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Official Records

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

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

Agenda item 19

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/97)

Draft resolution (A/64/L.4)

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I am honoured to speak in this plenary meeting on agenda item 19, “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

The Group of 77 and China have always been firmly against this embargo. The heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China at the Second South Summit, held in Doha, Qatar, from 12 to 16 June 2005, firmly 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 called upon the Government of the United States to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and to the principle of good-neighbourliness, causes huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba.

In this regard, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate once again their long-standing position on this important matter. At their recent thirty-third annual meeting held here in New York on 25 September 2009, the ministers for foreign affairs of the States members of the Group of 77 and China

“firmly 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 emphasized that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law but also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment. They, therefore, called on the international community neither to recognize these measures nor apply them”. (A/64/489, *annex, para. 39*)

The Group of 77 and China take note of the replies of Governments and bodies within the United Nations system to the Secretary-General’s request for information on the matter, contained in his report on the implementation of resolution 63/7 (A/64/97). Sadly, they unequivocally show that the embargo remains largely unchanged and continues to impose severe economic and financial restrictions on Cuba. Furthermore, the debilitating impact of the global economic crisis on Cuba and the continued embargo by the Government of the United States will contribute to further aggravating the hardships of and imposed on the people of Cuba.

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The Group of 77 and China calls on the United States to heed the increasing appeals of the international community to put an end to the five-decade embargo and to fully adhere to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of a sisterly nation. The embargo frustrates efforts towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and negatively affects regional cooperation in that area.

The Group of 77 and China is committed to working towards a better world for all, in which nations large and small can coexist peacefully. The achievement of such peaceful coexistence among nations requires adherence by all nations to the cardinal principles of the United Nations Charter and the peaceful conduct of relations among nations.

The Group of 77 and China will again fully support the draft resolution against the embargo (A/64/L.4) and urges all States Members of the Organization to do so as well.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to propose that the list of speakers for the debate on this item be closed.

It was so decided.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on this important item, and would like to start by welcoming His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to the General Assembly.

The Non-Aligned Movement once again renews its commitment to defending, preserving and promoting the United Nations Charter and international law, and stresses its commitment to promoting, preserving and strengthening multilateralism and the multilateral decision-making process.

On the basis of that principled position, the Non-Aligned Movement firmly reiterates its rejection of the adoption and implementation of extraterritorial or unilateral coercive measures or laws, including unilateral economic sanctions or other illegal measures contrary to international law, that seek to exert pressure on non-aligned countries to prevent them from exercising their right to decide, by their own free will, their own political, economic and social systems. We therefore call on all States to refrain from recognizing such measures or laws, which undermine the principles

enshrined in the United Nations Charter and international law and severely threaten the freedom of trade, navigation and investment.

Furthermore, the Non-Aligned Movement opposes and condemns such measures or laws and their continued application, and urges other States to do likewise, as called for by the General Assembly and other United Nations organs. The Non-Aligned Movement once again requests States applying such measures or laws to revoke them fully and immediately. Moreover, in accordance with international law, the Non-Aligned Movement supports the claim of affected States, including targeted ones, to compensation for the damage incurred as a consequence of the implementation of extraterritorial or unilateral coercive measures or laws.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba has been in place for 50 years, and 70 per cent of Cubans have been born under it. The Non-Aligned Movement expresses its concern over the continuation of that long-standing unilateral policy, especially since the overwhelming majority of States has consistently rejected it, as evidenced by last year's General Assembly resolution on this item (resolution 63/7), which received the support of 185 Member States.

The heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, at its fifteenth summit conference held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in July 2009, reiterated once again in the final document adopted by the summit their long-standing position on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. We therefore call upon the Government of the United States of America to put an immediate end to the embargo.

Furthermore, during the summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, the heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement adopted an exceptional declaration, entitled the "Special Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". That declaration reflects the importance that the Non-Aligned Movement attaches to that issue, and

marked the end of Cuba's outstanding presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement for the past three years.

From another perspective, I would like to underscore that the embargo, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the United Nations Charter, international law and the principle of good-neighbourliness, continues to cause huge material loss and economic and financial damage, which have had a negative impact on the welfare and well-being of the people of Cuba.

The Non-Aligned Movement also reiterates its deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo against Cuba and rejects the reinforcement of measures adopted by the United States Government, aimed at tightening the embargo, as well as all other recent measures carried out by the Government of the United States of America against the people of Cuba.

Therefore, the Non-Aligned Movement once again urges the Government of the United States of America to immediately and fully comply with all resolutions of the General Assembly related to the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Similarly, the Non-Aligned Movement urges all States to strictly comply with resolutions 47/19, 48/16, 49/9, 50/10, 51/17, 52/10, 53/4, 54/21, 55/20, 56/9, 57/11, 58/7, 59/11, 60/12, 61/11, 62/3 and 63/7. All those resolutions relate to the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

To conclude, I would like to highlight that, despite the continuation of the embargo and all its negative effects, the Cuban Government conducted its presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement over the past three years in a highly capable and commendable manner that preserved and advanced the interests of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement and contributed to enhancing the interaction between the Non-Aligned Movement and the larger membership of the United Nations.

In addition, these past few years have also witnessed an increased dynamism in Cuba's international relations with all regions of the world. In that context, I would like to state that the new United States Administration has embarked on a path of openness and engagement with the outside world.

Thus, the Non-Aligned Movement looks forward to that new policy being extended to Cuba as well and leading to the immediate end of the long-standing embargo.

Mr. Bart (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I, too, recognize the presence of the Foreign Minister of Cuba.

I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which also aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

CARICOM member States continue to reiterate their unequivocal opposition to the United States imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which has been opposed by the overwhelming majority of the international community for the past 17 years. The unilateral imposition of extraterritorial laws on third States is contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter, and the embargo itself continues to run counter to the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade that this body traditionally champions.

The stubborn persistence of the embargo is apparently impervious to the sustained chorus of international criticism and to the logic of a world that has changed immeasurably over the four and a half decades since the blockade was first imposed. The embargo has now outlived the cold war by 18 years. It has outlasted the terms of eight United States presidents and that of Cuban President Fidel Castro. Over 70 per cent of Cubans alive today were born under the embargo.

CARICOM considers the embargo to be an anachronism that has succeeded only in contributing to the suffering of generations of ordinary Cubans and unnecessarily increased tensions between the United States and Cuba. It serves no justifiable legal, political or moral purpose in the twenty-first century.

The punitive embargo is of a particular concern to CARICOM, which shares a history, culture and brotherhood with the people of Cuba. Cuba is the most populous State of the Caribbean region and an integral part of the pan-Caribbean process. Caribbean ties with

Cuba have historical significance, cemented by years of active cooperation at various levels. The States members of CARICOM continue to maintain their close relations with Cuba through a wide range of programmes of cooperation in areas including trade, health care, infrastructure and human resource development. Our future regional development is in many ways reliant upon our collective advancement and progress. In that context, we view the embargo not just as a punitive act against Cuba, but as an impediment to our shared regional development.

This year's report of the Secretary-General (A/64/97) on the implementation of resolution 63/7, like previous reports on this matter, outlines responses from an overwhelming majority of Member States that share a common perspective on the continued unilateral embargo against Cuba. Indeed, the report demonstrates that the embargo even affects the manner in which organs and agencies of the United Nations system carry out their work in Cuba.

CARICOM States therefore reaffirm the position of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement in opposing such unilateral actions, and we maintain the position that constructive engagement and peaceful negotiations remain the only acceptable means of advancing long-term peace and stability.

The significance of the embargo on the Cuban economy continues to be of great concern to CARICOM, and its humanitarian impact on the people of Cuba, especially in the area of health care and food, is especially saddening. The inability of Cuba to acquire necessary medical equipment, spare parts and the latest-generation medications because of the embargo continues to affect the health-care system, whereby treatment remains free of charge to the Cuban people.

With the strengthened and more frequent storms and hurricanes brought by climate change and Cuba's geographical susceptibility to these natural disasters, the unacceptable humanitarian impact of the embargo is becoming even more acute. Additionally, Cuba's access to construction materials and heavy equipment is becoming increasingly impossible because of the stringent rules on origins and restrictions against corporations based outside of the United States.

The negative effects on the Cuban economy and its growth are obvious and tangible. The embargo has now cost Cuba almost \$100 billion since its 1962

imposition. It is remarkable that even as Cuba struggles with the recent unfortunate string of natural disasters and the impact of the global economic crisis, it continues to assist other nations in the developing world, starting with its immediate Caribbean neighbours. Thousands of CARICOM students have attended Cuban universities without charge, thousands have received free surgeries and medical assistance in Cuba, and thousands more have been treated in their home countries by Cuban doctors and nurses.

We have benefited from technical expertise, capacity-building programmes, infrastructure assistance and the selfless generosity of the Cuban people. The people of Cuba have threatened no one, and neither the embargo nor its deleterious side effects have prevented them from continuing to extend a hand of friendship and solidarity, even across ideological divides.

Given Cuba's peaceful, generous and cooperative international stance, it should not be isolated or excluded from participation in regional and hemispheric processes. CARICOM reiterates its unwavering support for the right of the Cuban people to self-determination in a manner beneficial to their social and economic development. We call once again for the end to an embargo that has preserved a state of tension between two neighbouring countries and generated concern, disquiet and discomfort throughout the Caribbean.

States continue to enjoy friendly relations with both Cuba and the United States. These two neighbours — a mere 90 miles apart — have produced great scholars, scientists and global leaders. The two countries possess proud and noble histories and are populated by friendly, open and loving peoples. As such and in spite of a long history of dashed hopes, CARICOM continues to believe that a new beginning is possible in the relationship between the Governments of Cuba and the United States. However, we consider the lifting of the embargo to be a prerequisite of any meaningful rapprochement between the two countries, not a negotiated end result.

While there have been some recent positive indications of flexibility, there have also been reminders of unilateral rigidity. For example, CARICOM notes with regret that the United States Trading with the Enemy Act — an Act that lists only Cuba as its target — was renewed as recently as last month. Indeed, recent diplomatic activity only serves

to highlight the undeniable fact that the embargo remains firmly in place and that its imposition is a continued violation of international law and norms.

We are optimistic that the recent recommitment by the United States to multilateralism will result in an increased willingness to consider the opinions and concerns of its global friends and partners. On this issue, global opinion can hardly be conveyed in a more convincing or consistent manner. As such, our faith in the recent pronouncements of the United States Government carries with it an expectation that these few remaining historical and unilateral wrongs will be righted expeditiously. It is within this context that CARICOM States unstintingly support the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States of America against Cuba.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to welcome the presence among us of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

For the eighteenth consecutive year, the Mexican Government is taking the floor to reiterate once again its rejection of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and to restate its opposition to the use of coercive actions that have no legal basis in the United Nations Charter. Mexico underlines that such national measures, when applied extraterritorially to third countries, have severe humanitarian consequences that are contrary to international law and reflect a repudiation of dialogue and diplomacy as the proper means to solve disputes among States.

As we have done since 1992, when the Cuban Government first introduced a draft resolution to the General Assembly calling for an end to the embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America, Mexico takes the floor to reiterate its historical principled position that any political, economic or military sanction imposed upon any State must derive only from decisions or recommendations issued by the Security Council or the General Assembly. Multilateralism, respect for international law and the rules and principles that govern coexistence among nations, and respectful dialogue remain the best way to resolve disputes and to ensure peaceful coexistence among States and an international climate of peace.

Various United Nations organs and entities recognize the negative impact the embargo has on the economic and social development of Cuba, with significant damage to its economic, commercial and financial dealings. The embargo has also had a negative impact on sensitive sectors that touch directly on the everyday lives of the Cuban people, as well as indirect consequences on third countries prevented from interacting with Cuba in many economic and social activities. The vociferous outcry of the international community against such action reminds us that political, economic or military sanctions imposed on States must not be the result of unilateral decisions. Rather, they must always result from measures adopted by the appropriate bodies of this Organization, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law.

In that respect, on 23 October 1996 the Mexican Government enacted a law to protect trade and investments from foreign regulations that contravene international law. The law prohibits activities that affect trade or investment when such activities are a consequence of the extraterritorial effects of foreign legislation. Mexico has supported all initiatives against the embargo and unilateral actions here at the United Nations, in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and in other forums, such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, the Ibero-American Summit and the Rio Group. We have also promoted opportunities for cooperation and respectful dialogue based on the fact that the United States embargo against Cuba reflects a policy that has weighed upon the Cuban population in a silent, systematic and cumulative way for almost half a century.

In this context, in addition to opposing the economic, political and diplomatic isolation of Cuba, Mexico has supported, at the Cuban Government's request, Cuba's membership in all regional mechanisms of integration in order to promote economic and trade exchanges, as well as cooperation and development. In this regard, I wish to underscore the support our Government offered for Cuba's full membership of the Rio Group in November 2008 in Zacatecas, Mexico, with the full support of States members of that organization.

That historic moment contributed to cooperation and exchanges to promote development and strengthen

multilateralism and Latin American unity. It also prefigured the historic decision of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, adopted by acclamation on 3 June 2009, revoking resolution VI of 31 January 1962, which excluded the Government of Cuba from participating in the inter-American system. The new decision establishes that Cuba's participation in the OAS will be the result of a process of dialogue and in accordance with the practices, purposes and principles of the OAS.

Mexico considers that the facts we have outlined demonstrate that exclusion, far from resolving disputes, amplifies them to negative effect. We therefore reiterate our support for the inclusion of Cuba in mechanisms of dialogue and global economic, commercial and financial activity, pursuant to its own sovereign will and decisions. In this regard, Mexico welcomes the measure taken by the United States Government to allow the flow of remittances and Cuban-Americans between Cuba and the United States. While those measures may modestly contribute to improving the prevailing environment, Mexico feels that much remains to be done to truly and substantially mitigate the negative effects of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

The Mexican Government bases its bilateral and multilateral relations on the principles of international law that regulate peaceful and civilized coexistence among sovereign States in the modern world. Those principles have preserved solidarity and continuity in relations between Mexico and Cuba. We have maintained unbreakable historical ties supported by a climate of renewed confidence, and consistently observed the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular peaceful coexistence, respect for sovereignty and sovereign equality among States, and non-interference in internal affairs.

Based on our own experience, we are aware that societies evolve and change according to their own circumstances, and not as a result of arbitrary and coercive measures imposed from the outside. In light of that, the Government of Mexico reiterates its firm commitment to actively and decisively contribute to effective international law in regard to this item on the agenda of the General Assembly, and will support the draft resolution on this issue that has been introduced at the present session.

Mr. Zhang Yesui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the report submitted by the Secretary-General on this agenda item (A/64/97) and supports the statement made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

China pursues an independent foreign policy of peace and is committed to developing friendly relations with all countries on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence. We are of the view that every sovereign State is entitled to independently choose its own suitable social system and path of development. No country has the right to unilaterally impose military, political, economic or other forms of sanctions on other countries. Experience shows that sanctions usually fail to achieve their expected results; on the contrary, they may end up victimizing civilians, not least of all the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

For 17 consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions by an overwhelming majority, urging all countries, in compliance with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law, to repeal or invalidate all laws and measures with extraterritorial effect that compromise the sovereignty of other States, undermine the legitimate rights and interests of entities and individuals under the jurisdiction of those States, and affect freedom of trade and navigation.

Regrettably, however, those resolutions have not been effectively implemented over the years, and the long-term economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba imposed by the country concerned is still in place. This not only constitutes a serious violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter, but also seriously undermines the Cuban people's rights to survival and development.

As the Secretary-General describes in his report, by December 2008, the embargo had inflicted direct economic damage on Cuba totalling over \$96 billion, immeasurably constraining the efforts of the Cuban people to eradicate poverty, promote economic and social development, and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The international community is now faced with the serious challenges of the global financial, food, and energy crises, as well as climate change, which makes the embargo and sanctions against Cuba all the more unreasonable. We have noted that, in April this year,

the United States Government lifted travel and remittance restrictions on Cuban-Americans. We welcome this move and hope that the United States will continue to improve its relations with Cuba and promote normal exchanges between the peoples of the two countries.

In today's world, multilateralism and democratization of international relations strike a chord in people's hearts, while openness, cooperation, mutual respect and win-win progress have become the consensus of the international community. When disputes arise, dialogue on equal footing and in the spirit of friendly consultation is the best way to achieve progress.

The Chinese Government has always maintained that countries should develop their relations in compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. It is always our hope that there will be dialogue rather than confrontation, and engagement and exchanges rather than embargo and sanctions in State-to-State relations. The Chinese Government therefore demands that the country concerned terminate as soon as possible its economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

In this connection, China supports the draft resolution submitted by Cuba under the current agenda item.

Mr. Vyas (India): At the outset I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/64/97) on the agenda item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Chair of the Group of 77.

For the past 17 consecutive years, the General Assembly, while deliberating this agenda item, has categorically and overwhelmingly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact.

The General Assembly has also called upon all States, in compliance with their obligations under the Charter and the principles of international law, to refrain from promulgating and applying, as well as repealing and invalidating laws and measures that have extraterritorial effects on the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons

under their jurisdiction and on the freedom of trade and navigation.

Unfortunately, those repeated resolutions remain unimplemented. The nearly five-decade-old United States embargo on Cuba, including its extraterritorial aspects, continues to remain in force. We share the views expressed by the international community in its opposition to the extraterritorial aspect of the embargo.

In the report of the Secretary-General, various United Nations entities have detailed the impact of the embargo, particularly its extraterritorial effects. For example, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Havana has noted that humanitarian and development cooperation implemented by the United Nations system in Cuba is significantly affected by the embargo. The embargo also adversely impacts the functioning of United Nations offices, including travel for United Nations staff.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has stated that the effects of the embargo can be observed in all spheres of Cuba's social and economic activities, as well as in its effect on the most vulnerable groups and on human development in general. It highlights the negative consequences of the embargo on UNDP's development coordination activities, including an average increase of 15 per cent in project cost.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development refers to the attendant costs of the embargo, both for Cuba and for citizens in third countries, due to its extraterritorial application. The United Nations Population Fund states that the impact of the embargo on some of its programmes was felt especially hard. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has stated that the embargo adversely affects the standard of living of Cuban citizens. The health sector has been among those affected, on account of enhanced costs and restrictions on equipment and technologies. Thus, the embargo has also had an indirect extraterritorial impact on Cuba's efforts at South-South cooperation in this field. Moreover, the natural disasters suffered by Cuba last year and the ongoing financial and economic crisis have made the impact of the embargo more acute.

Given their geography, Cuba and the United States of America could be expected to be natural partners in trade and investment. While the embargo has not permitted this, the potential for economic and

commercial ties between the two countries clearly exists. For example, by taking advantage of limited openings under the United States Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, the United States has become the largest exporter of agricultural products to Cuba. The United States International Trade Commission itself estimates that this would rise sharply if restrictions were lifted, which underscores the negative impact of the embargo on United States trade and business opportunities. Various efforts in the United States to relax or lift the embargo indicate that there is substantial interest, in particular in the business sector, in unhindered access to the Cuban market or in having contact with Cuba.

We are encouraged by the steps announced by the current United States Administration earlier this year to reduce restrictions on travel and on the sending of remittances to Cuba by Cuban-Americans and on United States telecommunications services. We look forward to the full lifting of sanctions and embargo against Cuba.

In conclusion, I reiterate India's opposition to countries taking unilateral measures that impinge on the sovereignty of another country, including attempts to extend the application of one country's laws extraterritorially to other sovereign nations.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): The delegation of Viet Nam fully aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Group of 77 and China. I welcome the participation of His Excellency, Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, in this important meeting of the General Assembly.

For 17 consecutive years, at each and every session, the General Assembly has demanded an end to the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Annual resolutions on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba have won increasingly broad support and have been adopted with virtual unanimity.

The embargo unilaterally imposed by the United States of America against Cuba constitutes a serious violation of international law, including of international laws relating to the freedom of trade and navigation, sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. This runs counter to the

universally recognized norms governing relations between sovereign countries regardless of their political systems and their chosen paths of development, as well as to the fundamental principles, purposes and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

Apart from causing losses worth billions of dollars to the Cuban economy, the embargo has, for the past year, continued to inflict considerable hardships on the Cuban people, in particular on women and children, making it extremely difficult for them to fully recover from a series of destructive natural disasters, let alone attain success in their efforts towards socio-economic development, national reconstruction and implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The embargo has also hurt those wishing to develop legitimate, normal and mutually beneficial economic, financial and trade relations with Cuba, including a large number of American businesses and individuals.

We concur with President Obama of the United States when he eloquently declared at the opening of the general debate of the current General Assembly that

“Democracy cannot be imposed on any nation from the outside. Each society must search for its own path, and no path is perfect. Each country will pursue a path rooted in the culture of its people and in its past traditions”. (A/64/PV.3)

Disputes among States should and can only be resolved through peaceful dialogue and negotiations on the basis of equality, mutual respect for each other's independence and sovereignty and the principle of the non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We join the majority of Member States in demanding that the Government of the United States of America put an end to the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba in order to ease the hardships and difficulties unduly inflicted upon the people of Cuba, reduce tension and create an atmosphere conducive to constructive efforts towards a normalization of the relations between the two countries in the interests of the peace, stability and development of the whole region.

Viet Nam reaffirms its support for and solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba and stands ready, together with the international community, to

continue assisting them to overcome the consequences of this embargo. In that spirit, Viet Nam will vote in favour of draft resolution A/64/L.4, submitted by Cuba.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): For yet another year, we are assembled here to address the issue of ending the economic embargo imposed on Cuba since 1962. In addressing this matter, Indonesia aligns its views with those expressed by the distinguished representative of the Sudan, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the distinguished representative of Egypt, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Conventional wisdom dictates that geographic proximity between the two countries should be a strong reason for close bilateral relations. Relations among States — any States — will be constantly tested by waves of change. States will always face the challenge of maintaining a delicate balance between cooperation and competition. Actions by States are naturally guided by their own national interests, restrained by international norms and standards.

Thus, differences will always remain between and among countries, and tensions could always arise between nations. But that should not prevent any movement towards creating a space for cooperation, a space that allows the two States, the two peoples and the business communities to seek and establish a common ground where both sides can benefit, grow and nurture the tree of friendship, mutual respect and cooperation.

For this reason, it is pertinent to highlight the spirit of global partnership required for development, as set out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Such commitments, made at the highest level, urged countries to cooperate, to set aside differences and to work for the common good of billions of people.

The current global economic crisis, ongoing climate change and the energy and food crises have severely curtailed efforts by Cuba to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The United States can bring much-needed assistance by lifting its policy of embargo. In that regard we would like to reiterate the call made by heads of State and Government at the fifteenth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, in Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, for an immediate end to that embargo in the name of humanity. That would help Cuba, a developing country, to continue efforts to

eradicate poverty and hunger from its midst and bring hope of prosperity to millions of Cubans.

Clearly, there is much to gain by cooperation and less to gain by confrontation. From that perspective, Indonesia believes that dialogue and negotiation offer the most viable solution for resolving existing disagreements. The United Nations Charter clearly stipulates its preference for that avenue towards peace.

This issue has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for many years, but tangible results are yet to be seen. Forty-seven years have passed, yet there have been only tortoise-like movements without major positive results. Year after year, through its resolutions the General Assembly has urged the two countries to dismantle the barriers that sustain unhealthy relations between them.

This year we have reason to be optimistic. Steps are being taken towards normalizing relations, and there are encouraging signs to confirm that. That is truly one essential step, and it merits our support. We stress our hope that the once-icy relations between these two neighbours will end and a new era of cooperation and engagement will blossom in the years to come. The ending of the economic, commercial and financial blockade cannot come too soon. We support the draft resolution on this agenda item.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Permit me first to welcome among us the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. We endorse the statements made by the Sudan and Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement respectively.

More than half a century after its unilateral imposition, the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States of America against Cuba is still in place. We are meeting today for the seventeenth consecutive year to restate the appeal of the General Assembly and the unceasing call of the international community for an end to that blockade, which is unjust and contrary to international law and international legitimacy. At a time when the values of cooperation, dialogue, solidarity and mutual assistance are more established than ever as the general trend in international relations, that blockade is an anomaly and runs counter to global developments.

Algeria reiterates its appeal for the lifting of the trade, economic and financial blockade that Cuba is facing. It violates the principles of the sovereign

equality of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of another State and is an obstacle to the Cuban people's right to development.

Extraterritorial legislation by a State that is aimed at imposing unilateral sanctions is a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter and the rules of international relations. Apart from the fact that it violates the relevant provisions of the Charter, that attitude calls into question freedom of trade, navigation and movement of capital, which substantially hampers the economic development of Cuba and its people. Algeria states its profound concern as to the grave consequences of the blockade, which are as unjust as they are illegal.

Algeria reiterates its firm support for the position adopted by the Fifteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, the decisions adopted at the Second South Summit, held in June 2005, and all declarations that have rejected the coercive economic measures and extraterritorial laws imposed on developing countries and demanded that the United States of America lift the blockade imposed on Cuba.

Algeria reiterates its appeal to the United States to lift the blockade, which has constantly been rejected by an increasing number of countries year after year, to the point where today it is nearly unanimously denounced.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): South Africa continues to support the resolution before us, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". We do so because that relentless and unilateral action against Cuba has caused untold suffering to her people.

The unity with which the international community has reacted in condemnation of the embargo, with a record vote of 185 to 3 in 2008, is testimony that the time has come for it to be lifted and thereby end the suffering of the Cuban civilian population, who are carrying the brunt of that injustice.

The time to end the embargo is long overdue. South Africa is guided by the basic norms of international law and conduct in its principled support for the need to eliminate coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion.

We similarly recognize the sovereignty of States to develop national legislation. However, when such

legislation takes on an extraterritorial reach, as is the case with the legislation that has been directed towards Cuba, the outcome of such action impacts on the very *raison d'être* for the existence of this Organization — the United Nations.

South Africa views the continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo as a violation of the principles of the sovereign equality of States. South Africa has thus repeatedly joined the majority of countries in expressing its disagreement with and opposition to the embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Throughout the period of this embargo, the Cuban people have extended a hand of friendship and solidarity to other peoples around the world. Cuba's outstanding work in the areas of health, education and biotechnology in many developing countries and the world in general is recognized by the international community. Cuba's contributions to supporting struggles for self-determination, freedom and justice around the world are also noted. South Africa continues to recognize Cuba's contribution to our own freedom and democracy. The role that Cuba played in South Africa's liberation history in solidarity with our people was celebrated last year during the twentieth anniversary of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, which was a decisive turning point in the struggle against apartheid and opened the doors for the liberation of South Africa.

In November this year, Cuba will host the sixth session of the Joint Bilateral Commission with South Africa. Through this cooperative mechanism, the Governments of South Africa and Cuba strive to expand the already sound relations in various areas of cooperation. Through the bilateral cooperation projects in the context of the Joint Bilateral Commission, Cuba is greatly assisting South Africa to address its skills-shortage problems through the provision of professional workers and trainers in myriad areas.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba is an obstacle to the economic and social development of the country. It is therefore incumbent on all of us, as equal Members of the United Nations, to urge adherence to the principles of our Charter. While international best practice nudges States towards engaging in robust trade and investment within a globalized economy, it is unacceptable that

Cuba is prevented from reintegrating into the world trading system.

The United Nations prides itself in rendering much-needed humanitarian assistance to those Member States that are afflicted by natural disasters or conflicts. We must continue to ensure that that track record of being responsive to humanitarian need is not tainted in any way, especially by denying the Cuban people access to affordable medical goods and services because of an embargo that, it is claimed, is enforced for their own good.

The extremely harsh global economic and financial climate only worsens the fate of the Cuban people. The international community should therefore take steps to free the Cuban people from the embargo.

While we welcome the positive rapprochement initiated by the current United States Administration and encourage it to continue on that path, we call on the United States to end its unilateral isolation of Cuba. We encourage the United States to engage in a meaningful dialogue with Cuba in order to accelerate the dismantling of those unjust sanctions against Cuba and its people.

South Africa will join the majority in this Assembly in supporting the draft resolution before us today. South Africa wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia): My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. President, for providing the opportunity to participate in this important debate. I wish to begin by associating myself with the statements by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Zambia commends the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/64/97, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", which provides useful information.

My Government believes that the continuation of the embargo is a violation of international law as contained in international covenants. It is for that reason that this body has in the past called on the United States of America to reconsider its position. The actions of Member States on this resolution have

consistently demonstrated the clear conflict of the embargo with the tenets of the conduct of international relationships. Accordingly, I wish to reaffirm my Government's position that lifting the embargo will be the best way forward. Against this background, my delegation continues to regard the extraterritorial effects of the embargo on third countries as further worsening the already desperate socio-economic conditions in Cuba.

It is our conviction that discussions on the agenda item before us should not end up as mere formalities but should result in measures that can be implemented. It is the expectation of the Cuban people on this, the fiftieth anniversary of the embargo, that through this Assembly the international community should send them a strong message that it is concerned by their plight; that together, the United Nations stands on high ground to induce the lifting of the embargo.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm the continued support of the Zambian Government for the call to bring to an end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. In the light of the foregoing, my delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/64/L.4, calling for the lifting of the embargo.

Mr. Valero Briceño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela supports the statements made in the General Assembly on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Group of 77 and China on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, committed to the values of humanism and solidarity among peoples, condemns the application of any unilateral measure of an extraterritorial nature that violates the norms and principles of international law. The blockade against Cuba breaches the principles of self-determination and sovereignty of peoples and States. It is a repeated refusal by a country signatory of the Charter of the United Nations of another Member State's right to development — in this case, the heroic Republic of Cuba. That policy represents a systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people. It also violates the constitutional rights of the people of the United States, including the freedom to travel to Cuba.

The embargo against the heroic Cuban people is the longest, cruelest and most unfair in the history of humanity. It is the main obstacle for the economic and social development of Cuba. The impact on the economy is astronomical. It is equivalent to double the expenditures of the United States in implementing the Marshall Plan in the years after the Second World War. The embargo against Cuba can be classified as genocide, given what is set out in paragraph (c) of Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It is also an act of economic warfare, according to the Declaration concerning the Laws of Naval War approved by the London Naval Conference.

There is no historical precedent for the Cuba embargo. No country, not even those considered sworn enemies of the United States, has been the object of such criminal measures. The embargo violates the rules of the international systems of commerce and navigation; it has an impact on the legitimate interests of any sovereign State that wishes to become a partner of Cuba. The extraterritorial application of United States laws, together with the hostility to the legitimate interests of companies and citizens of third-party countries, is an issue of concern to the entire international community. It represents a threat to world peace and an outright attack on the self-determination and sovereignty of peoples and States.

The embargo against Cuba has also affected the Venezuelan people and other peoples of the world, especially those of the Caribbean, as was expressed here by the delegation of the Caribbean Community. In the case of Venezuela, we should point out that the United States Government recently refused to grant permission to a transnational company to carry out a business transaction with Cuba involving the sale of defibrillators to Venezuela to address heart disease, one of the leading causes of death in our countries.

There are great expectations of President Barack Obama's Government, but there is no evidence to suggest that the Cuba embargo will be lifted, since all the laws and administrative provisions that underpin it are still in place. Vice-President Joseph Biden has said, and no one has denied, that the United States Government will maintain the blockade against Cuba as a "pressure tool". The half-hearted measures adopted so far do not alter the legal framework on which the embargo and its continued application rest. The political, administrative and repressive

mechanisms that guarantee thorough implementation of the embargo remain intact.

President Barack Obama received this year's Nobel Peace Prize. To meet the expectations raised around the world his Government should pay close attention, among the most important issues, to the call of this Assembly, repeated every year, to lift the blockade against the heroic people of Cuba, the heroic republic under the leadership of Comandante Fidel Castro. This is an emblematic issue, and that is why the President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías, has called on the President of the United States to end the blockade and prove that, in the words of President Chávez, he "is worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize".

The United States has systematically refused to comply with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations demanding that the embargo against the Cuban people be lifted. How long will this inhuman policy, rejected all over the world, continue? What can the General Assembly — the most representative body of the United Nations — do in light of such stubborn non-compliance?

For all of these reasons, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela again votes in support of the resolution demanding the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Mr. Sin Son Ho (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba has been in place for 50 years, in spite of strong demands by an absolute majority of Member States of the United Nations. The embargo, which has been enforced unilaterally by the United States under the pretext of accelerating a democratic transition in Cuba, is aimed at overthrowing the social system selected by the Government and people of Cuba. That constitutes a grave violation of principles, such as respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs that are enshrined in the United Nations Charter and international law.

Cuba has already suffered losses of hundreds of billions of dollars in various areas of its economy because of the cruel embargo imposed by the United States, which has also had a severe impact on the social life and well-being of the Cuban people. The embargo,

a silent economic war against the people of Cuba, is an illegal and inhumane act that has no justification at all, politically, legally or morally. No coercive measure of a unilateral and extraterritorial nature, devised in order to pursue sinister political purposes and to impose a political, economic and social system based on one country's own perspective, can ever be justified or tolerated in any way.

For the last 17 years, therefore, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions rejecting and calling for an immediate end to the United States unilateral embargo against Cuba, with the overwhelming support of Member States, barring a very few countries, including the United States. We also remind the Assembly that the heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed their rejection of, and urged an immediate end to, the United States embargo against Cuba at the Movement's fifteenth Summit Conference, held in July 2009 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

There have been some media reports on probable change in United States policy towards Cuba since the Obama Administration took office, but in fact there has been no change in their policy of maintaining the embargo as a tool to put pressure on Cuba. If it is genuinely willing to improve relations and to coexist with Cuba and every other nation, the United States should take substantial measures to move away from the outdated mentality of the cold-war era and conform with the expectations of people throughout the world.

It is the consistent position of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to oppose all forms of interference, threat of the use of force and sanctions against sovereign States.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic strongly urges the United States Government to immediately and unconditionally end the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, comply with all relevant General Assembly resolutions and compensate Cuba for the economic losses that have resulted from the embargo.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fully supports the adoption of the draft resolution on ending the embargo against Cuba and extends its firm support to and solidarity with the just cause of the Government and people of Cuba for defending their national sovereignty and achieving

economic development, social progress and prosperity of their nation.

Mrs. Waffa-Ogoo (Gambia): Mr. President, I wish to thank you for convening this debate on agenda item 19, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". The report of the Secretary-General (A/64/97) amply documents the devastation caused by the continued imposition of the embargo against Cuba.

In his remarks to this body at the 2009 general debate, His Excellency Al Hadji Yahya Jammeh said,

"My delegation ... calls on the United Nations to urge the United States of America to immediately and unconditionally lift its embargo on Cuba, in accordance with the wishes of more than 98 per cent of the membership of this body. That trade embargo continues to hurt Cuban women and children. The Cuban children born into those extreme hardships have committed no crime. The punishment of women and children because of political differences is a very serious violation of their rights." (A/64/PV.6, pp. 29-30)

UNICEF's contribution to the Secretary-General's report makes it clear that even children with special needs are not spared the impact of the embargo.

My delegation therefore joins the overwhelming majority of the Member States in the Assembly in calling for an immediate end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. For 18 consecutive years, the General Assembly, reflecting the voice and moral authority of the people of this world, has rejected the embargo as contrary to international law.

The harm that the embargo has inflicted on the Cuban people is incalculable in terms of human suffering and deprivation of essential commodities. Almost every sector of Cuban society is affected by the punitive reach of extraterritorial application of the embargo. The loss and damage to the Cuban economy, health, education, tourism, culture and many other areas is well documented in the Secretary-General's report.

The Gambia has consistently opposed the embargo and is of the firm belief that its continued application serves no other purpose than to punish the Cuban people and Government for their political

stance. Let us remind ourselves once again that we are in the twenty-first century and that the best way to solve our problems is through dialogue and multilateralism.

To paraphrase President Barack Obama, we call on the United States to embrace a new era of engagement with Cuba based on mutual interest and mutual respect, in order to build a new coalition that bridges all divides. We call on the United States Government to take a serious look at this year's draft resolution (A/64/L.4) and honour its demands. My delegation believes that the time has come for the United States to open a new chapter in its bilateral relations with Cuba, beginning with the immediate dismantling of the sanctions regime.

It is in the interest of the United States, Cuba and the international community to see an end to this extraterritorial regime. It is our hope that this year's draft resolution will usher in a new era of cooperation, dialogue and mutual respect and ultimately lead to the immediate and unconditional lifting of the embargo.

Mr. Savostianov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation would first and foremost like to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report contained in document A/64/97. The report presents the opinions of the Member States that have unanimously expressed their disagreement with and objections to the introduction of the unilateral and extraterritorial economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba.

Russia's position of principle in respect of the resolution on this issue is well known. Our country wholeheartedly shares the opinion of the overwhelming majority of members of the international community in resolutely condemning the American blockade of Cuba and calling for its swift lifting. We are convinced that ending the anti-Cuban embargo and normalizing American-Cuban relations as a whole will contribute to redressing the situation with respect to Cuba and to its further reintegration into continent-wide structures.

We consider that the maintenance of the economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba is counterproductive and anachronistic, inconsistent with today's realities. We welcome the April decision of Barack Obama's Administration to lift a number of restrictions on visits to Cuba by United States citizens who have relatives there and on monetary and postal

transfers to Cubans from the United States. We trust that other actions to improve relations between the two countries will follow, ultimately leading to the full end of the long-obsolete economic and commercial embargo against Cuba.

For the time being, we feel that it is necessary to continue our policy of supporting the draft resolution demanding the lifting of the blockade, guided by the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations on the inadmissibility of any discriminatory measures or interference in the internal affairs of States.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report submitted under agenda item 19, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/64/97).

My delegation also associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The adoption of resolution 63/7 — the most recent in a long chain of resolutions that the Assembly has adopted on this subject with such strong support — clearly indicates the strong objection of the international community to unilateral economic coercive measures in general and to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba in particular.

Resorting to an embargo as a tool to attain political objectives seriously undermines the collective efforts of Member States to achieve economic growth and sustainable development at the national, regional and international levels. Therefore, these consecutive resolutions, which call on all States to refrain from applying such laws and measures and to take necessary steps to repeal or invalidate them, are wise and laudable reactions by the international community to such unacceptable measures.

Nevertheless, we are deeply concerned that, despite so many appeals contained in resolutions of the General Assembly and recommendations adopted by the Human Rights Council and at several major United Nations conferences, unilateral coercive measures, with all their negative implications, continue to be imposed and implemented.

It is worth recalling paragraph 102 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which clearly urges Member States to take steps with a view to avoid and refrain from any unilateral measure that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the people of the affected countries.

My delegation reiterates its long-standing position that the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba runs counter to the principles of international law governing relations among States and contradicts the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, we strongly reject the implementation of unilateral economic and trade measures by one State against another that affect the free flow of international trade and financial resources. We further denounce the extraterritorial application of national legislation to other States.

Indeed, such measures continue to adversely impact the living conditions and human rights of the Cuban people and to hamper the efforts of the Cuban Government in eradicating poverty and hunger, promoting health and education — indispensable elements of economic and social development — and achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, along with many other States Members of the United Nations, emphasizes the urgent need for an immediate end to such measures and for the full implementation of all relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like at the outset to welcome the presence among us of Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

The commercial and financial embargo against Cuba is an issue that has occupied us for nearly 50 years. Last year saw the most impressive display of support for the traditional resolution on this subject. Let us hope that we can celebrate the long-awaited international consensus that would enable us to settle this unresolved item on the agenda of our Organization. Let us hope that we can keep pace with history, which has already consigned to the grave so many other anachronisms of the cold war era. Let us hope that we can overcome one of the last obstacles preventing us from finally entering the twenty-first century, free of the constraints of an international order

whose elements of conflict we do not wish to pass on to future generations.

We have grounds for optimism. Last year, the winds of change finally began to blow. The first tangible movement was Cuba's full integration into the Rio Group as a result of a presidential decision late in 2008. The presence of that brotherly nation in a mechanism for building political consensus will be valuable in continuing to build a common destiny. The next step occurred at the Summit of the Americas held in Puerto España in April this year, when the possibility arose of achieving the full reintegration of the inter-American family of nations in our hemisphere. In June, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), meeting in the city of San Pedro Sula, took the historic decision to declare resolution VI, adopted in 1962, by which the Government of Cuba had been excluded from the inter-American system, without effect.

The progress of the past year brought us a little closer to the ideals of the OAS charter, based on the principles of solidarity and good-neighbourliness. In addition, it expressed the aspiration of our peoples to a tolerant regionalism based on progress and prosperity for all, independence, the sovereign equality of States and respect for the law. Those principles assume universal scope at the United Nations and require firm commitment to multilateralism.

Some early progress has been made over the past year in the relaxing of the embargo. We are following with the greatest interest and welcome the decisions taken to reduce the restrictions imposed on the travel of individuals with relatives in Cuba, to raise the caps on financial remittances and to facilitate the mailing of parcels. The resumption of bilateral dialogue between the United States and the Government of Cuba on migration issues and the more open parameters for the participation of telecommunications companies in Cuba are also positive.

Notwithstanding the recent progress, or perhaps precisely because of it, the commercial and financial embargo against Cuba seems increasingly irrational and anachronistic, in addition to being harmful to the interests of the international community. The truth is that nothing less than an unequivocal, swift and decisive end to the embargo will bring us back into line with the realities of the new century in which we live.

From this very rostrum, President Lula has affirmed that we must exert our political will to overcome situations that militate against peace, development and democracy. An end to the embargo would contribute decisively to that end.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.4.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Alexis García Iribar was born in Cuba, in the province of Guantánamo, with congenital cardiopathy. At the age of six, after successive deferrals and with complications, he had to undergo open-heart surgery on 9 March 2009 because the Government of the United States prohibits the North American companies NuMED, AGA Medical Corporation and Boston Scientific from selling Cuba the Amplatzer and embolization coil devices for paediatric catheterization that can replace surgery. I could mention another 12 cases of children between the ages of five months and 13 years, all of whom have undergone a similar procedure in the past year and a half, two since 20 January.

Cuban children suffering from acute lymphoblastic leukaemia who reject the usual medicines cannot be treated with the North American product Elspar, made specifically for cases of intolerance. Consequently, their life expectancy is reduced and their suffering increases. The North American Government prohibits the company Merck from supplying it to Cuba. Cuba has been unable to obtain the genetic analyser equipment needed to study the cause of breast, colon and prostate cancer, which is manufactured by the North American company Applied Biosystems. Lactalis USA, a supplier of dairy products, was fined \$20,000 by the North American Government.

Since President Obama's election, there has been no change in the application of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba. It remains intact. It continues to be an absurd policy that causes scarcities and suffering. It is a mass, flagrant and systematic violation of human rights. Under the 1948 Geneva Convention, it could be classified as an act of genocide. It is ethically unacceptable.

The blockade is an arrogant and ignorant act. Recently, the North American Government prevented

the New York Philharmonic Orchestra from performing in Cuba. Cuban artists cannot be paid for their performances before the North American public. How can artistic creation be considered a crime? Microsoft blocked Cuba's access to Windows Live because, as can be read after opening that tool, that is what happens to users from countries under United States embargo. The same happens with the web pages of Cisco Systems, SolidWorks and Symantec. The blockade limits Cuba's bandwidth and connectivity. It prevents our connection to the submarine fibre-optic cables that pass near our coasts. Why does the United States Government hinder the free flow of information and access to new technologies?

However, such inhumane prohibitions, inappropriate in this age, are applied not only against Cuba, but also against other countries represented here. Philips Medical Systems failed to fulfil the contracted supply of spare parts for medical equipment, bought at a cost of \$72 million and installed in Cuba and in Venezuela. Moreover, it was fined \$200,000. It is a Netherlands company, against which the United States Government applied the blockade extraterritorially.

Hitachi stated that it cannot sell Cuba an electronic transmission microscope, essential for pathological anatomy studies, while Toshiba said the same about a gamma chamber and magnetic resonance and high-precision ultrasound equipment. They are Japanese companies against which the United States also applies the blockade. The North American Government forbade the food company Sensient Flavors from exporting to Cuba, although it is a subsidiary registered and based in Canada.

Siemens, a German company, refused to sell us a 125-megawatt transformer owing, it said, to its obligation to follow certain United States rules. One of its subsidiaries based in Denmark could not supply equipment for a cement factory in Cuba under the North American ban. The Australia & New Zealand Bank Group, headquartered in Australia, was fined millions for doing business with Cuba. Some 1,941 vessels that moored in Cuban ports between July 2008 and July 2009 were banned from entering North American ports for 180 days. There are many other examples cited in the Secretary-General's report (A/64/97), which includes Cuba's reply.

The United States representatives lie when they assert that the blockade is a bilateral issue. The

extraterritorial application of blockade laws, such as the Helms-Burton and Torricelli Acts, against States represented here is a serious violation of international law, the United Nations Charter and freedom of trade and navigation. Recently, blockade measures have been applied against at least 56 countries. It is up to the General Assembly to deal with this matter.

According to recent polls of institutions of that country, 76 per cent of North Americans oppose the blockade. It is antidemocratic to disregard the wish for change and to maintain the blockade. In a time of unemployment and economic crisis, United States businesses are banned from the Cuban market and prohibited from investing in Cuba. International companies face no North American competition in Cuba because the United States Government forbids it.

What harm could there be in North Americans accessing Cuban products? Who would be hurt by the creation of new jobs in United States ports as a result of the development of normal trade relations between our countries? Why can North Americans not have access to the latest Cuban medicines for cancer or diabetes and the technologies to manufacture them, which are available in only Cuba? Why does the company Bacardi, which paid for the lobbying that led to the Helms-Burton Act, avoid competition and force North Americans to buy a poor imitation of Cuban rum at a higher price? Why should a Cuban cigar be inaccessible and exotic in that country?

The United States President seemed stuck in the past when, on 11 September, he extended the embargo for another year, citing the national interest of the United States, based on the Trade with the Enemy Act of 1917, which is applicable only to situations of war and enforced solely against Cuba. No serious person could maintain that Cuba is a threat to the national security of the only super-Power.

Our strength is that of law, truth and reason. The inclusion of Cuba on the spurious list of alleged State sponsors of terrorism — the reason given for some of the blockade measures — should cease. Our five anti-terrorist heroes, who have been unjustly imprisoned in that country, should be freed now.

On 11 September 2001, Cuba opened its skies and airports so that any American plane could have somewhere to land. It offered plasma and health-care workers. Later on, it offered antibiotics and equipment to combat the anthrax threat and generously offered to

send doctors when Hurricane Katrina battered New Orleans.

Cuba is a hospitable nation that invites American citizens to visit, American intellectuals, scholars and scientists to engage in cooperation and fruitful debate, American artists to build bridges, and American companies to trade and invest.

A few days ago, we all applauded President Obama when he said from this rostrum, “international law is not an empty promise” and “no nation ... should try to dominate another nation” (A/64/PV.3).

The international community cannot and will not accept that those who govern in Washington, D.C., believe they have the authority to implement coercive economic measures and extraterritorial laws against sovereign States. President Obama has a historical opportunity to lead a change of policy towards Cuba and lift the blockade. He is even vested with executive powers that would allow him, right now and all by himself, to substantially modify the implementation of the blockade measures by granting general licences, dispensations or waivers, humanitarian exceptions or measures taken for reasons of national interest, without even modifying the laws that enforce such prohibitions.

President Obama righteously defied the egoism and callous nature of the conservative right when he told Congress,

“One man from Illinois lost his coverage in the middle of chemotherapy ... and he died because of it. Another woman from Texas was about to get a double mastectomy when her insurance company cancelled her policy”.

Anyone who could be troubled by this could not, without disregarding the most basic ethical standards, prevent Cuban children suffering from cancer or a heart condition from receiving medicine and medical equipment. To paraphrase Senator Kennedy when he referred to health reform, the blockade against Cuba is also a moral issue that puts to the test the character of the United States of America.

It is true that Cuba purchases significant quantities of agricultural products from the United States. However, the United States representatives lie when they say that the United States is Cuba’s trading partner but fail to mention that this trade does not conform to the standards established by the

international trade system. Cuba's payments are to be made in cash and in advance, without access to private credit. Cuban vessels are not allowed to transport cargo. Cuba is submitted to onerous and discriminatory procedures and endures endless manoeuvres aimed at confiscating shipments. We cannot call "trade" those operations that lack even the minimum reciprocity that would allow Cuba to export its products to the United States. A country imposing a blockade on another cannot be its trading partner.

The representatives of the United States Government lie shamelessly when they assert that the United States is the main donor of humanitarian assistance to Cuba. The data they use are false. They conflate, through fictitious and intentionally misleading figures, the value of alleged licences for transactions that never took place and the assistance that Cuban immigrants residing in the United States send, through no effort but their own, to their relatives. Successive United States administrations have persecuted and harassed non-governmental organizations that send humanitarian assistance to Cuba, and as a result, half of those organizations have stopped doing so.

A year ago, when Cuba was devastated by three hurricanes, which caused losses equivalent to 20 per cent of our gross domestic product, the Bush administration did not even respond to our request that American companies be allowed to sell to us, on an exceptional basis, construction material and tarpaulins to replace damaged roofs, and to grant us private credit.

At several meetings, United States representatives have referred to the steps that their Government has taken to dismantle the most brutal restrictions imposed by George W. Bush on travel by Cuban émigrés and on remittances to their relatives, as well as to resume bilateral talks on migration issues and re-establish direct postal services.

These actions are positive, but they are extremely limited and insufficient. The truth is that we have not even returned to a situation comparable to that which prevailed until the early days of 2004, when the United States allowed a certain level of academic, cultural, scientific and sporting exchange with Cuban counterparts. Such exchanges continue to be banned today.

Some vague proposals relating to telecommunications will simply be impracticable so

long as other restrictions that remain in force are not eliminated, and so long as the practice of stealing Cuban funds resulting from such transactions, which remain frozen in American banks on the basis of decisions adopted by venal judges in violation of their own laws, is not discontinued.

Since the right of United States residents of Cuban origin to travel to the island has been re-established, the absurdity of preventing American citizens from travelling to Cuba — the only place in the world forbidden to them — has been thrown into starker relief. American citizens, who pay taxes, are not free to travel to Cuba, despite the fact that the Constitution of that country allegedly guarantees that right. American citizens are not allowed to receive first-hand information about Cuba.

United States representatives have also referred in several meetings to a supposedly new spirit in their relations with our country. Cuba's response has been fully consistent with its historical readiness to talk directly with the United States. Just as Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz did in the past, President Raúl Castro Ruz has reiterated his willingness to establish dialogue on all issues and to negotiate all bilateral problems on the basis of respect and sovereign equality, without prejudice to our national independence and self-determination. We have clearly stated that we will not negotiate our internal affairs or our constitutional order. We await a response from the United States Government about the proposed agenda submitted by Cuba this past July to launch a bilateral dialogue, which I publicly announced in this Hall on 28 September 2006.

The economic blockade has not succeeded and will not succeed in its purpose of crushing the patriotic resolve of the Cuban people. However, it generates shortages, restricts our development potential and seriously hurts our economy. It is, without doubt, the fundamental obstacle that hinders the economic development of our country. Its cost is very difficult to estimate. A rigorous and conservative record of the economic damage amounts to hundreds of billions of dollars, based on the current and decreasing value of that currency.

Representatives of the United States have said that our shortages result from the failure of our system. But they lie, perhaps rather from ignorance than bad faith. Thanks to our system, we have been able to resist

for 50 years and we have developed despite the blockade. If the United States representatives are convinced that our system does not work, why do they need the blockade?

In conditions of true economic warfare and vicious manipulation of the media, and subject to the effects of climate change and the global economic crisis, Cuba is engaged in deeply human and fraternal, social and cultural work. Our people are determined to move ahead, in sovereignty, in order to solve our problems and perfect our political, economic and social system within socialism. We Cubans have every right to do so, without blockades or foreign pressure, without the millions in funds with which the United States Government finances subversion and without foreign interference in the decisions that only we Cubans are entitled to make.

That is the purpose of the draft resolution that we intend to adopt and that I am honoured to present. Supporting this draft resolution would be an act against aggression and the use of force. It would be an act in favour of peace, justice and hope. It would be an act of justice towards the heroic people of Cuba who are today paying tribute to the memory of Camilo Cienfuegos, a young and cheerful Commander from the Sierra Maestra Mountains, from whom we learned that loyalty to our sacred achievements and our profound convictions is the only way to victory.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/64/L.4.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote before the vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats. However, in view of the large number of speakers, I would ask delegations to limit their explanations of vote to no more than a few minutes so that we can finish our work on this item in a timely manner.

I now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): Here we go again. I suppose old habits die hard. The hostile language we have just heard from the Foreign Minister of Cuba seems straight out of the Cold War era and is

not conducive to constructive progress. We will not respond in kind to the painfully familiar rhetoric that we have heard in years past. Rather, I am here to acknowledge that there is a new chapter to this old story.

In recent months, since the start of the Obama administration, the United States has undertaken several steps to reach out to the Cuban people in support of their desire to freely determine their country's future. We have promoted family visits and the free flow of information to and from the Cuban people. The United States has lifted restrictions on family visits and remittances and expanded the amount of humanitarian items that the American people can donate to individuals in Cuba. The United States has enhanced the ability of United States telecommunications companies to pursue agreements to provide service to Cuba and has made it easier for United States agricultural producers to pursue contracts with Cuban buyers. These are important steps and we hope they can be the starting point for further changes in the relationship.

It is equally important to note that the United States has demonstrated that we are prepared to engage the Government of Cuba on issues that affect the security and well-being of both our peoples. Specifically, we have resumed bilateral discussions on migration, we have initiated talks to re-establish direct mail service between the United States and Cuba and we stand by to provide assistance should Cuba be ravaged again by hurricanes as it was in 2008.

We believe that any resolution commenting on the relationship between Cuba and the United States of America should reflect those constructive developments. Sadly, the draft resolution under discussion fails in that regard and, regrettably, the Government of Cuba has not yet reciprocated those important steps taken by my Government.

At the same time, we must point out that the United States of America, like all Member States, has the sovereign right to conduct its economic relationship with another country as it sees fit. The United States economic relationship with Cuba is a bilateral issue and part of a broader set of relations. The steps the United States has taken to improve communications and exchanges with the Cuban people are undertaken with a continuing firm commitment to encouraging the Cuban Government to respect basic norms embodied in

the Inter-American Democratic Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As we discuss our differences on that subject, we must remember one important commonality. The United States, like most Member States, is firmly committed to supporting the desire of the Cuban people to determine freely their country's future. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are part of this Organization's core values. We should not lose sight of that in a stale debate bogged down in rhetorical arguments of the past. That kind of debate does nothing to help the people of Cuba.

I must address two significant distortions in the Cuban position. First, my delegation regrets that the delegation of Cuba continues inappropriately and incorrectly to label United States trade restrictions on Cuba as an act of genocide. Such an egregious misuse of the term genocide diminishes the real suffering of victims of genocide elsewhere in the world.

Secondly, it is erroneous to charge that United States sanctions are the cause of deprivation among the Cuban people. The United States maintains no restriction on humanitarian aid to Cuba. In fact, the United States is a major source of humanitarian assistance to the Cuban people and the largest provider of food to Cuba. In 2008, the United States exported agricultural products, medical devices, medicine, wood and humanitarian items to Cuba. In agricultural products alone, the United States sold \$700.1 million of goods to Cuba. Once again, in 2008, the United States was Cuba's fifth largest trading partner.

As we have sought to reach out to the Cuban people, we have called upon the Cuban Government to take steps to respond to the desire of its citizens to enjoy political, social, and economic freedoms. There are many things the Government of Cuba could do to signal its willingness to engage constructively with its own people and with the United States. Positive measures could include liberating the hundreds of prisoners of conscience in Cuban jails, ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, reducing the excessive charges on remittances flowing into the country, demonstrating greater respect for freedom of speech, ending the practice of arresting political opponents on vague and arbitrary charges such as "social dangerousness" and permitting the visit of United Nations rapporteurs on human rights and torture. As other delegations consider this draft

resolution, we do hope they will not lose sight of the undeniable fact that the Cuban Government's airtight restrictions on internationally recognized social, political and economic freedoms are the main source of deprivation and the primary obstacle to development in Cuba.

Because it does not reflect current realities, my delegation will vote against this draft resolution. At the same time, the United States will continue to work to expand opportunities for the people of Cuba to empower themselves through access to information and resources. We will continue to engage the Government of Cuba on issues of mutual concern and national security. We await a constructive Cuban response to our initiatives. In the meantime it is high time for this body to move beyond the rhetorical posturing of the past, to recognize the situation in Cuba for what it is today and to encourage progress towards genuine change.

Mr. Balé (Congo) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation I would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this debate on the need to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

My delegation, which has consistently voted in favour of the resolution on the Cuban embargo, wishes to make the following observations on this issue, on which we could have spared ourselves a vote. First, the embargo imposed on Cuba, which causes suffering to the Cuban population, as well as considerable economic damages to the nation, does not constitute, in the opinion of my delegation, an acceptable means of resolving political differences among States. Secondly, this embargo, which is a unilateral measure, not only is a flagrant violation of the provisions of the United Nations Charter, the principles of international law and resolutions adopted year after year by this Assembly, but also flouts the principles of freedom of commerce and international navigation.

Congo, which keenly wishes to see the lifting of this measure, has no intention of associating itself with it in any way whatsoever. That is why it has refrained from passing or putting into practice any law of the kind referred to in the draft resolution. In that spirit, the Congolese delegation will cast a vote in favour of the draft before us.

I could not conclude my statement without taking note of the encouraging signs seen recently that give us

reasons to hope that a settlement of this question is possible through constructive dialogue. Congo encourages any development to that end and expresses a hope that the parties to this conflict may draw on a spirit of dialogue in order to put an end to this unjust, anachronistic measure that is manifestly damaging to peace and security in the region.

Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua would like to explain the elements it believes need to be taken into account for this vote and, specifically, explain why we will vote in favour of draft resolution A/64/L.4.

Who is Cuba? Cuba is a sister, the inspirational source of our own struggles, the daughter both of the American continent and the African continent, an example of solidarity and generosity. Cuba, all of your brothers and sisters on this continent are with you. All our peoples and Governments recognize you and admire you — all except one. And the Government that does not recognize you is acting against the will of its own people. Moreover, that Government not only does not recognize you but also abuses you, and abuses you against the will of the international community.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba for more than 50 years is the highest expression of a cruel and inhumane policy that is lacking in legality and legitimacy and is deliberately designed to provoke hunger, disease and desperation in the Cuban population. This blockade has to stop now. It is a flagrant violation of human rights.

The United States Government cannot continue to ignore the resolutions of this Assembly. It must immediately obey them and join in what has been the will of the international community, which since 1992 has expressed itself in a growing condemnation of the Member States of this Organization, a condemnation and rejection that last year reached a total of 185 States, a figure that we have no doubt will continue to grow.

With every passing day the policies of the United States will isolate it more and more, until it finds itself utterly alone, because the call for the elimination of its blockade against Cuba and for an end to its policy of aggression against a small and worthy country is stronger and more determined than ever. Once more, Nicaragua expresses its fundamental rejection of all coercive, unilateral, extraterritorial measures that are

contrary to international law and the accepted norms of free trade, because such measures represent a serious threat to multilateralism. We also condemn the use of unilateral coercive measures, such as illegal sanctions against developing countries, for the purpose of thwarting those countries' exercise of their right to determine their own political, economic and social system.

The cold war has been left behind. Dialogue and negotiation should replace blockades, aggression and hostility. It is now time that the United States set aside its imperialist policy and resolve its differences with Cuba and other States in a civilized manner, through dialogue and negotiation. In the specific case of Cuba, such dialogue should take place without preconditions and under terms of full equality, as our sister country has requested.

Why does the United States continue this criminal policy when it knows very well that the people and Government of Cuba will never give in? Cuba is a giant in dignity and resistance in the face of a powerful empire and an example for all our peoples. Cuba, despite the blockade, shares its political, economic and social accomplishments with all of us. Cuba is life and it gives life to our peoples. While others prescribe destabilization, hostility, aggression and death to us, since they only know to respond to challenges with military force and ever more bases in our region, Cuba shares with us education, health, housing, scientific and technological knowledge, sports, friendship and its values. In sum, it shares all the necessary components of complementary solidarity to assist in the development of our peoples and to build a better world.

The people and Government of Cuba do not merely hand out their leftovers; they share what they have. It is because of this example that the United States has persisted with its aggressive policy against Cuba for 50 years. We urge the United States instead to follow Cuba's example and to focus its energies and resources on cooperation based on solidarity and impartiality in favour of the development of our region and of the peoples of the world.

Nicaragua is living proof of the benefits of the initiatives and solidarity of this generous people and Government. As our President and Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra says, in this new history, which includes new forms of thinking and living better, you,

brothers and sisters in Cuba, are a permanent source of inspiration for the new victories of our nations.

We would like to take this opportunity to restate our profound gratitude to the thousands of Cuban doctors, teachers, construction workers, technicians and specialists who have devoted all their efforts and knowledge in favour of the development of my country. Nicaragua, in unfailing solidarity, reiterates its unconditional support for the heroic people and Government of Cuba in their enormous struggle in the face of the constant aggressions of the empire, as well as its support for the ending of the blockade, the return of Cuba's legitimate territory in Guantánamo and the liberation of the five Cuban heroes. We reiterate our defence of Cuba's achievements, sovereignty, self-determination and socialist homeland. We will always defend the right of the Cuban Revolution to exist and to continue to illuminate us with its light and its wisdom.

For the justice of the Cuban cause, we will vote in favour of the draft resolution. And we hope there will be a genuine change in the policy of the United States towards Cuba — that is to say, that it will bring the blockade to an end.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote. The General Assembly shall now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/64/L.4. 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 (Plurinational State of), 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, El Salvador, 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), Iraq, 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, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, 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, 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 (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of)

Draft resolution A/64/L.4 was adopted by 187 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions (resolution 64/6).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We shall now hear speakers in explanation of vote after the vote. I hope that speakers will be very brief so that we may finish our work on this item on time.

Mr. Lidén (Sweden): I have the honour to deliver this explanation of vote on behalf of the European Union. Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Montenegro, 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. However, American legislation such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 has extended the effects of the United States embargo to third-party countries. As a matter of principle, the European Union has firmly and continuously opposed such extraterritorial measures.

We welcome the recent decision by the United States Government to lift restrictions on remittances and family travel to Cuba, but we cannot accept that unilaterally imposed measures impede our economic and commercial relations with Cuba. To address this problem, the European Union's Council of Ministers adopted, in November 1996, a regulation and a joint action to protect the interests of natural or legal persons residing in Europe against the consequences of these Acts. Furthermore, at the May 1998 European Union-United States Summit in London, a package was agreed that also sought to alleviate the problems with extraterritorial legislation. It covered waivers to titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act, a commitment by the United States Government to resist future extraterritorial legislation of that kind, and an understanding regarding disciplines for the strengthening of investment protection. The European Union reiterates its call on the United States to implement this agreement.

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 peaceful process of transition, led by the Cuban people, to a pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as a sustainable economic recovery and an improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people.

Reaffirming the validity of this Common Position, the European Union in June 2008 lifted the political measures imposed on Cuba in 2003. The dialogue with the authorities in Havana was resumed without preconditions and on the basis of reciprocity and non-discrimination.

Ministerial sessions were held with the Cuban Government in Paris in October 2008 and in Brussels in May 2009. The dialogue addressed issues of

common interest, including human rights, an area in which the European Union expects concrete actions from Havana. Additionally, the European Union intends to continue its dialogue with the democratic opposition and civil society on Cuba.

While it has signed the United Nations International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Cuba has not yet ratified them. Havana has undertaken to invite the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food and has mentioned the possibility of visits from other rapporteurs.

The Cuban Government continues to deny its citizens internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms. The European Union remains seriously concerned at the continuation of human rights violations in Cuba despite a decrease in the number of political prisoners. The European Union once again urges the Cuban Government to unconditionally release all political prisoners and, in particular, expresses utmost concern at the deteriorating health of several of them and of members of the group of 75 who were detained in March 2003. The European Union also reiterates its call on the Cuban Government to grant freedom of expression and free access to information.

These restrictions on rights and freedoms undermine the Cuban achievements in health care and education. Similarly, domestic Cuban economic policy seriously hampers the country's own economic development. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States contributes to these problems, negatively affecting the living standards of the Cuban people.

The European Union clearly believes, therefore, that the lifting of the United States embargo would open up the Cuban economy, to the benefit of the Cuban people. We again express our rejection of all unilateral measures directed against Cuba that are contrary to commonly accepted rules of international trade. With regard to Cuba, the European Union urges the Cuban authorities to bring about real improvements in all areas mentioned.

For all those reasons, and in spite of serious criticism of Cuba's human rights record, the European Union voted unanimously in favour of resolution 64/6.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and its associated States: Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and my country, Uruguay.

As in previous years, the States members of MERCOSUR and its associated States voted in favour of the resolution submitted by the delegation of Cuba, because we understand that the embargo against that country contradicts the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and contravenes rules of international law, in particular the norms regulating international trade that are binding on members of the World Trade Organization.

The position of MERCOSUR and its associated States falls within the broader framework of the defence of multilateralism, non-intervention and the peaceful settlement of disputes, which are fundamental principles of the diplomacy of our continent.

This embargo has been condemned before here at the United Nations and in other international forums and bodies, including the Organization of American States, the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, and the Ibero-American and Rio Group summits.

The States members of MERCOSUR and its associated States reject unilateral and extraterritorial measures out of principle. In that connection, we condemn the implementation of coercive unilateral measures contrary to free trade, which cause irreparable harm to the well-being of peoples and obstruct regional integration processes.

By voting in favour of resolution 64/6, MERCOSUR and its associated States have reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate instrument for the peaceful settlement of disputes between States and an effective tool in promoting international cooperation, human rights, security and understanding among peoples.

Mrs. Phommachanh (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): My delegation subscribes to the statements made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic wishes to express once again its opposition to the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo unilaterally imposed by the United States of America against Cuba for half a century. We believe that the ongoing imposition of that economic, commercial and financial embargo is a violation of the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of another State, and that it constitutes an attack on the sovereignty of the Cuban people and their right to development. The extraterritorial application of legislation by one State aimed at imposing unilateral sanctions against another runs counter to the fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Because of its harmful effects on the livelihoods of the Cuban people, as well as its extraterritorial nature, the embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States of America has, since 1992, been systematically condemned by the international community in 17 identical resolutions, adopted by an overwhelming majority every year by the General Assembly. However, despite the requests of the General Assembly and many other intergovernmental organs and forums, the embargo remains in place. Its perpetuation will only create further tension in the bilateral relations between the United States and Cuba and lead to new suffering and difficulties for the people of Cuba, in particular its most vulnerable citizens, such as women and children.

I should like to conclude by reaffirming our tireless support for and solidarity with the Cuban people. We join other Member States in insistently requesting the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba. It is in that spirit that the Lao People's Democratic Republic voted in favour of resolution 64/6.

Mr. Loayza Barea (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of Bolivia, I should like to endorse the statements made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Common Market of the South. I also wish to welcome Minister Rodríguez Parilla.

Resolution 64/6, just adopted by the General Assembly — the eighteenth such resolution to have been consecutively adopted — unequivocally reflects the international community's explicit rejection of the embargo imposed by the United States of America and, above all, fully reaffirms the purposes and principles of the Charter, such as sovereign equality, non-intervention and, especially, non-interference in States' internal affairs.

Once again, it is clear that there is a need to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo, which results from a persistent unilateral attitude that has no place in the twenty-first century. It lacks all legitimacy, and its adverse consequences continue to affect the Cuban people, who, with great dignity, are growing much stronger in opposing an obsolete measure that has proved to be a resounding failure year after year.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/64/97) sets out the actual and irrefutable facts of this reality. It cites examples of the economic and social effects of this aggressive embargo, whose extraterritoriality — which blatantly subverts international norms — is supported in laws such as the Helms-Burton Act, which imposes sanctions on companies maintaining relations with Cuba. That concept, which is absolutely null and void, also entails a flagrant violation of human rights, as well as a breach of the fundamental principles of relations among sovereign States because it seeks to control their political life.

That is why one cannot defend the assumption by one State of the extraterritorial right to implement a legal norm against another without its consent. The 18 resolutions adopted by the General Assembly rejecting the blockade eliminate any possible doubt about that fact, which has once again been resoundingly reaffirmed by the international community today.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia believes that the time has come to reverse this situation and that, in the twenty-first century, we need a change in attitude and behaviour that are contrary to and incompatible with the principles of the United Nations Charter. In that regard, we need to give sway to reason and dialogue based on full respect for the economic and political model that works best for the interests of the Cuban people, in accordance with their identity and unique characteristics. They should not have to bend to

the external pressure or irregular policies that are implemented against Cuba.

Why persist with such mistaken policies? If we consider the regional context, the argument against such conduct is powerful. The beginning of a new era of commitment, interest and mutual respect invoked by President Barack Obama is in line with the Nobel Peace Prize that he was awarded. Why not, in the name of peace, unconditionally revoke the blockade so that we can overcome once and for all a vast humanitarian crisis that contravenes international law? Why continue to buck a trend recognized in numerous regional, subregional and global forums, which seek cooperation towards the optimal mutual benefit among peoples through coordination, not subordination? For the Plurinational State of Bolivia, that herald of change has been ratified today. Cuba is forging onward. That is why we voted in favour of resolution 64/6.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to remind speakers of time constraints and ask them to be brief in their statements.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): Ghana aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba nearly 50 years ago remains in place and has had negative repercussions on the people of Cuba. That situation is now exacerbated by the global financial, energy and food crises. Despite the fact that the General Assembly demanded an end to that embargo and extraterritorial domination, the unilateral measures imposed 17 years ago are still being implemented.

Ghana, in fulfilment of its commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and international law, has steadfastly refrained from promulgating and applying those laws whose extraterritorial effects adversely affect the sovereignty of States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction, and the freedom of trade and navigation.

We welcome the decision of the current United States Administration to reduce restrictions on travel to Cuba and remittances by Cuban-Americans. It is our considered view that such measures, constructive

engagement and peaceful negotiations will eventually promote cooperation and good-neighbourliness between the United States and Cuba. We commend the Cuban people for their resilience and sense of unity and purpose under difficult economic and social conditions.

Mrs. Beck (Solomon Islands): At the outset, my delegation acknowledges the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. We take the floor to speak in explanation of vote on resolution 64/6, just adopted to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

The reason is simple: We all live in an interrelated and interdependent global system. We need each other — big countries and small, rich and poor — to tackle our global problems. Against this backdrop, my delegation is saddened to see the remnants of the cold war continuing to this day. The decades-old blockade is one of the longest-running campaigns, spilling over into a new century and a new generation.

Today, there are now more than 100 Pacific islands students studying medicine in Cuba. Despite the economic, commercial and financial embargo, the Cuban people in their hardship have sheltered, fed and clothed our young people. Solomon Islands remains thankful for that and commends the resilience of the Cuban people. We also know that, without the embargo, Cuba could do more for the developing world.

The reference to those young people is to underscore the argument that the United Nations Charter is centred on its peoples and begins with “We the peoples”. We, States Members of the United Nations, must continue to give humanity a chance and to work together to build bridges over the embargo. We must do so in the name of peace, security and the Cuban people’s right to development.

Solomon Islands calls for the unconditional lifting of the blockade against the Cuban people and its replacement with genuine dialogue and cooperation. We make this call in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, and as an opportunity for a new beginning between Cuba and the United States.

Mr. Ja’afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): May I begin by expressing Syria’s support for the statements delivered by the Permanent

Representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The right of States to exercise sovereignty over their territory and to non-interference in their own internal affairs is enshrined in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Those principles and their inviolability have been part of the United Nations since its founding in 1945.

As the host country, the United States contributed to the drafting of the United Nations Charter following the Second World War, in which many States had had the bitter experience of outside interference in their internal affairs and of their sovereignty being threatened both before and during the hostilities. The United States, more than any other State, is therefore supposed to respect the United Nations Charter.

The unilateral embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba and new measures to tighten the grip of the embargo run counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and of international and international humanitarian law, and to the rules and principles governing relations between States, in particular the equal sovereignty of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, and the freedom of international trade and navigation.

The embargo is thus illegal and does not conform to international standards of intergovernmental relations. It poses an unprecedented challenge to international law, as well as to the credibility of the legality of United States policy. The 49-year-old embargo is unprecedented in bilateral relations and extraneous to international law. It has subjected Cuba to numerous economic, social and political hardships and increased the suffering of the Cuban people. It has also placed the United States in direct confrontation with the international community.

My delegation commends Cuba’s stated commitment to constructive dialogue with the United States with a view to resolving all the issues between the two parties on the basis of the equal sovereignty of States, mutual respect, non-interference in their internal affairs, and respect for the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and for the principles of good-neighbourliness.

We believe that relations between countries, especially between the United States and Cuba, should

be normalized to take the interests of the peoples of both countries into account. We assert the right of peoples to freely choose their own economic, political, social and cultural systems.

The 187 votes in favour of resolution 64/6 at this meeting reaffirm the fact that the overwhelming majority of countries believe that the time has come to lift the illegal embargo imposed on Cuba and underline the need to respect national, political, economic and social systems freely chosen by States in the light of their own interests.

Coercive, unwarranted economic measures imposed against other countries because of their political orientation are unacceptable to the international community. The international community has repeatedly denounced the pursuit of unilateral measures against Cuba, as well as efforts to broaden the sanctions through the so-called Helms-Burton Act.

Pursuant to its mandate, the General Assembly must take the necessary steps to put an end to the embargo policies and sanctions imposed by the United States on its neighbours and countries further afield. We hope that the embargoes imposed on Cuba and several other countries, including my own, Syria, will come to an end. We hope that the voice of the international community and international organizations and institutions will be heeded and respected by the United States and its legislative bodies.

In the light of the foregoing, Syria voted in favour of resolution 64/6. Israel's aberrant vote against the resolution, which was adopted by the overwhelming majority, was most revealing. It was also an acknowledgment of the fact that Israel flouts international law and the voice of the international community, and that it represents an isolated minority. Its position exacerbates the situation and makes it even more difficult for the United States to revert to the logic of dialogue in seeking to resolve disputes between countries and to apply international law while respecting the differing opinions.

The President (*speak in Arabic*): I beseech delegations to be brief.

Mr. Sinoussi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*speak in Arabic*): The people of Cuba continue to suffer under an unfair blockade that has lasted for more than four decades and had serious impacts on all levels of

society, including the most vulnerable, such as children, women and the elderly. The blockade has also sharply reduced Cuba's capacity to import food and goods that meet its medical and agricultural needs, and has certainly hampered the country's development efforts.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya expresses great concern and asserts that the imposition of such unilateral and abusive economic measures by some countries is extraterritorial in nature and explicitly violates international law. We reiterate our rejection of such measures and stress that embargoes are not the way to resolve disputes between countries, but that, on the contrary, they further complicate them.

As civilized nations, we repudiate violence in all its forms and manifestations, including the imposition of sanctions and blockades. Therefore, we must choose the path of wisdom, rationality and constructive dialogue to resolve our disputes. That is not difficult if there is enough political will.

We believe that the United States Government's decision to ease its unilateral measures is cause for optimism. We hope that it will introduce further measures that take into account the humanitarian needs of the Cuban people and international law and that it will eventually lift the blockade once and for all.

Mr. Wetland (Norway): Norway considers the United States embargo against Cuba to be a bilateral issue. We support sanctions when they are adopted by the international community through the United Nations, but cannot support the extraterritorial extension of unilateral measures against another country. Therefore, we cannot accept that unilateral measures imposed by the United States should determine Norway's relations with Cuba.

Norway welcomes the recent decision of the United States Government to lift restrictions on remittances and family travel to Cuba and encourages both the United States and Cuba to make further efforts to improve their bilateral relationship.

While Norway is encouraged by some positive developments in the area of human rights in Cuba, we nevertheless remain concerned about their protection and promotion. We reiterate our call on the Government of Cuba to release all political prisoners unconditionally. We also reiterate our call on the Cuban

Government to grant freedom of expression and free access to information.

Norway does not consider isolation to be an appropriate response to the developments in Cuba. More can be achieved through a constructive dialogue with the Government of Cuba. Moving forward, Norway intends to contribute to such a dialogue. For these reasons, Norway voted in favour of today's resolution, as it has in previous years.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): Uganda aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Uganda voted in favour of today's resolution, as it has consistently done in the past, as it opposes the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. The embargo is unjustified. It has had an adverse impact on the people of Cuba for too long. Furthermore, we do not support unilateral measures with extraterritorial applications, which we believe are inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and humanitarian law.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Benin voted in favour of the resolution that has just been adopted, because we believe in friendly relations between States.

By their extraterritorial nature, the measures imposed on Cuba 50 years ago in the context of the cold war continue to hamper the country's exercise of its rights as a sovereign State on the international stage. This Assembly is the right place to recall that relations between States Members of the United Nations are ruled by the Charter. The Cuban people ask only that they be allowed to live in an atmosphere of respect for their rights as a sovereign State and a country of peace and justice, and that they be accorded reciprocal advantages.

The current situation is a historic opportunity that must be exploited to ensure that the blockade is lifted in an amicable manner. The profound changes that have taken place in the lives of the two nations should lead to improved relations in line with the provisions of the United Nations Charter. Benin appeals urgently to the Governments of the United States and Cuba to launch without delay a frank dialogue towards

normalizing relations between the two countries. We welcome the measures taken by the Administration of President Obama to ease restrictions on travel and remittances from Cuban-Americans to their country of origin. This is an important step towards the full rapprochement desired by all.

The more there are among us demanding a closure to this painful chapter of international relations, the more our voices will be heard and the more powerful our call for reconciliation between two nations that are both friends of Benin. The people of Benin truly hope to see the two countries shake hands, repudiate the illogic of coercion and restart their relationship on a healthier basis.

Mr. Yaroshevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Today, the General Assembly has adopted its eighteenth resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Once again, some 99 per cent of Member States, including the closest political partners of the United States, have appealed to that country to lift the blockade, which has been in place for half a century. We hope that this time the voice of the international community will be heeded in Washington, D.C.

The Belarusian delegation would like to quote from the Special Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, adopted at their fifteenth summit conference in Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, in July 2009, on the issue of the United States blockade against Cuba, which stresses that "under no circumstances people should be deprived of their own means of subsistence and development".

The practice of imposing measures to apply economic pressure on a country creates serious obstacles to its achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and contributes to international instability. Speaking at the general debate of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session (see A/64/PV.10), the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Belarus noted that it appears that, after a long hiatus, the international community is starting to think in terms of a single system of references, while political leaders are beginning to speak in the same language of common sense. In particular, this year the United States declared its readiness to build partnerships and resolve problems that no country can resolve in isolation.

We call on the United States to act in keeping with the constructive foreign policy course it itself has outlined, to end the embargo and to lift restrictions that impair the vital interests of the people of Cuba. We are certain that, in the light of the global financial and economic crisis, the arsenal of unilateral sanctions and coercive measures is especially inappropriate.

Mr. Hamza (United Republic of Tanzania): I thank you, Sir, for granting me this opportunity to speak after the voting. My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The United Republic of Tanzania voted in favour of the resolution to end the economic and financial embargo on Cuba because we believe that current political and economic realities in the world, and in particular between Cuba and the United States, warrant an end to the embargo. Both sides wish to enhance democracy and good governance in order to promote the economic and financial prosperity of their countries. The embargo does not promote such goals.

Furthermore, Tanzania is convinced that if the peoples of the two countries are to continue working towards economic growth and prosperity, there must be increased and varied contacts between them. This is crucial, particularly in the areas of trade and people-to-people communication.

We also welcome the lifting of the restriction on family travel imposed by the United States. This indeed reflects a positive trend and an improved beginning of the end of the embargo. We urge both sides to develop confidence-building measures to set the ground for future cooperation between Cuba and the United States after the lifting of the embargo.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call on the representative of Cuba in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I feel obliged to respond to the statements of the United States, the European Union and Norway.

I must tell the European Union that Cuba in no way recognizes its moral authority to dictate models or give advice on democracy. I would like to remind the Union of its complicity with the acts of torture that took place in Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib, and I reiterate that so long as it resorts to double standards and hypocrisy, it will have no credibility whatsoever.

Ms. Susan Rice, who unfortunately is not present in the Hall right now, began by saying: “Here we go again”. With those words, she acknowledged that she was here to do what 17 United States representatives have done in the past. I respect her opinions and I acknowledge that her career is different from that of a neo-conservative such as John Bolton, but she had the sad task here of defending a blockade policy that began, according to a classified memorandum of 6 April 1960, with the declared aim of causing the hunger, despair and hopelessness of the Cuban people. The only remains of the cold war, as has been mentioned here, is the blockade itself. If the blockade is lifted, that relic will disappear.

Cuba is a democracy that is closer to Lincoln’s principles of a Government of the people, by the people and for the people than the plutocracy or Government of the rich currently running that country. The United States Ambassador identified as dissidents or political prisoners people who are in fact agents of a foreign Power — mercenaries paid by the Government of the United States. If she wants to talk about political prisoners, the United States should release the five anti-terrorist Cuban heroes subject to cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment in American prisons.

Ambassador Rice said that we are abusing the word “genocide” when we talk of the blockade. I quote paragraphs (b) and (c) of article 2 of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Paragraph (b) notes that genocide is an act “[c]ausing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group”, referring to a group of human beings, and paragraph (c) notes that genocide is an act of “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part”. I invite the United States Department of State to study that Convention more closely.

The embargo against Cuba is a unilateral and criminal policy and as such must be lifted unilaterally. It is neither reasonable nor fair nor possible to expect Cuba to move to make this criminal action against its people, including its children and elderly, stop, with the examples mentioned previously.

The United States should lift the embargo and lift it now; first of all, because Cuba has no embargo against the United States, nor does it occupy any part of its territory with a military base, nor do we discriminate against its citizens or companies.

Secondly, it should lift the blockade because it is in the best interests of the United States itself and it is the will of the people of the United States.

There has been mention of the free movement of information. Lift the prohibition of United States citizens to travel freely to Cuba. Respect their right to freedom of movement. Lift the embargo against Cuba in the area of technology and information. Permit better connectivity for our country. Export software and technology to Cuba and there will be progress in that field.

Ms. Rice mentioned constructive progress. It is true that there have been some steps in the right direction, but they have been strictly limited to relations between Cubans living in the United States with their country of origin, and they have nothing to do with nor do they signify any flexibility with regard to the embargo. They are steps in the right direction but are very limited and insufficient.

The embargo is not a bilateral issue. That has been clearly demonstrated by the many examples of its extraterritorial application. Ms. Rice has reiterated the proposal to continue with exchanges or dialogue between the two countries. That idea was presented many years ago by Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro and reiterated several times in public by President Raúl Castro. If the United States wants to enter into a dialogue, it should respond to the proposal of a bilateral agenda presented by Cuba to that Government on 17 July 2009.

At New York University in August, Ms. Susan Rice said that the United States leads by example, acknowledges mistakes, corrects course when necessary, treats others with respect, and forges strategies in partnership. In the same speech, she also said that we are proving that the United States is willing to listen, respect differences and consider new ideas. I am very surprised that Ambassador Rice had to say the complete opposite this morning.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): As in previous years, the General Assembly has just expressed its opinion on the agenda item by adopting a resolution — resolution 64/6 — that enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States. In proceeding in this fashion, the international community has expressed its insistence on strict compliance with the principles and purposes expressed in the Charter. I therefore cherish the hope that the appeals addressed

here for implementation of this resolution will be heard by all of us.

At a time when we see a will to spurn confrontation and unilateralism, we see great support for dialogue and multilateralism. We need to see the positive aspects of that approach and put an end to sanctions and embargoes and open up the way to peace, development and cooperation. We hope that all parties will find a solution to conflicts through cooperation and dialogue.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 19?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 7 (continued)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Before adjourning, I invite the Assembly to take a decision on an issue as follows. In a letter dated 27 October 2009 to all Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations, I forwarded a letter dated 16 October 2009 from the President of the Human Rights Council transmitting Council resolution S-12/1 for the consideration of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. I also attached two letters dated 26 and 27 October 2009 from the chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Sudan, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Group of Arab States, and the Permanent Representative of Egypt, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, with a request that the report of the Human Rights Council on its twelfth special session be considered directly in plenary meeting under agenda item 64, entitled "Report of the Human Rights Council", during the first week of November.

Members will recall that at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 18 September 2009, the Assembly decided, inter alia, to allocate agenda item 64 to the plenary and the Third Committee. If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly decides to consider the report of the Human Rights Council on its twelfth special session, as contained in document A/64/53/Add.1, at a plenary meeting, without setting a precedent?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.