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Official Records

President: Mr. Francis (Trinidad and Tobago)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Seah (Singapore), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 28

Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Gil Pinto (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, whose States members would first like to express their appreciation for the convening of this historic debate on an issue to which they attach particular importance. It has been almost 14 years since the General Assembly last held a debate on this agenda item (see A/65/PV.63), which was first included on its agenda in 1996 (see A/51/PV.67). The convening of today's debate is long overdue, since it is as pertinent as it is timely, especially in the current international circumstances. At the outset, we would therefore like to take this opportunity to urge the Assembly to take the measures needed to ensure that in the light of the increasing adoptions and implementation of unilateral coercive measures the issue will be addressed much more frequently.

Unilateral coercive measures are illegal, and that includes those imposed as instruments of political or economic and financial coercion against any country, especially developing countries. Among other things, they represent a clear violation of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the most basic norms of international law and the provisions of both the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. One of the most notorious examples of failed policies using unilateral coercive measures is the economic, commercial and financial blockade that was imposed on the Republic of Cuba more than 60 years ago. In that regard, we renew our unwavering solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba, while at the same time once again urging the Government of the United States to immediately and unconditionally end the embargo and remove Cuba from its arbitrary and unilateral list of alleged State sponsors of terrorism.

The promulgation and implementation of unilateral coercive measures, which is the subject of this meeting, have no place or basis of any kind in the framework of international law. They are definitively unlawful. It is important to be clear on that point, because the Governments that have imposed such measures have tried to present the world with a false narrative, with the sole purpose of deliberately confusing and misleading the international community about their blatant attempts to justify and even legitimize such illegal policies. In that context, we should point out that contrary to what

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some Governments would have us believe, financial transactions or the provision of goods and services necessary for humanitarian assistance and the most basic human needs are in fact affected by the mere existence of unilateral coercive measures, including as a consequence of fear of so-called secondary sanctions. Humanitarian exemptions for unilateral coercive measures are simply a fantasy and an illusion, given the fact that even if they exist on paper, in reality and in practice they have been shown to be ineffective or, more precisely, non-existent. It is therefore not hard to conclude that unilateral coercive measures clearly constitute crimes against humanity and mass violations of human rights, since they are obviously designed to deprive entire populations of their own means of subsistence, among other things. We should not allow ourselves to be deceived or convinced otherwise.

More than 30 nations in the world, including many that are Members of this Organization, are currently subject to unilateral coercive measures that directly affect the daily lives of more than a third of humankind. Needless to say, that reality has created a systemic crisis within our entire system of international relations, which not only continues to erode multilateralism but is also increasing uncertainty, instability, distrust and tensions throughout the world. Such measures therefore constitute a global problem that requires a global solution, and that is why this debate is so important. The fact is that today we are facing a new generation of illegal measures, more cruel and destructive than ever before. We are talking about a new generation of so-called sanctions that use the pain and suffering of entire peoples to advance interventionist and destabilizing agendas. The greatest obstacle to the implementation of the development plans of the nations subjected to unilateral coercive measures today is those very measures, weapons that seek to generate pressure and the exploitation, domination and subjugation of sovereign and independent nations. We must say it clearly. Unilateral coercive measures endanger the lives and welfare of the peoples subject to them, while simultaneously hindering international cooperation and limiting the ability of the States subject to them to access and acquire foreign investments and technologies, as well as the goods and services needed to overcome their various challenges, including environmental issues.

In the current context, as a new multipolar world is emerging, unilateral coercive measures have also become a means of fostering unfair competition in

markets. Reserve currencies are used as weapons of oppression, while sovereign property is arbitrarily blocked or even confiscated. As a result, any country that is more or less dependent on Western markets, technology and financial assistance, and that may also have reserves in Western jurisdictions, is likely to face the risk of a total loss of its assets.

In the circumstances, it is not difficult to see that among other things, such aggressive measures are intended to put a stranglehold on the global South and undermine its economic development potential, with the ultimate goal of eliminating a competitor and turning the developing world into a mere supplier of raw materials. The fact is that whether we can see it or not, unilateral coercive measures affect us all equally, directly or indirectly. In the nations that are subject to them, they have a negative impact on their enjoyment and full realization of their human rights, including the right to development, health and food, as well as the acquisition of goods and services, financial and technical assistance, technology transfer and capacity-building. For those nations, at the global level they are deliberately aggravating the multifaceted crisis facing humankind today, including on the energy and food-security fronts, while cutting off their supply chains and disrupting markets. As long as they continue, they will not only have a negative impact on the global economy generally but will also cause and prolong human suffering throughout the world. We therefore call for an immediate and complete end to all such illegal measures.

It is worth asking, for example, how much Zimbabwe could contribute to alleviating the global food-insecurity crisis if the unilateral coercive measures imposed on it were lifted. How much could Belarus contribute to alleviating that same crisis if it were allowed to freely trade its fertilizers? How much could Iran, Russia or Syria contribute to alleviating the global energy crisis if the unilateral coercive measures imposed on them were lifted so that they could trade their oil and gas without limitations or discrimination? Could Venezuela not promote cooperation with Caribbean and other countries in its region, particularly on the energy front, through such programmes as PetroCaribe, which provide advantageous compensation mechanisms for oil production? How much could Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Mali, Nicaragua and all who find themselves subject to these illegal regimes contribute to overcoming our shared challenges, if the so-called sanctions were eliminated and they could all

fully develop their productive potential? We have the historic task of working together to build and make a reality of this new and possible world of peace and development for all. That is our responsibility to both our present and future generations, which everyone talks about so much these days.

Given the persistence of these unilateral coercive measures — and with our first-hand knowledge of their harmful consequences for independent and sovereign nations' ability to freely carry out trade and investment among themselves, among other things — we want to express, first of all, our commitment to a multilateral system anchored in the Charter, as well as our determination to explore possible ways and means of ensuring a framework or platform that is truly independent, respects international law and enables us to conduct financial transactions and payments between banks around the world. To be explicit, we are determined to identify ways and means that will allow us to counter, mitigate and address the adverse effects of unilateral coercive measures, including through the possibility of establishing a safe zone, free of unilateral sanctions, in which we can trade and process payments without danger or arbitrary punitive obstacles, in order to guarantee both the welfare of our peoples and the development of our nations, or through the definition of a concrete road map that will enable a reduction in the dependence of international trade on national currencies that may be used to implement unilateral coercive measures or sustain a State's monetary hegemony over the global economy. It is also important to recognize the legitimate claims that States that are affected by unilateral coercive measures, whether directly or indirectly, may make under the relevant rules of international law, in order to obtain due compensation from the States imposing those measures for damages suffered as a result of their existence, promulgation and application.

I would like to conclude by making six points. First, we appreciate all the regional groups and national delegations that will participate in today's debate and value their continuing solidarity with the nations and peoples that are subjected to unilateral coercive measures, as well as their determined support for the global cause of achieving a world free of so-called sanctions.

Secondly, we urge the Secretariat to submit a report without delay with its respective conclusions, based on the Assembly's request for the monitoring of unilateral economic measures imposed as a means of political and economic coercion, and to study the negative impact of

such illegal measures on the countries affected, including in their trade and development. We cannot overemphasize the role of the Secretariat in raising awareness of this issue, which, as I said earlier, has global implications.

Thirdly, we urge all responsible members of the international community to ensure that this reality is not minimized or ignored, including in the context of ongoing intergovernmental processes here at the United Nations. If we are truly committed to honouring our promise to leave no one behind, the time has come for all of us to comprehensively and effectively address the issue of unilateral coercive measures, in the interests of the welfare of we, the peoples of the United Nations. For example, one first step in the right direction was the inclusion of the issue in the recently agreed conclusions and recommendations of the Financing for Development Forum. We trust that it will also be included in the outcome documents of the upcoming Summit of the Future. We cannot continue to shy away from the debate on this issue, which represents an existential threat to millions of people around the world.

Fourthly, we call firmly on all States to refrain from enacting, recognizing or applying unilateral coercive measures as a political means, including in the context of bilateral relations, among other things for the purposes of putting pressure on or forcing the sovereign will of another State, including as part of so-called regime-change policies.

Fifthly, we call on all international organizations and international financial institutions to refrain from recognizing, supporting, applying or de facto complying with unilateral coercive measures.

Sixthly, we reiterate our firm commitment to spare no effort to preserve, promote and defend the prevalence and validity of the Charter, which among other things requires that any unilateral coercive measures that exist in the world today be lifted completely, immediately and unconditionally.

I would now like to add some additional comments and considerations in my national capacity. Since at least 2014, the criminal United States Government, allied with sectors of the evil and corrupt Venezuelan and Latin American ultra-right oligarchy, has been applying one of the most aggressive illegal sanctions programmes in modern history against Venezuela. Its purpose has always been to impose a policy of regime change and its predatory model on a people who, in building their freedom and independence, have refused to give in to its blackmail, and who are firmly determined to be the masters of their own destiny.

As part of what they called a maximum pressure campaign against our country, a whole network of lies and legal and financial falsehoods has been approved to attack our people — criminal laws, damaging executive orders, lists of sanctioned entities and people and regulations aimed specifically at our country. All of those actions make up a criminal structure that seeks to legitimize and justify an illegal and spurious policy, applied extraterritorially, designed to conceal the conduct of a decadent empire that believes it can act with impunity in the face of a weak international system. That set of systematic and sustained measures of economic terrorism — more than 930 to date — applied by the Government of the United States, the European Union and other satellite nations has resulted in freezing the Venezuelan people's assets and property. They have blocked accounts and prevented bank transfers, among other things interrupting our country's payment of debts and collection of interest, titles and bonds. They have prevented the purchase of machinery, supplies and parts of various kinds on the international market. They have paralysed the contracting of services at the international level, exerted pressure aimed at discouraging economic and commercial exchanges between Venezuela and third countries and hindered imports of goods and services that are essential to ensuring the welfare of the Venezuelan people.

Those measures, which constitute modern-day colonialist practices, are aimed at achieving the collapse of the Venezuelan national economy and at manufacturing and inducing an unprecedented multifactorial crisis, with a negative impact on the public and private economy of our nation. That has been acknowledged by the promoters of those crimes against humanity themselves. One of the criminals, William Brownfield, the infamous representative of the genocidal Government of the United States of America, confessed:

“We must treat this as an agony, a tragedy that will continue until it reaches an end ... and if we can do anything to speed it up, we must do it, understanding that this is going to have an impact on millions of people who are already having difficulty finding food and medicine ... We cannot do this and pretend that it is not going to have an impact. We have to make a hard decision. The desired end justifies this severe punishment.”

As a result of the unilateral coercion of those measures, between 2015 and 2022, Venezuela stopped producing 3,393 million barrels of oil, which is equivalent

to \$232 billion. Overall, until 2022, the damage caused to the country's internal economy was estimated at \$642 billion. That means that the loss caused to Venezuela was greater than the combined international reserves of the 11 other countries of South America. In short, the unilateral coercive measures against Venezuelan companies, ships, aircraft and other assets, to which we must add the retention and confiscation of more than \$22 billion in at least 29 international banks and three multilateral organizations, have made Venezuela the country in the world with the fifth highest number of penalized people, the sixth highest number of companies and public bodies affected, the fourth highest number of naval vessels affected and the third highest number of aircraft affected by those destructive and criminal measures.

However, to evade their international responsibility for the crimes committed, the financial executioners who impose that set of unilateral coercive measures try to hide behind the issuance of the well-known licenses. In reality, such licenses, which in some cases are even euphemistically presented as so-called humanitarian exemptions, are a means of administering collective punishment, a mechanism of economic neocolonization that enforces conditions on the attacked States and adapts to the political and economic interests of private corporations and the Government of the aggressor State. In other words, they are licenses to dominate, administer pain, deepen and extend the structural ties of economic and financial dependence — a dependence already sustained by an unjust international system and designed to suit the interests of the North — and manipulate the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples.

Before the coercive measures were implemented, Venezuela had made significant progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and was on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 in an optimal and timely manner. Those gains have been affected by the extortion policies of the United States and other Governments that serve its imperial interests and deliberate domination. Today the recovery of the Venezuelan people is being achieved by their own effort. With pride and dignity, they are calling for all criminal sanctions to be lifted so that they can move ahead with greater determination and fully exercise their right to development. The blockade of financial transactions in the food, health, education and public services sectors, which have become widespread since 2016, resulted in real restrictions that still persist today, in contrast to

what the aggressors would have international public opinion believe, with the support of large media corporations that try to clean up their image.

All that is part of that policy of maximum cruelty, calculated to cause pain and suffering for the entire Venezuelan society — a veritable form of collective punishment for which its promoters must be held accountable before international justice sooner rather than later. Now, despite all the attacks, acts of aggression, siege and looting that those cruel and inhumane unilateral coercive measures that are currently being applied against our country have represented, the Government of President Nicolás Maduro Moros has never put aside what we consider essential: the protection of our people through social investment. The unilateral coercive measures have focused on blocking and confiscating Venezuelan State assets abroad, through the international financial system, arbitral tribunals and courts in foreign countries. That has been carried out in combination with a strategy of aggression that uses force or the threat of the use of force, thereby violating international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. In the Venezuelan case, the so-called sanctions operate as a curtain, a cover that aims to hide a criminal operation that engages in the looting and theft of our country's assets.

That is why we see ourselves duty-bound to denounce from this rostrum today the attempt to illegally deprive our country of an asset that constitutes the seventh largest oil refining company in the United States market and is the indisputable and sovereign patrimony of the Venezuelan people. We refer to the Citgo Petroleum Corporation, Venezuela's main asset in the United States, which is owned by the Venezuelan State oil company and has been blocked since 2019. Owing to the legal warfare — or lawfare — actions of a Delaware court, with the support of fictitious entities that are only recognized by Washington as so-called Venezuelan representatives, the company runs the imminent risk of being auctioned for the benefit of United States and Canadian corporations. That is why the United States delegation, in this very Hall, dissociated itself from the overwhelming election of our country as a Vice-President of the General Assembly just a few days ago (see A/78/PV.87), perpetuating a farce, with the support of its local agents, in order to continue to plunder the property of all our people in this country and beyond.

We cannot fail to mention the impact of the sanctions on the regional and global economy and development. Energy security has been seriously affected. An attempt was made to reduce the productive capacities of the country with the largest oil reserves in the world. The PetroCaribe programme, the most wonderful enterprise of solidarity cooperation in our region, which allowed the investment of considerable resources for our peoples, was vilely attacked, with the sole aim of doing inhuman damage to entire peoples, limiting the development of more than 12 countries participating in that programme.

By choosing their sovereignty and the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination, as well as their right to freely choose the system of government and economic model that suits them best, the people of Venezuela have shown that their dignity is priceless. That is why all the coercive and unilateral strategies have failed and are destined to continue to fail miserably in future — not only for the good of Venezuela but for the accelerated erosion of the supremacist and arrogant spirit of those who impose these illegal, cruel, inhumane and genocidal measures. For every day that infamous policy against Venezuela persists, the alternative capacities for economic, political, social and cultural development of its people will be enhanced and realized. For every measure that seeks to freeze a good, service, monetary value or transaction, Venezuela will unleash a torrent of new opportunities. Just one example will suffice. At the height of the blockade and the economic war against Venezuela, the nation reached shortages of 95 per cent and today, although challenges certainly persist, it is possible to affirm that that figure has been reversed and we now have 97 per cent food self-sufficiency in the country. Today, through its own efforts, the Venezuelan economy has begun a process of recovery, with projected growth figures well above those of other countries in our region, as reported by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and other specialized agencies.

On 28 July, Venezuela will hold presidential elections for the constitutional period 2025-2030. In the peaceful and civil electoral atmosphere in which 11 candidates and 37 political parties, representing the entire national ideological and political spectrum, are running, a great public debate is taking place right now in the streets of our country, Venezuela.

The so-called sanctions, requested, stimulated and supported by sectors of a subservient political opposition remotely operated by Washington, are at the

centre of the electoral debate. They will undoubtedly contribute to the electoral defeat that is predicted against those who tried to undermine the dignity of the Venezuelan people and impose a colonial regime, with fascist practices and absolutely adhering to the anachronistic Monroe Doctrine, which seeks to turn Venezuela into their backyard.

Those who impose sanctions and their anti-democratic and neoliberal model of hunger, misery, surrender, pain, suffering and coercion will be defeated once again, by the Bolivarian principles of sovereignty and independence, and the results of the upcoming elections will likely confirm the determination of the vast majority of the Venezuelan people for President Nicolás Maduro Moros to serve another term as President.

On 28 July, a resounding democratic and popular cry that the United Nations must hear and recognize will be confirmed by the electoral ballots; a cry that is summarized in the call to restore all the values and principles of the founding Charter of the United Nations; an imperative that is consistent with international law and that, with the clamour of the heroic Venezuelan people, exclaims victoriously and resolutely: no to sanctions!

Mr. Rodríguez Perdomo (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of this timely and relevant debate on the elimination of unilateral coercive measures used as an instrument of political and economic compulsion.

Our delegation aligns itself with the statements to be made by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of 77 plus China and the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

I would like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela for his words of solidarity with Cuba, which we just heard.

Cuba firmly rejects the implementation of unilateral coercive measures, which violate the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Such measures are particularly harmful under the current conditions of an international economy in crisis, increasingly interconnected, interdependent and subject to the dictates of the financial centres of power.

We note an unacceptable trend towards an increase in unilateral coercive measures. Their impact undermines our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and national development plans, by preventing our participation in international markets on equal terms, in a fair and inclusive manner. Such measures cause direct, intentional and politically motivated harm to the sovereignty and independence of the States against which they are directed. In certain cases, they are directed against entire populations. They violate the principle of non-interference in internal affairs and hinder the efforts of nations to promote the full enjoyment of human rights. They constitute a violation of international trade rules, insofar as they provide for actions of economic pressure harmful to the sovereignty of countries. The complete, immediate and unconditional elimination of such measures is a historical demand of the international community, expressed in resolutions of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, as well as in numerous declarations of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of 77 and China and the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

We demand the complete, immediate and unconditional elimination of all unilateral coercive measures.

For 62 years, the United States Government has imposed on Cuba the most severe and prolonged system of unilateral coercive measures ever imposed on any nation. More than 80 per cent of the current Cuban population was born under the economic, commercial and financial blockade. It is a deliberate act of economic warfare intended to obstruct the country's incoming revenues, destroy the Government's ability to meet the needs of the population, cause the economy to collapse and create an ungovernable situation.

The blockade is a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cubans, and it has been almost unanimously repudiated by the international community. The human damage caused by that policy is incalculable. No Cuban family has been spared the effects of the blockade, which causes shortages and instability in the supply of essential and basic necessities.

Since 2019, the blockade against Cuba has escalated to an extreme, much more cruel and inhumane, dimension. In the area of health, our country cannot gain access to equipment, technologies, devices, treatments

and suitable medicine. We are prevented from acquiring them from United States companies, and we are forced to buy them at exorbitant prices through intermediaries or to replace them with generic drugs of lesser efficacy, even for newborns and sick children. The blockade deprives our national industry of financing to import the necessary inputs for food production. It exacerbates the financial limitations and access to credit to invest in, repair and maintain the country's thermoelectric plants. The cumulative impact of the more than six decades of imposition of the blockade amounts to more than \$159 billion.

The persecution by the United States of financial, commercial and investment transactions related to our country is incessant and obsessive. That has been further reinforced by the arbitrary inclusion of Cuba on the State Department's unilateral list of alleged countries sponsoring terrorism. That is a designation without any basis, authority or international backing whatsoever, in an attempt to justify and tighten the siege against Cuba with which the United States continues to punish the Cuban people.

It is not enough to recognize that Cuba fully cooperates with the United States in the fight against terrorism, as the State Department recently admitted. Cuba must be removed without further delay from that spurious unilateral listing, a fallacy that has a suffocating impact on its economy.

The States represented here are also victims of the extraterritorial impact of the blockade against Cuba, which harms the sovereignty of nations, infringes on their national legislations, subjects them to the decisions of United States courts and harms the interests of their companies wanting to have relations with both countries, all of which is in violation of international law.

Subsidiaries of United States companies in third countries are prohibited from trading with Cuba; the export to Cuba of articles produced in any country is prevented when they contain 10 per cent or more of United States components; and products manufactured in third countries are excluded if they contain Cuban raw materials.

The United States Government complements the blockade with an intense campaign of disinformation, with subversive programmes to which it allocates tens of millions of dollars of its federal budget and additional undisclosed funds. It seeks to discredit Cuba

by all means through the shameless use of lies, hatred and manipulation of data. The purpose is to promote political and social instability amid the economic hardship caused by the United States Government itself.

It is neither legal nor ethical for the Government of a Power to subject a small nation, for decades, to a relentless economic warfare in order to impose a foreign political system on that nation. It is not acceptable for the Government of the United States to ignore for more than 30 years the successive resolutions of the General Assembly demanding an end to the blockade against Cuba. It is unacceptable to deprive an entire people of the right to peace, development, well-being and human progress.

The blockade has not fulfilled and will not fulfil its purpose of subduing the Cuban people. Even amid the inhuman prohibitions and limitations imposed on us, Cuba will never give up its system of social justice. We will continue being a fully independent and sovereign nation, master of its destiny. It is an achievement attained through the sacrifice of several generations, which we will always defend.

I conclude by expressing my gratitude, on behalf of the Cuban Government and people, for the solidary support we have received from the vast majority of the States represented here, in the light of the injustice perpetrated against Cuba. We thank them for standing with us in defending the right of the Cuban people to live without unilateral coercive measures.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of European Union, in its capacity as observer.

Ms. Popan (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Montenegro, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

Sanctions have become a fault line in the United Nations. They have been misconstrued by some and unjustly blamed for matters for which they are not responsible. I therefore thank the President for convening this meeting, which serves as an opportune moment to clarify the reasons for sanctions, how they function within the EU and their intended outcomes.

Sanctions are a vital tool available to the Security Council to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security. They support conflict resolution, such as in the case of the two latest renewals for Libya and South Sudan. They constrain the proliferation activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the terrorist threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida and their affiliates. They curb the flow of arms and ammunition or the financing of armed groups in conflict situations. In short, sanctions are one of the most powerful peaceful tools of the international community.

Language describing sanctions as “unilateral coercive measures” can be misleading and is often a politically motivated attempt to divert attention away from the reasons the sanctions were imposed in the first place. Some of the loudest voices promoting the unilateral coercive measures narrative are at the same time obstructing the adoption or implementation of United Nations sanctions. In that context, it is deplorable that the Russian Federation recently vetoed the extension of the mandate for the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, seemingly with the intent to hide illicit arms transfers between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia.

For the EU, sanctions are necessary to preserve peace and security and to defend international law, the rule of law and human rights. The alternative would be non-action in the face of clear violations of international law and the inability of the Security Council to act.

In the wake of the unprovoked and unjustified aggression by Russia against Ukraine, the EU adopted 13 sanctions packages. All of them are public and can be checked online. They range from asset freezes to travel bans to sectoral economic sanctions, including a ban on export of components, goods and technologies that can be used in the battlefield.

Yet sanctions against Russia did not come out of thin air. When Russia started to build up troops at the border of Ukraine in preparation for the invasion, we told Russia that if it invaded Ukraine, there would be serious consequences. And these are the consequences. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression is a blatant violation of the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The international community must not ignore instances of human rights violations or abuses, the imprisonment or killing of human rights defenders, the suppression of democratic opposition and civil society organizations or the use of chemical weapons. Our sanctions aim to target those responsible for these transgressions.

The EU global human rights sanctions regime applies to genocide, crimes against humanity and other serious and systematic human rights violations or abuses. It targets those who provide support for or are otherwise involved with people or entities committing such violations.

EU sanctions are intended to preserve peace and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law. They seek to protect the most vulnerable. The measures are targeted and carefully calibrated, aimed at those responsible. EU sanctions do not target the civilian population. On the contrary, it is frequently the civilian population, human rights defenders and civil society entities that call for those measures. They also do not target the delivery of humanitarian aid. Food, medicine and other emergency supplies are exempted, by default, from EU sanctions.

The EU and its member States are the biggest donor of humanitarian assistance in the world, including to countries where sanctions are in place. EU sanctions regimes contain humanitarian exceptions in order to facilitate humanitarian action. The EU has fully transposed Security Council resolution 2664 (2022), which provided a humanitarian carveout from the asset freeze from United Nations sanctions regimes. Additionally, the EU autonomous sanctions regimes contain humanitarian exceptions.

EU sanctions respect the rights of the listed persons and entities, including due process rights. EU sanctions designations are based on specific listing criteria and require legally robust evidence. They always give reasons for each listing so that the individual or entity concerned understands the grounds for their listing. Individuals, legal persons and States under sanctions may challenge them before the Court of Justice of the European Union. Some of them have successfully done so.

EU sanctions are temporary in nature. They are subject to regular review and are proportionate to the gravity of the situation they address. The term “sanctions” can have a negative connotation, as in layman's terms, a sanction is a penalty or punishment.

However, sanctions are not punitive. That is why the EU treaties call them restrictive measures. They restrict certain activities in order to induce a change of conduct. Those restrictions are applied to EU operators and within the EU jurisdiction. They do not create obligations for non-EU operators, unless their business is conducted at least partially within the EU. As such, our sanctions do not have extraterritorial application.

In conclusion, sanctions are a means rather than an end in themselves. They are part of a wider, comprehensive policy approach that involves political dialogue and complementary efforts, such as preventative diplomacy, political dialogue and other instruments aimed at preserving international peace and security, defending the Charter, the rule of law and human rights. If those universal principles and values were universally upheld and respected by all United Nations States Members, sanctions would not be needed.

Mr. Da Cruz (Angola): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the 16 Member States of the Southern Africa Development community (SADC), namely, Botswana, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own country, Angola.

We align ourselves with the statements to be made by the representative of Uganda, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the representative of Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States.

We thank the President for convening this meeting on a very important subject — the elimination of unilateral, extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion. In a world with increasing geopolitical tensions, rising inequality and growing threats from natural calamities, the need for diplomacy cannot be overemphasized. In that context, the resort to unilateralism for political gains goes against the grain and is in any case against the Charter of the United Nations and the very spirit of multilateralism.

SADC is concerned that unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures disproportionately affect the most vulnerable segments of society, exacerbating poverty and inequality, and cause socioeconomic instability. Furthermore, the measures hinder regional

and international cooperation, disrupt trade and investment flows and undermine efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They strain diplomatic relations, not only between the countries imposing the measures and those targeted by them but also with third-party nations affected by their extraterritorial reach. The measures have significant and long-term negative economic, social, political and institutional impacts on the targeted countries, as economic hardships and reduced opportunities lead to brain drains, with skilled professionals emigrating to seek better opportunities elsewhere, thereby hampering the ability of the targeted countries to recover.

SADC has practical experience of the negative impacts of such measures and has witnessed at first hand their crippling effects, not only on the country targeted, Zimbabwe, but also on the region. The reality is that the sanctions imposed against Zimbabwe have caused indiscriminate and significant damage, not only to the economy of the country but also to the economies of our region. That has been corroborated by Professor Alena Douhan, Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, in the report on her mission to Zimbabwe in 2021 (see A/HRC/51/33/Add.2) and in her report (see A/78/196) discussed by the Third Committee on 19 October 2023. As highlighted in our letter to the President of the Economic and Social Council of 25 October 2023, the SADC region is deeply concerned about the extraterritorial nature of secondary sanctions and their consequences, as they infringe on Zimbabwe's sovereignty and violate international legal principles. At a time when the SADC region is facing drought induced by the El Niño phenomenon, the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe create an alarming double threat to the livelihoods and survival of the people of Zimbabwe. In line with the collective global commitment to leave no one behind, we call for the urgent removal of all sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe for the good of the country, its people, the region and the world at large.

SADC underscores the inherent sovereignty of all nations and the principles of non-interference and mutual respect enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures violate those fundamental principles by imposing economic hardship on sovereign States, undermining their ability to exercise independent decision-making and impeding their development

efforts. Such actions contravene the spirit and letter of international law, infringing upon the sovereign rights of nations to determine their own political, economic and social systems.

We call upon all States to refrain from imposing unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures on any country and to resolve disputes through dialogue, negotiation and peaceful means, in accordance with international law. We believe that if genuine concerns exist, the United Nations remains the only international platform with the legitimate authority for collective action. The United Nations provides the necessary checks and balances and has peer review mechanisms in place to address all concerns. We cannot give up on dialogue and diplomacy — the only tried, tested and effective conflict resolution tools. We therefore reiterate our encouragement of dialogue and diplomatic solutions to conflicts and disapprove of the use of economic measures as tools of coercion. Indeed, the General Assembly adopts annual resolutions against unilateral coercive measures. We therefore call upon the Assembly to take concrete actions to address the adverse effects of those measures and to support the efforts of affected countries in achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

SADC reaffirms its commitment to solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect among nations, and this dialogue session is therefore a first step towards addressing any concerns in a peaceful and amicable manner. We call for collective action to eliminate the use of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion. We also reaffirm our commitment to a multilateral system founded on the principles of equality, justice and respect for international law, as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. We urge the international community to reaffirm its commitment to multilateralism and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is imperative that we uphold the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference and respect for territorial integrity. Unilateral coercive measures, particularly those with extraterritorial reach, are incompatible with those principles and must be unequivocally rejected.

In conclusion, SADC remains committed to working with the international community to create a just and equitable global order. We believe that through collective action and unwavering commitment to the principles of international law, we can eliminate the use of unilateral

extraterritorial coercive economic measures and build a future in which all nations can thrive in peace and prosperity. Let us seize this opportunity to reaffirm our dedication to a fair and just international system, in which economic cooperation and political dialogue prevail over coercion and compulsion.

Mr. Kwoba (Uganda): Uganda wears two hats. Allow me to speak first on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China.

It is an honour for the Republic of Uganda to take the floor on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We appreciate the convening of today's plenary meeting of the General Assembly on such an important topic, which affects a large number of countries in the global South. Developing countries face great challenges, including the increase in unilateral political, economic and trade actions or policies and the weakening of multilateralism, which are flagrant violations of the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations and international law and the purposes of the United Nations. We consider that it is urgent to stop those actions, which threaten the economic and social development of the countries that are subject to them and consequently prevent them from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Group considers that the application of those measures, together with all unilateral protectionist measures, including tariff and non-tariff barriers, also violate the rules of the World Trade Organization, undermine the multilateral trading system and seriously threaten free trade, the right of States to export or import goods or services from world markets, investment and sustainable development. Those measures also constitute means of arbitrary discrimination against developing countries subject to them. The impact of those measures also affects, among other things, technical and financial cooperation; technology transfer; agricultural and industrial production in the countries; access to food; the supply of medicines, vaccines, treatments and medical equipment to treat diseases, as occurred during the coronavirus disease pandemic; and even the participation of delegations in meetings of the United Nations system or of sports delegations wishing to attend international events.

The G-77 and China welcomes the adoption of resolution 78/135, on unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, especially because it requests

the Secretary-General to monitor the imposition of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion and to study, inter alia, with the support and cooperation of resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, the impact of such measures on the affected countries, including the impact on trade and development. Similarly, we welcome that the matter has been duly reflected in the recently agreed conclusions and recommendations of the 2024 Financing for Development Forum. We trust that will also be the case in the outcome documents of the upcoming Summit of the Future, currently under negotiation, as the matter can no longer be ignored and must be thoroughly and effectively addressed, including as part of our commitment to leaving no one behind.

In conclusion, the Group categorically rejects the application of unilateral coercive measures and calls on the countries concerned to refrain from imposing them, including unilateral sanctions and trade restrictions, which negatively impact the human rights of millions of people living under those illegal measures in developing countries and in turn deepen the gap between those countries and developed countries. Instead, those countries must show greater solidarity and cooperation to support other countries in overcoming the huge challenges and vulnerabilities they face in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in compliance with the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

Allow me to put on the other hat and speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

It is an honour for the Republic of Uganda to take the floor on behalf of the 121 member States of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, especially on a subject to which we have historically attached particular importance, namely the respect for international law and the firm condemnation of the promulgation and application of unilateral coercive measures, including against member States of our Movement, in clear contravention of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Today's debate has a particular significance for the member States of the Movement, as it provides an opportunity, among other things, to assess the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures, a subject on which NAM submits a draft resolution annually in both the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. During the nineteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Kampala in

January 2024, the Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their previously agreed positions, particularly their opposition to all unilateral coercive measures, including those measures used as tools for political or economic and financial pressure against any country, in particular against developing countries, which violate the Charter of the United Nations and the rules and principles of international law. Similarly, the Member States of the Movement reaffirmed that under no circumstances should people be deprived of their own means of subsistence and development, while expressing their concern about the continued imposition of such measures, which hinder the well-being of population of the affected countries and create obstacles to the full realization of their human rights.

With respect to development, the Heads of State and Government of NAM recognized at its most recent Summit conference that the unilateral coercive measures and the unilateral sanction regimes imposed against developing countries constitute obstacles that prevent Member States from implementing their national development policies and plans, including the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. They condemned the unilateral coercive measures as acts that are contrary to and in violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. They reiterated their determination to act in their denial. The Heads of State and Government of NAM also welcomed the adoption of resolution 78/135 on unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries, in particular its request to the Secretary-General to monitor, with the support and cooperation of the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, the impact of unilateral coercive measures on affected countries, including the impact on trade and development. In that regard, they also welcomed the launch of a uniform and universal tool, as elaborated by the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, for the purpose of monitoring and assessing the impact of unilateral coercive measures and overcompliance on human rights, as well as on the economic and social development of developing countries targeted by those measures and on their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

With regard to contributions, the Movement recognized that the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, unilateral sanctions or embargoes has resulted in some cases in the failure of Member States to

meet their assessed contributions to the United Nations in a timely manner, for which reason their immediate and complete lifting is urged. At the Kampala Summit, the Heads of State and Government stressed that any efforts to use financial contributions to push for the adoption of certain proposals are counterproductive and violate the obligations of the Member States to provide resources for the Organization, as enshrined in its Charter. The Heads of State and Government rejected in that context all unilateral coercive measures contrary to international law, which obstruct and sometimes impede the payments of assessed contributions from members of the Non-Aligned Movement to the budgets of the Organization.

With regard to human rights, let us recall that it was upon the initiative of our Movement that a Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights was appointed 10 years ago, taking into account the fact that the continued imposition of such measures hinders the well-being of the populations of the affected countries and creates obstacles to the full realization of their human rights. In that context, NAM welcomed the decision of the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 45/5, to extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights. NAM has invited the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights — as well as all special rapporteurs and existing thematic mechanisms of the Human Rights Council in the field of economic, social and cultural rights — to continue to pay due attention, within the scope of their respective mandates, to the negative impact and consequences of unilateral coercive measures.

Concerning health, the Heads of State and Government of NAM have expressed grave concern at the unilateral coercive measures imposed against some NAM member States, which have impeded or disrupted access to and the procurement of medicine and medical supplies and services and the development, purchase and delivery of vaccines and reagents and raw materials for their production, thereby creating serious challenges for the management and mitigation of infectious diseases, as well as rare diseases. They urged those States that have imposed unilateral coercive measures to promptly comply with their obligations under article X of the Biological Weapons Convention and to immediately lift all unilateral coercive measures

that directly or indirectly affect the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of biological agents and toxins for peaceful purposes.

Moreover, the NAM Heads of State and Government expressed their deepest concern over the intensification of the unilateral coercive measures, especially in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. They also expressed their rejection of the extraterritorial dimension of the blockade, which has severely and negatively impacted the international financial transactions of the affected countries and the well-being of their peoples.

In addition, the Heads of State and Government of NAM recognized the additional impediments faced by certain nations — including members of the Non-Aligned Movement — in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of the promulgation and application of unilateral coercive measures, which are flagrant violations of the norms and fundamental principles of international law, including those set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, the NAM Heads of State and Government condemned such wrongful acts, as well as the fact that such unlawful measures were neither terminated nor even partially lifted but instead were expanded and further intensified, resulting in human losses and in both obstacles to and deliberate delays in obtaining access to essential supplies, including vaccines, medicines, medical equipment and diagnostic tests.

With regard to international trade, the Non-Aligned Movement expresses its deep concern at the imposition of laws and other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, against developing countries, imposed by a specific country or a group for political and economic purposes. Such measures violate the Charter of the United Nations, the rules and principles of international law and the rules of the World Trade Organization. They also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment and constitute an interference in the internal affairs of other countries. We urge the relevant countries to put an end to such coercive measures.

Similarly, we emphasize that food should not be used as an instrument for political and economic pressure. We also reaffirm the importance of international cooperation and solidarity, as well as the necessity of refraining from undertaking unilateral

coercive measures that affect trade related to food and fertilizers, which could endanger food security. Such measures particularly impact groups in vulnerable situations and are not in accordance with international law or the Charter of the United Nations.

Moreover, on disaster and risk reduction, we express our deep concern that unilateral coercive measures and unilateral economic, financial or trade measures impede the development of targeted countries' multi-hazard early-warning systems and their ability to implement disaster preparedness, response and recovery in the wake of natural disasters. Such measures heavily increase the scale of economic and human losses generated by natural disasters on the countries I mentioned. We therefore firmly encourage the removal of such restrictions, especially during natural disasters.

The Non-Aligned Movement supports, in accordance with international law, the claim of affected States, including targeted States, to compensation for damage incurred as a consequence of the implementation of extraterritorial or unilateral coercive measures or laws. That is also in line with paragraph 32.6 of the final document of the nineteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was concluded in Kampala.

Furthermore, allow me to recall one of the principles enshrined in the Declaration on the Purposes and Principles and the Role of the Non-Aligned Movement in the Present International Juncture, adopted at the fourteenth NAM Summit, held in Havana:

“Refraining by all countries from exerting pressure or coercion on other countries, including resorting to aggression or other acts involving the use of direct or indirect force, and the application and/or promotion of any coercive unilateral measure that goes against International Law or is in any way incompatible with it, for the purpose of coercing any other State to subordinate its sovereign rights, or to gain any benefit whatsoever”. (*A/61/472, annex II, p. 103*)

We conclude by expressing our unwavering solidarity with those nations and peoples subjected to the negative impacts of unilateral coercive measures, in particular those who are members of our Movement, and by reiterating our commitment to continue calling for the complete, immediate and unconditional lifting of all unilateral coercive measures, including

measures used as tools to exert political or economic and financial pressure on any country, in particular developing countries. Such measures are in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, especially given that they hinder the health and well-being of the populations of the affected countries, creating obstacles to their full realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, human rights and national development plans.

Ms. Bryant (Australia): I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Canada and my own country, Australia.

Canada and Australia reject the claim that autonomous sanctions are illegitimate or illegal. Canada and Australia apply autonomous sanctions judiciously, transparently and consistently with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. Autonomous sanctions are aimed at deterring and preventing the very behaviours that pose a threat to international peace and security, including human rights violations and abuses and serious corruption, and at restricting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Charter of the United Nations recognizes that there are times when sanctions are necessary to address threats to global peace and security. By imposing autonomous sanctions, Member States send a clear signal that policies and behaviours that violate international rules, norms and conduct will not be tolerated.

Canada and Australia also challenge the claim that contemporary autonomous sanctions disproportionately impact vulnerable people. Our sanctions target regimes that give little consideration to the needs of their people. And sanctions target entities that carry out crimes whose victims are everyday people in our communities. When Canada and Australia implement targeted sanctions measures, we strive to minimize any adverse consequences for civilian populations and for legitimate business and humanitarian activities. We work closely with the private sector and humanitarian partners to ensure that humanitarian aid can be delivered effectively in contexts in which sanctions apply. And we stand ready to address any legitimate concerns in that regard.

Canada and Australia expect the Security Council to lead on applying and monitoring the implementation of sanctions regimes that it has adopted. But on matters in which the Council is blocked from responding

to egregious behaviour, including violations of the Charter, we look to a broader set of tools to ensure that regimes and terrorists cannot benefit from international crimes. Sanctions are one of a suite of tools that we use to respond to situations of international concern.

Australia and Canada note with deep concern attempts to circumvent and undermine United Nations sanctions regimes. We deplore Russia's recent actions to undermine the effectiveness of sanctions regimes adopted unanimously by the Council, including vetoing (see S/PV.9591) the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), which is central to upholding the United Nations sanctions regime against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. All Member States have a responsibility to implement Security Council resolutions, and permanent members of the Council have an even higher duty to do so.

Finally, Canada and Australia are deeply concerned that this debate continues to draw attention away from pressing international issues. Criticisms of autonomous sanctions, too often, are a deliberate effort to divert attention from breaches of international peace and security, serious human rights violations, weapons proliferation and terrorism — an effort made by perpetrators of those violations and threats. We urge all Member States to focus on the fundamental need to promote respect for the Charter and international law.

Mr. Imohe (Nigeria): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We are grateful to the President for convening this plenary meeting to address an issue of significant importance to our continent.

Several Member States in Africa face unique challenges that are compounded by unilateral economic measures. Those measures significantly undermine our collective efforts to achieve sustainable development and widen the economic disparity between African nations and the developed world. Sanctions lead to reduced markets, collapse of infrastructure and increased transaction costs for small businesses.

Unilateral economic measures have resulted in substantial trade revenue losses for African countries, severely hampering our progress towards achieving

the Sustainable Development Goals. The imposition of unilateral sanctions and trade restrictions severely affects our economies, particularly in areas critical to our development, such as agriculture, healthcare and infrastructure. Those measures disrupt supply chains, restrict access to essential goods and services and impede financial and technical cooperation. Recent studies and economic analysis indicate that sanctions have consistently reduced the gross domestic product (GDP) growth of affected African nations. Multilateral sanctions reduce the target State's annual GDP per capita growth by more than 2 percentage points for 10 years, resulting in a 25.5 per cent decline in GDP. Comprehensive sanctions are even more detrimental, reducing GDP growth by more than 5 percentage points. In contrast, unilateral sanctions typically decrease GDP growth by between 0.75 and 1 percentage point annually for seven years, leading to a total GDP reduction of 13.4 per cent.

The coronavirus disease pandemic further magnified those detrimental impacts, severely hindering our capacity to effectively manage and recover from the crisis. We also express deep concern regarding the unilateral protectionist measures taken by some trade partners that would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination between countries or a disguised restriction on international trade; such protectionist measures include unilateral and discriminatory border adjustment mechanisms and taxes.

Africa's development relies heavily on multilateralism and international cooperation. Unilateral measures not only violate international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, but they also undermine the global trading system, limiting our access to markets and investment opportunities. The African Group emphasizes that those unilateral measures have a disproportionate impact on our women and children, who suffer the most from economic instability and reduced access to essential services. We stress the importance of a fair and equitable trading system that supports our developmental aspirations.

Despite those challenges, Africa has made significant strides in increasing agricultural productivity and achieving food security. However, unilateral measures threaten to reverse those gains by disrupting supply chains and access to necessary agricultural inputs. We welcome the adoption of

resolution 78/135, which highlights the need to monitor and assess the impact of unilateral economic measures. In addition, we appreciate the inclusion of those concerns in the outcomes of the 2024 Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up and look forward to them being reflected at the upcoming Summit of the Future.

The African Group categorically rejects the application of unilateral coercive measures. We urge all nations to demonstrate greater solidarity and cooperation in order to help us overcome this immense challenge we face. We must ensure that no one and no country is left behind in our collective journey towards sustainable development. The continent has also been at the forefront of technological innovation, with several nations emerging as tech hubs. Sanctions and trade restrictions stifle that progress by limiting access to technology and international partnerships.

In conclusion, the Group reaffirms its commitment to multilateralism and calls for an international order that respects the sovereignty and development needs of all nations, particularly those in Africa.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the President for organizing this meeting to address unilateral, extraterritorial coercive economic measures, or, in short, unilateral sanctions.

Representing a country that, for well over four decades, has been and continues to be severely affected by unilateral sanctions, I will first elaborate on their legal aspects; secondly, I will provide certain objective examples of their adverse effects; and finally, I will explain our views on why the international community of States must address such measures effectively, leading to their elimination.

First, from a legal perspective, the imposition and application of unilateral sanctions is a gross violation of the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Unilateral sanctions materially breach the purposes of the United Nations, particularly those set out in Article 1, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, to develop friendly relations among nations, to achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights. Similarly, the introduction and application of unilateral sanctions is a flagrant violation of the principles of the United Nations, in particular those set

forward in Article 2, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Charter of the United Nations, concerning the sovereign equality of States and fulfilling in good faith the obligations assumed by Member States under the Charter. That is why, according to the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, all States should refrain from using military, political, economic or any other type of measure to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights and to secure from it advantages of any kind.

The imposition of unilateral sanctions also contravenes the principles and norms of international human rights law and violates article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, according to which, “[i]n no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence”.

It also materially breaches article 47 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as article 25 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, according to which,

“[nothing therein] shall be interpreted as impairing the inherent right of all peoples to enjoy and utilize fully and freely their natural wealth and resources”.

Unilateral sanctions furthermore contradict the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as set out in article 12, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Equally, they violate the inherent right of every human being to life, as reaffirmed by article 6, paragraph 1, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and no derogation therefrom is permitted, according to the Covenant’s article 4, paragraph 2. While unilateral sanctions adversely affect and violate many other human rights, from the right to work to the rights to shelter, a decent environment and education, there is no need to add to the examples I mentioned.

I would now like to provide a few objective examples of the detrimental effects of unilateral sanctions to illustrate the severity of their negative impact across various domains, including but not limited to the right to health, the right to development, the right to education, the right to welfare and in general the right to life of the targeted nations.

First, patients with chronic diseases face severe shortages of life-saving medications due to restrictions on their importation as a result of unilateral sanctions. Similarly, sanctions prevent the adequate importation of medical equipment and hinder the proper functioning of hospitals and healthcare facilities. Those shortages together result in a significant increase in mortality rates among patients, in particular children, the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Secondly, I must refer in that context to the devastating impact of sanctions on patients suffering from epidermolysis bullosa (EB), a rare and debilitating skin disease. While such patients need a specific wound dressing for treatment, unilateral sanctions severely restrict the import of such dressing. That has not only exacerbated the suffering of EB patients in my country but has also resulted in a remarkable increase in the mortality rate among EB patients. As we approach the anniversary of Saddam Hussein's 1987 attack on the Iranian city of Sardasht with chemical weapons, I must also refer to the suffering of the victims of chemical weapons as a result of the sanctions. Just one example among thousands concerns the dire needs of a 43-year-old Iranian woman for a certain medicine. When she was wounded in Sardasht by a chemical agent, she was only seven years old. In order to breathe normally, she needs a certain medicine that cannot be imported now because all possible ways are blocked by sanctions. In 1987, she was the victim of chemical agents provided to Saddam Hussein by Western countries and now she is the victim of sanctions imposed by the same Western States. Yet such States continue to shed crocodile tears for the status of women in my country.

As the Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures has highlighted, sanctions have adverse impacts on persons with disabilities, as well as those suffering from rare or severe diseases, who are in need of sustained medical attention and are the most vulnerable in the face of such unilateral sanctions. Her report emphasizes that such measures and the absence of adequate and sufficient medical assistance and treatment for persons with disabilities, as well as for patients with severe and rare diseases, has resulted in a growing mortality rate, reduced life expectancy and exacerbated overall health conditions. Unilateral sanctions also stifle economic growth, hinder development projects and deprive individuals of their means of subsistence, perpetuating poverty and inequality. They also increase mortality rates among vulnerable segments of society,

including children, pregnant women and the elderly, due to the lack of access to basic necessities such as food, medicine and healthcare.

I would now like to turn to the question of why the international community of States must pay serious attention to the horrifying trend of the introduction and application of unilateral sanctions. That is necessary and urgent for the following reasons.

First, by any measure, unilateral sanctions are inhumane, immoral and unlawful. They are both a brutal collective punishment of targeted nations for their determination to exercise their inherent right to self-determination, as recognized in Article 1 of the Charter, as well as article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Secondly, human rights are not realized in a vacuum. Rather, they can be realized only if the necessary conditions are created, as has rightly been stated in the preamble to both Covenants, and such conditions cannot be created, at least not satisfactorily, in countries targeted by unilateral sanctions, since sanctions, *inter alia*, prevent such States from using their resources, disrupt their economies and trade relations and prevent them from importing their people's basic needs such as food and medicine. Countries introducing sanctions weaponize food, medicine, medical equipment and other necessities to further their narrow national policies. Unilateral sanctions continue to destroy the fabric of multilateralism, with the United Nations at its centre; seriously breach the letter and the spirit of the Charter; reject cooperation; foment confrontation; and instead of promoting friendly relations, cause hatred and hostility. All those alarming realities continue to undermine the very essence and spirit of the Organization and its Charter, which were founded first and foremost on such lofty values as inclusion, cooperation, peaceful coexistence, good-neighbourliness, solidarity, freedom and justice. Unilateral sanctions are nothing but economic war and terrorism. They restrict the access of the targeted nations to essential goods and services; exacerbate economic hardship and poverty; undermine the well-being of civilians and ordinary people; perpetuate a cycle of poverty, inequality and human suffering; and worst of all, have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable segments of targeted societies. We must not allow that dangerous trend of unilateralism to undermine the rule of law, multilateralism and our

collective endeavours to promote peace, prosperity, solidarity and friendship among nations. That is what we owe to the current and future generations of our societies. If unchecked, the Western States that continue to race to the bottom on imposing more brutal sanctions on more nations will ultimately transform unilateral sanctions into actual economic blockades against targeted States, the living example of which is the 17-year-old unlawful and inhuman blockade of the Gaza Strip by the Israeli regime. Israel is now weaponizing food, water, medicine and other life-saving aid needed by the civilian population and uses starvation as a method of war. I must stress that despite the claims of Western States, there are no so-called humanitarian exemptions for sanctions. That false and hypocritical term was coined by the United States and other Western States merely to putatively hide the inhuman nature of their sanctions. Such terms are nothing but lies and deceptions.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the international community of States must condemn and reject unilateral economic coercive measures in support of promoting the fundamental and inherent rights and well-being of all nations, the rule of law, inclusion and true multilateralism. That is indeed a collective responsibility and my delegation is prepared to actively contribute to the fulfilment of those objectives.

Mr. Lara (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

Since 1983, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions recognizing the negative effect of unilateral coercive measures on the economies of developing countries and the fact that such illegal measures in no way benefit multilateralism or contribute to creating a climate of peace and friendly relations among States. Since 2000, the imposition of unilateral coercive measures has become a key foreign policy tool used by countries such as the United States and the member States of the European Union, which have imposed more than 26,000 sanctions affecting almost one third of the world's population. Such coercive measures trample people's rights to self-determination and freedom. More than 40 years after the adoption of resolution 38/197 of 1983, entitled "Economic measures as a means of

political and economic coercion against developing countries", the United States and its allies continue to display their imperial arrogance with total impunity, by taking advantage of their dominant position in the international economy and using such economic measures to exercise pressure on or forcibly influence the sovereign decisions of developing countries.

The General Assembly has recognized the extraterritorial nature of those coercive legislative and administrative measures, policies and practices, which are adopted unilaterally to obstruct the development of people and the full realization of their human rights. The General Assembly has prescribed that developed countries must refrain from the threat or application of trade restrictions, blockades and other economic measures that run contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter establishes the sovereign equality of all States. However, both the Charter and international law are conveniently applied by the imperialist Powers, which have conferred upon themselves the authority to create unilateral lists, not only by instrumentalizing human rights and democracy but also by falsely accusing others of sponsoring terrorism, under contrived pretexts and contrary to international law. Article 32 of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, adopted in resolution 3281 (XXIX), of 1974, established that,

"No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights [or secure from it advantages of any kind]."

Despite the universal applicability of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, the blockade against the brotherly people of Cuba continues to cause inestimable damage to that country by limiting access to medicines and food — basic necessities to preserve health and life. We also condemn the inclusion of the brotherly Republic of Cuba on the notorious list of State sponsors of terrorism, which is one more instrument used by the United States and its allies to justify the adoption of illegal coercive measures in order to exert economic and political pressure, in clear violation of the sovereignty of the Cuban State. Nicaragua demands that Cuba be removed from that unilateral list. Nicaragua, like other brotherly countries, continues to be a victim of such measures in violation of international law, through extraterritorial laws and executive orders imposed by the United States that are clearly aimed

at destroying our economy and attacking our national sovereignty and the right of our people to unhindered self-determination, without external interference. It is unacceptable that a country or a group of countries should come before the General Assembly to justify or attempt to justify the application of such criminal measures, almost proclaiming themselves to be judges for all humankind to impose what they call sanctions. It undermines international law. Under international law, no country unilaterally has the power to establish such sanctions authority.

The International Monetary Fund has recognized Nicaragua for its implementation of adequate economic policies and its efforts to implement norms related to transparency and the oversight of public funds. Similarly, in 2022 the Financial Action Task Force recognized Nicaragua's work in aligning its framework for the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing with international standards, which resulted in Nicaragua's removal from the so-called grey list. In March 2023, the President of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration described Nicaragua's execution of projects financed by international organizations as exemplary.

With regard to security, a citizen and human security strategy is being implemented through our national police force. The strategy uses a gendered approach and focuses on individuals, communities and families. It integrates all State institutions, which carry out multidisciplinary, comprehensive, balanced, educational and preventive actions. In addition, the retaining wall strategy against drug trafficking is being implemented, with inter-institutional coordination, which makes it possible to divert, contain and seize as many drugs as possible at the immediate entry points into the national territory, whether at the land, air or sea borders, so that those substances do not circulate in the country and do not continue their transit to consumer markets in the United States and other consumer countries. In that way, their destructive impact is prevented, which assists the region and the international community in investigating, prosecuting and punishing people involved in drug trafficking and organized crime. As a result of our security strategies and policies, Nicaragua is an exemplary model, with the lowest murder rate in the region. From 2019 to 2023, it averaged an annual rate of 7.2 murders per 100,000 inhabitants, which is two times lower than the Central American average.

While Nicaragua works towards peace and security, combating hunger and poverty and ensuring access to free education and universal access to health, the United States wages a campaign against our people by applying illegal coercive measures to hinder the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, agreed upon within the Organization. The United States applies extraterritorial acts, such as the so-called Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act, known as the NICA Act, adopted in 2018, and the Reinforcing Nicaragua's Adherence to Conditions for Electoral Reform Act of 2021, known as the RENACER Act. With those Acts, the United States seeks to block loans from international financial institutions to Nicaragua, with the clear objective of affecting the development of social programmes financed through external cooperation.

Through executive orders, the United States has imposed a ban on new investment in Nicaragua and the import and export of certain products. In addition, in breach of international law, those orders impose individual measures on Government officials that are intended to paralyse the functional management of State institutions and hinder capacity-building in institutions, such as the National Police, the Nicaraguan Army, the Supreme Electoral Council, the Public Prosecutor's Office and telecommunications. They also implement measures on the energy and mining sector to slow down the country's economic development. On 15 May, the United States Department of the Treasury, in a further attempt to destabilize Nicaragua, imposed coercive measures on the Training Centre of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs in Managua. The Training Centre provides cooperation in terms of knowledge and skills to police institutions in Central America. It affects the entire Central American region, not just Nicaragua. That measure has the clear objective of paralysing international cooperation and constitutes a violation of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

Those unilateral coercive measures are further examples of the use of force and mechanisms to interfere in the internal affairs of States, which is prohibited by the Charter of the United Nations. They constitute a collective punishment against peoples, disrupt the economies of countries and affect the standard of living of entire populations, restricting their access to food, medicine, water and sanitation, health, housing, education and employment, with the aim of provoking social discontent and overthrowing legitimate Governments. Such measures are usually based on fake

news and are accompanied by negative stereotypes and hate speech against brotherly countries, such as China, Cuba, Iran, Belarus, Eritrea, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Russia and other countries, including Zimbabwe, which are also victims of such measures. Coercive measures are not innocent tools of soft power. They kill just as bullets kill in war. They starve people to death. They kill people by depriving them of medicine. They are aimed at deliberately affecting the living conditions of a population to bring about its total or partial physical destruction. That is called genocide.

It is imperative to immediately suspend the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on our peoples. We must eliminate those aggressions, which are genuine obstacles to the eradication of poverty, and advance towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The General Assembly must be proactive. It must not be satisfied with encouraging and condemning those genocidal practices in violation of international law. The General Assembly must adopt a resolution in accordance with Article 96 of the United Nations Charter, referring the legal issues related to the unpunished implementation of illegal unilateral coercive measures to the International Court of Justice, requesting an advisory opinion on the consequences of the continued imposition of such measures and establishing the obligation to compensate the countries that are victims of those measures for the damages caused.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Everyone likes butterflies. Children love to catch them, often unaware that even gently touching their wings can injure the butterflies or deprive them of the ability to fly. There are people among us known as butterfly people. There are more than half a million of them in the world. In Belarus, for example, there are a little more than 100 butterfly people, half of whom are children. Regrettably, behind that poetic name lies a terrible disease — epidermolysis bullosa. It is a rare genetic disease that causes blisters and sores on the skin and mucous membranes to form with minor or even no physical touch. The skin peels, leaving an open wound that must be covered with special bandages and protected from being injured again.

Those special bandages are produced primarily by one company, with which Belarus has successfully cooperated until recently. After the most recent round of European Union sanctions, the supply of the company's products to Belarus stopped. When asked about the reasons for the ban on the sale of those goods to the Belarusian market,

we received the following answer from the company's management: we fear sanctions against our company. Subsequently, speaking to European journalists, the company's leadership acknowledged that in addition to their concerns, there are real problems due to unilateral sanctions. Owing to those unilateral sanctions, banks are unwilling to participate in transactions with sanctioned clients or with other banks in sanctioned countries, making it impossible to sell bandages, dressings and other medical products to Belarus. Therefore, by imposing sanctions, the European custodians of human rights are deliberately depriving sick children of the opportunity to play with their friends, attend school and simply hug their parents. That is because without those special bandaging and dressing materials, any touch causes them unbearable pain. Unfortunately, we can cite dozens of other examples in which medical equipment and medicines required to save people's lives cannot reach Belarus due to the criminal sanctions policy of the United States, the European Union and those that aid and abet them. They include epilepsy medication from Poland, medications to treat Parkinson's disease and various forms of cancer from Finland and even simple painkillers from the United Kingdom.

Belarus has built a top-rate system of free medical care and medicines and we promptly found replacements for those that are unobtainable — that is not the problem. We have repeatedly heard assurances, including in this Hall and today from the representative of the European Union, about humanitarian exemptions and the targeted nature of unilateral sanctions. Those are nothing more than false and empty statements. In reality, as in the specific example I just provided, we are talking about people's lives and health, especially the lives of women and children. When the authors and supporters of unilateral measures and the pseudo-politicians they finance applaud the latest package of sanctions, I recall that they are the ones depriving a child with a rare disease of the chance to lead a normal life and depriving a seriously ill pensioner of the chance to see their great-grandchildren. They are the ones who condemn millions of people in the countries of the Global South to starvation. That is not an exaggeration. The claims by the United States and the European Union that their unilateral sanctions do not apply to potash fertilizers are also lies. The direct consequence of the sanctions on Belarusian potash fertilizers, which constitute almost one third of global exports, has been a significant drop in harvest yields in Africa.

We understand that the United Nations cannot force States to lift their unilateral sanctions, but for us the Organization has always been and remains a kind of moral compass when it comes to illegal coercive measures. The Secretary-General himself has called for such sanctions to be lifted, as have the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, UNICEF, the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, and hundreds of experts and researchers on the subject of such measures around the world. Those responsible for unilateral sanctions cannot be unaware of the real consequences of such measures, which violate every conceivable norm of international law and all human rights and are aimed solely at undermining the independent foreign policy of certain undesirable countries. There is no such thing as a smart sanction. All illegal economic sanctions are aimed at strangling and destroying the economy of a country and thereby lowering the living standards of its people.

European and American economists have long analysed the impacts of sanctions. It has been proven that sanctions primarily affect the most vulnerable citizens, yet at the same time affect to varying degrees the entire population of the countries on which they are imposed. The impact of sanctions is tangible, as demonstrated by decreased life expectancy, decreased per capita income and a larger poverty gap. Illegal unilateral sanctions have a negative impact on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, it is telling that, while generally successful in the implementation of its development programme, Belarus has fallen behind in fulfilling precisely those national goals that are subject to the effects of Western sanctions, including with regard to access to medicines.

By analysing data on the impact of sanctions on people, researchers have come to the conclusion that unilateral measures are comparable in their impacts to acute armed conflicts and natural disasters. We propose that illegal unilateral sanctions be considered not just economic terrorism but also acts of aggression, with all the consequences that entails. Belarus is proud of its achievements in social policy and economy. Against a backdrop of unprecedented pressure, Belarus has been able not only to persist as a sovereign State but also to continue to develop and fulfil all of its social obligations

to its citizens, preventing a qualitative decline in their standard of living. That only strengthens our conviction that the model and path of development chosen by Belarus is the right one. To our colleagues from certain Western countries, for whom the sanctions stick is the only choice in their bilateral relations toolbox, we would like to say one thing: let them deal with the long-standing problems in their own countries. Let them not prevent the people of Belarus from building our lives and choosing our own political system and our model of development as we see fit.

In conclusion, although some may find it rude or politically incorrect to say — those who initiate unilateral sanctions have no brain; those who apply them have no heart; and those who justify them have no conscience. It is deeply regrettable that some people lack all three of those qualities.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China thanks the President of the General Assembly for convening today's debate. We hope that this session will provide the international community with greater clarity in relation to the grave harm caused by unilateral coercive measures, reinforcing international consensus against such measures and strengthening the common aspirations of all parties in effectively responding to them.

China aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

We wish to make five points.

First, unilateral coercive measures are in flagrant contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The United States, together with a minority of other States, without authorization from the Security Council, proceeds on the basis of its own preferences and decides to arbitrarily impose unilateral coercive measures on other States. That is tantamount to placing its domestic legislation above international law and the national legislation of other States, challenging the authority of the Security Council, violating the principle of sovereign equality and flouting the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The United States has even gone as far as to push for so-called secondary sanctions, compelling the compliance of third States through its unilateral coercive measures. That amounts to making worse what was already wrong

in the first place, thereby seriously undermining the fundamental principles of international law and the international rule of law.

Secondly, unilateral coercive measures seriously impede the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes that all countries should benefit equally from the dividends of development and urges countries to refrain from promulgating and implementing unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are contrary to the Charter and international law. However, a handful of countries, including the United States, have continued to capitalize on their hegemonic economic and financial power to frequently impose unilateral sanctions on other countries, thereby seriously disrupting normal economic and trade cooperation among the countries concerned, gravely threatening the stability of the global production and supply chains, undermining food, energy and financial security, and seriously disrupting the world economic order and the efforts of the countries concerned to achieve the SDGs.

Thirdly, the unilateral coercive measures are a criminal tool used to infringe on the human rights of other countries. The United States and a few other States claim to protect human rights, but in reality they abuse unilateral coercive measures to the serious detriment of the rights to life, health, development and education, among other basic human rights, of the people in the countries targeted. The Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights noted in her report (A/HRC/54/23) that unilateral sanctions have led to a serious shortage of medicines, vaccines and medical equipment in the countries targeted and led to a rising mortality rate, leaving vulnerable groups such as women, children, the elderly and the disabled in a particularly difficult situation. The report states that every additional year of unilateral sanctions lowers average life expectancy in countries subject to sanctions by 0.2 to 0.3 years. In Syria, Venezuela and Zimbabwe, unilateral sanctions led to energy shortages, leading to people in those countries facing difficulties when they need to travel by car to seek medical treatment.

Fourthly, unilateral coercive measures are a major driver of worsening humanitarian crises in the countries concerned. The comprehensive United States blockade of Cuba, which has persisted for more than 60 years, and its designation of Cuba as a so-called State sponsor of terrorism to this day have led to hundreds of billions

of dollars in losses for Cuba. The effects of that are felt across all livelihood sectors and have led to a serious humanitarian catastrophe. The long-term unilateral sanctions against Syria led to serious shortages of heavy equipment and search-and-rescue instruments during the country's post-earthquake response and people were forced to dig literally with their bare hands through the rubble. Many innocent civilians, including children, lost their precious lives because their rescue came too late.

Fifthly and lastly, unilateral coercive measures are an acute manifestation of hegemony and power politics. The United States and those few other States abuse their power to weaponize and instrumentalize unilateral sanctions. The underlying logic that they follow is the law of the jungle, whereby the strong prey on the weak. The ultimate aim of those measures is to maintain their monopolistic hegemony and an unjust and unreasonable international order, in which the big bully the small, the strong abuse the weak and the rich oppress the poor. The unilateral coercive measures frequently imposed by the United States and the few other countries in their foreign relations run counter to the historical trend of peaceful development and win-win cooperation and are incompatible with the common calls for building a multipolar world, practicing multilateralism and upholding equity and justice. Such actions against the tide of history will inevitably be swept away by its irresistible force.

For a long time, the international community has voiced its consistent and strong opposition to unilateral coercive measures. Since 1989, the General Assembly has adopted a resolution every two years opposing unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries. Since 1992, the Assembly has adopted a resolution every year urging the United States to end its economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. And since 1997, it has adopted a resolution every year expressing concern about the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on human rights. We call on the United States and the few other States concerned to heed the just call of the international community and to fully and immediately abolish their unilateral coercive measures. We call on the Member States, the United Nations system and other international organizations to provide support to countries under sanctions to help them alleviate their hardships. We call on the international community to pay close attention to the grave consequences of such measures and collectively resist those illegal practices.

As a lead member of the global South and a victim of unilateral coercive measures, China has consistently stood on the side of equity, justice, multilateralism and developing countries. We are committed to working with the international community to safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order based on international law and the fundamental principles of international relations based on the purposes and principles of the Charter, and to promoting the development of a more just and equitable global governance.

Mr. Abd Karim (Malaysia): At the outset, Malaysia thanks the President for convening this important meeting.

Our delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Malaysia remains a nation steadfast in its commitment to upholding the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It is within that framework that Malaysia has consistently opposed the imposition of unilateral coercive measures against any country. Malaysia firmly believes that such measures constitute a blatant contravention of international norms and contradict the fundamental purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. Those actions undermine the spirit of multilateralism and cooperation that the international community strives to uphold. The imposition of unilateral coercive measures, especially on developing countries, has had severe repercussions. Those measures have significantly restricted the ability of the affected countries to improve economic growth and provide for the basic needs of their peoples. They have stifled free and open business across borders and hindered the social development of their populations. Their impact on ordinary citizens has been profound, exacerbating hardships and denying them access to essential services and opportunities.

Malaysia remains unequivocally opposed to all forms of unilateral economic, financial and commercial measures that contravene international law and international humanitarian law. Such measures contradict the very essence of the United Nations Charter, which advocates for the promotion of peace, cooperation and respect for sovereign equality among nations. As we strive towards advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development, Malaysia urges Member States to remain ambitious in formulating the Pact for the Future to ensure that it envisions an equal opportunity to prosper economically and socially. The Summit of the Future must address the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, which has made the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals even more difficult.

Malaysia is committed to playing its part in facilitating peaceful resolutions and encourages all Member States to uphold the principles of justice and equity. In that vein, my delegation urges the international community to collectively oppose unilateral coercive measures and to work together towards building a more just and harmonious world.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico has reiterated many times that the Charter of the United Nations establishes that the Security Council is the only body entitled to impose sanctions if it deems them necessary in cases where there are threats to peace and security. The application of unilateral economic, financial or commercial measures is simply incompatible with the Charter and the principles of international law, especially those relating to equality among States and the right to self-determination. Such measures have a negative impact on individuals' enjoyment of their human rights, on the sustainable development of States and on the economic prospects of developing countries, and they are an obstacle to progress towards the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Unilateral sanctions also have negative effects on civilians living in conflict and post-conflict situations. In our own region of Latin America, we have seen how unilateral coercive measures hinder development and contribute to increases in irregular migration. In that regard, in follow-up to the commitments arising from the Palenque Summit, on the theme of "good-neighbourliness and well-being", we call for the lifting of the unilateral coercive measures that have been imposed on the countries of our region, which, as I said, are contrary to international law.

We also echo the calls of the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights urging States that have imposed unilateral economic, financial or trade measures to withdraw them or reduce them to a minimum. It is essential that Member States implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 78/135 and 77/214, on human rights and

unilateral coercive measures. In that spirit, Mexico will continue to actively participate in the discussions in the Second and Third Committees, as well as in the Human Rights Council, on the effects of unilateral coercive measures. Finally, and in this context, Mexico believes it is essential to streamline the discussions on this topic and to concentrate on the substantive efforts that are being developed in existing forums in this Organization, so as to avoid any duplication of effort.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia aligns itself with the statement delivered by Mr. Yvan Gil Pinto, Venezuela's Minister for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, and we support the appeals he made. We would like to add some remarks in our national capacity.

Today in the General Assembly, after a break of many years, we have an opportunity to make a comprehensive assessment of the practice of unilateral coercive economic measures. That practice of Western countries is not only contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and the entire world order that it enshrines, it is also an obstacle to international development, cooperation and human rights. It is a practice that is quite literally killing people by depriving them of what they need most.

To start with, our opponents are trying to equate Security Council sanctions with illegal unilateral coercive measures in order to steer the discussion away from an unpleasant subject. First of all, Security Council sanctions are an auxiliary instrument for responding to the emergence of threats to international peace and security. Their application should be calibrated, targeted and time-limited and should take into account the entire range of potential humanitarian, socioeconomic and human rights consequences. Security Council sanctions regimes have to be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are responding appropriately to the situation on the ground. As the stability of the political context improves, so must the international restrictions be eased and ultimately lifted altogether. It is impermissible to abuse this tool in order to pursue unfair competition and punish undesirable States. It is also impermissible to supplement Security Council sanctions with unilateral restrictive measures, particularly those of an extraterritorial nature.

Turning to unilateral measures that circumvent the Security Council, the subject of our agenda today,

we underscore that the Western unilateral coercive measures target countries that have independent foreign and domestic policies and therefore sometimes respond to that independence with neocolonialist economic methods and models. The aims of such sanctions campaigns are openly declared. They are designed to isolate countries financially and technologically in order to undermine their prospects, weaken their domestic political circumstances, create preconditions for regime change and exert external control over sovereign resources. However, the Western countries try to convince us that they are acting lawfully. They say they are only encouraging other countries to fulfil their obligations under international law and allege that the coercive measures stem from their opponents' own international obligations. We have heard that today as well. In that regard, I would like some answers to a number of questions.

First, who appointed them the judge of who, where, when and how much others are fulfilling their obligations? Let me remind them that under the Charter, the right to introduce coercive measures is the prerogative of the Security Council alone. Moreover, not a single international treaty provides that if in the opinion of the West its provisions are being violated by any State, Western countries then have the right to abuse their position as the global financial hegemon and hinder that State's trade or seize its sovereign assets.

Secondly, what should we do when the West itself violates its obligations? The answer is of course clear. There are no such violations. The position of countries that practice illegal unilateral coercive measures can be expressed in a well-known Latin maxim: *quod licet Iovi, non licet bovi* — Jove may do what cattle may not. In other words, there is no legal basis, merely rules that the West changes as it goes along to suit its interests.

As has already been said today, unilateral measures are currently in effect against roughly 30 countries with a total population of almost 2 billion people, meaning that more than a quarter of the world's population are dealing with illegal restrictions on their economic activity. According to the assessments of the Human Rights Council's Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, following her field visits to Cuba and Venezuela, the economic consequences of United States sanctions are being borne by millions of citizens in those countries. They have a negative impact on their enjoyment of their economic, social, political and

cultural rights, including the right to health, adequate nutrition and a decent life. They disproportionately affect children, women and other vulnerable groups.

The Special Rapporteur notes that sanctions are making it increasingly difficult and expensive for humanitarian organizations to provide assistance to populations in need. They are facing delayed or refused payments and it is becoming more difficult to deliver medical and food supplies. Humanitarian workers themselves have also told us that. They affirm that so-called humanitarian exemptions do not work, owing to secondary sanctions and the effects of overcompliance with them.

In addition to its embargo on Cuba, the attempts of the United States to portray Cuba as a State sponsor of terrorism are particularly disgusting. This is a country that assisted people in need around the world during the coronavirus disease pandemic by sending out brigades of doctors and medicines, and that has also been a mediator in negotiations between the parties in Colombia. We call on the United States to heed the clearly expressed universal call to begin lifting the embargo against Cuba and to remove it from the list of State sponsors of terrorism.

Here I should also mention Syria, which against a backdrop of large-scale destruction is being strangled by illegal unilateral sanctions and the United States occupation forces' looting of its natural resources. We are concerned about the advancement in the United States of an inhumane new sanctions bill entitled the Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act, which, if enacted, would once again hit hardest the citizens who are most in need. We await the promised United Nations special report on the impact of sanctions on humanitarian activities in Syria. The application of economic pressure on Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Zimbabwe, the Sudan, Eritrea and other countries shows clearly that unilateral illegal measures have long since become weapons for inflicting indiscriminate mass damage and threatening international peace and security. We and other delegations will continue to actively raise the subject of that illegal activity.

At the same time, the bodies of the United Nations system are themselves timid when talking about this. We once again underscore the importance of more active United Nations involvement in monitoring the negative impact of illegal unilateral measures, in accordance with

existing General Assembly resolutions. The preparation of such reviews, whether Western donors like it or not, is a direct obligation of the Secretary-General, and starting this year, of the United Nations Resident Coordinator system as well, as outlined in resolution 78/135, on unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries.

We would like to draw particular attention to the fact that the United States adopted a law in April laying the groundwork for the seizure, confiscation and transfer of the sovereign assets of Russia's Central Bank. That law is a gross violation of the norms and principles of international law on the immunity of States and their property, not to mention the principles of the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their internal affairs, as enshrined in the Charter. The conduct of the United States and its allies is setting a dangerous precedent whereby no State's assets will be safe from illegal expropriation. All States should think twice before deciding to keep their assets in the United States or its satellites. We call on all responsible members of the international community to oppose that illegal conduct and to refrain from supporting or recognizing it in order to avoid becoming complicit in such violations. If our assets are confiscated, we will be guided by our right to take retaliatory measures.

In general, we want to emphasize that the Western countries' attempts to maintain their slipping hegemony — and their reliance on unfair competition, "green" barriers, clamping down on effective forms of technology and investment flows and erecting other new kinds of barriers — are self-destructive choices by our opponents, whose own populations are already expressing their opinion of them. Unlawful and uncontrolled economic pressure from Western countries is ensuring that there will be strengthened joint resistance to those measures and consolidation around a new global model based on polycentricity, equality and mutual respect. Those subjects were discussed at the recently concluded Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum on the theme "The formation of new areas of growth as the cornerstone of a multipolar world" and the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), which our country hosted in just the past few days. The development of innovative economic cooperation between countries of the South will enable sanctioned countries to become such areas of growth and emerge from the burden of restrictions.

More specifically, the elements are already being sketched out of a new financial system and architecture that does not depend on the dollar or the payment infrastructure tied to it. The transition to transactions in national currencies is already ongoing in useful formats such as the Eurasian Economic Union, BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Other solutions are also being actively developed to reduce dependence on those using their dominant position in the economy as a weapon. We stand ready to participate actively in that work and to build bridges rather than walls.

Mr. Van Schalkwyk (South Africa): Our delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Uganda, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; Nigeria, on behalf of the Group of African States; and Angola, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

South Africa appreciates the convening of today's much-needed debate on the elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion. I would like to state unequivocally that my delegation believes that unilateral extraterritorial economic measures are a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Today's debate comes at a time when there has been a noticeable increase in the scope, targets and extraterritorial nature of unilateral coercive measures. The illegality of unilateral coercive measures has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. South Africa remains deeply concerned about the extraterritorial application of laws and regulations imposing unilateral coercive measures, and urges States to make use of multilateralism, diplomacy, negotiations, dialogue and other peaceful tools to resolve differences without resorting to coercive measures such as unilateral sanctions.

We reiterate that unilateral coercive measures violate our solemn commitment, pledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to leave no one and no country behind. We consider that it is a matter of urgency to cease such actions, which devastate developing countries, threaten the economic and social development of the countries that are subject to them and consequently prevent them from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the current

context, in which we are forecast to meet just 12 per cent of the Goals and are in desperate need of reviving our efforts to get back on track towards achieving the 2030 Agenda, we must acknowledge that unilateral coercive measures endanger our collective aspirations and are a needless obstacle to achieving the SDGs and the right to development.

Today more than one in four countries are subject to some kind of sanctions, affecting a large segment of the world's population. A recent comprehensive review of the academic literature found that sanctions caused significant harm to the populations of the targeted countries, significantly worsening poverty and inequality. The collapse in gross domestic product and life expectancy was similar to that found in wartime. Unilateral coercive measures are a flagrant violation of human rights. Such practices are contrary to the International Bill of Human Rights, impacting many rights, including the right to food, employment, education and health.

Alarmingly unilateral sanctions affect various aspects of the right to health, including access to healthcare, nutrition and access to and the delivery of vaccines and medical equipment even during situations of emergencies. The burden of those measures impedes the realization and enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights of the most vulnerable, particularly women and children.

We would like to highlight the catastrophic humanitarian impact of unilateral coercive measures, which, in addition to poverty, nutritional and health insecurity, includes destroying essential public services, educational opportunities for youth and the livelihoods of families and increasing the risk of the right to life in sanctioned countries. The Special Rapporteur has noted that some States insist that the humanitarian impact is so high that it may be equated with crimes against humanity. We especially emphasize our outright rejection of the use of food as an instrument of political and economic pressure.

In that regard, we would like to express our outrage that the people of Gaza are still subject to deadly famine as part of a genocidal onslaught. We further condemn the application of sanctions to international civil servants doing their job, for example, the judges and officials of the International Criminal Court. Sanctions also impede access to humanitarian aid and experience has shown how the complexity of unilateral, cohesive

measures, including overlapping sanctions, render humanitarian exemptions inefficient. Even in the case of so-called targeted sanctions the impact is further exacerbated by overcompliance by private sector entities out of fear of repercussions, magnifying the harm that they cause by widening the scope of effective targets to include non-sanctioned individuals, entities and sometimes entire populations.

Unilateral coercive measures also have negative spillover effects that seriously undermine third countries. That is a bitter reality that we and other neighbours of Zimbabwe, a country that has been impoverished by decades of sanctions, can attest to. We call for the urgent removal of the unjust sanctions against Zimbabwe in the interest of all people of southern Africa.

Our delegation would further like to register its categorical rejection of the European Union's carbon border adjustment mechanism as an extraterritorial, unilateral, cohesive and trade-distorting measure under the guise of climate protection. It is a regime with dubious environmental benefits that would result in a reversal of climate finance from the global North to the global South to further enrich one constituency of the North and that would allow developed countries that have the primary responsibility for causing climate change to directly tax private companies of sovereign developing countries that bear the least responsibility for causing climate change. That is illegal, immoral and inadmissible.

We join other delegations in requesting the Secretary-General to monitor the imposition of unilateral economic measures and to study, with the support and cooperation of the resident coordinators, the impact of such measures on affected countries, in line with resolution 78/135.

We would also like to express our deep appreciation for the excellent work of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral cohesive measures on the enjoyment of human rights.

We further welcome the launch of the tool for monitoring and assessing the impact of unilateral cohesive measures and overcompliance on human rights, as well as on the economic and social development of developing countries targeted by those measures and on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

My delegation was also honoured to have played a role earlier this year, together with the Group of 77 and China, in ensuring that the sustainable development impact of unilateral coercive measures was included in the outcome document of the financing for development forum for the first time since its inception.

Finally, South Africa categorically rejects the application of unilateral coercive measures and calls on the sanctioning countries to withdraw them.

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. That designation is unfounded, and we call for the removal of Cuba from that list, which is aimed at further punitive actions.

We express our unshakable solidarity with all peoples affected by those illegal measures and join the calls for the international community to uphold the bedrock United Nations principles of sovereign equality, non-interference and territorial integrity and take urgent measures to eliminate the use of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion.

Mr. Aldahhak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am delivering this statement on behalf of Mr. Faisal Mekdad, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic.

I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the friendly Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Yvan Gil Pinto, for the efforts undertaken by his country in its capacity as Coordinator of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations to convene this meeting to discuss an extremely important humanitarian issue that many of our countries suffer from, namely, unilateral coercive measures as a means of economic compulsion and political blackmail.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Charter of the United Nations affirmed the principle of sovereign equality among Member States and prioritized achieving international cooperation and promoting the economic and social advancement of all peoples among its purposes. With a view to developing friendly relations among States and strengthening international cooperation on the basis of justice and equity, the General Assembly adopted in 1970 resolution 2625 (XXV) containing the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States, which stipulates:

“No state may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another state in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights and to secure from it advantages of any kind.”

The General Assembly reaffirmed that position in article 32 of resolution 3281 (XXIX), adopted in 1974, which includes the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.

Instead of engaging in constructive cooperation, the United States and a number of its allies chose to abandon political dialogue and diplomatic efforts and pursue policies of hegemony, blockade, coercion and unilateral coercive measures. They have adopted irrational classifications, like the so-called United States list of State sponsors of terrorism, in order to target specific Member States and to justify interfering in their internal affairs in an attempt to undermine their sovereignty and their national choices.

In recent years, the pace of the United States and the European Union imposing unilateral coercive measures has increased. The scope of those illegal measures was expanded in their various forms and appellations. That has caused extreme economic hardships for our countries and immense humanitarian suffering. It has prevented several peoples from enjoying their fundamental rights, including the right to a dignified life, to health, food and development. It has subjected them to collective punishment, which represents a United Nations Charter violation. The Charter entrusted the Security Council, exclusively, with the power to impose sanctions, pursuant to the criteria set out in Chapter 7.

The United Nations has condemned the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, considering them to be blatant violations of the provisions of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter, as well as an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights. The relevant General Assembly resolutions recognize that co-

ercive measures directly and seriously affect all aspects of life in the targeted countries. However, successive United States Administrations and the European Union have chosen to continue to impose unilateral coercive measures, ignoring the resolutions of our Organization and its principles and invoking the so-called rules-based order — and nobody knows what those rules are — in their attempt to consolidate such rules instead of being guided by the United Nations Charter.

My country, Syria, has been suffering for more than four decades owing to the illegitimate, immoral, inhumane measures imposed by successive United States Administrations and their allies in the European Union and other countries. They have imposed successive packages of such measures at an increasing frequency during the war of terror waged by those same States against my country, Syria, in order to stifle the Syrians and punish them for supporting their leadership and maintaining their national choices and positions.

The devastating consequences of coercive measures have affected all aspects of the daily life of Syrians. They have affected various sectors, including public health, the provision of vaccines and life-saving medicine, hospital equipment, the water sector, irrigation, the banking sector, commercial transactions, financial transfers, the transportation sector, civil aviation equipment and spare parts. They have also affected the energy sector, including the exportation of oil and oil derivatives and the importation of necessary spare parts to provide electricity, which is a lifeline for Syrians and for our national economy. The agricultural sector has also been affected by the unilateral sanctions, which have prevented us from importing the fertilizers, seeds and machinery necessary for agricultural production — the main pillar of the Syrian economy and paramount to improving living conditions and reducing food insecurity in Syria. The illegitimate measures have also prevented the dignified return of displaced persons and refugees to their regions.

Nevertheless, the United States Administration has not stopped at that. It is seeking to increase its sanctions through false laws, like the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 and the Illicit Captagon Trafficking Suppression Act and other tools of political and economic pressure and blackmail, which target any party that tries to support Syria and its people.

Following her visit to Syria in 2022, Ms. Alena Douhan, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, emphasized the devastating and serious

consequences of unilateral coercive measures on Syrians' enjoyment of their fundamental rights. She stated that those illegitimate measures have greatly affected all forms of life, as well as the national economy and recovery and reconstruction efforts. The consequences of those measures are being compounded by the hostile conduct of the United States and its allies against Syria, including acts of aggression, occupation, the plundering of Syrian national resources and preventing Syrians from enjoying their national resources.

Syria reaffirms that unilateral coercive measures represent economic terrorism. They are a sword hanging over the necks of peoples, financial institutions, commercial and business sectors in third countries, which refrain from transacting with the targeted States in order to avoid being targeted themselves by the unjust United States sanctions. Experience has shown the falsehood of what is being said about the humanitarian exemptions. We witnessed that first-hand during the coronavirus disease pandemic and in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Syria last year.

The countries that consider those measures as foreign policy tools have been offering baseless justifications for their criminal conduct against our peoples, but such justifications will not change the fact that unilateral coercive measures run counter to the United Nations Charter and the principles and rules of international law and international customary law. They are internationally prohibited acts that entail responsibility for the countries imposing them.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls on Member States to strengthen and unite their efforts to counter unilateral coercive measures and the policies of starvation and blockade. We call for an immediate, full and unconditional lifting of all forms of unilateral coercive measures being imposed by Western States against Cuba, Russia, Iran, Venezuela, Belarus, Nicaragua, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Mali, my country, Syria, and other countries. Syria reaffirms the need to put an end to all attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of those States and the need to respect their sovereignty, guaranteed under the Charter and international law.

The United Nations bears a recognized and urgent responsibility, namely, to advance serious multilateral work to address this issue, to adopt all necessary measures and means to prevent the use of unilateral coercive measures and to compensate for their negative consequences.

Syria therefore calls for convening more frequent General Assembly meetings on this item in order to effectively address this issue and to listen to briefings and re-

ports from the Secretariat on the efforts being made to end this blatant violation of international law and the principles of the Charter. We look forward to the special report, to be submitted by the Secretariat, on the impact of the inhumane unilateral coercive measures imposed against the Syrian people and on the work of the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations in my country, Syria.

The Acting President: Now, with the interpreters' indulgence, we will hear one last speaker for this morning.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): We thank the President for convening this timely meeting.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Uganda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Brazil has long maintained that unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures have no legal basis in international law. They violate the fundamental principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. Deprived of international legality, they lack legitimacy and weaken multilateralism. The impact of unilateral coercive measures extends well beyond the legal and political realms. Such measures have severe social consequences, as they lead to or aggravate economic crises more often than not. They contribute to poverty, inequality and, in many cases, personal suffering, as a result of shortages of food, medicine and essential goods. In other words, the brunt of sanctions is borne by regular citizens who do not have the slightest influence on, much less responsibility for, whatever it is that sanctioning States or groups of States wish to punish foreign Governments for. The purported targeted nature of some sanctions is not necessarily so — and even when it is, such measures may have serious collective implications, depending on the target. The problem is further aggravated by the fact that unilateral coercive measures have proven ineffective in achieving their declared goals. Some sanctions have been applied for decades now, while the policies they seek to change remain firmly in place.

In the light of those considerations, the international community must continue to condemn unilateral coercive measures and clearly maintain the key principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We will hear the remaining speakers this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this Hall.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.