



General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

27th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 6 November 2019, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Muhammad-Bande (Nigeria)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

believes that this is a setback in the process of achieving normalized relations between both countries.

Agenda item 39

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/91/Rev.1)

Draft resolution (A/74/L.6)

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 39, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/74/91/Rev.1) on the item we are discussing today.

The Group regrets that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba for almost six decades remains fully in force and continues to be strengthened. The Group recalls the positive steps taken by the former United States Administration between 2015 and 2016, which were still inadequate to effectively end the impact of the embargo but were focused in the right direction.

The Group regrets the new policy established by the current Administration of the United States aimed at strengthening the embargo against Cuba. The Group

The Group expresses its deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo against Cuba, including the full implementation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, and rejects the reinforcement of the financial measures adopted by the Government of the United States aimed at tightening the embargo.

The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its commitment to the principles, purposes and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, as well as freedom of international trade and navigation. The Group believes that it is the duty and responsibility of every Member State to strictly comply with such principles. The Group is of the view that any policy or action that disregards those principles, in this case the unilateral economic sanctions against Cuba, should be seriously considered for immediate repeal.

Given the fact that the United States embargo against Cuba has continued for almost 60 years, the Group of 77 and China would like to express its deep concern about the prolonged negative effects that the economic sanctions and travel restrictions have had on Cuba and its people. From April 2018 to March this year, the impact of the United States embargo on Cuba’s foreign trade amounted to more than \$4 billion. Limited foreign investment and difficult access to development credit translate directly into economic

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

19-35479 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



hardship and humanitarian impacts for the people of Cuba. The country's socioeconomic reforms have also been hampered by the embargo.

The Group of 77 and China is concerned that if the economic sanctions continue, Cuba's development potential, in both economic and human development terms, will be unfairly undermined and that it will be impossible for Cuba to successfully embark on the path towards sustainable development envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for which all Member States have pledged their support.

Over many decades, Cuba has extensively and continuously contributed to the international community, particularly through South-South Cooperation. Cuba's emergency assistance to the African countries affected by the Ebola crisis in West Africa is a good example of its solidarity with the international community.

The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its strong support for the implementation of the recommendations of resolution 73/8, as well as its call for the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States against Cuba to cease. The urgency and necessity of our appeal are further highlighted by the ongoing global collective effort to implement the 2030 Agenda. The Group of 77 and China would therefore like to appeal to the international community to further step up its efforts in support for the lifting of the embargo, not only for the prospects of Cuba alone but also for the fair achievement of economic and social development for all members of the global community as a whole.

Mr. Baati (Tunisia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States on this very important topic, which continues to engage our attention each session. Over the years, the increasing rejection by the members of the international community of the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba continues to gain momentum. Today will be no exception. For its part, the African Group remains firmly rooted in its principled position of solidarity with Cuba in calling for the immediate end to the embargo.

The African Group expresses its deep concern about the negative consequences of the economic sanctions imposed on the Cuban population for many decades, as they represent an acceptable form of collective punishment in contradiction to the Sustainable

Development Goals, particularly the pledge to leave no one behind.

On the eve of the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the unilateral embargo against Cuba negates our collective aspiration to rekindle and uphold the ideals and principles of multilateralism, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

In that spirit, at its meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in February 2019, the Assembly of the African Union affirmed its solidarity with the people of Cuba, acknowledged that the blockade was a main obstacle for Cuba's implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and expressed support for resolution 73/8 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

As in previous years, the Group of African States will vote overwhelmingly in support of resolution A/74/L.6.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the 120 member States comprising the Non-Aligned Movement.

At the outset, we would like to convey our respect and extend our warmest welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his report on the important issue of the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (A/74/91/Rev.1).

For the past 28 consecutive years, the General Assembly has expressed its overwhelming support for and solidarity with the people and the Government of Cuba through its principled position in favour of the resolution calling for the lifting of the embargo imposed against the sovereign country by the United States. Last year, 189 States Members of the United Nations voted in favour of resolution 73/8. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate its strongest opposition to the promulgation and imposition of unilateral coercive measures that are not authorized by the relevant United Nations organs and which are inconsistent with the principles of international law set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, given their extraterritorial implications and illegal character.

The Non-Aligned Movement has repeatedly made its call to the United States Government to put an end to the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo that the United States has illegally imposed against Cuba for almost six decades now. The embargo, in breach of international law, the Charter and the norms and principles governing inter-State relations, constitutes a violation of Cuba's right to fully interact with the international community.

The Non-Aligned Movement has historically maintained the principled position of rejecting unilateral coercive measures that are not authorized by the relevant organs of the United Nations, that are inconsistent with the principles of international law set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, that contravene the basic principles of the multilateral trading system or that are used as a tool of political or economic and financial pressure against States, especially developing countries. This position has been reaffirmed by the eighteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was recently held in Baku. The embargo on Cuba is a perfect example of the adverse effects of unilateral coercive measures on the well-being of affected peoples, preventing them, *inter alia*, from fully enjoying and exercising their human rights, including the right to development.

The direct and indirect damage inflicted by the embargo against Cuba is enormous. It affects all critical sectors of the Cuban economy, including public health, nutrition and agriculture, as well as trade, investment, tourism and banking. The banking sector has been particularly hard hit, in particular since the most recent consideration of this agenda item.

The persecution of Cuban financial transactions in third-country jurisdictions, which has a significant deterrent effect in economic terms, continues. Between June 2018 and April 2019, the United States Government imposed nine penalties on companies or banks from third countries and from the United States itself. The total amount of these penalties reached \$3,751,449,017. As a consequence of the embargo, Cuba is also being denied access to markets, international aid from international financial institutions and technology transfers, which creates serious obstacles to the socioeconomic development of the country. In addition, the embargo is the main impediment to broader access to the Internet, people-to-people contacts and the development of cultural, athletic and scientific relations.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms that the continuation of the embargo is totally unjustifiable and that it does not correspond to this time in history. The embargo also runs counter to Cuba's continued efforts aimed at realizing its sustainable development, including the achievement of the goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Movement expresses its deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo against Cuba, including the full implementation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act. The Non-Aligned Movement also rejects the reinforcement of financial measures adopted by the United States Government to tighten the embargo, which inflicts economic damage on the Cuban people amounting to \$922.63 billion, taking into account the depreciation of the dollar in relation to the price of gold on international markets. At current prices, the blockade has over all these years caused damages of over \$138 billion. It is worth highlighting that since the most recent consideration of this agenda item one year ago (see A/73/PV.29), the blockade has caused losses of over \$4 billion.

The Non-Aligned Movement considers the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America to be an initial positive step in the process towards the normalization of bilateral relations. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the implementation of the blockade against Cuba has remained unchanged. Moreover, some of the progress in the normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries is now in jeopardy, as evidenced by the policy of strengthening the embargo against Cuba that the United States President has been pursuing since June 2017.

Furthermore, while the regulations issued on 15 January 2015 by the United States Department of Commerce and the Department of the Treasury were steps in the right direction in such areas as travelling to Cuba, telecommunications and remittances, they are limited in scope and modify only some aspects related to the implementation of the blockade. Despite the historic decision of the former United States President, Mr. Barack Obama, to notify the United States Congress of the removal of Cuba from the so-called list of State sponsors of international terrorism, a unilateral and illegal list on which Cuba should have never been included, it has not concretely mitigated the effects of all the prohibitions and restrictions established by blockade-related laws and regulations against Cuba. In

the light of all the foregoing, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms its call for an end to the unilateral and illegal economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba.

The fact that 189 States Members of the United Nations voted in favour of resolution 73/8 last year constitutes an expression of unanimity within the international community in demanding an end to the 57-year-long embargo and full adherence to the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter, as well as to the norms of international law, including those relating to mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Currently, more than 190 nations are engaging economically and politically with Cuba, while the United States remains alone in pursuing its unjustified and illegal policy of economic sanctions. Consequently, the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement once again urge the United States Government to yield to the will of the overwhelming majority of the international community and rectify its failed policies by fully complying with all relevant General Assembly resolutions that call for the immediate and complete end to the embargo imposed against Cuba.

In conclusion, while reiterating its commitment to the promotion, preservation and strengthening of multilateralism, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms that full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular those that refer to sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention, is critical to the effective maintenance of international peace and security. The international community must therefore continue to work together in the reversal and elimination of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba, given, *inter alia*, its illegal character and extraterritorial implications.

Ms. McGuire (Grenada): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on agenda item 39, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

CARICOM aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the observer of the Observer State of Palestine and the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the presence in the General Assembly Hall of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

The Charter of the United Nations is clear that the principles of sovereignty, non-interference, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of friendly relations among States must always be respected. The unilateral imposition of extraterritorial laws on third States is contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the provisions of the Charter. Further, the economic, commercial, and financial embargo against Cuba runs counter to the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade that the United Nations upholds.

CARICOM States have reported annually to the Secretary-General that they continue to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures inconsistent with the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of States in conformity with their obligations under international law, including the United Nations Charter. For small States, such as those comprising the Caribbean Community, adherence to these principles is paramount and constitutes an essential component of the rule of law of the international community.

In that regard, we take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/74/91/Rev.1), which contains an impressive array of replies from Member States and United Nations bodies on the matter of the embargo against Cuba. CARICOM States look upon the punitive embargo with particular concern. CARICOM shares a history, culture and brotherhood with the people of Cuba, which is the most populous State of our Caribbean region. Cuba is an integral part of pan-Caribbean integration and an important component of our Caribbean civilization.

The Caribbean Community's ties with Cuba have historical significance, cemented by years of fraternal relations and active economic and technical cooperation at various levels. These ties were most recently reaffirmed in the declaration adopted at the conclusion of the sixth meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CARICOM and Cuba in June 2019 in Georgetown, Guyana, at which Ministers recognized the need to collectively address the challenges of sustainable development, particularly in the economic

and environmental areas, in order to advance just, inclusive and equitable societies.

The Ministers heralded ongoing CARICOM-Cuban cooperation in areas such as health care, human resource development, construction, sports and disaster-risk reduction and mitigation, all within the context of advancing the development and well-being of our respective peoples. Increased cooperation in projects to improve airports and seaports, infrastructure, connectivity and overall economic and trade relations is further indication of a shared pan-Caribbean approach to the future development of our region.

Cuban assistance to CARICOM States through the assignment of health-care personnel and the provision of medical care in distressed areas and areas affected by natural disasters continues to be a tangible manifestation of the country's commitment to regional cooperation. As a small State whose economy is under embargo from arguably the most powerful country in the world, Cuba nevertheless maintains the highest number of physicians per capita in the world.

The provision of thousands of scholarships for tertiary and professional education to many CARICOM students continues to contribute significantly to human resource development in the Caribbean. It is of significance that Cuba was one of the first countries to come to the aid of the people of the Bahamas in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, which decimated parts of our CARICOM sister country with devastating consequences, including the significant loss of life.

We view Cuba as an integral part of our Caribbean civilization, which threatens no one. CARICOM continues to support the sovereign right of Cuba to choose its own path in a manner it deems beneficial to its social and economic development. The embargo imposed against Cuba violates international law and is an anachronism and aberration in the world of today. It serves no useful purpose in the twenty-first century, where global cooperation is critical to addressing the numerous challenges currently facing the international community, not the least of which is the existential threat caused by climate change and its implications for the future of our planet for succeeding generations.

It is only through cooperation and collaboration that the foregoing challenges can be successfully met. It is in this broader context that we view the embargo not just as a punitive act against Cuba, but

as an impediment to Caribbean regional development as a whole. The embargo and recent measures aimed at tightening it following a brief rapprochement create undue hardship for the Cuban people as a result of the significant external pressure it places on their economy.

Recent additional restrictions on air services from the United States to Cuba add further constraints to the free flow of commerce. In this regard, CARICOM States continue to maintain that constructive engagement, and peaceful negotiations remain the most suitable means for regularizing relations. Given Cuba's peaceful, generous and cooperative international stance, CARICOM reiterates its support for the right of the Cuban people to self-determination in keeping with their aspirations for social and economic development. We once again call for the end to an embargo that has preserved a state of tension between two neighbouring countries that is not only a destabilizing force within Cuba but represents a source of ongoing concern and discomfort throughout our subregion.

CARICOM continues to enjoy friendly relations with both Cuba and the United States. Those 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. The lifting of the embargo would bring about a meaningful rapprochement between the two countries and yield resultant global benefits. It is within this context that CARICOM States have supported previous resolutions on this item and will vote in favour of the current draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States of America against Cuba (A/74/L.6).

I will now make a statement on behalf of my country, Grenada.

Grenada aligns itself with the statement I just delivered on behalf of CARICOM, as well as the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement.

We are meeting at a time when the world is plagued by an alarming array of social and economic problems — a time when the geopolitical landscape is changing at an accelerating pace. It is nevertheless a time when we see genuine efforts emerging among us to resolve the social, economic and political problems with which we are confronted, in an effort to transform our world.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/74/91/Rev.1) on the implementation of resolution 73/8 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba is reviewed in the light of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. Indeed, the prolongation and maintenance of the decades-long embargo and the failure to bring it to an end, despite numerous United Nations resolutions, violates the spirit and letter of the Charter and runs contrary to international law. This failure remains of grave concern to Grenada. It is for this reason that my delegation unwaveringly calls for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

In Grenada, we appreciate the upstanding relations we have with the Government of Cuba as well as its tremendous contributions to the assistance it has extended to Grenada. History records that there is an unbreakable link between Cuba and Grenada and that the peoples of Grenada have benefited tremendously over the years and continue to benefit from proletarian programmes in the areas of health, education and economic development, *inter alia*. The myriad of sectors in which the Government of Cuba has so fervently contributed to the citizens of our region has exemplified the profound friendship, mutual solidarity and close working relations that continue to exist between the peoples of Cuba and the Caribbean Community. Indeed, at its sixth Meeting of CARICOM Foreign Ministers and Cuba, in June, the Caribbean Community seized the opportunity to once again reiterate its clarion call for an immediate and unconditional end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. Measures to tighten the unjust embargo against Cuba run counter to the strongly-held view that economic development and stability contribute to international peace and security, particularly in the Caribbean region, just as it does in other parts of the world.

Grenada is of the firm belief that recent, bolstered measures aimed at restricting remittances, banking transactions and air services to Cuba from the United States serve only as a detriment to the economic stability of our sister nation, thereby severely affecting the socioeconomic conditions of the Cuban people. We therefore will continue to steadfastly call for an end to the embargo and for an immediate repeal of the Helms-Burton Act.

In conclusion, we believe that nothing is set in stone. Grenada continues to believe that, with the support of multilateralism in this community of nations, there is still hope for a return to good faith dialogue and full normalization of relations between the two Governments in the spirit of true and sincere reconciliation and for this unilateral imposition to become a vestige of the past. Above all, when the rubber meets the road, it is only in unity that we can earnestly fight to overcome the seemingly insurmountable difficulties of the world.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in order to express our support for draft resolution A/74/L.6 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba.

ASEAN aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

This is the fifth year that ASEAN has made a statement in the General Assembly calling for the lifting of the United States embargo against Cuba as soon as possible. It is the eighteenth year that ASEAN member States have voted unanimously in favour of the relevant annual resolution, which has been consistently adopted by an overwhelming majority since it was first submitted in 1992.

ASEAN is firmly committed to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which underpin the multilateral rules-based order. We firmly believe that differences between States should be resolved through engagement and inclusion, not confrontation and isolation. We also strongly believe that differences between States should be resolved on the basis of the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention. ASEAN does not support the imposition of unilateral economic, commercial and financial measures on other countries.

Four years have passed since the restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba in 2015, which was an important step towards the normalization of relations between these two countries and remains key to building better regional relations in the Americas. However, in the past year, we regrettably

have seen regression rather than progression in this important relationship. ASEAN continues to believe that ending the United States economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba would significantly improve the quality of life and living standards of the Cuban people and contribute to the economic and social development of Cuba. It would also advance the General Assembly's efforts towards fulfilling an inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations next year will be an opportunity for us to assess our achievements, reaffirm our support for multilateralism and renew our commitment to the United Nations Charter. In that spirit, ASEAN encourages the United States and Cuba to renew their commitment to an open and constructive dialogue, underpinned by mutual respect.

Once again, ASEAN joins other members of the General Assembly in reiterating its support for the lifting of the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba as soon as possible.

Mr. Ayebare (Uganda): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on draft resolution A/74/L.6, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba has immensely affected both the Cuban economy and the well-being of the Cuban people. The Cuban financial sector is particularly suffering due to the refusal by banking institutions to carry out operations with Cuban banks as well as the closing of accounts and the cancellation of keys established by the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication for the exchange of financial information. Between April 2018 and March 2019, Cuban banking system experienced losses resulting from difficulties with 140 foreign banks. During that period, 12 more foreign banking institutions joined the policy of refusing to provide their services. That threatened the normal functioning and operations of Cuban banking institutions, which must work in an atmosphere of permanent tension, uncertainty and adversity in order to ensure the secure movement of their financial flows.

The overall situation remains a source of deep concern. We strive to work for humankind and for the

well-being of our peoples. Here at the United Nations our leaders agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals and committed to fulfilling the aspirations of the global community so that no one is left behind. The embargo against Cuba impedes the efforts of its people to realize the Sustainable Development Goals and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The OIC therefore joins the call by the overwhelming majority to put an end to the embargo against Cuba. The OIC member States support draft resolution A/74/L.6, entitled "Necessity of lifting the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", and calls on others to vote in favour of it, as they did in past years.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation strongly supports the immediate lifting of the United States blockade against Cuba introduced 57 years ago. We categorically reject the sanctions against Cuba spearheaded by the United States. We believe that it is not a question of problems in the relations between the two States but of Washington's systematic gross violation of international law, above all the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that the discriminatory and illegal practice of the extraterritorial application by the United States of America of its national legislation threatens the overall system of international relations. Those acts undermine the foundations of global and regional stability and make the prevalence of force the norm in international relations in American terms. The question is who will be the next insubordinate one. Life under a sanctions regime is a reality today not only for Cuba or Russia but in fact for up to a third of the world's countries.

The sanctions war unleashed by Washington is to achieve its main goal, which is to remove the undesirable Cuban leadership and to punish its principled position in support of the legitimately elected President of Venezuela, Mr. Maduro. It is a clear example of blatant pressure under a foreign policy in the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine. That treacherous interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation flouts human rights and humanitarian values.

The blockade against Cuba, which has continued since the middle of the last century, has wreaked havoc on its economy. Think about these figures: from April 2018 to March 2019 alone, the embargo

cost \$4.34 billion. The total loss during those years exceeded \$922 billion.

The United States has constricted Havana in terms of energy, having sanctioned foreign companies for oil shipments from Venezuela. Due to fuel shortages, flights to Santo Domingo, Mexico City, Cancún, Caracas, Port-au-Prince and other capitals in the region have been cancelled. It has also had an impact on domestic air travel. Experts estimate that the number of passengers flying with Cuban airlines will be reduced by 40,000 just by the end of the year and the total cost to the industry will be approximately \$10 million.

Obstacles have been imposed to thwart the country's scientific and technical development potential by banning the export and re-export of products with more than 10 per cent of United States components and all telecommunications equipment. The transport and supply infrastructure in Cuba is at risk due to the ban on leasing aircraft and vessels. The tourism industry has been damaged by the ban on the entry of United States cruise ships to the island and visa restrictions.

The most sensitive area of the campaign against Cuba launched by Washington is the humanitarian aspect. The embargo is the main impediment to the full realization of human rights in Cuba, particularly in terms of health care, education and food security. We are appalled by the fact that the ruthless United States pressure has affected the work of Cuban doctors in many developing countries and Cuba's pharmaceutical industry, jeopardizing the health of thousands of ordinary people who use Cuban medicines. In fact, Washington has embarked on a course to slowly suffocate the Cuban people.

By increasing the sanctions and tightening the trade, economic, financial and energy blockade against the island, Washington is preventing the exercise of the inalienable rights of Cuban citizens to a dignified life and to choose their own model of social and economic development.

There is patent hypocrisy on the part of Washington. On the one hand, it publicly supports the fundamental principle of the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development to leave no one behind as the basis for achieving sustainable development. On the other hand, it tightens the blockade, causing millions of ordinary Cubans to suffer deprivation.

We note that such a policy on the island does not meet with international support. The entire developed world, unlike the United States, does not see the development path embraced by the Cuban people as a threat. Adapting the internal political and economic system and establishing economic relations with other countries demonstrate Cuba's openness to both reform and cooperation with the international community.

Washington ignores Cuba's constructive and significant role, its warranted credibility in world affairs and its positive contribution to the promotion of regional integration processes. We strongly condemn that vicious policy, which undermines the fundamental principles of international law and leads to greater confrontation in the world. That unlawful measure does not make sense because it runs counter to the interests of the people of the United States and business.

The Russian Federation has always shown solidarity with the brotherly people of Cuba in overcoming the hardship caused by the sanctions imposed by Washington, underpinning such efforts with broad economic and humanitarian cooperation and development assistance for an island of freedom. We will continue to do so.

In support of our steadfast position, we will once again vote in favour of draft resolution A/74/L.6, which calls for the immediate lifting of the blockade against Cuba without preconditions, in line with the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter on the inadmissibility of any discriminatory measures, infringement of national sovereignty and interference in the internal affairs of States.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Belarus considers all unilateral measures to put pressure on a sovereign State member of the United Nations to be unacceptable. Any such measure imposed without a relevant resolution of the Security Council represents not only a direct violation of the norms and principles of international law, undermining the system of multilateralism and the foundations of civilized relations among nations. In our view, it is a clear example of economic terrorism.

The protracted trade, financial and economic blockade of Cuba by the United States of America is an irresponsible way to put pressure on an independent State in order to force it to change its internal political system, abandon the established foundations of State

administration and undermine the traditional pillars of society.

Sanctions make it difficult to implement social and economic reforms, damages the Cuban economy and diminishes the country's ability to expand trade and inter-bank cooperation and to consolidate the private sector. In general terms, it prevents Havana from participating fully in international financial and economic life, thereby hindering the sustainable development of the country.

The consequences of the economic blockade on Cuba have a negative impact above all on the citizens of the country. In that regard, it is the people of Cuba who are the victims of the ongoing restrictive measures against Havana. Sanctions are a direct violation of the rights of Cuban citizens.

We are equally concerned about the recent lack of significant progress to resolve the situation. The positive diplomatic and political steps taken by the United States and Cuba a few years ago in the context of the normalization of bilateral relations that had started did not develop and became hostage to a new, even tougher policy towards Havana. The Republic of Belarus has always advocated and will continue to advocate that every State should have the right to independently determine its own development model. Economic and political coercion as a way to put pressure on sovereign nations has nothing to do with the current notion of good relations among States.

We sincerely hope that constructive bilateral dialogue between the two countries will be resumed based on the principles of mutual respect and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We call for a complete, unconditional and irreversible lifting of the economic, financial and commercial embargo against Cuba by the United States of America.

The Republic of Belarus, as always, will this year again support draft resolution A/74/L.6 on lifting the blockade against Cuba.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to extend my warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. I would also like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed

by the United States of America against Cuba (A/74/91/Rev.1).

Vietnam aligns itself with the statement made by the representatives of the State of Palestine, Azerbaijan and Singapore on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of South-East Asian Nations, respectively.

For many years the General Assembly has adopted with an overwhelmingly majority a resolution demanding that the United States end its economic, trade and financial blockade against Cuba. The United States embargo imposed on Cuba for almost 60 years represents a violation of international law and an infringement of fundamental rights and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Furthermore, the matter runs counter to the common desire of every nation of the world to build sound and equal international relations, regardless of differences in their political systems, while ensuring the right of every nation to choose its own development path.

As we focus on the global implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the embargo is a serious obstacle to the efforts and endeavours of the people and the Government of Cuba to fully participate in that process. As a country that suffered a United States trade embargo for 19 years, Viet Nam fully understands the difficulties and damage. The reality of the relations between Viet Nam and the United States shows that only constructive dialogue and engagement can foster mutual trust and bring positive change. Embargoes and similar imposed measures only exacerbate the problem.

Today, Viet Nam will therefore vote in favour of draft resolution A/74/L.6. By voting in favour, Viet Nam joins the international community in calling on the United States to put an end to its unilateral embargo against Cuba so that Cuba can exercise its right to participate equitably and fairly in economic and trade relations in accordance with international law.

We also urge the United States Government to reverse its current policy towards Cuba not only for the benefit of the people of the two countries but also for the sake of peace, stability and development in the region and the world at large. At the same time, we appreciate Cuba's desire to continue dialogue and cooperation on issues of mutual interest and to negotiate pending bilateral matters with the United States on as basis of equality, reciprocity and respect for each other's national sovereignty and independence.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Viet Nam's strong support, friendship, cooperation and solidarity with the brotherly people of Cuba and to renew its unwavering commitment to safeguarding the principles of international law as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Kakanur (India): India associates itself with the statements made by the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Foreign Minister of Cuba, among us here today. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report on this issue (A/74/91/Rev.1).

Every year, the Assembly has rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with an extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of people the world over. Last year, 189 Member States voted in favour of resolution 73/8, expressing their strong support for the lifting of the embargo.

The General Assembly has also called on all States to refrain from promulgating and applying, and has urged them to repeal and invalidate, laws and measures that have extraterritorial effects on the sovereignty of other States, in conformity with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law. There can be little doubt that the continued existence of the embargo, in contravention of overwhelming world opinion as expressed by the Assembly, undermines multilateralism and the credibility of the United Nations itself.

As the world's largest democracy, with abiding faith in multilateralism, India stands in solidarity with the Assembly in its unambiguous rejection of domestic laws that have an extraterritorial impact. Such embargoes have the effect of impeding the full achievement of the economic and social development of the population of the country affected, particularly women and children. They also hinder the full enjoyment of human rights, including the right to development, food, medical care and social services, among other things.

Successive reports of the Secretary-General — and this year's report is no exception — have also established that the embargo, particularly through its extraterritorial effects, has had an adverse impact on the Cuban people and the country's development efforts. At the same time, we would like to acknowledge the notable

socioeconomic and development achievements of the Cuban people, particularly the country's high ranking on the human development index and its achievement of several of the Millennium Development Goals.

Four years ago, when launching the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders again strongly urged all States to refrain from any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The continued embargo would severely affect Cuba's ability to comprehensively implement the 2030 Agenda. Cuba's expertise in health care, achieved despite such conditions, enabled it to respond quickly, effectively and in a substantial manner to the General Assembly's call made five years ago to all nations to respond to the Ebola crisis in Africa.

People-to-people contact holds immense possibilities for fostering better understanding between nations. The international community needs to intensify its efforts to promote an environment free from sanctions and embargoes. India hopes that the embargo will be withdrawn at the earliest. India supports draft resolution A/74/L.6, submitted by Cuba.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramirez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico reiterates its clear and firm rejection of the unilateral actions taken against Cuba, including the more than five decades of economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on it, which runs counter to international law. All unilateral measures that seek to change a country's political, economic or social system from the outside contravene the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, especially those that contemplate equality among States and the right to self-determination.

Mexico rejects the enforcement of unilateral laws with extraterritorial effects. We therefore regret the decision of the United States Government to apply, for the first time in history, Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, commonly known as the Helms-Burton Act, which affects not only the Cuban people, but other countries as well. I would also note the 23 August 1996 opinion of the Inter-American Juridical Committee, issued pursuant to the resolution of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, entitled "Free trade and investment in the hemisphere", which states that the foundations and application of the Helms-Burton Act does not comport with international law. Mexico welcomes the renewal

of dialogue and cooperation between the United States and Cuba, as it would provide a good opportunity for both nations to promote their national priorities and develop a shared international agenda on topical international issues.

Mexico and Cuba enjoy a traditional and historical relationship of friendship and closeness, which has recently adopted a more dynamic view of the future through a broad and deep bilateral and regional agenda that reflects the need to renew our institutions in order to face the new challenges shaping the new regional and global scenario. Cuba is a strategic ally of Mexico, and we have worked to endow this relationship with greater meaning and content through a respectful, honest, fluid, intense and trusting dialogue, which has deepened our economic and cooperation ties on the basis of a broad agenda. In this regard, we will seek to promote business and investment opportunities as we strengthen cooperation for development and sharing experiences.

Mexico today is the island's fifth-largest commercial partner and the second in the region. Our growing economic interaction is consolidated, and our cooperation in educational, scientific and cultural spheres has seen concrete progress in at least 15 projects. Visitors between our two countries are increasing year by year. There are currently over 80 flights per week between Mexico and Cuba, and Mexican airlines fly more frequently to Havana than to any other Latin American capital.

Eliminating the economic, commercial and financial embargo would enable Cuba's efforts to adapt the legal and programmatic bases of its Government to modern times, thus yielding greater benefits for the Cuban people. Facilitating its access to the international financial system would promote trade and investment flows for the benefit of the entire region.^[P]_[SEP] Relations between neighbours of the American continent that are based on mutual respect and understanding are critical for the growth and development of the countries of the hemisphere, especially in modern times, which require greater openness and a freer flow of people, goods, technologies and ideas. Additionally, in the current international situation, it is important to reiterate as often as necessary that, in a globalized and interdependent world, it is illusory to think that we can solve global problems or even undertake great regional and national transformations in isolation, without the support of the international community.

Mexico calls on the United Nations to continue defending multilateral institutions and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and promoting the role of international law, not only on principle, but also because a relevant and effective multilateralism will benefit all States and is in all of our own national interests.

Mrs. Azucena (Philippines): For the twenty-eighth year running, we have witnessed today a clear expression of the solidarity of Member States with the Cuban people through overwhelming support for the draft resolution on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (A/74/L.6). From 59 votes in favour in 1992, to 173 in 2002, to 188 in 2012 and 189 in 2018, the international community's demand for an end to the 57-year-long embargo, an unjust and unjustified economic sanctions policy, has clearly grown in strength. It is also the twenty-eighth year that the Philippines has supported this annual resolution and the eighteenth year that the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have voted collectively and unanimously to lift the embargo. The Philippines is clear on its position on Cuba's resolution — we have not imposed and do not intend to impose any laws, regulations or measures that are contrary to the implementation of this annual resolution.

The restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba in 2015 marked a watershed moment in international relations. However, the extraterritorial nature of the blockade continues to intensify. It has been reported that, at current prices, damages to Cuba's economy during almost six decades of implementing the embargo policy have reached \$138.84 billion — over \$4 billion in 2018 alone.

The blockade presents a major obstacle for Cuba's socioeconomic development. It poses a serious challenge to Cuba's implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It violates international law. It is contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

With cultural and economic ties dating as far back as the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade in the early sixteenth century, Cuba and its people will always have the unwavering support of the Philippines in their legitimate claim to pursuing their own sovereign path to peace and development. The United States must lift

the embargo against Cuba unilaterally, unconditionally and once and for all.

Mr. Mimouni (Algeria): We come together once again to consider General Assembly agenda item 39 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba and to reaffirm our deep concerns over the tremendous economic and social challenges Cuba is still facing as a consequence of a blockade that exacerbates the suffering of the Cuban people. Today's meeting is also a reminder of the extreme importance of this annual debate, which mobilizes each year the whole international community and appeals to us collectively on the necessity of upholding the guiding principles and ideals that are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and which are at the core of our Organization.

The annual adoption by an overwhelming majority of the members of the General Assembly of a resolution calling for the lifting of the blockade against Cuba for many consecutive years reflects the strong and steadfast support of the international community for the lifting of the unjustified and unnecessary embargo imposed on Cuba for nearly six decades. Algeria reiterates its position on the continuation and the tightening of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against the sisterly country of Cuba. These unjustified sanctions not only exacerbate the suffering of the Cuban people by depriving them of their basic human rights, but also obstruct the economic development of Cuba and hamper its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I note that Algeria has always stressed that Cuba, like any other State Member of the United Nations, has the right to freedom of trade and navigation and to expand trade on a mutually agreed basis with any economic partner. Algeria also fully shares the position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which has consistently rejected the imposition of unilateral acts or extraterritorial regulations that impede the development of any country and all forms of coercive economic and trade measures. This position reflects the unwavering principles of Algeria's foreign policy, which is why Algeria expresses its full support and solidarity with the Government and the brotherly people of Cuba.

Algeria believes that today, more than ever, it is important to rebuild the momentum generated a few years ago and build on the positive achievements

witnessed in recent years in the relations between Cuba and the United States. The establishment of a constructive and respectful bilateral dialogue, in full respect of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, would certainly chart a new way forward for the full normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States and lead to the lifting of the unnecessary long-standing embargo for the mutual benefit of the peoples of both countries, of the whole region and beyond.

Finally, Algeria aligns itself with the statements that were delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, the Group of African States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the observer of the Observer State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation would like to make the following observations in its national capacity.

Allow me first to welcome my dear friend, Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to the General Assembly Hall today. I wish to assure him and his country, Cuba, that the Syrian Arab Republic will always support the constancy of the people and the Government of Cuba in confronting the unjust embargo imposed on them by the United States since 1962. Syria will not forget the position that our friends from Cuba took as we began to confront the terrorist war starting nine years ago, as well as their support as we have dealt with the Israeli occupation of the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and the occupied Palestinian territory. Furthermore, my country is proud that so many of our young women and men have studied medicine and engineering in the well-established universities of Cuba, which have remained a beacon for knowledge and science despite the unjust United States embargo that has gone on for almost six decades now.

My country, Syria, believes that the condemnation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on the Cuban people is no longer sufficient, particularly in the light of the current United States Administration's policy of escalation, which is based on tightening the embargo so that its effects extend beyond Cuban borders. In this

regard, I would refer to the measures recently taken by the United States Administration under Title III of the so-called Helms-Burton Act, opening the door for judicial measures against Cuban companies or individuals, or even third countries that engage in trade with Cuba, by United States courts.

The United States authorities have not stopped there: they have now launched a new aggressive policy against the Cuban people with a view to depriving them of energy and fuel through sanctions imposed on any party or individual that participates in shipping or facilitating the transfer of energy or fuel to Cuba, including tankers, transport companies, the owners of ships and their flag States, and insurance companies. These measures are in addition to other new restrictions on reducing the number of civilian and commercial flights to Cuba and preventing any United States flights from landing in any Cuban city, except for the capital, Havana.

The Syrian Arab Republic fully supports draft resolution A/74/L.6, which we consider to be a clear reflection of the United Nations political and legal position that rejects unilateral economic coercive measures as collective punishment of an entire people. Such measures undermine the United Nations system, infringe on its terms of reference, hamper the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, violate the right of States to development, and impede international trade and the full realization of all rights protected by human rights instruments.

Today we are 11 years away from the target completion date for the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. No one can argue that the economic embargo imposed by some Governments against so many States in the world is not directly hampering the economic and social development of the people of those States.

The periodic reports of the Secretary-General and the information and assessments they provide on the damages and losses caused by the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on Cuba prompt us today to propose a new approach that goes beyond mere condemnation of the embargo and a call for its end. Instead, we call for the implementation of the Organization's recommendations on justice for the victims of those measures and the establishment of an international register of unilateral measures that affect human rights. We also support the idea of a General

Assembly declaration on unilateral measures and the rule of law. We call for the Governments of Member States that impose illegal economic embargoes to be held fully responsible — politically, economically and financially — for the losses inflicted on economies of the target countries of illegal blockades, given that such measures lead to the collapse of vital economic sectors that provide basic services to citizens, particularly in the areas of health, education, nutrition and agriculture, industry, trade, communications and technology.

Like the Cuban people, the Syrian people have suffered for decades now, and continue to do so, from the grave repercussions of the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed by the United States and other Governments. These dire repercussions have reached unprecedented levels in recent years. Syria's economy has been sabotaged and its efforts at development handicapped, especially since it has also had to suffer the effects of a terrorist war, unethical policies directed against it by some Governments with the aim of hampering our reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts, and the return of internally displaced persons and Syrian refugees to their homes and their homeland.

Year after year, we in Syria repeat this question: how can the representatives of certain States come to the rostrum at the United Nations to call for expediting the achievement of the goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for adhering to the slogan of "leaving no one behind" while, at the same time, their own Governments are imposing unilateral coercive economic measures on Cuba, Syria, Iran, Venezuela, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Palestine, the Russian Federation, China and other States?

In conclusion, let me recall the words of Mr. Idriss Jazairy, Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights:

"I am profoundly concerned that unilateral coercive measures are contributing to the ongoing suffering of the Syrian people. Claims that they exist to protect the Syrian population, or to promote a democratic transition, are hard to reconcile with the economic and humanitarian suffering being caused."

This general assessment of the tragic repercussions for all peoples that suffer from unilateral economic measures was made by a high-level United Nations

representative. In Syria, we believe that the time has come to put an irreversible end to the policies of economic sanctions that some Governments of Member States adopt. It is the right course of action if we are truly committed to the principles of equality and justice, as well as the right of all peoples of the world to well-being and development without discrimination or restrictions.

Mr. Phansourivong (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/74/91/Rev.1) under this agenda item.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representatives of Azerbaijan and Singapore on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its belief that in an era of interdependence in the world, the application of unilateral measures with extraterritorial implications not only contravenes the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in particular the sovereign equality of States, independence, territorial integrity and the non-interference in internal affairs, but it also hampers the national development of other countries. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has therefore neither promulgated nor applied any domestic laws or measures of such nature against other countries. For this reason, my delegation will continue to support and vote in favour of draft resolution A/74/L.6 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is convinced that the ending of the embargo will be of mutual benefit not only to the countries concerned, but also to the world at large. This is because we believe that by doing so it will create an environment conducive to the enhancement of dialogue and cooperation between the two countries, which will lead to the improved relations between the two countries, which, in turn, will contribute to ameliorating the well-being of the Cuban people and the Government of their country and enable Cuba to engage in trade and economic exchanges with nations around the world.

Mr. Suan (Myanmar): My delegation welcomes the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, who is present in the Assembly Hall today.

Myanmar aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of 77 and China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

It is sad that we must once again take the floor in this Assembly Hall to join the resounding call to end the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba for the past 57 years. Myanmar believes in the sacrosanct principles of international relations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, namely, sovereign equality, the non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the peaceful settlement of disputes. We have always been against the extraterritorial application of the blockade and the politicization of human rights issues, which are against international law.

Myanmar knows very well from its own experience that embargoes or sanctions imposed on a country for political objectives brings only negative effects to the lives of ordinary people. For too long, the Cuban people have endured economic hardships because of the unilateral embargo. They have been deprived of their right to development, and the hardest hit are the most vulnerable groups — women and children — whose well-being and enjoyment of their inherent human rights should not be subject to political confrontations.

History has taught us that hostility, political pressure and coercive measures never help promote human rights. Only mutual respect, mutual understanding and cooperation will pave the way for peace, prosperity, justice and equality, thereby enabling the enjoyment of human rights.

We believe that the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba will lead to a great opportunity for the two neighbouring countries to enjoy greater peace and prosperity and extend those benefits to the whole region. We are confident that the eventual lifting of the embargo imposed against Cuba will create an economic environment conducive to Cuba realizing its full development potential.

We strongly hope that the two great nations and peoples of the United States and the Republic of Cuba have the wisdom, courage and ability to address the

protracted political problem between them and enter through dialogue into a new chapter of friendship and cooperation for the good of their peoples. We urge the United States and Cuba to revive and continue the constructive engagement of the 2016 rapprochement.

As a friend of both countries, Myanmar will continue to support every constructive effort aimed at ending the 57-year-long embargo as soon as possible. In this spirit of hope and goodwill, and as we have done in the past 27 years, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against the Republic of Cuba (A/74/L.6).

Mr. Kamau (Kenya): At critical points in history, we are called upon to re-evaluate trends and policies that have had a great impact or remain a challenge to sustainable peace and development for all and that create disharmony in global coexistence in our world. Today, we, States Members of the United Nations, are gathered in this Hall yet again to consider the annual draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba (A/74/L.6).

Kenya aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States — statements that seek to end the unilateral sanctions against Cuba.

The question before us is whether sanctions, especially unilateral sanctions and embargoes, can continue to be tolerated by this body. The world has witnessed that sanctions weaken targeted countries, destroy lives and livelihoods, increase the fragility of countries and have a detrimental impact on individuals and institutions. Let us not mince our words today: unilateral sanctions, which are seemingly perennial and untargeted, are a clear abuse of human rights.

Current political and socioeconomic trends, including our very own ongoing United Nations reforms, call upon us to reach a higher ideal that will ensure no people — and no nation — is left behind because of sanctions. Let us not allow sanctions and embargoes, unilateral or otherwise, to become part of the instruments that undermine Cuba's development and leave that country and her people behind. The United Nations should never uphold or support any negative or punitive actions, including sanctions and embargoes in perpetuity.

For the foregoing reasons, Kenya always votes in favour of the annual draft resolution on the necessity to eliminate that prolonged burden on the Cuban people. We, as Kenya, have said it before, and we say it here again today: these sanctions against Cuba are not in the spirit of the United Nations and they must be brought to an end.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Permit me to take this opportunity to extend fraternal greetings to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms our unwavering support for and solidarity with him and the revolutionary Government and the noble people of Cuba.

My delegation also aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representatives of Azerbaijan and Grenada on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Caribbean Community, respectively.

Once again, we assemble in this Hall not simply to express our firm support of draft resolution A/74/L.6, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba", but also to overwhelmingly decry the unilateral embargo, which is an act that remains an affront to all established international norms and elemental humanity. This economic, commercial and financial blockade against the indomitable Cuban people was wrong at the time it was first implemented, and, six decades later, it remains unjustifiable and unlawful.

Our message today, as has been consistently repeated since 1992, is that we categorically condemn the blockade and cannot remain silent while the United States of America — a country, I must add, that is not just a long-standing partner of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines but one that we consider our sisterly neighbour and friend — continues to flagrantly violate international law and the sacrosanct principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In the twenty-first century, unilateral and extraterritorial coercive measures have no place.

In the light of the prejudicial effect of the lingering harmful blockade at the national, regional and international levels, particularly on disenfranchised and vulnerable people, Cuba's resolve in its struggle in pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

and its Sustainable Development Goals is all the more commendable. Cuba continues to epitomize the spirit of solidarity, integrity, complementarity and cooperation that is paramount in our rules-based international system and multilateralism. Indeed, the majority of States Members of the United Nations have profited from Cuba's invaluable assistance, solidarity and support. In the areas of health care and humanitarian assistance, Cuba's contribution to underserved areas in the world is unparalleled and was typified by its role in the fight against Ebola in Africa.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines attests to Cuba's benevolence, which has touched the hearts and souls of Vincentians throughout our multi-island State in one way or another. For this reason, we remain eternally grateful to the Government and the people of Cuba.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomed the venerable approach of the former President of the United States, Barack Obama, in seeking to normalize relations with Cuba. In his famous 2016 speech during the first official visit by a sitting President of the United States of America to Cuba since the imposition of the economic blockade, he stated,

"I have come here to bury the last remnant of the Cold War [in the Americas]. I have come here to extend the hand of friendship to the Cuban people".

It was a sign of hope, which placed faith and confidence in diplomacy, dialogue and our multilateral system.

Lamentably, in recent times, there have been efforts aimed at undermining and reversing the small, yet meaningful advances realized under President Obama towards rapprochement with Cuba. These recent efforts, including the decision by the Government of the United States of America to permit, under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, the possibility of taking legal action in United States courts against entities dealing commercially with properties legally nationalized in Cuba during the 1960s, ostensibly seek to reinforce the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, thus exacerbating and deepening the suffering of the Cuban people.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines enjoys healthy and robust relations with the Governments and the peoples of both Cuba and the United States of America. We believe that cooperation in keeping with the principles of sovereign equality and non-intervention, rather than confrontation, augur well for the socioeconomic

development of the two countries. We also believe that dialogue and constructive engagement between Cuba and the United States are essential. Dialogue has and will always be the just path chosen by civilized nations at this soon-to-be 75-year-old Organization. Isolationism and exclusionism within our international system have no relevance. Lifting the economic, commercial and financial blockade is therefore critical for the people and the Government of Cuba to achieve full prosperity.

It is our hope that the resounding affirmation in favour of lifting the economic blockade, which has reverberated throughout the General Assembly, will, this year, resonate in the hearts and minds of the members of the Congress of the United States of America and that, in their infinite wisdom, they will correct this unlawful policy by doing what is just and lift the blockade. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its unequivocal rejection of the antiquated, irrelevant, indefensible, illegal and illegitimate economic blockade imposed on the heroic Government and the people of Cuba by the United States of America, which we all agree is an indispensable multilateral actor. We urge our cherished friend, the United States of America, to act in the name of humanity and decency and in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, at today's meeting. China aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For 27 consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted by overwhelming majorities resolutions entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", calling on all countries to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law and to repeal or invalidate laws and measures with extraterritorial effects that affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation. Regrettably, however, those resolutions have for many years not been effectively implemented, and the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba has not ended.

According to statistics, in the period April 2018 to March 2019, the embargo cost Cuba over \$2 billion in foreign trade losses and over \$700 million in financial losses, which is contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, inflicting enormous economic and financial losses on the Cuban people and disrupting the normal economic, commercial and financial ties between other countries and Cuba. The embargo has also hampered the efforts of the Cuban people to eradicate poverty and achieve other Sustainable Development Goals, thereby undermining their rights to life and development.

China consistently advocates respecting the right of countries to independently choose their own social systems and development path, safeguarding the international order based on international law and defending international fairness and justice. We are against imposing unilateral sanctions on other countries by military, political, economic or other means. We have always strictly implemented and abided by the relevant General Assembly resolutions. China and Cuba have maintained economic trade and personnel exchanges, and our friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in all fields continues to make progress, in line with the aspirations of the peoples of our two countries and in a manner conducive to Cuba's economic and social development.

The world today is undergoing a profound change without precedent in the past 100 years. Peace, development, cooperation and win-win relations have become the leitmotiv of our times, and the general trend towards globalization is unstoppable. Dialogue as equals and friendly consultation are the best way to resolve differences. Unilateralism, protectionism and bullying will eventually harm those who engage in them.

China hopes that the United States and Cuba will continue to advance the normalization of their relations and that the United States will completely abolish the embargo policy against Cuba as soon as possible. Both parties should move with the times by forging normal inter-State relations in accordance with the purposes of the United Nations Charter and the basic norms of international relations. Doing so would also serve the common interests of the two countries and their peoples, promotes peace and stability throughout the Americas and contributes to the common development of the international community. China will once again

vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Cuba under this agenda item (A/74/L.6).

Ms. Sweeb (Suriname): Suriname aligns itself with the statements made by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representatives of Azerbaijan, Uganda and Grenada on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Caribbean Community, respectively.

As the economic, financial and commercial embargo against Cuba and its people continues and is nearing a sixth decade, Suriname must once again reiterate its disapproval in the strongest terms. Year after year, the overwhelming majority — the near unanimity — of nations takes a stand against the embargo imposed by the United States of America because it impedes the unlocking of the full potential for the economic and social development of this sovereign sister nation of Cuba.

The recent tightening of the blockade on Cuba increases the effects of its extraterritorial application and severely affects Cuba's trade relations with other nations in our region and beyond. It therefore continues to gravely undermine the efforts of the people of Cuba to achieve development by employing all the potential of the Cuban economy for the implementation of its national economic and social development plan. Yet, despite the undue hardships suffered in now-critical sectors of its society, the Cuban nation continues to offer the international community a peaceful and generous stance on cooperation in many fields, and in this regard, with heartfelt gratitude, we salute Cuba for its solidarity.

Mr. Dogan (Croatia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As a small State, Suriname remains firmly committed to upholding the principles of international law and therefore condemns the imposition of all unilateral coercive measures with extraterritorial implications. They are not in line with the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, which are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and have always guided us in our collective commitments towards achieving peaceful and sustainable development for all nations.

My Government expresses regret that the broadened continuation of the economic and financial blockade

sets the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States even further back. We therefore call upon the United States to utilize peaceful dialogue rather than economic coercion to resolve political differences.

Suriname will vote in favour of draft resolution A/74/L.6. By voting in favour, we join the international community in calling on the United States to put an immediate end to its obsolete policy and lift the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, as it is indeed not necessary.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Gabon has always voted in favour of the successive resolutions on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. My country has done so in compliance with the obligations stemming from the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the purposes and principles it sets forth, which are based on cooperation among States and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of African States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of 77 and China.

My country remains concerned about the maintenance of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba, with its consequences on the Cuban population extending to those residing outside Cuba. If this embargo is not lifted, it could have nefarious effects on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals not only to the detriment of Cuba but also to several countries in the region.

Gabon strongly hopes that the United Nations resolutions that echo the collective support for the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States of America will be respected and enforced, which would allow Cuba to participate in international trade and take full advantage of the resulting dividends. In the same vein, Gabon calls on the international community to continue its efforts towards normalizing relations between the two countries. We are convinced that only the principles of dialogue and cooperation will help to create a climate of trust and calm that will facilitate significant progress in this regard.

For all the foregoing reasons, Gabon maintains its position on this issue and will vote in favour of draft

resolution A/74/L.6 on the lifting of the blockade imposed on Cuba.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): Angola aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Tunisia and Azerbaijan on behalf of the Group of African States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively, and by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We gather once again to discuss a subject that, due to its anachronistic character, should already have been consigned to the archival vault of the United Nations. The continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba for six decades is unjust and a retrograde measure that inflicts serious damage on the Cuban economy, with grave consequences for its people, especially the most vulnerable.

The embargo has impeded the full realization of economic and social development in the country and consequently restricted the enjoyment of basic human rights, including the right to development, sustenance, health care and social services, which will undoubtedly affect the implementation of Cuba's national economic and social development plan and negatively affect its fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Angola reaffirms its commitment to respecting, preserving and promoting the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law as they constitute the essence of multilateralism and a collective effort aimed at maintaining international peace and security, economic growth and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In addition to running contrary to international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the embargo has inflicted enormous damage on the Cuban economy. The extraterritorial nature of the embargo is reflected in the financial persecution of the country and its banks as well as the imposition of new fines on institutions for violating United States Government rules against Cuba. According to the Cuban authorities, on 17 April, the United States Department of State announced its decision to permit judicial actions to be taken in United States courts against Cuban enterprises, companies and individuals, or third countries that do business with properties nationalized in the 1960s, pursuant to Title III of the Helms-Burton Act. This decision ended the practice of

earlier United States Administrations that, since 1996, suspended this possibility every six months.

Since the implementation of the State Department decision, Cuba's economic activities have been powerfully affected, especially Cuban relations with foreign-trade operations and those dealing with foreign investments. No citizen or sector of the economy escapes the negative effects of this unilateral policy, which hinders the development that every country is entitled to construct in a sovereign manner. Accordingly, Angola encourages the United States and Cuba to continue to build a relationship based on dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect for the benefit of both countries and both peoples.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We align ourselves with the statements made by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Nicaragua joins the international community in reiterating once again its rejection of the criminal, illegal, immoral and unjust blockade imposed on the brotherly Cuban people — an internationalist people who are in solidarity with and always willing to help all nations.

As always, we are honoured by the presence of our brother, Comrade Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and his distinguished delegation, who shared with us once again the ravages and the negative economic, financial and commercial effects that the blockade has had on the Cuban people, the author of which is far from heeding the call of the international community represented in the General Assembly. Although it has been called upon to end those measures, it has intensified them and taken additional measures and decisions against the noble and courageous Cuban people.

Like every developing country and the entire international community at large, Nicaragua notes with concern how the efforts of the Cuban people to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are being hindered by the intensification of the blockade, which is violating the human rights of an entire people and their right to development. Cuba stated that, from April 2018 to March 2019, the blockade has resulted in losses to Cuba totalling \$4.343 billion directly affecting various vulnerable sectors, such as health care, education and sports, among others. We

firmly condemn the new extraterritorial measures imposed by the current United States Administration under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, whose objective is to harm vulnerable economic sectors of the Cuban economy and the Cuban people and block access to financial resources and new technologies, which are measures that violate in and of themselves the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

It is clear that such unilateral restrictive measures seriously affect the human rights of all peoples. Such measures have the publicly announced objective of leading to a regime change in Cuba. We believe that no State has the right to impose its will on others through unilateral coercive economic measures that violate international law and the United Nations Charter. The implementation of such policy is illegitimate, illegal and undoes the gains made in global economic governance.

We are sending a message of love and brotherhood to the Government and the people of Cuba — to the more than 11 million Cuban hearts — and thank them for their contribution to all the social campaigns and programmes in Nicaragua, including in the areas of health care, education, sports and so many others, while letting them know in the strongest terms that our peoples are, and will always remain, united, in their cause on the path towards victory. We fully believe that international solidarity with Cuba will remain in force and that the international community will condemn once again the criminal blockade, as well as all extraterritorial measures that continue to increasingly adversely affect the brotherly Republic of Cuba.

It is admirable that, in its struggle against the blockade, Cuba has never ceased to contribute selflessly to humankind. It is a model of solidarity and cultural and scientific development for the world. Its cause is echoed today by the international consensus, the Caribbean Community, the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the great African continent, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other groups and States, all of which reaffirm their solidarity with Cuba and call for immediately ending the blockade.

Nicaragua hopes that dialogue based on equality will be established between the Governments of Cuba and the United States and that the path forward towards ending the blockade definitively will be taken up. We wish to share with the General Assembly the

words that our Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, President of Nicaragua, and our Vice President and First Lady Rosario Murillo, said to President Miguel Díaz Canel Bermúdez:

“Cuba has been, and is, an inspiration and model for all free peoples — women and men — who are determined to remain free in the world. Cuba, which embodies dignity, resistance and the unlimited heroism of yesterday, today and always, is moving forward towards strength and new victories”.

Nicaragua will always stand united with the formidable spirit of Martí, Fidel, Raúl, Díaz Canel and the great people of Cuba. As it has done every time in past years, Nicaragua will vote in favour of draft resolution A/74/L.6, and today, by universally approving the draft resolution introduced by Cuba, the General Assembly will be defending multilateralism, the Charter, peaceful coexistence among nations and the promotion of the culture of peace of which we all speak and for which we all yearn.

Ms. Young (Belize): I have the honour of delivering this statement on behalf of the Government and the people of Belize in support of agenda item 39, entitled, “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. We do so, fortified by the universally accepted belief that international law brooks no exceptions for violations of the rule of law.

Belize aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Grenada on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

Belize and Cuba share a special bilateral relationship that is rooted in Belize’s deep respect and admiration for the significant role Cuba has played in Latin America and the Caribbean as a pioneering force of South-South cooperation, and globally, as a supporter of the aspirations of oppressed peoples everywhere, even though it itself faces extreme economic and financial pressures. While the formalization of diplomatic relations with Cuba occurred only in 1995, our ties can be traced as far back as the dawn of Belize’s independence. The solidarity Cuba demonstrated to our fledgling democracy is indelibly etched in our history and remains the foundation of an unbreakable friendship between our two peoples.

Over the years, our two countries have deepened cooperation, primarily in the health and education

sectors, two areas where Belizeans have needs and our Cuban friends have strengths. Since 1999, our people have enjoyed the care of Cuban medical practitioners and, with the recently concluded cooperation agreement on health, we will ensure that there will be no shortage of health specialists to serve the neediest in our country. In addition to the offer of medical expertise, Cuba has also been magnanimous in its offer of training for our own medical practitioners and other professionals. To date, some 200 Belizeans have graduated from Cuban universities. Belize and Cuba continue to expand their areas of cooperation, reaching into key sectors, such as agriculture, tourism, culture and disaster preparedness, which can have mutual benefits for both our countries and, most importantly, for our peoples.

Despite all the good that has come and can only come by working together, the Cuban embargo works persistently to drive a wedge between Cuba and the rest of the world. The recent about-face in United States Government policy towards Cuba signals a most worrisome tightening of the blockade and a further expansion of its extraterritorial application. Sanctions are being expanded to more Cuban entities and sub-entities, causing considerable damage to the country’s economy. Moreover, it was announced earlier this year that judicial actions can be taken in United States courts against Cuban enterprises or companies or against Cuban individuals or third countries that do business with properties nationalized in the 1960s. Most recently, efforts have begun to cut off the fuel supply to Cuba and its people.

It requires no stretch of the imagination to understand and know the far-reaching implications of those actions. History itself is replete with examples of the humanitarian crises that have been forced upon such peoples as the native peoples of the Americas and of the injustices they suffered as a result of measures inflicted by greater powers with the aim of denying them the basic necessities for self-sustenance. But that is not the history that should define us now. Together, through the United Nations, we have built a strong foundation of international legal norms and standards intended to ensure that all peoples everywhere can equally enjoy fundamental human rights and freedoms and that they can do so in harmony with one another and with nature. Given the fragility of peace and security and the fragility of our planet, we can ill afford to revert to or, worse yet, tolerate actions that would pit brother against brother and promote righteousness over justice.

After 27 years of calling for an end to the economic blockade, it is unacceptable that not only should it persist but that it should now be worsening. This is a serious travesty of international justice. Belize desires nothing more than a fair and equitable global order, with the rule of law as its guarantor. Accordingly, we stand firmly in solidarity with Cuba and repeat our most urgent call for the lifting of the blockade against Cuba and its people.

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): I would like to warmly welcome Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba.

Indonesia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the observer of the State of Palestine and the representatives Azerbaijan, Uganda and Singapore on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively.

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the item under discussion today (A/74/91/Rev.1).

Indonesia has on numerous occasions joined the majority voice at the General Assembly to end the long-standing economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. Today, Indonesia once again reaffirms its commitment to supporting and taking action on the draft resolution of the General Assembly for the immediate ending of the embargo by the United States against Cuba (A/74/L.6). We support the adoption of the draft resolution for the following reasons.

The President returned to the Chair.

First, Indonesia reaffirms its strong opposition to unilateral embargoes and extraterritorial coercive measures that undermine the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and the freedom of international trade and navigation as governed by international law, including the law of the sea.

Secondly, Indonesia reaffirms its fundamental belief that the continued imposition of the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo violates the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, which are enshrined in many international legal instruments, including the Charter of the United

Nations, and in the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States.

Thirdly, Indonesia considers that such an embargo undermines the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which urges States to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are not in line with international law and the United Nations Charter or that impede full achievement of economic and social development.

Indonesia underlines the importance of enhanced dialogue with a view to ending the embargo imposed on Cuba and towards normalizing relations. We recall the positive steps taken in 2015 and 2016, which indicated the warming of bilateral relations between the two countries. We therefore encourage continued efforts towards the normalization of relations through open and constructive dialogue. It is our deep and lasting hope that this sincere and constructive message will be received positively.

Mr. Kim Song (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): At the outset, I warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, who is attending this important meeting today.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, proceeding from the principled position of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of 77 to oppose unilateral sanctions in all forms, fully supports the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (A/74/L.6).

We denounce the United States embargo on Cuba as a challenge to the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as an infringement of sovereignty and a crime against humanity. The unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States against sovereign States draw condemnation and denunciations from the international community as time wears on and only serve to bring about the isolation of the United States itself. Due to the United States' economic and financial blockade and commercial embargo, which have lasted more than 60 years, Cuba's economic losses are estimated to have reached \$1 trillion. But the Cuban people have been very successful in their struggle to safeguard their system and achieve economic development and prosperity with the active support

of the States Members of the United Nations. They are advancing steadily along the road of socialism, which they themselves have chosen, and last year they achieved 1.2 per cent economic growth even in the face of sanctions and natural disasters.

International support for and solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba in their just cause are also increasing. The General Assembly has adopted 27 resolutions requesting an end to the United States economic embargo on Cuba by an overwhelming majority of all members except for the United States and Israel. The longer the anachronistic United States economic embargo on Cuba continues, the more the Cuban people will work to redouble their efforts.

In conclusion, the delegation of Democratic People's Republic of Korea would once again like to express its support for and solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba in their just cause of protecting their country and sovereignty.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Grenada, the observer of the Observer State of Palestine and the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively.

It remains a source of concern that we are obliged to gather in this venue once again to consider the agenda item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". As the consecutive consideration of this agenda item enters its twenty-eighth year and the blockade nears its sixth decade, we note with concern that the embargo, which was imposed in a bygone era, is today being applied with an even greater level of intensity and rigour than when it was first instituted.

The situation is aggravated by the immense social and economic dislocation that accompanies the embargo's continued retention. We remain troubled by its disproportionate impact on the lives of ordinary Cubans. In an environment in which all the members of the Assembly have agreed to focus attention on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is a regrettable contradiction that the embargo continues to be maintained even as we proclaim the need to leave no one behind. In sum, the embargo constitutes the principal obstacle to the sustainable

development of the Cuban economy. As a small island developing State that is highly dependent on the rules-based global order, Jamaica is gravely concerned about the impact that the economic, commercial and financial restrictions have on Cuba's economy, not least of which are its tourism, energy and telecommunications sectors. In that regard, we note with concern the reported losses of more than \$2 billion to Cuba's foreign trade over the past fiscal year. We also deplore the limitations placed on Cuba's productive capacity, including with respect to the restrictions that inhibit its ability to guarantee the secure undertaking of cross-border financial transactions and foreign investment business. Reports of sustained financial losses of more than \$725.8 million — a 35 per cent increase between April 2018 and March 2019 compared to the previous period — are not insignificant.

Jamaica has long enjoyed fraternal and cooperative ties with Cuba that have provided a basis for the development of a vibrant, dynamic framework of bilateral relations, which persists undiminished despite the challenges brought about by the embargo. Indeed, we have benefited significantly from a range of programmes generously provided by Cuba in various social, economic and cultural areas, and we remain committed to maintaining the strength of our relationship. We are also determined to support the continued growth and development of our CARICOM region, and we regard the retention of the punitive embargo as going against the grain of that collective objective.

Our Cuban brothers and sisters deserve the same opportunities that we all enjoy, which is to pursue and realize their social and economic development in the manner that best suits them, to which they are entitled as a sovereign nation and member in good standing of the Assembly. They should not be denied that right, especially given the international community's unswerving commitment to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It should therefore concern us all that Cuba's prospects for achieving sustainable development are stymied by the progressive and steady tightening of the embargo under the provisions of the Helms-Burton Act.

The international community has been consistent, convincing and clear in denouncing the embargo, as it contravenes the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, runs counter to international law and violates fundamental humanitarian principles. For Jamaica, which enjoys strong relations with both

Cuba and the United States of America, we hope that a framework of cooperation, mutual respect and understanding can be established that will ensure their peaceful coexistence within our region. We remain available to lend our support to any endeavour that will advance that objective and call on others to do likewise.

In conclusion, I reiterate our full support for draft resolution A/74/L.6, introduced under this agenda item, and hope that in the very near future we will be able to dispense with the need for its adoption by virtue of the removal of the embargo and the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba.

Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe): Zimbabwe would like to acknowledge the presence among us today of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba.

Zimbabwe associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the observer of the Observer State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For the past 27 years, the General Assembly has expressed its overwhelming support for and solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba through its decisive support to the annual resolution calling for the lifting of the embargo imposed on that sovereign country by the United States of America. Moreover, Zimbabwe has repeatedly reiterated its call to the Government of the United States of America to end the unilateral and illegal economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba 56 years ago. In addition to breaching international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States, the embargo constitutes a violation of Cuba's right to fully interact with the international community, as well as its right to development.

Almost a year ago, on 1 November 2018, the 193 States Members of the United Nations held the twenty-seventh consecutive annual vote of the General Assembly on a draft resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", which was adopted as resolution 73/8 by a near-unanimous vote, with 189 in favour, two abstentions and two against. In this regard, the international community is called upon to reiterate its strongest opposition to the promulgation and imposition

of unilateral coercive measures on Cuba, given their extraterritorial implications and their illegal character.

In the past year, we have seen the tightening of the blockade continuing to be the central pivot of the United States Government policy towards Cuba, with more notable effects of its extraterritorial application. All these actions have been taken to achieve the deliberate and declared objective of causing considerable damage to the country's economy by intimidating the international business community.

Zimbabwe is also reeling under the heavy burden of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the Government of the United States of America through the so-called Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001. This has seen our country being denied access to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank development finance and credit facilities. The Act works in conjunction with United States exchange orders, which are renewed annually to prohibit some Zimbabwean business entities and individuals from doing any business with the United States of America. The country's entire economy has been affected by these illegal sanctions.

These unjustified and oppressive illegal sanctions continue to cause untold suffering to the people of our great country. Their direct and indirect debilitating impacts have equally been felt by our neighbours. We are grateful that on 18 August the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of State and Government, meeting in Dar Es-Salaam, Tanzania, took a bold and historic decision to declare October 25 of every year as the day on which the entire SADC region would collectively voice its disapproval and condemnation of the illegal sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries Heads of State and Government, during their recent summit held from 25 to 26 October in Baku, welcomes the SADC decision. We are grateful for that. Indeed, on 25 October, together with our friends in SADC and across Africa and many other parts of the world, we rose up collectively and said, enough is enough. The illegal sanctions are an albatross on the people of Zimbabwe in terms of their development, well-being and prosperity and are hindering our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; they should be removed now, without any conditions.

In the same vein, Zimbabwe today stands together with Cuba and like-minded countries and calls on the international community to continue working together towards the removal of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba and the reversal and elimination of all unilateral coercive measures that the United States has imposed on other countries, given, among other things, their illegal nature.

Mr. Matjila (South Africa): Allow me to acknowledge the presence of the honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, at this important debate, which seeks to end the injustice of the embargo against Cuba.

South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; and the representative of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of African States.

We welcome draft resolution A/74/L.6 and the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba” (A/74/91), which once again clearly reflect the overwhelming support of the States Members of the United Nations for an end to this injustice.

The imposition of these unilateral coercive measures by the United States contravenes the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, to which we all are committed as Member States. It has clearly caused immeasurable damage to the development of the people of Cuba and can surely no longer be justified.

Relations between South Africa and Cuba dates back to well before the historic 1994 democratic elections. The friendship and solidarity between South Africa and Cuba are deep-rooted and enduring. At great sacrifice, Cuba made a significant contribution to the liberation of South Africa, for which we are eternally grateful. In that regard, we pay special homage to the fallen Cuban combatants who sacrificed their lives for the attainment of a free and democratic South Africa, particularly as we celebrate our country’s twenty-fifth anniversary of freedom.

South Africa will therefore continue to support the Cuban people in their struggle to end the economic,

financial and commercial blockade unilaterally imposed by the United States against Cuba. That is a principled position that is supported by the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations.

The window of opportunity that opened up briefly for the normalization of diplomatic relations and a relaxing of the embargo under the previous United States Administration has been regrettably reversed, with the imposition of further stringent sanctions against Cuba. As a result, the Cuban people are once again faced with a monumental obstacle to the fulfilment of their national development goals and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In that regard, South Africa has noted with concern the escalation of United States aggression against Cuba and the region and the rolling back of the previous United States Administration’s policy of engagement with Cuba. South Africa condemns the activation, as announced on 3 April, of title III of the 1996 Helms-Burton Act, which allows legal action through United States courts for reparations following the nationalization of properties in Cuba in 1959.

The intensification of the extraterritorial application of the embargo through the activation of title III of the Helms Burton Act is strongly rejected by South Africa, as third countries are increasingly being discouraged from pursuing normal trade and investment opportunities with Cuba.

South Africa is also concerned at the new restrictions on American citizens travelling to Cuba on group educational visits known as “people to people” trips; the prohibition of cruises, private yachts, fishing and oil vessels from docking in Cuba; and the recent announcement that the United States Department of Commerce will restrict Cuba’s access to commercial aircraft and expand sanctions to include more foreign goods containing United States content. More alarmingly, the punitive actions of the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States against countries undertaking financial and business transactions with Cuba will further undermine the Cuban people’s aspirations to develop their country fully. The severe economic and financial restrictions threaten to be further increased, compounding the hardship and suffering of the Cuban people. South Africa calls on all countries to support Cuba and its people by scrapping any domestic laws or regulations that continue to

hamper the development of Cuba and its people, in accordance with resolution 73/8.

The policies imposed by the United States on Cuba remain the biggest obstacle to the Cuban people's fulfilment of their basic human rights, infringing on their right to development. They stifle Cuba's economic and social development and further undermine collective efforts towards sustainable development.

In conclusion, in solidarity with Cuba and with the support of the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations, South Africa will once again vote in favour of the draft resolution to be adopted by this organ of the United Nations. South Africa therefore urges the United States Government to reconsider its policies on Cuba and calls on the entire international community to scrap any domestic laws or regulations that continue to hamper the development of Cuba and its people. The current embargo on Cuba is indefensible and should be lifted in order to ensure the Cuban people's right to development and to facilitate Cuba's quest to achieve its national development goals and priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Ahmed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to welcome His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the observer of the Observer State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and by the representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Uganda, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. We would also like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo that has been imposed by the United States of America on Cuba for nearly 60 years continues to harm the Cuban people and hamper the country's economic development. Today the Sudan, like the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations, will vote in favour of draft resolution A/74/L.6, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", based on our principled rejection of any unilateral measures imposed on States that run counter to the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. Since 1992 the General Assembly

has been adopting resolutions calling for an end to the United States' economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. Regrettably, it has yet to be lifted. We believe that it not only contravenes the purposes and principles of the Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions but also hampers the Cuban people's efforts to strengthen their economic and social development, while also disrupting their economic, commercial and financial relations with other countries.

We would like to express our concern about the fact that the embargo on Cuba has remained in effect despite the fact that the General Assembly has discussed the issue on numerous occasions. Having expressed our concern about the harmful impact of these measures on the Cuban people, we would like to refer to paragraph 30 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which urges Member States to refrain from implementing unilateral economic and other measures that contradict the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law, particularly those targeting developing countries. In that context, the Sudan stresses its unreserved support for lifting the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba. For those reasons, the Sudan once again expresses its total rejection of efforts to impose extraterritorial jurisdiction and any form of unilateral coercive measures that hamper the fulfilment of universal human rights, including the right to development.

The Sudan has been suffering from an unjust unilateral embargo, which was renewed every year and hampered every aspect of its people's life, including by restricting financial transactions and preventing the country from accessing grants or loans from the international funding institutions. Until it was lifted in 2017, it also affected our opportunities to cooperate with other States in making progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development and comprehensive economic growth. However, the Sudan has not benefited from the embargo's removal, because it was then placed on the list of State sponsors of terrorism, which has meant that our suffering has continued. Our expression of solidarity with Cuba on this matter stems from a deep knowledge and shared understanding of the suffering and losses that the Cuban people have sustained thanks to the obstacles put in the way of their right to development and access to fundamental services such as health care, education, food, trade, regional and international

funding and the benefit of human exchanges. Those effects are more often than not laid at the feet of the poor Cubans.

In conclusion, the Sudan will always be committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and freedom of international trade and navigation. We therefore once again express our unwavering support for lifting the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. Let me take this opportunity to issue a strong call to the international community to redouble its efforts to promote constructive dialogue with a view to lifting the embargo on Cuba so that we can truly ensure that no one is left behind.

Ms. Austin (Guyana): I would first like to recognize the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Guyana wishes to align itself with the statements made by the representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Uganda, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and Grenada on behalf of the Caribbean Community, and by the observer of the Observer State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Guyana reiterates the Caribbean Community's call for an immediate and unconditional end to the economic and financial embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America on Cuba. The embargo remains a serious obstacle to the development efforts of small States, affecting their economic stability and contributing to the unevenness of development in our region as a whole.

The extraterritorial nature of the actions taken by the United States are contrary to both the letter and spirit of

the Charter of the United Nations, and specifically the provisions meant to guarantee respect for the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs, the self-determination of peoples, the peaceful settlements of disputes and the maintenance of friendly relations between States. As President David Granger of Guyana has rightly observed, the embargo is an aberration in international relations perpetrated by one State against another. We remain firm in our view that it has no place in modern international relations and call for an immediate end to that destructive policy.

Guyana and Cuba share a long history of friendship and cooperation, and despite the pressures associated with the early years of the embargo, in 1961 6 per cent of our rice exports went to Cuba. That act of trade made us one of the first countries to defy the economic embargo, and our decision to do so was based on principle. Today we continue to stand on principle with our demand that the embargo be lifted, especially given the indisputable evidence of its devastating effects on the lives of the Cuban people. It is nothing short of a tragedy that for decades we have had to confront the same ghost every year.

The perpetration of the embargo remains an unconscionable and unjust act against the Cuban people and all who have been made its indirect victims. For its part, Guyana will continue to insist that the embargo on the Cuban people be lifted, and to encourage constructive dialogue between the United States of America and Cuba as a means of building trust and ultimately leading to a complete normalization of relations between the two countries. Guyana assures the Cuban people of its unwavering solidarity in their just struggle for unhindered progress and prosperity.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.