vessels from the countries that delegates to the General Assembly represent. Those vessels cannot go to the United States if they have first entered a Cuban port. That is the Torricelli Act, signed by President Bush, Sr. in 1992.

Under the Helms-Burton Act, the blockade prevents investments by third-country companies in Cuba, claiming that they relate to properties that are subject to claims by the United States. For that reason, executives of Canada's Sherritt International Corporation are still under sanctions — and last year, because of that threat, the Jamaican tourism company SuperClubs withdrew from Cuba.

The blockade also violates the constitutional rights of the American people. It prevents them from travelling to Cuba and from enjoying our culture and engaging in a free exchange with the Cuban people. When Cuba is speaking in this forum, we are not simply doing it to defend the rights of the Cuban

people, we are also doing it in defence of the rights of the American people, with whom we have feelings of friendship and respect. The American people are not guilty of our suffering and the unjust and genocidal policy that their Government maintains against our country. We are also speaking in defence of the rights of the entire international community — rights that are violated by the illegal unilateral policy.

The blockade also affects the economic interests of the United States, not just the rights of the United States. According to a study of June 2005, released by the Center for Business and Economic Research of the University of Southern Alabama, the removal of the blockade could generate 100,000 new jobs and additional revenues of up to \$6 billion for the United States economy.

For many years we have observed that the delegation of the United States, which is present here today, has refused to take part in the debate preceding this vote. I believe it is because they do not have any ideas, not a single argument, and for that reason they have abstained from even defending their position in the general debate. They are overwhelmed by the fact that over 20 delegations have made statements explaining their position here, before the Cuban delegation has spoken. The United States is silent because, perhaps, as President Abraham Lincoln said, “You cannot fool all the people all the time”.

I must say that we also understand that the United States decision is a type of moral capitulation. You need more than power, you need ethics and moral authority, and that is not won by force, or by war, or with weapons. Moral authority is won with exemplary acts and with respect for the rights of others, even though they may be small and poor.

I know that the United States is still on the list to speak later in explanation of vote, therefore I cannot comment on their opinions. However, I can guarantee that in the right of reply, the Cuban delegation will reject every lie and will reiterate every truth that must be expressed in this forum.

Lastly, I wish to stress that the blockade against Cuba must be lifted. The United States Government must cease its aggression against Cuba. Once and for all it must recognize our right to self-determination.

The United States Government is delusional — I say this frankly — with its idea that it can overthrow

the Cuban Revolution. It disguises its plans and refers to what would be a gross and bloody annexation of Cuba as a transition. But they are wrong. They are overlooking the courage, the spirit of independence and the political awareness that the revolution has instilled in the Cuban people.

The steadfastness and the sense of dignity shown by five Cuban youths, heroes in the fight against terrorism who are political prisoners in United States jails, whose families, whose wives, whose mothers, whose sons, are following this debate in Havana, confident in the sense of justice of the delegations in this Hall attest to the indomitable spirit with which the Cubans defend today, and will always defend, our right to build a more just, solidarity-based and human society.

On behalf of those five heroes; on behalf of the Cuban children and youths who have been forced to live all their lives under the blockade; on behalf of the generous, happy and courageous people back in Cuba who rely on the Assembly because they know that the world has seen Cubans fighting, teaching and healing wherever their services have been required, because they know that the world has always seen Cubans giving not out of abundance but sharing what little they have; on behalf of Cuba's right, which is also everyone's right today, which is the right of all members and the right of the peoples they represent in this Assembly, I respectfully ask all members to vote in favour of draft resolution A/60/L.9, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/60/L.9. Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of the vote before the vote, may I remind the Assembly that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Johnston (United Kingdom): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Turkey and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, the European

Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union believes that the United States trade policy towards Cuba is fundamentally a bilateral issue. Notwithstanding this, the European Union and its member States have been clearly expressing their opposition to the extraterritorial extension of the United States embargo, such as that contained in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996.

In November 1996, the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted a regulation and a joint action to protect the interests of natural or legal persons resident in the European Union against the extraterritorial effects of the Helms-Burton legislation, which prohibits compliance with that legislation. Moreover, on 18 May 1998, at the European Union/United States summit held in London, a package was agreed covering waivers to titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act, a commitment by the United States administration to resist future extraterritorial legislation of that kind and an understanding with respect to disciplines for the strengthening of investment protection. The European Union continues to urge the United States to implement its side of the 18 May 1998 understanding.

The European Union's policy towards Cuba is clear and was set out in a Common Position in 1996. The objective of the European Union in its relations with Cuba is to encourage a process of transition to pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as an improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people. Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the Common Position most recently on 13 June 2005.

The European Union believes that critical engagement with the Cuban Government, along with dialogue with wider Cuban civil society, is the most effective way to promote peaceful change in Cuba. However, the European Union considers that full cooperation with Cuba will depend upon improvements in human rights and political freedom in that country. The European Union remains deeply concerned about the human rights situation in Cuba. Following the arrests and sentencing of 75 members of the peaceful opposition in spring 2003, the situation has not

improved, and in the past few months, has deteriorated. In July, the Presidency of the European Union issued statements condemning the suppression of peaceful demonstrations by the State and the arrests of a number of people connected with peaceful demonstrations. In September, the European Union issued a declaration about the situation of three political prisoners who were on hunger strike in protest against harsh treatment, all of whom were suffering severe health problems. The European Union urges the Cuban Government unconditionally to release all political prisoners and appeals to the Cuban authorities to cooperate fully with international human rights bodies and mechanisms.

The Cuban Government's achievements in healthcare and education are undermined by its restrictions on civil, political and economic rights. Domestic Cuban economic policy, as well as the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States, seriously hampers the economic development of Cuba, negatively affecting the standards of living of the Cuban people. The European Union believes that the lifting of the United States trade embargo would open Cuba's economy, to the benefit of the Cuban people. The European Union also urges the Cuban Government to bring about change in the economic field, particularly by lifting restrictions on private enterprise.

For the foregoing reasons, and therefore in spite of its serious criticism of Cuba's human rights record, the European Union intends to vote in favour of draft resolution A/60/L.9.

Mr. Godard (United States of America): The United States trade embargo is a bilateral issue and should not come before the General Assembly. But since Cuba has raised the issue, we would like to discuss the root of the problems the Cuban people face every day: the failed policies of Fidel Castro. As his economic policies harm the Cuban people, Castro tries to blame the United States for the failures of the Government he leads. This resolution makes frequent mention of free trade, for instance, yet Castro denies free trade to the Cuban people.

Castro continues with his cynical and baseless claims that the embargo denies Cuba access to food and medicine. But he knows that since 1992, the United States has licensed over \$1.1 billion in the sale and donation of medicine and medical equipment for

the Cuban people. Castro knows that the United States Government has licensed the export of over \$5 billion worth of agricultural commodities in the past five years.

If the people of Cuba are jobless or hungry or lack medical care, as Castro admits, it is because of his economic mismanagement, not the embargo. Castro has long blocked democracy and economic freedom for the Cuban people, even denying them the right to many forms of self-government. Castro gives his people a stark choice: work for his regime, or starve. Then he blames the embargo for the problems he has created.

Castro claims that the embargo is a blockade. He knows this is a lie. Cuba is free to trade with any other country in the world without interference from the United States. Castro knows that the real reason behind Cuba's trade problems is the failure of his country to pay its bills, and billions of dollars of loans in arrears. Castro is fully aware that the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has concluded that Cuba must promote small business opportunities to revive its suffering economy. But Castro sees a corner store as a threat to his power, so he continues to block free-market reforms.

Fidel Castro knows what it will take to end the embargo: reforms that will benefit the Cuban people. In 2002, we challenged Castro to permit free and fair elections to the National Assembly. We challenged Castro to open the Cuban economy and allow independent trade unions. President Bush made clear that his response to such concrete reforms would be an effort with the United States Congress to ease restriction on trade and travel between the United States and Cuba. Castro replied to that challenge for freedom with the imprisonment of human rights leaders and trade unionists.

The impediment to a new and vibrant relationship between the United States and Cuba is the dictatorship in Havana. The way forward is through a genuine transition to political and economic liberty for the Cuban people. The moment the Cuban people are fully free is when the floodgates of travel and commerce should open. That will be the moment when the American economy can actually help transform Cuba's failed and bankrupt economic system and give Cubans themselves the economic freedom and opportunity long denied to them by the dictatorship. United States and

Cuban economic interests will naturally coincide and become robust when Cuba is free.

The United States opposes Fidel Castro and his policies of repression. We support the Cuban people who yearn for freedom. We know that Castro will continue to claim that the United States is the only problem facing Cuba and that he will use support of this resolution as support for his regime and its repressive policies, just as he has in the past.

Castro knows that the United States supports Cubans who seek the right to independent trade unions and to open small businesses. Castro knows the United States supports Cubans who ask for basic human rights as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Castro knows that because the United States supports the rights of the Cuban people, we strongly oppose this draft resolution.

The United States will vote against this draft resolution, and we encourage all other delegations to do the same.

Mr. Song Se Il (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The United States has continued to impose sanctions on Cuba for over 40 years. Since 1991, the General Assembly has been discussing and adopting resolutions on ending the economic embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. These resolutions, supported by an overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States, has not yet been implemented, due to the behaviour of the United States. My delegation is of the view that the United States should be held accountable for that failure.

The most serious concern for the international community is that the United States maintains its anti-Cuba policy by means of unilateral sanctions. To cite just one example, in May 2004, the United States took a new measure aimed at further consolidating its sanctions against Cuba, under the pretext of accelerating the latter's democratic transition. Its sanctions against Cuba amount to a wanton infringement of the independence of a sovereign State, and an expression of unilateral arbitrariness that ignores the principles and norms of the United Nations Charter and international law. It is the consistent and principled position of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to oppose all unilateral sanctions against sovereign States.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea expresses its full support for and solidarity with the struggle of the Cuban people for justice and for implementing their vision, and urges the United States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Based on that consistent principled position, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly supports and will vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Cuba, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/60/L.9).

Mr. Chulkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia consistently maintains its position on the inadmissibility of applying unilateral extraterritorial measures in international relations. In today's world, any effort to isolate an individual country is, in our view, counterproductive.

Our State, like the majority of United Nations Member States, strongly condemns the United States embargo against Cuba and calls for lifting it immediately. Since 1994, at various sessions of the General Assembly, Russia has supported the resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. We are convinced that ending the embargo and normalizing United States-Cuban relations overall would help improve Cuba's situation, and help it to become more engaged in international and regional processes.

Russia believes that any continuation of the United States trade, economic and financial blockade against Cuba is not in keeping with the spirit of the time and does not promote modern international relations. Moreover, such a continuation is simply a relic of the cold war era and its legacy of ideological confrontation. It slows down the formation of a new equitable international regime for the twenty-first century which would be based on the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and on international law.

The recent decision to tighten sanctions against Cuba is an indication that the United States administration unfortunately continues to rely on repressive approaches. The new turn in the spiral of worsening Cuban-United States relations is a matter of

serious concern to us; it will lead to greater confrontation between the two countries and interfere with the establishment of any constructive dialogue.

Russia is guided by these points, and is in solidarity with the frequently expressed wishes of the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations to resolve all disputes and disagreements without diktat and without force. Accordingly, Russia, at the current session of the General Assembly, will once again vote in support of the draft resolution calling for the lifting of the blockade and for the normalization of Cuban-United States relations (A/60/L.9). That would be in the interest of the Cuban and the United States peoples and would have a positive impact on the overall situation in the region of Central America and the Caribbean as a whole, and indeed throughout the world.

Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe): This morning we have heard eloquent statements in connection with the economic embargo imposed by the United States against the Cuban people. We have also heard the United States declare that this is a bilateral issue. If it is a bilateral issue, why then is the United States legislating on behalf of other countries that are engaging in trade with Cuba?

Zimbabwe has always adhered to the principle of respect for the fundamental principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, and freedom of international trade and navigation. Zimbabwe has consistently advocated the revocation of laws and measures that have been and are being applied on a unilateral basis against Member States. The extraterritorial consequences of such actions affect the sovereignty of other States, the lawful interests of their peoples and of persons under their jurisdiction, and their freedom to trade and navigate.

Cuba, as a sovereign State, has a right to decide what path to follow in the area of development. We do not believe that any country has the right to determine or dictate which path Cuba should follow. There is no reason, therefore, why any country should impose an economic embargo imposed on Cuba simply because its views differ from Cuba's as to the latter's economic policies.

For the past four decades, all United Nations debates on this issue have shown a growing wave of protest against unilateral and coercive economic

measures applied for political purposes. In spite of the numerous appeals made from this very rostrum and of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the United States has not yet deemed it prudent to put an end to the unilateral measures it has imposed on the people and the Government of Cuba. That extension of the territorial jurisdiction of the United States to other countries is contrary to the principles of national sovereignty and of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States, as recognized in the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice.

This United States policy undermines the right of peoples to self-determination and development. It contravenes the principles of freedom of trade and navigation and of the movement of capital. The United States embargo against Cuba is cruel, anachronistic and counterproductive. It is also illegitimate and immoral, because it contravenes international law and the provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO). There is no justification for the continuation of such hostile policies.

As a current victim of domestic laws and legislation with extraterritorial impact, Zimbabwe fully understands the need to end the unilateral and illegal economic embargo on Cuba. Zimbabwe therefore stands firmly by the heroic people of Cuba in their fight against this illegal embargo and will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Assembly.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/60/L.9.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea,

Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Micronesia (Federated States of)

Draft resolution A/60/L.9 was adopted by 182 votes to 4, with 1 abstention (resolution 60/12).

The Acting President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has the honour to take the floor on behalf of

the MERCOSUR member States: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

As on former occasions, and with the firm conviction that it is necessary to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, we have voted in favour of the resolution, which has been adopted almost unanimously by the international community.

MERCOSUR and its associated States, committed to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, have repeatedly expressed their categorical rejection of unilateral and extraterritorial coercive measures that are contrary to international law.

Our countries, whose international policies include freedom of trade and of navigation and which promote the development of trade on the basis of compliance with our legal obligations as members of the World Trade Organization, strongly oppose foreign laws that directly or indirectly violate the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs or infringe on the sovereignty of States.

We are convinced that the imposition of unilateral coercive measures does not help to promote the democratic system in all of its diversity; rather, it undermines human rights, particularly the right of peoples to development.

That is why our countries, on more than one occasion and in various international forums such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Latin American Economic System and Ibero-American and Rio Group summits, have spoken out in favour of effective multilateralism and of the elimination of unilateral coercive measures, which only exacerbate tensions and undermine the international cooperation that is required to achieve development, security and human rights for all, which we strongly advocate.

Mr. Southcott (Australia): Australia shares concerns about the state of human rights and political freedoms in Cuba, but we do not consider that isolating Cuba through economic sanctions is an effective means of achieving human rights and political reform. Australia has consistently expressed its opposition, as a matter of principle, to the promulgation and application by States Members of the United Nations of laws and

measures, the extraterritorial effects of which affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction as well as freedom of trade and navigation.

In Australia's view, such laws and measures are not justified by the principles of international law and comity. We are therefore concerned about the extraterritorial aspects of the Helms-Burton Act of 1996. For those reasons, Australia has again voted for the resolution submitted under the agenda item.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote. One representative requested to exercise the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of Cuba.

Ms. Núñez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Year after year, we have listened to the representatives of the European Union repeat their hackneyed arguments to explain their vote, during the adoption of the resolution that condemns the blockade by the United States of America against the Cuban people. They seem to beg forgiveness when faced with the responsibility to acknowledge the undeniable. One cannot prevent a people from exercising its legitimate right to choose its own destiny in order to build a more just society, where the greatest benefits are not distributed among a few oligarchs.

The European Union, through a complex word game, is trying to hide the fact that the United States has launched an economic war against Cuba, that it is truly committing genocide and has been causing serious damage to the Cuban people for more than 47 years, only because of Cuba's refusal to become a pawn in the geopolitics of that unipolar Power. The European Union is only interested in the extraterritorial content of the imperial decree, not in its victims, the men and women of Cuba. The worst fallacy is trying to suggest that we deserve such actions.

It seems that unless its economic interests are affected, the European Union will show itself to be indifferent or, worse still, cooperative, if the empire

decides to apply sanctions that go against international law and against a dignified and brave people.

The European Union acts as an accomplice to the United States, when they favour and condone the false pretext that has been created to maintain and strengthen the hostile policy of genocide against the Cuban people. How can they dare speak of human rights — those who have extended a cloak of impunity to the perpetrators of atrocious human rights violations in the concentration camps established in the territory that is illegally occupied in Guantánamo, as well as extrajudicial executions and cruel and humiliating torture at Abu Ghraib.

Nothing about the United States statement surprises us. Their speech is full of hate and void of arguments and provides new evidence of the arrogance of a super-Power in decline, with claims of imperial domination on a planetary scale. We will reveal once and for all those lies. The racist, fascist, aggressive, dictatorial Bush Administration is attacking our country precisely because we are defending, protecting and promoting all of the human rights of all Cubans, seven of ten of whom have grown up under the constant threat of their powerful neighbour.

The agents of the new conservative doctrine of the Bush Administration have toughened the blockade against our country because it demonstrates a contagious example of dignity and resistance.

In Cuba, electoral fraud, such as the one that allowed Bush to usurp the presidency in the year 2000, is not possible. In Cuba, the national wealth is not stolen by corrupt leaders and transnational corporations. They cannot exploit or contaminate our heritage. There are no unproductive farms. The United Fruit Company cannot continue taking land away from farmers. There are no children's schools that lack access to quality health services. No Cuban man or woman has to humiliate herself or himself in order to find a job. It is one of the few countries in the world that has achieved the goal of full employment.

Bush has resorted to all kinds of manoeuvres to overthrow the Cuban revolution. He has ordered mercenary invasions. He has financed terrorism. He has designed plans to assassinate the legitimate leaders of the Cuban people, and he has mounted his unceasing radio-electronic war against our country. The representatives of the empire finance, direct and recruit mercenaries for the service of their annexationist

policies, with the purpose of reimposing new colonial domination over the Cuban people. It is not the sovereign decision of the Cuban people to build socialism, but rather the genocide of the American blockade, that impedes all facets of the economic and social development of my country.

What we have achieved thus far has been possible, thanks to the determination of the Cubans who have resisted brutal aggression for over half a century — paying a high price for their indomitable will to defend their right to national independence and their right to live a life of dignity and respect.

It is a lie that the Government of the United States sells food and medicine to Cuba. Cuba must carry out those purchases by overcoming the most difficult obstacles.

The statements we have listened to reveal the double standard and hypocrisy with which the European Union and the United States claim to judge others. Their arrogant statements cannot hide the colonial and racist inspiration behind their behaviour. Without addressing the sad situation of thousands of men and women who are condemned to prostitution in of some of their most prominent cities, everyone knows that in Europe, racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia are on the rise. In recent years, that trend has become even stronger.

The same European Governments that cry crocodile tears for a handful of mercenaries that betray their people have, for two consecutive years, prevented the Commission on Human Rights from adopting a draft resolution that only attempted to investigate the situation of individuals who have been condemned to scandalous and humiliating practices of torture and to the condition of non-people in the naval base of the United States in Guantánamo. They have not said a word about that torture, nor concerning the hunger strikes of some of those inmates — issues which have been discussed at length in the international press.

They cannot teach us anything about human rights. They conduct war only to enrich their military industrial complex and torture in the name of a false freedom. We can learn nothing of human rights from the richest society in the world, where the opulence is such that 44 million people do not have access to its hospitals. They can teach us nothing about human rights while their caste of politicians carries out fraud and uses deceit to run their empire. They can teach us

nothing of human rights, when they are incapable of preventing the deaths of thousands of their citizens and have abandoned them to their fate at the hands of nature's fury.

Cuba rejects, word for word, the statements of the representatives of the European Union and the United States. We do not acknowledge that they have any moral authority from them, to judge the heroic Cuban people. The march undertaken by the Cuban people for more than 40 years is irreversible, despite the opposition and aggressiveness of the greatest Power in history and its acolytes.

In Cuba, there will be no false revolution organized by the secret services of the Western Powers. In Cuba, there is already a true revolution, which is a genuinely popular and indigenous revolution that has made it possible for the Cuban people to build —

The Acting President: I am sorry that I have to interrupt the representative of the Cuban delegation

but the 10 minute period is up. May I ask her to be kind enough to conclude her statement?

Ms. Núñez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am concluding, Sir. If you just give me one more minute, I will finish.

This revolution has consolidated the deepest feelings of solidarity among the Cuban people, who cooperate with their brothers and sisters in every part of the world. We have powerful enemies, but we know that most people in the world respect and admire our courage. The Cuban people has devoted itself to building its present and its future and will never retreat.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 18?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.