



General Assembly

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Official Records

President: Mr. Körösi (Hungary)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Wallace (Jamaica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 36 (continued)

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

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/76/405 and A/77/358)

Draft resolution (A/77/L.5)

Ms. Dockery (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Government and the people of Saint Kitts and Nevis and to add our fraternal voice to this extremely important debate on agenda item 36, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Saint Kitts and Nevis aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Group of 77 and China, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/77/PV.26).

Saint Kitts and Nevis has traditionally had good relations with the United States of America. It remains one of our oldest, closest and strongest partners. We respect the role that it plays in international relations and in the establishment and promotion of the principles and values of this organ. Saint Kitts and Nevis is proud to

be the birthplace of Alexander Hamilton, whose legacy lends itself to the higher calling of respect and dignity. It is for that reason that we welcomed the previous steps taken by Cuba and the United States of America to normalize their diplomatic relations, which included the decision to remove Cuba from the list of State sponsors of terrorism in 2015. That marked a historic turning point in the easing of tensions between such close neighbours and inspired a new dawn of economic liberalization measures, peaceful coexistence and people-to-people exchanges between the two countries that were so meaningful and beneficial to the Cuban and Caribbean people.

However, Saint Kitts and Nevis finds it regrettable that several reversals were made since that brief period of détente and the blockade is still a reality for the Cuban people, and it denounces the imposition of unilateral coercive measures against a sovereign State. That unjust embargo drives a stake through the heart of international law, makes a mockery of the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention that govern inter-State relations, which are protected by the Charter of the United Nations, and severely impedes Cuba's ability to fully engage the international community, to adequately provide basic public services for its people and thereby to fulfil its aspirations for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

The fact that we are addressing this item yet again today underscores the indispensable role that the United Nations plays as a vital interlocutor and leader in international affairs. Saint Kitts and Nevis remains ever grateful that, within these our United Nations,

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there remains a space where Member States large and small must work to protect the interests of the global population; and where small island developing States like Saint Kitts and Nevis and Cuba can continue to find a place of shelter and succour, and large States can be looked in the eye and urged to act with a sense of responsibility and accountability.

We consider the financial, commercial and economic embargo to be an extreme burden on the development, well-being and stability of our brothers and sisters in Cuba, and indeed the entire Caribbean. The socioeconomic impact on the economy of that small island developing State is quite profound and unfair to the people of Cuba. In trying to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this is a critical time for the world, given the cumulative impact of two years of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the disproportionate and deleterious impacts and risks presented by intensified geopolitical hostilities in Ukraine and the global crises in food, fuel and transportation it has fomented. The stability of the international order is one predicated upon peace between and among nations, and the economic blockade of Cuba, for all intents and purposes, constitutes a hostile act to regional and hemispheric cohesion.

That the continued extraterritorial application of the Helms Burton-Act, including its Title III, constitutes a major obstacle to the normal development of Cuba is undeniable. The report of the Secretary-General (A/77/358) documents and confirms the high cost of that policy for the country and its people. The millions of dollars in annual losses to critical sectors, such as the health, education, energy and banking and financial sectors, as a result of sanctions are also well documented. The efforts that have been made by the Biden Administration to ease the chokehold of some of the more draconian measures imposed by the previous Administration are commendable, but they do not go far enough in addressing the more harmful aspects of the blockade. Those coercive measures, coupled with the harsh economic and social conditions caused by the pandemic, have produced much despair among the people and have led to a new migrant exodus from Cuba.

That is why Saint Kitts and Nevis once again calls upon the United States to end the unjust embargo. It is said that an unjust law is no law at all, and in the words of one of America's most notable founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, the international community not only has a right to disobey it, but we are obliged so

to do. For the moment, we choose only to express our righteous indignation at its imposition.

In case anyone doubted our interconnection as a human family who breathe the same air, have the same oceans that are the lifeblood of our shared planet, confront the artificiality of geographical boundaries, or accept that trade and commerce are essential to the viability and prosperity of every nation regardless of its politics, COVID-19, with all its consequences, presented us with a powerful reminder. It is that human interconnection that compels every nation and every person to be their brothers' and sisters' keepers, if not out of magnanimity, then out of enlightened self-interest — for in their security and well-being reside our own. For us in the Caribbean and Latin America, the economic, financial and commercial blockade against Cuba most certainly runs contrary to our people's desire for peace, as enshrined in the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace.

As a globalized and interdependent global community, we cannot afford for any country to be left behind. This is a time for international cooperation and for pooling resources to assist each other in facing the challenges we have in common. It is undeniable that during the global pandemic, Cuba proved itself to be an exemplary and benevolent global citizen and tangibly demonstrated its humanistic outlook. Cuba's benevolence was even further demonstrated through its own contribution in the race to find a vaccine. Not only did it develop five domestic vaccines; two of them were eventually approved for international use and offered to those nations unable to afford other, more expensive doses.

In the face of such magnanimity, altruism and compassion — which can be counted in the many lives saved, not lost — how can Cuba justifiably continue to be designated by the United States as a State sponsor of terrorism? Surely, that unwarranted and even neocolonial designation and the attendant sanctions attached to it defies all logic, reason and, indeed, the spirit of the United Nations.

Saint Kitts and Nevis has had a deep and enduring relationship with the Government and the people of Cuba and has benefited immensely from cooperation in many areas, including but not limited to health, agriculture and education. As a country just emerging from a general election on 5 August, we have Cuba to thank for providing a scholarship to an intelligent,

compassionate and honest young man of very humble beginnings, who was able to beat the odds and obtain a medical degree and become not only one of our nation's finest internists but also our country's fourth Prime Minister. As the newly appointed, youngest and first female Permanent Representative of Saint Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations, I too owe my ability to deliver my speech from this platform to Cuba. It was only five short months ago, in May of this year, that I lay in the surgical ward awaiting surgery to remove my right eyeball. It is only because of the highly knowledgeable, gallant and dedicated efforts of my Cuban optician, offering her services virtually free of charge, that I was able to save my eye.

So again, I ask the question: What justifies Cuba — a small, Caribbean nation that has had such a disproportionately positive impact on the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and whose internationalism and humanitarianism have saved, impacted and empowered so many human lives — continuing to be burdened and limited by an outdated embargo?

Saint Kitts and Nevis, which is among the smallest States in the world, knows and understands the power of one. One tree can start a forest. One smile can begin a friendship. One hand can lift a soul. One candle can wipe out darkness. One touch can show you care. One life can make all the difference. So today we lift our voices as one nation in solidarity with our friend Cuba to support draft resolution A/77/L.5, in the hopes of winning the unanimous support of 192 more countries and the great United States to end, once and for all, the unjust embargo.

Ms. Williams (Grenada): Grenada aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/77/PV.26).

At the outset, I acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

This noble institution is nearing its eightieth anniversary, a significant milestone that is worthy of distinct recognition. As such, this is an appropriate time to also renew our commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the norms of international law.

The imposition of the trade and financial embargo on Cuba is perilous to those norms and values, which govern the peaceful coexistence of States, and contradicts the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter to which we States commit ourselves. Against that backdrop, as an advocate for the principles of the United Nations Charter, Grenada recognizes the sovereign equality of States and joins with the rest of the General Assembly in its call for the immediate removal of the financial and trade measures against Cuba. Grenada is also satisfied that the removal of the imposed economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba will facilitate economic and social change there. Additionally, we call for the removal of Cuba from the list of countries that are sponsors of terrorism.

This year's report of the Secretary-General (A/77/358), like previous reports on this matter, outlines responses from an overwhelming majority of Member States that share a common perspective on the continued unilateral embargo against Cuba. Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General also reveals the deleterious effects of the embargo on the manner in which organs and agencies of the United Nations system carry out their mandates and provide support to Cuba.

In the midst of serious economic, financial and social challenges, Cuba has always been willing to extend a hand of friendship and solidarity to other nations in the developing world, starting with its immediate neighbours. Notwithstanding those hardships, the herculean spirit of cooperation and humanitarianism demonstrated by Cuba is essential to the genuine world peace and stability will all so desire. We profoundly thank Cuba once again for the solidarity and solid stand it has taken in that regard.

Grenada maintains the position that constructive engagement and renewed negotiations remain the only acceptable means for advancing long-term peace and stability. Grenada believes that the time has now come when we must move to elevate solutions that would create peaceful coexistence — one people, one world. The time has now come, in our view, for continued mobilization and demand for international support and solidarity. We continue to believe that there is still hope, with the support of multilateralism in this community of nations, for a return to the normalization of relations between the two Governments in the spirit of true and sincere reconciliation, and that this unilateral imposition will be a vestige of the past. Above all,

only in unity can we earnestly fight to overcome the similarly monumental difficulties of the world.

Mr. Mnguni (South Africa): South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of African States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China, and joins others that have expressed their overwhelming support for the lifting of the blockade unilaterally imposed by the United States on Cuba.

We wish to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, and thank him for placing before the membership the important draft resolution A/77/L.5, which has unfortunately gone unheeded despite the overwhelming support over the past many years.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/77/358), which has again highlighted the immeasurable damage that has been caused to Cuba and its people by the imposition of these unilateral coercive measures. That is a violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and can never be justified.

South Africa remains forever grateful for Cuba's significant contribution, at great sacrifice, to the liberation of our country. We will continue to honour the fallen Cuban combatants who sacrificed their lives for the attainment of the free and democratic South Africa that we enjoy today. More importantly, many of our young people have benefited from Cuba's selfless contribution to their education, which has changed the lives of generations to come.

Moreover, Cuba continues to play a leading role in championing the rights of developing countries and helping countries in need, especially in Africa, in various areas such as health, education and technical expertise, to name a few. Many countries, including our own, have benefited from Cuba's unwavering solidarity and internationalism. That is testament to Cuba's commitment to South-South cooperation and epitomizes its selfless generosity.

South Africa reiterates its long-standing call for the lifting of the embargo that continues to stifle the socioeconomic growth and potential of the Cuban people, causing immense hardship and denying them the most basic of rights, including the right to development. That injustice is even more acute in the context of the

multiple crises that countries are facing as a result of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The continued illegal blockade of Cuba by the United States and the extraterritorial application of sanctions on third countries through the Helms-Burton Act continue to severely curtail the potential of Cuba, at great cost. The United States designation of Cuba as a State sponsor of terrorism, together with the continued full application of the Helms-Burton Act, including the authorization to file lawsuits in United States courts under its Title III, further hinders Cuba's economic, commercial and financial relations with third countries. The designation is unfounded, and we call for the removal of Cuba from that list, which is aimed at imposing further punitive actions.

The huge financial loss, to the amount of \$3.8 billion, reflects the intensified impact of the blockade on Cuban exports and on its gross domestic product growth. Similar losses in revenue are seen in other sectors of the economy. Moreover, while it is stated that medicines and food are exempt from the embargo, sanctions imposed by the United States Office of Foreign Assets Control on banking transactions do not allow Cuba to purchase much-needed medical supplies, equipment and medicine, resulting in the loss of lives that could have otherwise been saved. That further hinders the efforts of the people of Cuba to economic development and full, equitable and fair participation in the global economic and trade system from which they can benefit and prosper.

Given all of the aforementioned — the list of which is not exhaustive by any account — the embargo remains an obstacle to Cuba's efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, together with its Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

South Africa remains unwavering in our support for the legitimate struggles of the people of Cuba to enjoy unobstructed freedom to develop, prosper and provide its people with a life of hope and dignity, which is the inherent right of all nations and peoples. We reiterate our principled position to support for the draft resolution and call once again on the United States to heed the almost unanimous position of the countries of the world to put an end to the blockade. We also call upon all Member States that believe that human rights are universal and inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, to join this cause

towards a new chapter of hope and prosperity for Cuba and its people.

Mr. Vongnorkeo (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Singapore on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively (see A/77/PV.26).

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting the report (A/77/358) on this important issue and join others in extending our warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, to this meeting.

Once again, we gather here in the Assembly to reiterate our call for an end to the embargo posed on the Republic of Cuba and reaffirm our unwavering support and solidarity with the Cuban people. Throughout the past six decades, the embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba, a sovereign State Member of the United Nations, has severely impeded social and economic development of the country and brought severe consequences and hardship to the innocent people.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic remains of the view that the embargo contravenes the spirit and key principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Moreover, with the current multifaceted challenges the international community is facing, including the lingering impacts of the coronavirus disease pandemic, natural calamities, economic and financial difficulties, and food and energy crises, among others, the Lao People's Democratic Republic joins the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States in our call for the immediate lifting of the embargo, as stipulated in the various United Nations resolutions. It is more crucial than ever for the international community to provide all necessary support and conducive conditions for Cuba, a sovereign and independent State Member of the United Nations, and its people to fully determine their own development path and put an end to needless deprivation caused to the Cuban people. For that reason, my delegation will continue to support and vote in favour of draft resolution A/77/L.5, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

In conclusion, my delegation urges all Member States to redouble their efforts and commitment to advancing equitable and sustainable development and promoting the legitimate rights of the people, in accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, especially at the time when all countries are facing multiple and unpredictable challenges.

Mr. Razali (Malaysia): Malaysia aligns itself with statements delivered by the representatives of Singapore on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Egypt on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/77/PV.26).

Malaysia has been consistent in our position opposing the imposition of unilateral coercive measures against any country, including Cuba. Malaysia views such measures as contrary to international law, international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles of peaceful relations among States. Malaysia believes that such unilateral coercive measures have severely restricted Cuba's ability to improve its economy and provide for the basic needs of its people.

It is disheartening to learn that in the seven months between August 2021 and February 2022 alone, Cuba incurred more than \$3.8 billion in losses. The blockade strains the Cuban economy, affecting the country in various ways, including service provision, food and medicine shortages, and a decline in the consumption levels and general welfare of the population. The imposition of unilateral coercive measures is very much against the spirit of leaving no one behind, as promised by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

Malaysia is also of the strong conviction that such unilateral embargoes will only cause social problems and raise humanitarian concerns in the States targeted. Therefore, we have always been supportive of the annual General Assembly resolution submitted by Cuba, which calls on the United States to end its unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Malaysia calls for the United States and Cuba to resolve their differences through peaceful means and to avoid any actions that could be detrimental to regional peace and stability. Malaysia encourages both the

United States and Cuba to immediately normalize ties and pursue renewed economic engagement.

Ms. Macchiavello Espinoza (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Argentina on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/77/PV.26).

We welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

Every year, the General Assembly expresses its steadfast position in favour of bringing an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba. In 2021, 184 States expressed robust support for the lifting of the embargo, representing almost all Members of the Organization. That result reflected their collective, legitimate determination, aligned with the basic norms of international law upheld by the General Assembly. It was also a clear and overt sign that we must end such unilateral measures in order to allow Cuba to advance on its path towards development and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Secretary-General's report of 21 September concludes that

"Since 2019, the blockade has escalated to a qualitatively more harmful and inhumane level... Lawsuits filed under Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996 (Helms-Burton Act); the prosecution of companies, ships and shipping companies that send fuel supplies to the country; the arbitrary and unjustified inclusion of Cuba on the United States Department of State's list of State sponsors of terrorism; the attack on all sources of income and foreign currency inflows to the country; and the intimidation of third parties and greater pressure on Governments, banking institutions and business people around the world have become an essential part of the United States strategy to isolate Cuba and cause its economic collapse." (A/77/358, p.1)

In monetary terms, the sanctions imposed on Cuba have generated cumulative damage of \$154,217.3 million over six decades, but in qualitative terms they have impacted food security, the production and distribution of medicine, the levels of consumption and

well-being and the quality of life of the population. They have affected and certainly continue to affect the Cuban people's enjoyment of their rights.

Peru does not agree with the imposition of unilateral sanctions of any kind. The only legitimate sanctions are those adopted by the Security Council in the context of the exercise of its competencies in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council recently adopted 2653 (2022), imposing sanctions on Haiti. In the eighteenth preambular paragraph of the resolution, it is noted

"that the measures imposed by this resolution are not intended to have adverse humanitarian consequences for the civilian population of Haiti".

The resolution also affirms that the sanctions imposed will be under continuous review and reassessment.

I draw attention to the phrase "adverse humanitarian consequences" for the population, because it is important to bear in mind, in the context of the multidimensional crises we are experiencing, that any situation that directly impacts the living conditions of populations entails a reaction or consequence the impact of which can be structural, multidimensional or cross-cutting, or can amplify underlying causes. Any measure taken by any State or nation that has adverse humanitarian consequences for the population must be eliminated or suspended immediately.

Peru shares the view held by almost the entire international community that the embargo imposed against Cuba runs contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international human rights law. As noted in the Secretary-General's report, "[t]he blockade violates the right to life and health of all Cubans" (*op. cit.*, p.4). Consequently, Peru affirms once again that it will vote in favour of draft resolution A/77/L.5, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", pursuant to a State policy that has been continuously in place for than 30 years.

Mrs. Mengesha (Ethiopia): At the outset, allow me to extend our warmest greetings to His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Ethiopia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/77/PV.26)

and would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity

Unilateral coercive measures constitute a flagrant violation of the principles of international law, as set forth in the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations. It obstructs friendly relations among States and international cooperation in development, security and human rights. The unilateral coercive measures against Cuba that have unlawfully spanned six decades have prevented the Cuban economy from tapping into its potential. The economic and financial embargo imposed has impaired the lives of the Cuban people and constrained the Government's efforts to achieve development.

Cuba has recently been affected by unfortunate incidents and natural disasters, including a hurricane. Ethiopia sends its heartfelt condolences to the affected and stands in solidarity with the Government of Cuba in its efforts to address the impacts of those unfortunate disasters. We are certain that the resilient people of Cuba will overcome those challenges and redouble their valuable contribution to socioeconomic progress at the global level.

Unilateral coercive measures are deliberate acts to stifle States into submission against the wishes and needs of their people and the preservation of their policy freedom. States subjected to such measures are put at a disadvantage in facing global challenges, including climate change, epidemics and transnational security threats. Even with their level of resilience, the unilateral embargo and the additional coercive measures imposed on Cuba have had a heavy toll on the well-being of the Cuban people and need to be halted. In that regard, Ethiopia encourages open and constructive dialogue between the United States of America and Cuba to bridge their differences. We are hopeful that the Government of the United States will repeat the exemplary measure it took in 2015 and reinstate its diplomatic relations with Cuba. Such measures should pave the way for the swift lifting of the embargo.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We associate ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Argentina on behalf of the Community of Latin American States, the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Central American Integration

System, and Eritrea on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

We thank and salute the presence of our brother and comrade, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Inconsistent with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, there are States that continue to impose illegal unilateral coercive measures with the aim of punishing peoples and Governments that do not kowtow to their interventionist measures or accept their impositions. Faced with such systemic interference, our peoples must unite their efforts and in solidarity summon the political will to reject, condemn and defeat those aggressions.

We must continue to condemn the criminal economic, commercial and financial embargo against the people and the Government of Cuba, which have been blockaded in an inhuman, economic, commercial and financial way by the United States over the course of decades, hindering a people who have managed to resist and move forward despite those attacks and blockades.

Nicaragua, like all developing countries and the international community as a whole, rejects those illegal unilateral coercive measures and a blockade that, in times of pandemic, has become a crime against humanity. We condemn all aggressive policies against Cuba, such as the prosecution of companies, ships and shipping companies that send supplies of fuel, food and others to Cuba; the arbitrary and unjustified inclusion of Cuba on the United States Department of State's list of State sponsors of terrorism; the attack on all sources of income and currency entering the country; the intimidation of third parties and the reinforcement of pressures on Governments, banking institutions and businessmen from all over the world.

Cuba has shown that, between August 2021 and February 2022 — that is, in seven months alone — the blockade caused record losses of \$3,806.5 million, amounting to \$154,217.3 million total damages over the six decades that this anachronistic policy has been imposed. Faced with those adversities, the heroic people of Cuba, always in the spirit of Martí and Fidel — and even now as the blockade has intensified — is producing and manufacturing vaccines so that the peoples can overcome a pandemic that continues to cause pain and death around the world.

It is admirable that Cuba — thanks to its conscience, its revolutionary spirit of struggle, its conviction and its socialist commitment to the world — has miraculously managed to be on a par with the developed countries that punish, block and attack it, and to produce vaccines and help our developing peoples and even developed countries. Cuba has stood up with its medical brigades to offer solidarity. We celebrate and congratulate the 88 medical brigades and the thousands of collaborators of the Cuban Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade who, for 17 years under the great banner of professionalism and altruism, have assisted populations in 55 countries in all regions of the world in the face of natural disasters or epidemics.

Recently, on 27 October, in the spirit of Latin American and Caribbean solidarity, our National Assembly issued a legislative declaration to once again reject the criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade that the United States Government has maintained for more than 60 years against the people and the Government of the sister Republic of Cuba.

The universal consensus of the peoples and the Governments of the world has demanded an end to that inhumane, illegal and criminal blockade, which affects the Cuban health system and demonstrates a cruel and genocidal nature aimed at suffocating the economy of that brother country, violating all human rights and undermining the efforts of the courageous Cuban people to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The Government of the United States, by failing to comply with the 29 resolutions of the General Assembly, flaunts its disrespect for international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the political will of the universal consensus of the international community, which demands an end to that anachronistic policy against Cuba. It is an irrational attitude that clearly expresses the supremacy and exclusive exceptionalism of the United States power elite.

We share our message of love and brotherhood with the Cuban people and Government, which march on undefeated as exemplars of revolutionary dignity and coherence. We commend their internationalism and socialist convictions, their disinterested contribution to all campaigns and social programmes in Nicaragua in the areas of health, education, sports and many other fields. I resolutely inform them that our peoples are and will always be united, strengthening our revolutions

and our projects for the common good, well-being and happiness of our peoples, from victory to victory forever.

Nicaragua hopes that, once and for all, the numerous United Nations resolutions on this issue will be respected and complied with and that the United States and the big countries will learn to respect the small countries, uniting in their efforts to end poverty, hunger, destitution and lack of health care and education. We once again urge the United States to initiate a respectful dialogue to resolve the pending bilateral issues with Cuba on the basis of the equality of States, reciprocity and respect for the sovereignty and independence of Cuba. We are fully convinced that international solidarity with Cuba will remain vigorous and that the General Assembly today will once again condemn that criminal blockade and all the extraterritorial measures and ramifications that continue to be stepped up against the dear Cuban people.

Finally, we share the following statement of our Commander Daniel, President of Nicaragua:

“There has never been a blockade as criminal as that which is being imposed against Cuba. Now our brother Miguel Díaz-Canel is on the front line at this truly terrible moment as the blockade has intensified and difficult situations have arisen, even with the hurricane that has just passed. Imagine this. The country is blockaded and a hurricane blows in with devastating power, bringing destruction and death and affecting the entire population. Why? Because even our energy sources were damaged and impacted by the hurricane. But this is a heroic people — a people that has resisted a thousand battles and emerged victorious. And we are sure, dear brothers and sisters, that Cuba will emerge victorious again, with the solidarity of the peoples of the world, in the face of these battle.”

Nicaragua, as it does every year, will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us (A/77/L.5), and today the General Assembly, by universally adopting that draft resolution presented by Cuba, will be defending multilateralism and the United Nations Charter, seeking the longed-for understanding and peaceful coexistence between nations, and promoting the culture of peace that we all speak of and desire. All those actions result in a historical and moral debt to our peoples, who have demanded compliance with this resolution for three decades.

Mr. Mouanda (Congo) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour for me to take the floor at this meeting devoted to the consideration of agenda item 36, “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

As noted in the Secretary-General’s report (A/77/358), this meeting is taking place at a time when the combined effects of global, multidimensional energy, food, environment and transport crises, on the one hand, and the scars left by two years of the coronavirus disease pandemic, on the other, have increased our vulnerabilities. It is in that deleterious context that Cuba continues to face the blockade imposed by the United States, despite numerous declarations that for decades have called for its unconditional withdrawal.

While endorsing the statements made by the representatives of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Mozambique on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/77/PV.26), my delegation would like to make a few remarks in its national capacity.

The embargo against Cuba, which has lasted since the middle of the last century, continues to inflict untold suffering on the people of that country. The aforementioned report by the Secretary-General sets out the main consequences of the blockade observed in Cuba between August 2021 and February 2022, as well as certain additional information. It attests without any doubt to the fact that the blockade constitutes a flagrant and systematic violation of the fundamental rights of the Cuban people.

In the light of the aforementioned report, it can be seen that the blockade remains a major obstacle to the well-being and prosperity of the Cuban people, who are suffering intolerable suffering. It seriously undermines the efforts of the Cuban Government for the economic and social development of Cuba, as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its related Goals.

The Republic of the Congo notes once again that the many resolutions adopted on this issue have still not been implemented and reiterates its rejection of all unilateral and unjust measures inflicted on the Cuban people. My delegation reaffirms its solidarity with the people and the Government of Cuba and therefore resolves to support the draft resolution (A/77/L.5) under consideration.

Mr. Vinito (India): India associates itself with the statements made by the Chair of the Group of 77 and China and the Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/77/PV.26). We welcome the Foreign Minister of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, here today, and we also thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/77/358) on this issue.

Every year, the Assembly has rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of people the world over. Last year, 184 member States voted in favour of resolution 75/289, expressing their strong support for the lifting of the embargo. The General Assembly has also called upon all States to refrain from promulgating and applying and to repeal and invalidate laws and measures that have extraterritorial impact affecting the sovereignty of other States, in conformity with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law. There is no doubt that the continued existence of the embargo, in contravention of the overwhelming opinion 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 having extraterritorial impact. Such embargoes have the effect of impeding the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected country, in particular 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.

The President took the Chair.

Successive reports of the Secretary-General have established that the embargo, particularly through its extraterritorial effects, has adversely affected the Cuban people and the development efforts of the country, with particularly devastating effects owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the attendant shortages of essential commodities. We acknowledge the notable socioeconomic and development achievements of the Cuban people, in particular the high Human Development Index ranking of Cuba and its achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals. Cuba’s expertise and contributions in the health-care sector, despite the restrictive

conditions, enabled it to respond quickly and effectively to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2015, while launching the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders again strongly urged all States to refrain from taking any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The continuation of the embargo would severely impact Cuba's ability to implement the comprehensive 2030 Agenda.

There is no doubt that the people of Cuba can contribute much to the needs of the global community today. To enable that, 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, and India supports draft resolution A/77/L.5, introduced by Cuba.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): The Republic of Angola aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Mozambique on behalf of the Group of African States, Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Eritrea on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Republic of Angola welcomes His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and his delegation to this meeting.

We thank the Secretary-General for the report presented on this important subject (A/77/358) and encourage all United Nations initiatives that may conduce to stop the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed against Cuba by the United States of America.

As the Secretary-General stated in September with respect to the defence of the United Nations Charter, the challenges facing the world today seek the importance of multilateral solutions to address and overcome those challenges. He also stated that one of the tools for preventing and solving those challenges is enshrined in the Charter. However, the international community is falling short of the values of those principles.

In June 2021, Angola voted in favour of resolution 75/289, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", to express its concern to see that issue resolved once and for all. However, we

are concerned over the fact that despite many resolutions having been adopted by the General Assembly to end of the embargo against Cuba for almost six decades, the situation remains unchanged. We continue to witness breaches of the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention in internal affairs.

The financial and economic blockade of Cuba has caused serious obstacles to the economic, cultural and social development of the island, with a significant negative impact on several sensitive sectors, such as agriculture and public health services, affecting the sustainable development of the country. In that regard, we emphasize that the end of the economic blockade and the unilateral measures and sanctions against Cuba will grant the Cuban people the full enjoyment and realization of their human rights, including to food, health, vaccines and medical treatment, financial services and education, and their right to decide their own political and economic system.

To conclude, 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 to maintain international peace and security, economic growth and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr. Wallace (Jamaica): Jamaica aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community and Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (see A/77/PV.26) on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

My delegation acknowledges and extends our warmest welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba.

Jamaica takes the floor in its national capacity to join the international community to express its solidarity with the Government and the people of the Republic of Cuba in the call for the removal of the decades-old blockade on Cuba, which has only served to stifle the development aspirations and the potential of the Cuban people. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his reports on this important issue and for providing the forum in which the multilateral perspectives enunciated

by each Member of the United Nations are brought to bear on that unilateral policy, which is in violation of international law and contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Jamaica considers the protracted blockade against Cuba to be contrary to the norms governing international trade and navigation. It continues to be the main deterrent to the growth, prosperity and the realization of the just aspirations of the Cuban people. The blockade has hindered progress on Cuba's national plan for economic and social development, as well as the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The embargo against Cuba has stymied economic, commercial and financial activities, hindering regular access to bilateral trade, the importation of goods and access to financial mechanisms through formal and institutional channels. The inclusion of Cuba on the United States list of State sponsors of terrorism further restricts entities from conducting business with Cuba and continues to pose grave implications on how third States engage with Cuba on development aid, international cooperation on transnational organized crime and technical assistance.

We continue to express our concerns about the impact of the continuation of the blockade and the extraterritorial application of United States laws regulating transactions directly or indirectly. For far too long, the people of Cuba have existed in an unjustified and suffered in an undignified manner as a result of the embargo. The undue hardship imposed has impacted and affected every facet of the life and livelihood of the Cuban people. The coronavirus disease pandemic and its unprecedented challenges over the past two years, compounded by natural disasters, alongside the current multidimensional crises of food, energy and an increase in the cost of living, have exacerbated the conditions in Cuba and transformed the socioeconomic landscape and realities of the Cuban population.

The international community has been seized of this matter since the first introduction of the relevant resolution at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly in 1991. Every year since 1992, the international community has consistently and resoundingly expressed support, as evidenced in the overwhelmingly favourable voting outcomes, for the need to end the blockade against Cuba.

Notwithstanding recent positive developments in the easing of some restrictions, those measures are not far-reaching enough and are not a substitute for the lifting of the embargo to allow the Cuban people access to critical financial resources and their right to development. In that context, Jamaica calls for renewed dialogue between Cuba and the United States and reaffirms its commitment to standing in solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba, in concerted efforts with the majority of the Members of the United Nations calling for the removal of the embargo and for the full inclusion of the Republic of Cuba in the international community. It is our fervent hope that this will be the last time there is a need for a debate on this draft resolution in the General Assembly.

Ms. Cano Franco (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Cuban delegation, led by His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, for again introducing for adoption the draft resolution, contained this year in document A/77/L.5, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", which in previous years has enjoyed the almost unanimous support of United Nations Member States.

Panama aligns itself with the statements made yesterday by the representatives of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Central American Integration System, the Argentine Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/77/PV.26).

I wish to make the following brief remarks in my national capacity.

Panama will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us, once again expressing its conviction and commitment to the Cuban people. Our country bases its foreign policy on the principles framed in the Charter of the United Nations and aspires to the inclusion of all on the paths of development. We therefore advocate the principles of peace and the friendly resolution of conflicts, always inspired by frank and good-faith dialogue, resulting in an end to the blockade, which restricts the development of the sister Republic of Cuba.

The development of peoples is key to allowing them to effectively enjoy opportunities in their own country and on their own territory. Panama reaffirms its strong

commitment to multilateralism as the appropriate instrument for resolving disputes among States. We therefore reiterate our vote in favour, together with all other countries committed to the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, convinced that its elimination is imperative to promoting the full development of the Cuban people.

Mr. Gaouaoui (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country's delegation welcomes His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to this meeting.

My country's delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations respectively (see A/77/PV.26).

I am making this statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, we thank the Secretary-General for his reports entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", contained in documents A/77/358 and A/76/ 405.

Believing in the need for States to respect their international obligations under international law, Algeria considers that the imposition on sovereign States Members of the United Nations of unilateral coercive measures that are not authorized by the competent organs of the United Nations is completely unacceptable and yields adverse results that are at odds with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular good faith, respect for the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their internal affairs.

Based on that principled stance in its foreign policy, Algeria has consistently voted in favour of General Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba and its people. In that context, Algeria has always expressed its opposition to that embargo at every opportunity, whether in regional forums or other international bodies.

We take this opportunity to express from this rostrum our concern about the embargo, which continues despite the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States for the General Assembly resolutions opposing it and calling for it to be lifted. Algeria also

believes that the embargo violates the basic principles of the multilateral trading system and constitutes an obstacle to achieving steady social progress and sustainable economic growth in Cuba. It stifles Cuba's economy, limits its ability to provide decent living conditions and welfare for its people, and hinders its ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

We therefore reiterate the inalienable right of United Nations Member States to determine their own development path. Any unilateral attempt by any Member State to engage in political regime change in other countries by exerting military, political, economic, financial or any other form of pressure is unacceptable in accordance with international legitimacy. Algeria regrets that no tangible progress has been made so far towards lifting the inhumane embargo and ending the economic, social and human suffering of the Cuban people.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I reiterate my country's appreciation of and confidence in you, Mr. President, in bringing the General Assembly together for transformative solutions at a time when the world is at a decisive turning point and faces complex challenges.

The value that makes the greatness and nobility of the General Assembly and this Hall where we are met is that every nation matters and every life matters. From the largest to the smallest, from the wealthiest to the destitute, we are all links in the same chain — that of humankind. We are the emanation and the representatives of the peoples of the world.

As Members of the United Nations, we have joined our destinies and made the choice to live together as a community that collectively responds to threats and challenges, while planning together the trajectory of our co-prosperity and the dignity of each one of us. We have chosen multilateralism, solidarity and respect for the sovereignty of each nation, and we have rejected unilateralism and the logic of domination and of zones of influence, which are manifestly anachronistic. Based on those vital choices, we proclaim every day that no nation should punish another. No nation should exploit another. No nation should enslave another.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba for 60 years is a punitive act against Cuba. It is an obstacle to the development of the country and the region as a whole. The blockade creates excessive difficulties for the Cuban people because of

the significant external pressure it exerts on its economy and its constraints on the free movement of goods. The blockade is iniquitous and must be lifted. We call on the parties to engage constructively in peaceful negotiations, which remain the most appropriate way to normalize their relations. Given Cuba's peaceful and cooperative international position, my country reaffirms its support for the Cuban people and their aspirations to social and economic development.

We call once again for an end to an embargo that fuels tensions and hostility between two neighbouring countries and represents a constant source of concern throughout our subregion. We are convinced that the lifting of the embargo will lead to a significant rapprochement between the two countries and have a positive impact at the global level. We are deeply convinced that without this punitive embargo, the United States and Cuba together have inestimable potential for cooperation and co-prosperity. It is in the light of that conviction that Gabon has supported the set of previous resolutions on this issue and will vote in favour of the current draft resolution (A/77/L.5) on the necessity to end the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba by the United States of America.

Mr. Ziyera (Zimbabwe): I thank you, Sir, for giving Zimbabwe the opportunity to make a contribution on this important agenda item on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

We acknowledge the presence in our midst of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Zimbabwe aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Mozambique on behalf of the Group of African States, Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Eritrea on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations (see A/77/PV.26).

My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on the matter under discussion (A/76/405 and A/77/358). It is clear from the reports that the interlinked crises that the world is currently facing have not spared the people of Cuba, whose plight has been further worsened by the embargo. The reports augment the justified calls for help by the people and the Government of Cuba, given the increasingly difficult socioeconomic circumstances

they are experiencing due to the embargo and the long-term impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We are therefore concerned that the embargo has placed an unnecessary burden on the Cuban people.

Every year, we speak about the devastating impact of the embargo on the people of Cuba, but we see no effort to remove the restrictions. My delegation underscores the need to end the embargo in accordance with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. The embargo undermines the development of Cuba and its people and is impeding the country from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Zimbabwe and the majority of members of the Assembly have repeatedly raised their voices in unison at various international forums, calling for an end to the embargo and the resultant inhumane consequences it has had for the people of Cuba.

The embargo has served only to isolate Cuba, a valued and respected member of the global family of nations. Over the years, Cuba has deployed medical teams to assist many countries, including Zimbabwe, to develop their health systems and to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, in spite of its limited capacity due to the embargo. We are grateful to Cuba for cooperating with Zimbabwe in the medical field.

A few weeks ago, Ms. Alena Douhan, Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, in her report to the fifty-first session of the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/51/33), observed that the world faces an increase in the use of unilateral sanctions. Ms. Douhan, who had visited Zimbabwe, which has endured over two decades of sanctions imposed by some Western countries, witnessed the devastating negative impact of the measures on the country and its people. My delegation therefore fully understands the importance of lifting the unjustified embargo on Cuba.

Zimbabwe is committed to improving the livelihoods of all the peoples of the world, including the people of Cuba, through the development of strong, resilient and sustainable economies and societies and the maintenance of a global zone of peace. We believe that free and unfettered relations between Cuba and all countries, including the United States of America, would be enhanced by ending the embargo.

In conclusion, I reiterate Zimbabwe's call for the lifting of the embargo on Cuba, particularly in the wake

of the COVID-19 crisis, the global food, energy and financial crises, and rising global inflation.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba to introduce draft resolution A/77/L.5.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I express our heartfelt solidarity with the sisterly Caribbean nation of Belize, which is today suffering the devastation of a powerful hurricane.

More than 80 per cent of Cuba's current population was born under blockade.

Three decades have gone by since the Assembly first started to demand, as it has continued to do every year thereafter, the ceasing of the United States policy against Cuba, which can be classified as an act of genocide, has the effect of a permanent pandemic or a never-ending hurricane, and has been universally rejected. It is a deliberate act of economic warfare intended to obstruct the country's incoming revenues, destroy the Government's ability to attend to the needs of the people, bring about the collapse of the economy and create a situation of non-governability. As was suggested by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Lester Mallory in 1960, the policy seeks to provoke "disenchantment and disaffection", "decrease... real wages", and "bring about hunger, desperation, and the overthrow of Government".

Since 2019, the Government of the United States has escalated the siege around our country, taking it to an even crueller and more inhumane level, with the purpose of deliberately inflicting the greatest possible damage on Cuban families. During the first 14 months of Joseph Biden's Administration, the damages caused by the embargo were estimated at \$6,364 million, that is, over \$15 million per day. Between August 2021 and February 2022, losses amounted to \$3,806 million, a record figure for a period of only seven months. Had the blockade not existed, our gross domestic product could have grown by 4.5 per cent during that same period.

Damages accumulated over 60 years have been estimated at \$154,217 million dollars at current prices; based on the price of gold, they amount to \$1,391,111 million. What would Cuba be like today had it had those resources? What else could we have accomplished? What would our economy be like? It is impossible to quantify the anxiety generated by blackouts and the instability in the electric power system, supply shortages, long queues to buy essential

goods, or the obstacles to the life projects of families, particularly young people. The blockade also creates conditions that incite irregular, disorderly and unsafe migration and the painful separation of families. It takes a toll on the lives of Cuban men and women and contributes to transnational organized crime and trafficking in persons.

During the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Government of the United States applied temporary humanitarian exemptions to countries that were victims of its unilateral coercive measures and other sanctions. Why was Cuba excluded from that temporary humanitarian relief? Worse still, while the COVID-19 pandemic was claiming millions of lives across the planet and filling Cuba with sorrow, the blockade was further tightened, generating difficulties and delays in the arrival in our country of the medical inputs and equipment indispensable to confronting the disease, particularly to the industrial scale-up of Cuban vaccines. Even the purchase of medical oxygen in third countries was hindered. When the blockade prevented the supply of ventilators, Cuba developed them locally with prototypes of its own.

How is it that a small country like Cuba has been able to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic with resources and vaccines of its own making? At the worst moment of the pandemic and despite our limited resources, we cooperated with other nations by sending 58 medical brigades to 42 countries and territories, joining the more than 28,000 Cuban health professionals who at that time were already offering their services in 59 nations.

But the blockade also hampers the national production of antibiotics, analgesics, hypotensive drugs, medicines to treat cancer and cardiopathies, as well as several other basic medications that had never before been in such short supply in our hospitals and drug stores. Cuban boys and girls suffering from retina problems or glaucoma are not able to include in their therapies the laser system manufactured by the United States Iridex Corporation. Patients whose cases devolve into more severe conditions run the risk of going blind. Our children also have no access to United States-made biological heart valves. Low birth weight babies have to undergo open-chest surgeries because the ultra-low profile catheters marketed by such United States firms such as Boston Scientific are not available in Cuba.

There is no way the United States Government can justify the implementation of a policy that deprives Cuban children suffering from cancer from receiving the ideal chemotherapy to treat their condition. Work to save and preserve life in the midst of such difficult circumstances is possible only thanks to the governmental and collective efforts that have been made for decades to build a high-quality and robust system of science and health of a deeply humanist nature, accessible to all Cubans at absolutely no cost.

The blockade has also exacerbated financial restrictions and limited access to credits to repair, invest in and maintain the country's thermal power stations. Suppliers have significantly increased their prices, citing the risk they incur when operating in Cuba. After 26 years of uninterrupted work, the German group Continental Reifen Deutschland GmbH decided to terminate its relations with Unión Cuba Petróleo. The French supplier CNIM notified us that it could no longer continue to supply the spare parts for the Antonio Guiteras Thermoelectric Power Station because they were unable to operate with a country under sanction.

Equally unceasing and obsessive is the prosecution of investments and financial and commercial transactions associated with our country. Between January 2021 and February 2022 alone, foreign banks reported 642 direct actions against the Cuban banking system. In the course of last year, a significant number of banks in third countries refused to process payments to the suppliers of the Cuban food import company Alimport. With permits subject to legal restrictions, Cuba can buy, through regular commercial channels, a limited amount of agricultural products in the United States, but it is forced to pay in advance and without access to credit, which is also extremely difficult because our income sources are also blocked.

Under such financial siege, numerous efforts are to be made by our Government to guarantee the basic family food supply. More often than not, Cuban entrepreneurs are denied the use of electronic payment and trade platforms. Our nationals living in different latitudes are not allowed to open personal bank accounts just for being Cuban nationals.

The financial persecution has been further reinforced with the arbitrary and fraudulent inclusion of our country on the State Department's unilateral list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism, which

exponentially increases the so-called country-risk and forces us to buy any commodity at even twice its price on the international market. Such action against a country that has been a victim of terrorism; that is still suffering because of the incitement to violence and the commission of terrorist actions from United States territory; and whose conduct in firmly rejecting and prosecuting any form or manifestation of terrorism has been impeccable and recognized, is inadmissible. That lethal measure was imposed by the former Republican Administration only nine days before leaving the White House. The current United States President could correct the situation with just a signature. That would only be morally and legally right.

The extraterritorial impact of the blockade is also harmful to the sovereignty of the countries that are represented here. It violates their national laws, subjects them to United States court decisions under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, imposes sanctions on their business people and prevents access to United States ports by third-country vessels that have docked in Cuban ports. It also prevents subsidiaries of United States companies in third countries from trading with Cuba. It forbids export to Cuba of products manufactured by any country if 10 per cent or more of their components were made in the United States, and excludes products manufactured in third countries if they contain Cuban raw materials. Who could truthfully affirm that the United States is one of Cuba's trading partners?

We do not blame the blockade for all the difficulties our country faces today, but those who deny its very serious impacts or fail to recognize that it is the main cause of the deprivations, scarcities and hardships suffered by Cuban families would be failing to tell the truth.

The United States controls the most powerful media and hegemonic digital technological platforms and uses them in a virulent disinformation and disparagement campaign against Cuba. It resorts to the most diverse methods of non-conventional warfare, using our children, youths and artists as the targets of that political and media bombardment. The United States Government allocates tens of millions of dollars from the federal budget and additional undercover funds and recruits Government and private institutions to finance the political operators who wage disinformation, hatred and destabilization campaigns on the social networks against Cuba.

On 24 October, the United States transnational companies Twitter and Meta (Facebook), one of whose senior executives is the former campaign manager of an anti-Cuban Republican senator, simultaneously undertook actions of censorship against Cuban public media and users. They targeted publications whose reach on the networks had been limited and cancelled accounts that were critical of the United States destabilizing operations against our country. This was a selective, well-coordinated action that violates the right of Cubans to freedom of expression and reflects the subordination of these companies to the designs of United States politicians.

On 22 July, at the closing of the ninth session of the National Assembly of People's Power in its Ninth Legislature, President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez affirmed:

“Cuba’s track record in the development of its foreign relations shows that the promotion of peace, cooperation and solidarity are defining characteristics of our international projection. We have demonstrated this in our Latin American and Caribbean region and in other parts of the world.”

The current United States Administration does not have a Cuba policy of its own. It is acting on inertia and has continued to implement the inhumane maximum pressure policy established under the Donald Trump Administration. In recent months, it has taken steps to make adjustments to some of the irrational restrictions imposed on United States flights to Cuba, remittances and consular proceedings. Those are positive actions, but very limited in their scope and implementation. They in no way modify the policy or the economic, commercial and financial measures.

The blockade, which has been tightened to the extreme, continues to be the central element defining the United States Cuba policy. The Cuban Government is ready to move forward towards a better understanding with the Government of the United States and to develop civilized and cooperative relations based on mutual respect and without detriment to our sovereignty. I reiterate the appeal made by our Army General Raúl Castro Ruz to the Government of the United States in 2017 to remove

“the obstacles that prevent or restrict relations between our peoples, the families and citizens from both countries. We should learn the art of coexisting in a civilized manner despite our differences”.

Even amid the inhumane limitations imposed on us by the blockade, Cuba will never renounce its socialist system of social justice, as confirmed by a free and universal constitutional referendum in 2019. We will always defend the full enjoyment of all human rights by all of our citizens. We will never accept the attempted imposition of alleged paradigms of democracy or any other culture alien to the Cuban culture.

With the same energy with which we defend the inalienable right of every country to choose its own political, economic and social system, we demand respect for ours. Faithful to the legacy of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, in Cuba there will always be “a Government of the people for the whole people” and “a revolution of the humble, with the humble and for the humble”.

Undeniable evidence of that was the most recent demonstration of a truly democratic, participatory and inclusive exercise in our country. In a popular referendum, the Cuban people voted in favour of a new, modern and progressive Family Code, one of the most advanced in the world, which is irrefutable proof of our vocation of taking into account the views of all Cuban men and women, without any type of discrimination.

Our country has not ceased to renew itself, based on the principle of changing everything that needs to be changed, in the construction of a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation and in the development of our socialist, rule-of-law, social justice, democratic, independent and sovereign State. We advocate for an increased participation of our young people and all citizens in general in the political, economic, social and cultural processes of the country.

We are making progress in the decentralization of the economy and the empowerment of State socialist enterprises. Thousands of small and medium-sized private and State companies have been created. We are promoting science, technology and innovation, the mass rollout of information and communications technology in our society, and social communication as the pillars of Government management. More opportunities are being offered to foreign investors as part of our development policy.

Cuba is being continuously renewed. What remains unchanged, anchored in the past and isolated is the United States blockade. We highly value the support of numerous Governments, personalities, solidarity movements and political, social and popular

organizations from all over the world in the face of the injustice that is being committed against Cuba. We deeply appreciate the commitment and the voices of Cubans and people of Cuban descent in all latitudes, even in the United States, raised in defence of Cuba's sovereign rights and against the implementation of that policy.

We also thank all those who have expressed their support for our country in the midst of the difficulties resulting from our recovery from the grave trail of destruction left by Hurricane Ian in the western provinces in September. Hundreds of thousands of our compatriots suffered the hurricane's impact. A total of 119,048 houses were damaged, huge farming areas were destroyed and the power and communications infrastructure was severely affected, among other damage. We will continue to gratefully accept any emergency assistance offered to our people without any preconditions.

We appreciate the noble and humanitarian efforts of United States organizations, movements and groups, members of Congress and personalities, the solidarity movement and civil society organizations who, in the face of the magnitude of the ravages caused by the hurricane, have asked President Joseph Biden to temporarily lift the unilateral coercive measures against our country and authorize the processing of donations by United States banks and the purchase of materials to rebuild the affected areas.

Millions of Cubans are watching right now what is going on in this Hall. They have heard the statements and will be closely following the voting. On their behalf, I must express my gratitude for the statements made against the blockade by numerous Heads of State and Government and other dignitaries and speakers in the debate on this item. In brief, when casting their votes, representatives will not only be taking a stand on a vital issue for Cuba and all Cubans. They will also be voting in favour of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. They will be taking a stand in support of reason and justice.

Cuba must be allowed to live in peace. Cuba would be better off without the blockade. Every Cuban family would be better off without the blockade. United States citizens would be better off without the blockade. The United States would be a better country without the blockade against Cuba. The world would be better off without the blockade.

I respectfully ask representatives to vote in favour of draft resolution A/77/L.5, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". I do so on behalf of the courageous and noble people of Cuba, who, despite all adversities, have not been and never will be defeated; on behalf of our boys, girls and youths, who oppose the policies of hatred but suffer their cruel effects; and on behalf of the generations of Cuban men and women who have been born or are yet to be born under the most cruel and long-lasting system of coercive measures ever applied against any country, which should be abolished for the good of all.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/77/L.5.

Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Borland (Belize): In our explanation of vote, we align ourselves with the statements made yesterday by the representatives of the Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community and Argentina on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, as well as the statements made by the representatives of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/77/PV.26).

We acknowledge the presence of the Foreign Minister of Cuba and thank him for his kind words towards Belize.

Belize will vote in favour of draft resolution A/77/L.5, once again joining the resounding call of the General Assembly for the immediate lifting of the illegal financial, commercial and trade embargo imposed by the United States of America upon Cuba. Belize unequivocally condemns the imposition of the embargo by the United States of America against Cuba. Unilateral coercive measures, including with extraterritorial application, constitute a gross violation of the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, as expressed in international law and enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

International law and the Charter of the United Nations should not be selectively respected or applied. The illegal embargo imposed by the United States has deliberately caused extreme hardship on the Cuban people, stifling economic growth, undermining development and isolating Cuba from the international financial system. The accumulated damage caused by the embargo over its six decades of enforcement amounts to over \$1 trillion.

The calculated and continued imposition of the embargo in the face of the coronavirus disease pandemic, the climate emergency and catastrophic natural disasters, such the recent Hurricane Ian, clearly reveals its immoral, illegal and inhumane moorings. Furthermore, Belize condemns the unjustified designation of Cuba as a State sponsor terrorism.

Notwithstanding the brutal policies directed at it by the United States, Cuba has contributed immensely and generously to Belize's development through its pioneering cooperation programmes in disaster management, health care, education, sports and culture. We can proudly and gratefully confirm that a large segment of Belizean medical professionals have benefited from Cuba's training.

The Cuban spirit of resilience, generosity and support for oppressed peoples everywhere continues to inspire us in Belize. Belize stands in solidarity with Cuba. We reiterate our call on the United States of America to immediately and unconditionally lift the illegal embargo imposed on Cuba.

Ms. Chand (Fiji): We thank the Government of Cuba for submitting the annual draft resolution to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session. I wish to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, the Foreign Minister of Cuba, for his presence during this important vote.

Fiji remains concerned at the lack of progress by the General Assembly with respect to ending the embargo, despite the sustained efforts of an overwhelming majority of States calling for an end to that inhumane act against the friendly nation and people of Cuba. We condemn all forms of unilateral coercive measures, sanctions or embargoes of any kind that impede the socioeconomic development of a friendly nation.

Speaking as a small island developing State, the development challenges have only multiplied for

island States, which are increasingly at the mercy of climate change, climate-induced sea-level rise or other climate-related disasters. Crossing the half-century mark, it has been 61 years since the embargo was imposed on Cuba. That is 61 years of denial for a small island nation. It is an exclusionary policy that deprives Cubans of the right to exist freely, the right to food, the right to development and the right to trade, among other rights.

We therefore call on all States to show continued support for draft resolution A/77/L.5 in support of Cuba.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/77/L.5, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia,

Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Brazil, Ukraine

Draft resolution A/77/L.5 was adopted by 185 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions (resolution 77/7).

The President: Before giving the floor for explanations of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Klíma (Czechia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; and the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina align themselves with this statement.

The economic, commercial, and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba has a damaging impact on the economic situation of the country and negatively affects the living standards of the Cuban people. External trade and foreign investment could play a crucial role in setting the country on a path towards modernization, reform and sustainable growth, and help it overcome the economic hardship caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

and deepened by the recent fires in Matanzas and the terrible destruction caused by Hurricane Ian. The EU considers therefore that lifting the embargo could make economic reforms more effective and facilitate the opening of the Cuban economy, to the benefit of the Cuban people.

We are concerned about the human rights situation in Cuba, in particular following the events of 11 and 12 July 2021, about the severe judgments issued by Cuban courts so far, and as regards civil and political rights. We therefore reiterate our call on the Cuban Government to fully grant its citizens internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms, including the freedom of assembly, the freedom of expression and free access to information, to release all political prisoners, to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and to extend a standing invitation to all United Nations special procedures to visit Cuba. We also believe that empowering civil society is essential for the promotion and protection of all human rights, and call upon the Cuban Government to open spaces for a constructive and inclusive dialogue, without preconditions, with the whole spectrum of civil society actors on the island. A broad spectrum of civil society, both Cuban and European, should also be involved in the implementation of the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement.

The EU believes that positive change in Cuba is best brought about by closer engagement at all levels: Government, economy and civil society, but also through people-to-people exchanges. We therefore welcome the measures announced by the United States Administration in 2022 to ease restrictions on family remittances and travel to the island, and to fully resume consular services. However, the redesignation of Cuba as a State sponsor of terrorism by the previous United States Administration, without presenting any new facts, and its maintenance on the list, despite the fact that members of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional from Colombia have left the country, has introduced obstacles to international financial transactions with the island. Moreover, the embargo has restricted Cuba's ability to import pharmaceuticals, medical devices and other medical supplies needed for the combat against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beyond the damaging impact of the embargo on ordinary Cubans, United States sanctions and

other administrative and judicial measures are also negatively affecting EU economic interests. We have firmly and continuously opposed any such measures, due to their extraterritorial application and impact on the European Union, in violation of commonly accepted rules of international trade. We cannot accept that such measures impede our economic and commercial relations with Cuba.

The EU strongly rejects the United States activation of Titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act in April 2019. That breaches the commitments made by the United States in the United States-EU agreements of 1997 and 1998. We will draw on all appropriate measures to address the effects of the Helms-Burton Act, including in relation to our rights and through the use of the EU Blocking Statute, which protects against the extraterritorial application of those United States sanctions to EU citizens, businesses and non-governmental organizations operating in Cuba.

For the EU, international cooperation, dialogue and closer — even critical — engagement are the way to go with Cuba. The provisional application of the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement is now in its fifth year. The agreement has put our bilateral relationship on a new and solid legal footing and sets out an agenda of critical engagement with Cuba that will also allow us to support and accompany Cuba on its path of reform and modernization. We are enhancing dialogue and cooperation also on issues on which we still have fundamental differences. To that end, the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement has established a human rights dialogue as a key pillar of our relationship. The fourth formal meeting of the dialogue will be held in 2023.

Following the adoption of the country's new Constitution, and to overcome the current economic and social crisis, we call on Cuba to ensure that its reform agenda extends economic, judicial and social reforms and is implemented in a manner that addresses the key concerns of the Cuban population and meets the legitimate aspirations of the Cuban people to more opportunities to participate in the shaping of the country's future.

With the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, the EU offers Cuba a consistent and reliable partnership to support it as it seeks to reform its political and economic model, to pursue sustainable development and to find common

solutions to global challenges, while continuing to advocate democracy and respect for human rights, in the exclusive interest of all Cuban citizens.

It is our considered view that the United States embargo does not contribute to promoting those aims, but impedes their achievement. Against that background, the States members of the European Union voted unanimously in favour of resolution 77/7.

Mr. Nunes (Timor-Leste): At the outset, we wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, the Foreign Minister of Cuba, and we wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on this issue (A/77/358).

The vote we cast today in support of resolution 77/7 represents our great concern over the adverse effects of the embargo on the well-being of the people of Cuba. We are of the view that the embargo prevents the peoples of Cuba from fully enjoying their human rights, including the right to development, as it undermines the efforts of Cuba to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As described in the report of the Secretary-General on the issue, the embargo has affected the full potential of Cuba to be a more active actor in international trade and development and international cooperation. In addition, we have also come to understand that the embargo has directly and indirectly affected all critical sectors of the Cuban economy, including public health, nutrition and agriculture, as well as investment, tourism and banking. Therefore, Timor-Leste joins other delegations here in calling for the lifting of the embargo, which will help the people of Cuba to fully enjoy their human rights, including the right to development, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the international law.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): The United States remains committed to the Cuban people in their pursuit of freedom, prosperity and a future with greater dignity. We are focused on the political and economic well-being of the Cuban people and centre our efforts on democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Cubans of all walks of life are speaking out for fundamental freedoms, protesting Cuban Government repression and advocating for a better future. In July 2021, the world witnessed tens of thousands of Cubans across the island take to the streets to peacefully demand freedom. The Cuban Government responded

to the demands of the Cuban people with crackdowns on peaceful protesters, journalists and human rights defenders. The Cuban Government has used harsh prison sentences, even against minors, intimidation tactics, arrests, Internet interruptions, Government-sponsored mobs and horrendous prison conditions to try to prevent Cubans from exercising their human rights. Cuban security officials have also forced into exile human rights activists and journalists who had been either detained or warned about their activities. We join international partners in urging the Cuban Government to release political prisoners immediately and unconditionally and to protect the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly of all individuals in Cuba.

As we hold the Cuban Government accountable, our support for the Cuban people is unwavering. The embargo includes exemptions and authorizations relating to exports of food, medicine and other humanitarian goods to Cuba. We recognize the challenges the Cuban people face. The people of the United States and United States organizations donate a significant amount of humanitarian goods to the Cuban people, and the United States is one of Cuba's principal trading partners. Since 1992, the United States has authorized billions of dollars of exports to Cuba, including food and other agricultural commodities, medicines, medical devices, telecommunications equipment, consumer goods and other items to support the Cuban people. In 2021 alone, United States companies exported over \$295-million worth of agricultural goods to Cuba, including food, to help address the Cuban people's basic needs.

Last month, following the devastating impact of Hurricane Ian, the United States announced that it was providing to the Cuban people critical humanitarian aid through trusted international partners working directly with Cubans whose communities were devastated by the storm. The United States Agency for International Development will provide \$2 million in funding for emergency relief to those in need in Cuba.

The United States opposes resolution 77/7, but we stand with the Cuban people and will continue to seek ways to provide meaningful support to them. We encourage this body to urge the Cuban Government to listen to the Cuban people and their demands to determine their own future.

Mr. Matea (Solomon Islands): At the outset, I wish to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency

Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, and extend our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports (A/76/405 and A/77/358).

In explanation of vote after the voting on agenda item 36, I confirm that Solomon Islands voted in favour of resolution 77/7, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Solomon Islands commends Cuba for taking the most peaceful path in seeking the unconditional lifting of the blockade through the United Nations. We continue to believe that each and every country has the inalienable right to define and determine its own political system and to participate in international economic activities. Those are fundamental principles of international law.

The 60-year embargo and blockade have resulted in Cuba's having to face severe difficulties by causing economic harm and depriving Cuba of financial resources and the fuel supply required not only for its development, but also for the daily vitality of the Cuban people. The adverse impact of the embargo on the people of Cuba continues to impede the socioeconomic development of the country and its progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, which is well reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/77/358.

Solomon Islands and the General Assembly again voted overwhelmingly in support of the resolution on this item. For three decades since 1992, the international community has consistently maintained its affirmation in calling for the unconditional ending to the economic, commercial and financial blockade against the peaceful people of Cuba. Resolution 77/7 reaffirms Solomon Islands and the General Assembly's adherence and commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for the principles of sovereign equality among Member States, non-interference and non-intervention in the domestic and internal affairs of another State.

Solomon Islands continues to enjoy cordial and friendly relations with both the United States and Cuba. On this occasion, the Solomon Islands Government and its people would like to thank the Government and the people of Cuba for medical scholarships provided to students from Solomon Islands and Pacific small island

developing States. Since 2007, more than 100 Solomon Islands doctors trained in Cuba have returned home and are serving our people. We thank Cuba for its solidarity and friendship to Solomon Islands and our subregion of the Pacific.

In closing, Solomon Islands calls for the full implementation of resolution 77/7 to bring an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, and encourages the United States of America and Cuba to renew their commitment to an open, constructive dialogue based on a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

Mr. Pieris (Sri Lanka): We were pleased to read the contents of the Secretary-General's report (A/77/358). We were equally pleased to have with us Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Sri Lanka voted in favour of resolution 77/7, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

It has been said numerous times in this forum and elsewhere that we live in a world beset with multiple crises. Such crises should ideally bring out the best in us if we are to build back better. Is it not time that we put history behind us and really commit ourselves to building back better, including the Cuban crisis? That should ideally begin by promoting the means for populations to enjoy the full spectrum of their human rights. The lifting of the economic embargo on Cuba, which is an anomaly in the multilateral system, would contribute in a substantial manner to enabling the Cuban people to face up to the contemporary challenges confronting all of us in this post-pandemic era.

We therefore commend the valiant people of Cuba, who have, despite the odds of an embargo against them, achieved an impressive degree of human development for themselves, as shown in their social indicators. In our view, the embargo constitutes a violation of Cuba's right to fully interact with the international community and thereby hampers the avenues for the Cuban people to fully enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

We call on those concerned to lift the imposition of unilateral coercive measures that are not authorized by the relevant organs of the United Nations and

are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We were pleased, however, to have heard the representative of the United States refer to the fact that there was greater accommodation in United States policy in this day and age, and we hope that we will see greater accommodation in times to come.

The most problematic part of unilateral sanctions is in the practice of most frequently resorting to secondary sanctions aimed at universalizing the effects of a sanctions regime, by seeking to avoid the flouting of the unilateral sanctions by States and entities not bound by the sanctioning State's law. In essence, such sanctions regimes aim at emulating collective sanctions. That makes it clear that unilateral sanctions can never achieve results similar to those of collective sanctions without exaggerated claims to jurisdiction.

We must remember that sanctions, although a core foreign policy tool, have two important implications for multilateral and unilateral activity. One country may well perceive the implications of sanctions differently from another. Other countries may differ on the targets, types and directions. If one looks at the bigger picture carefully, unilateral sanctions have never had their desired effect. It is therefore time to re-examine the continuation of the sanctions against Cuba, which have been imposed for so long.

We will recall the time when super-Power antagonisms left little space for consensus. Everyone did what they willed. They employed unilateral sanctions in the guise of countermeasures whenever there was a security need, while the Security Council lay silent. Examples abound, including that of Cuba, starting in the 1960s. We have come a long way since then, and Sri Lanka believes that it is time that those sanctions be withdrawn as the Assembly has a raft of mechanisms to impose controls if the need arises. We cannot be seen to abdicate that right to the whims and fancies of one Member State, however powerful it may be.

While reiterating our commitment to the promotion, preservation and strengthening of multilateralism, my delegation would like to call for full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly those referring to sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention, which are critical to the effective maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore call for adherence to the principles of impartiality, non-selectivity and

objectivity in the promotion and protection of human rights, inclusive of the treatment of Cuba in the post-pandemic era.

Ms. Tsiode (Nauru): First, let me first convey my delegation's appreciation for the convening of this very important meeting on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Secondly, I recognize the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and extend my delegation's warmest welcome.

I now take this opportunity to explain Nauru's vote after the voting. Nauru aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the G77 and China (see A/77/PV.26).

For many years, Nauru has voted in favour of the resolution on this item. In fact, the Assembly has adopted this resolution every year for nearly three decades with the support of almost all States Members of the United Nations. Despite the near unanimous agreement on the need to end the barbaric embargo against the friendly people of Cuba, a developing State — a small island developing State — the United States has shunned the calls of the many, threatening the lives and safety of the Cuban people in times of hardship.

Mr. Wallace (Jamaica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/77/358), which shows that multidimensional global crises in the energy, food, environment and transportation sectors, combined with the cumulative impacts of two years of the coronavirus disease pandemic, have put the Cuban economy under extraordinary pressure, leading to a decline in consumption levels and the general welfare of the population.

The Government of Nauru reiterates and reaffirms its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the fundamental principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention in internal affairs, as well as to the freedom of international trade and navigation, as established by international law.

Mrs. Mamesah (Indonesia): Indonesia would like to align itself with the statements delivered by

the representatives of Singapore on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Egypt on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (see A/77/PV.26).

Indonesia cast its vote in favour of resolution 77/7, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". The General Assembly consistently rejects the imposition of laws, regulations and all other forms of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of people around the world. However, for more than six decades the Cuban Government and people have endured an imposed embargo that has sidelined them from global economic, trade and financial relations. The situation has been worsened by the tremendous challenges brought on by the pandemic, geopolitical tensions and multidimensional crises.

In that regard, we reaffirm our principled position to support and act on the resolutions of the General Assembly for the immediate ending of the unilateral embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, and would like to highlight three points.

First, Indonesia strongly opposes unilateral embargoes and extraterritorial coercive measures carried out against the sovereignty of other States.

Secondly, Indonesia is of the view that the continued imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba contradicts the main principles of international law, including the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs, and respect for international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States.

Thirdly, the embargo has not only impeded the economic growth of Cuba, but has also aggravated its socioeconomic conditions, as the people of Cuba are also facing serious global crises and the coronavirus disease pandemic. The situation certainly undermines the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and jeopardizes our shared goal of leaving no one behind.

Indonesia underlines the importance of enhanced and constructive dialogue with a view to ending the embargo imposed against Cuba and towards

the normalization of relations through open and constructive dialogue. Taking into account Indonesia's cordial ties with and support for the Government and the people of Cuba, Indonesia would like to join other members in calling for an immediate end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The representative of Cuba has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind him that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The debate on this agenda item should not be sullied by the fallacious allegations of the United States delegation now that the Assembly has, by an overwhelming margin, sent an unequivocal message on the urgent need to end the blockade against Cuba.

In his statement, the representative of the United States Government referred to their concern over the plight of the Cuban people. How can his Government justify its use of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic to intensify its inhumane blockade against Cuba and block our access to treatment and our ability to purchase of basic products to manufacture our own vaccines, pulmonary ventilators and even medicinal oxygen?

The United States claims to advocate for individual freedoms in Cuba, and yet it has not reversed restrictions that are having a direct impact on Cuban entrepreneurs in such areas as software development, hospitality and other services. If the United States Government truly cared for the well-being, human rights and self-determination of the Cuban people, it could lift the embargo and join us in our international cooperation.

Cuba has been and remains the subject of a dirty campaign directed by the United States Government and by politicians in that country. Lying has been a fundamental component of that campaign. It is false to state that Cuba detained, prosecuted or punished peaceful protestors on 11 July 2021. Those who committed crimes during those disturbances were brought to justice fairly and transparently, with all legal guarantees. No one has been prosecuted for expressing

their opinion. It is unacceptable for the United States to call us out for defending our constitutional order when it is actually that country that has detained over 800 people following the events of 6 January 2021 at the United States Capitol.

Is the United States the only country in the world with the right to defend its institutions, like any other country would do? We will not allow the law to be broken or the interests of an external regime change agenda to subvert the constitutional order and the political system that we Cubans have freely chosen. We will continue to strengthen our institutional legal framework to promote and protect human rights, including the right of association, and we will continue to ensure the strict application of and full respect for our laws.

Desperate to justify its hostility towards Cuba, the United States is manipulating the issue of arrests by focusing on minors. The Cuban authorities have provided enough information to corroborate their respect for due process in our country. They have made it clear that we in Cuba do not, in any circumstances, assign criminal responsibility to minors under 16 years of age. The only arbitrary detentions and lengthy penal incarceration on Cuban territory are those being carried out by the United States Government at the Guantanamo naval base.

The representative of a country where there are no ethical limits in electoral campaigns cannot talk about democracy and elections. Hatred, division, egoism, racism, xenophobia, slander and lies are promoted in elections in that country. It is a country in which money and corporate interests define who is elected and who is not. Cuba needs no lessons on democracy and human rights, much less from the United States. We will not accept any such questioning, particularly when it is used to justify a system of universal coercive measures that is the most prolonged and wide-ranging ever imposed against any country.

The United States Government should focus on its own population below the poverty line, its repressive policies towards migrants, and its repression of minorities and reproductive rights. It should focus on its own lack of gender equality, racism, discrimination against persons of African descent, police brutality, the more than 1,000 deaths per year in police shootings, secret jails, extrajudicial arrests and the use of torture. Allow me to cite just two specific examples from that list.

The United States is the only country that is not a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the only country where minors under the age of 18 are sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. According to the Children's Defense Fund, in 2021 alone between 600,000 and 700,000 minors were arrested in that country. Institutional discrimination and unrestrained police brutality against persons of African descent, Hispanics, migrants, refugees and minorities have reached alarming levels in the United States. Persons of African descent represent only 13 per cent of the United States population, but they represent 36 per cent of the total prison population. In 2021, a total of 266 persons of African descent were murdered by the police in the United States.

If the United States really wants to look out for the well-being of the Cuban people, it should once and for all and unconditionally lift the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba. Instead of promoting cooperation and cordial relations with Cuba, the United States seeks confrontation and overtly sponsors political change in Cuba. In its 2022 budget, the Biden Administration has asked Congress for \$20 million for programmes allegedly aimed at promoting democracy in Cuba and for almost \$13 million for the illegal broadcasts of the ill-named Radio y Televisión Martí. Such conduct contrasts with that country's high sensitivity over any attempt or suspected attempt at interference in its domestic affairs, and is aimed at fabricating political opposition in Cuba and breaking down our constitutional order.

The United States delegation is lying when it cites extremely high levels of exports and humanitarian assistance to our country. It is cynically using multi-million dollar amounts from funds that the United States Agency for International Development allocates to subversion in Cuba and to stopping the care packages sent, at great cost, by Cuban emigres to their families or the modest donations that are made, despite many obstacles, by non-governmental organizations. There is irrefutable proof that the blockade blocks the main channels for sending assistance to my country, including from third countries. All this is occurring in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, I reiterate a statement made just a few days ago by Cuban President Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel y Bermúdez, who said:

"We have firmly and creatively faced the imposition of the criminal economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America, which was opportunistically intensified during the time of the pandemic. Nor did the Cuban people cede to the subversive media campaigns. No obstacle will suffice to weaken our resolve to resist, to fight and to win."

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.