



# General Assembly

Seventy-third session

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Official Records

*President:* Ms. Espinosa Garcés. . . . . (Ecuador)

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

## Agenda item 43

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

#### Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/85)

#### Draft resolution (A/73/L.3)

#### Draft amendments (A/73/L.9 through A/73/L.16)

**Mr. Hilale** (Morocco): In my capacity as Chair of the Group of African States for the month of October, I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 43, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

The African Group is of the view that economic sanctions against Cuba have caused great economic hardship, especially for the poor and vulnerable populations in the country. We believe that an immediate end to the economic embargo against Cuba is essential and could serve to promote social well-being and better living standards for the people of Cuba. In that regard, we encourage fostering a spirit of dialogue in resolving the issue and thereby enabling Cuba to continue to make an effective contribution to global development.

This is a matter of great importance to the African Group and to Africa in general. At the thirtieth

ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union in January, Africa’s Heads of State and Government expressed their regrets about the setback in bilateral relations between Cuba and United States of America and urged the United States Government to lift its long-standing, unjustifiable economic, commercial and financial blockade of the Cuban people.

Accordingly, the African Group reaffirms its full support for draft resolution A/73/L.3, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. We think that a diplomatic and political solution to the matter can be found, and we firmly believe that such a solution will be beneficial to both the United States of America and Cuba, as well as other countries.

**Mr. Edrees** (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 43, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the item under discussion today (A/73/85).

The Group regrets that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba for almost six decades remains fully in force and continues to be strengthened. We would like to recall the positive steps taken by the former United States Administration between 2015 and 2016, which were still not enough to put an end to the embargo’s impact but did focus on a path leading in the right direction. The Group regrets that the new policy established by

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the current United States Administration is aimed at strengthening the embargo on Cuba. We believe this policy is a setback to the process of normalizing relations between the two countries.

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

Given the fact that the United States embargo of Cuba has continued for almost 60 years, the Group of 77 and China would like to express its deep concern about the prolonged negative effects that the economic sanctions and travel restrictions have had on Cuba and its people. From April 2017 to June of this year, the impact of the United States embargo on Cuba's foreign trade amounted to more than \$4 billion. Limited foreign investment and difficulty of access to development credits translate directly into economic hardship and negative humanitarian effects for the people of Cuba. The country's socioeconomic reforms have also been hampered by the embargo.

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

Over many decades, Cuba has made an extensive and ongoing contribution to the international community, particularly through its remarkable provision of medical assistance to countries in need. Cuba's emergency assistance to countries affected by the Ebola crisis in West Africa is a great example of its solidarity with the international community. For that reason, the Group of 77 and China commends Cuba's contributions to humanitarian assistance and would like to express the hope that with the permanent lifting of the United States embargo, Cuba will be granted the

opportunity it has long deserved to work fully with the global community and international organizations on issues such as health, the environment and agriculture, among others.

The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate its strong support for the implementation of the recommendations set forth in resolution 71/5. We would like to reiterate our call for the ending of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. Its urgency and necessity is further emphasized by the ongoing collective global endeavour to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Group of 77 and China would therefore like to appeal to the international community to intensify its efforts to bring about the lifting of the embargo, not only for Cuba's own prospects but also for the full achievement of the economic and social development of all members of the global community as a whole.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to propose that the list of speakers on the current topic be closed, in view of the large number of delegations already inscribed on the list.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. Moncada** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor on behalf of the 120 States members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We would first like to express our respect for Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, and to welcome him warmly. We would also like to express our gratitude for the report of the Secretary-General on this very important issue (A/73/85).

Over the past 27 years, the General Assembly has expressed its support for the people and the Government of Cuba through its support for the resolutions calling for the lifting of the embargo imposed by the United States on that sovereign country. In that regard, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its full opposition to the enactment and imposition of unilateral coercive measures, given their extraterritorial repercussions and their illegal nature. We also reiterate our call to the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the illegal economic, commercial and financial

embargo that it imposed on Cuba nearly six decades ago. Apart from being a violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles that govern peaceful relations among States, the embargo is also a violation of Cuba's right to fully interact with the international community.

The Non-Aligned Movement has historically taken a position of principle in rejecting unilateral coercive measures, particularly those used as instruments for putting political or economic and financial pressure on States, especially developing countries. The embargo on Cuba is a perfect example of the adverse effects of unilateral coercive measures affecting the welfare of peoples and among other things creating obstacles to the full enjoyment of their human rights, including the right to development. The direct and indirect harm inflicted by this undeserved embargo against Cuba is vast. It affects all the crucial sectors of the Cuban economy, including public health, nutrition and agriculture, trade, investment and tourism and banking, a sector that suffered a significant blow this year because dozens of financial institutions decided to close bank accounts with any ties to Cuban citizens. It also denies Cuba access to markets, aid from international financial institutions and technology transfers and is Cuba's main obstacle to wider access to the Internet, the exchange of ideas and the development of cultural, sports and scientific relations.

We therefore have no hesitation in emphasizing that continuing the embargo is completely unjustifiable and inappropriate to our times. It also runs counter to Cuba's ongoing efforts to attain sustainable development, including the Goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, the economic damages borne by the Cuban people as a result of the United States embargo amount to \$933 billion. To put that figure in context, we should point out that since we last discussed this agenda item, just one year ago (see A/72/PV.38 *et seq.*), the embargo has resulted in additional damages totalling nearly \$4 billion.

The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries believes the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America is a positive first step in the process of normalizing bilateral relations. However, we have to point out that the implementation of the blockade against Cuba has not changed, and that represents a setback in the normalization process. Moreover, the certain degree of progress in that normalization is now threatened, as the policies

established in June 2017 by the current United States President, which seek to strengthen the embargo on Cuba, have shown.

Moreover, although the Departments of Commerce and the Treasury issued regulations on 15 January 2015 that amounted to steps in the right direction in areas such as travel to Cuba, telecommunications and remittances, they have limited scope and modify only certain aspects of the implementation of the blockade. Despite former United States President Barack Obama's historic decision to notify the United States Congress of his decision to remove Cuba from the so-called list of States sponsoring international terrorism — an illegal and unilateral list that should never have included Cuba — that has not led to a relaxation of the restrictions imposed by the laws and regulations of the blockade on Cuba.

The fact that 191 States Members of the United Nations voted in favour of resolution 72/4 last year expresses the international community's unanimity in demanding an end to the 56-year embargo and full adherence to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, including the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. We should point out that today more than 190 nations maintain political and economic relations with Cuba, while the United States of America remains alone in implementing its policy of illegal and unjustifiable economic sanctions.

In the light of this, the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement urge the Government of the United States of America to align itself with the will of the vast majority of the international community and comply with all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, through which we have called for an immediate and lasting end to the blockade on Cuba.

Finally, in reiterating its commitment to strengthening multilateralism, the Movement reaffirms that full respect for the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention, is an essential element in the effective maintenance of international peace and security. That is why the international community must continue to work together to reverse and eliminate unilateral coercive measures, including the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba.

In our national capacity, we want to express our full solidarity with our Cuban brothers and sisters, who, protected by their values of dignity, patriotism and humanism, have resisted the campaign of aggressions conducted by the United States. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will vote in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.3, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”, in its original version, as it was presented by the Cuban delegation. We call on the members of the international community to reject the proposals for amendments contained in documents A/73/L.9 to A/73/L.16, which seek to divert attention from the main issue that brings us together today, the illegal embargo that has been imposed on our sister Republic of Cuba for more than 50 years.

In conclusion, in Venezuela we believe that the time has come to take concerted action to build international mechanisms that make it possible to counter the effects of the corrosive illegal measures taken against hundreds of millions of innocent victims all over the world. It is time to organize to free our peoples from this weapon of international aggression afflicting humankind.

**Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). I would like to begin by welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

CELAC welcomed the steps taken between 2015 and 2016 by Cuba and the United States to begin the process of normalizing their diplomatic relations, marking the beginning of a new chapter in the history of peace and coexistence among American nations. However, we deplore the fact that the blockade is still a reality for the Cuban people. It is undeniable that its continued existence is a major obstacle to Cuba's normal development.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/73/85) confirms the cost of this policy to Cuba, which does substantial and unjustifiable damage to the welfare of the Cuban people and is contrary to the Latin American and Caribbean peoples' desire for peace, as expressed in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace. We also regret the new policy announced by the current United States Administration, which seeks to strengthen the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba and is a setback

to the normalization of bilateral relations between the two countries.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba is contrary to the letter, spirit and principles and purposes of the Charter and international law. CELAC reiterates its categorical rejection of the application of laws and measures contrary to international law, such as the Helms-Burton Act, including its extraterritorial effects and the increasing efforts to suppress Cuba's international financial transactions, which goes against the political will of the international community. We urge the Government of the United States of America to put an end to its application of this law.

The United States Congress has the authority to completely end the blockade of Cuba. We have also seen that the President of the United States, if he wishes, can use his broad executive powers to substantially modify the application of the blockade. CELAC reiterates its special declaration on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba, adopted during the fifth Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Punta Cana, in the Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, by which it requested the Government of the United States to comply with the successive resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and to heed the repeated calls from the international community to end its economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba. We believe that returning the territory occupied by the United States Guantanamo Bay Naval Base to Cuba, as the Cuban people and Government have repeatedly requested, should be one of the elements included in the process of normalizing relations between the two countries through a bilateral dialogue, in accordance with international law.

The Charter of the United Nations enshrines the rights, obligations and principles that have become part of the legal norms of humankind, not merely of international law. It must not be violated or undermined by any Member State. Member States must bring their national and international actions in line with the rights, obligations and principles enshrined in our Charter.

In 2015, 2016 and 2017, the resolution on the Cuban embargo was adopted with 191 votes in favour, confirming the universality of this cause. That is why the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States will once again resolutely support the adoption of draft

resolution A/73/L.3, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

We want to emphasize the dichotomy between the application of unilateral corrective measures that are not supported by international law and the letter, spirit and purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We reiterate our appeal to the United States to accept the call from the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, every other region of the world and its own people, to put an end once and for all to the unjust blockade of Cuba.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in order to express our support for draft resolution A/73/L.3, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial, and financial embargo imposed by the United States on the Republic of Cuba.

Let me start by acknowledging the presence in this Hall today of the Foreign Minister of Cuba, whom we welcome to the United Nations.

ASEAN aligns itself with the statements just delivered by the representatives of Egypt and Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, respectively.

Since this session began, we have heard clarion calls from Member States urging us to forge a more inclusive world where differences are resolved through greater engagement and dialogue prevails over withdrawal or confrontation. ASEAN firmly believes in these ideals, which are in accordance with the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In a multilateral rules-based system, there is no justification for a unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo of Cuba.

ASEAN notes the assessment of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system for operational activities for development in Cuba, detailed in the most recent report of the Secretary-General, that

“[t]he embargo affects opportunities for national and local development and creates economic hardship for the population. It has an impact on the population’s most vulnerable groups, and on human development in general” (A/73/85, p. 126).

We also note the assessment of the United Nations Population Fund, which states that

“[t]he embargo continues to affect the economic, social and cultural development of the Cuban people, particularly, the quality of life of the most vulnerable groups” (*ibid.*, p. 149).

This year marks the fourth in which ASEAN has made a statement in the General Assembly calling for the unilateral embargo of Cuba to be lifted as soon as possible. ASEAN member States have also voted unanimously in favour of the relevant annual resolution for the past 17 years.

It has been three years since the United States and Cuba restored diplomatic relations. ASEAN encourages both countries to build on that first step and together chart a path forward towards the normalization of relations. Ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba will be a significant and historic step in the right direction. It would significantly improve the quality of life and living standards of the Cuban people and contribute to the economic development of both countries, as well as advancing the General Assembly’s efforts aimed at achieving an inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We recognize that much remains to be done, and encourage the United States and Cuba to remain committed to an open and constructive dialogue that is underpinned by mutual respect. ASEAN joins the vast majority of the international community in reiterating its support for the lifting of the unilateral embargo on Cuba as soon as possible.

**Ms. Carey** (Bahamas): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on agenda item 43, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

I would like to acknowledge the presence among us of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, who has joined us for this morning’s meeting.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt, Venezuela and El Salvador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, respectively.

The Caribbean Community reiterates its unequivocal opposition to the imposition by the United States of an economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba that has been in place for nearly six decades. The embargo has caused the Cuban people undue hardship for two generations.

For almost 30 consecutive years, the General Assembly has opposed this unilateral and coercive measure by an overwhelming majority. CARICOM views these sanctions as a contravention of the precepts of international law, including humanitarian law, inconsistent with the policies of free trade and in conflict with the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States. In more recent years, the resolution has garnered resounding global support, with all Member States except two voting to end the embargo on Cuba. This near unanimous vote in favour of immediately ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo is a clear indication of the overwhelming disapproval of the United Nations membership. The international community has recognized that the embargo runs counter to the doctrine of multilateralism, the tenets of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in a country's domestic affairs.

The punitive embargo is of concern to CARICOM, which shares history, culture and familial ties with the people of Cuba. Cuba is the most populous State in the Caribbean region and an integral part of the Pan-Caribbean process. Cuba's ties with other Caribbean countries have been cemented by years of active cooperation at various levels. The States members of CARICOM continue to maintain close relations with Cuba through a wide range of programmes of cooperation in such areas as trade, health care, infrastructure and human resource development.

Cuba is an economic and development partner of the Caribbean Community. We are a sisterhood and brotherhood of nations that continues to enjoy mutually beneficial relations. In many ways, our future regional development depends on our collective advancement and progress. In that context, we view the embargo not just as a punitive act against Cuba but as an impediment to our shared regional development.

Cuba is a friend of many. It is a peaceful and generous State. It is a cooperative partner in international affairs and a voice of reason on matters on the international agenda. CARICOM therefore reiterates its support for

the right of the Cuban people to self-determination in a manner beneficial to their collective social and economic development.

CARICOM saw progress in the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States. We believe it was an important positive step in the process of normalizing bilateral relations between the two States. At the same time, we are concerned with the proposed rollback of the positive steps of recent years. Our subregion understands very well that each country has a responsibility to conduct its own bilateral relations. At the same time, we also understand that we are all guided by a set of principles that provide an overarching framework in which friendly relations among nations are pursued. We hope that as an important player in international affairs, the United States will be open to considering the opinions and concerns of its friends and traditional partners on this issue.

The Group welcomes the recent visit to Cuba by the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the United States, Senator Bob Corker, to discuss relations between the two countries. We remain guardedly optimistic that his visit will help to reset relations in a positive direction.

I want to state categorically in this context that CARICOM continues to enjoy friendly relations with both Cuba and the United States, two neighbours that are a mere 90 miles from each other. It is in that context that CARICOM States unstintingly support draft resolution A/73/L.3, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States of America against Cuba. We consider the lifting of the embargo to be a prerequisite for any meaningful reconciliation between the two countries.

**Mr. Islam** (Bangladesh): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on draft resolution A/73/L.3, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

The suffering of the Cuban people has gone on for far too long and is unfair. The United States embargo has been harming not only the Cuban economy, but also the well-being and basic human rights of the Cuban people and Cuban nationals living in other countries, creating unnecessary economic hardship for them. The OIC believes that such unilateral action runs counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the

United Nations. Pursuant to its established position consistent with international law, the OIC opposes any unjustified use of unilateral action that might affect the sovereignty and interests of another State and its people. The unilateral blockade affects not only Cuba but also third countries, as well as entities and companies that face fines for engaging in commercial activities with Cuba. That erodes the liberalization of trade that the international community has long been trying to achieve. The overall situation remains a source of deep concern.

We are striving to work for humankind and for our peoples' well-being. Not too long ago, our leaders here at the United Nations agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals and committed to fulfilling the desire of the global community to ensure that no one is left behind. The lingering embargo on Cuba is an obstacle to its people's efforts to realize those Goals. The risk of leaving Cuba's 12 million people behind, through no fault of their own, does a disservice to our goal of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As a front-runner among the countries who advocate for a prosperous global society, the United States has a larger responsibility to ensure that the 2030 Agenda's full benefits reach the entire Cuban people. The OIC therefore joins an overwhelming majority of Member States in urging the United States to put an end to the embargo on Cuba. The OIC's member States firmly support draft resolution A/73/L.3 and call on the States Members of the United Nations to vote in favour of it, as they have in past years.

**Mr. Opimakh** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus has always stood and will always stand against the use of unilateral sanctions in foreign policy. The use of economic coercion as a method of putting pressure on sovereign States is a gross violation of the norms and principles of international law. Such actions are unacceptable in the modern world and should be repudiated in any civilized society. We deplore the fact that the positive steps that the United States and Cuba took in 2015 and 2016 within the framework of a process of normalizing bilateral relations have not been built on as they should and have become hostage to a new and even more rigid policy towards Havana. The increased negative rhetoric and continuing restrictions on Cuba not only do not contribute to a constructive dialogue between the parties but also devalue the constructive results of their previous bilateral cooperation. This state of affairs continues to have a

negative impact on Cuba's economic development with adverse effects on its citizens.

In our view, it would not only be possible to resolve the situation in a civilized way, based on mutual respect and equal cooperation, but to do it in a very short time, as we witnessed just a few years ago. All it needs is the political will and courage to end the decades-long economic blockade of an island of freedom. In that regard, we hope for a resumption of a positive and constructive process, in accordance with the norms of international law and the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes. Belarus remains committed to the position that it is crucial to put together a genuine, living dialogue to counter economic and political pressure and sanctions. We have repeatedly declared that any attempts by individual States to change other States' internal political systems through military, political, economic or other means are unacceptable. Belarus calls for a complete, comprehensive and irreversible end to the economic, financial and trade embargo on Cuba by the United States. Only real steps in that direction can ensure the positive development of bilateral relations between it and Cuba.

**Mr. Dang Dinh Quy** (Viet Nam): I would first like to warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. I would also like to express our great appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/73/85) on the implementation of resolution 72/4.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statements just made by the representatives of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Singapore, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

A few years ago, we were encouraged by the explicit intentions of beginning a new chapter in its ties with Cuba that the United States Government showed in carrying out a number of measures, including calling on its Congress to lift its economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. Regrettably, those positive developments have been fading since April of last year, when the United States began gradually introducing tougher measures to reintensify and reconsolidate the embargo. The renewed United States sanctions have created more obstacles and challenges to Cuba's efforts to take advantage of development opportunities, including through business and trade ties with American and third-party partners. Such coercive

measures represent a serious setback that not only adds to the tension in the bilateral relations between the two countries but also inflicts severe damage on the people of Cuba and especially its most vulnerable groups, including women and children.

As we have done for the past 26 years, we are gathered here today to take action on a draft resolution of the General Assembly (A/73/L.3) calling on the United States to put an end to the embargo. Since 1992, when Cuba introduced the first draft resolution on this agenda item in the Assembly, support for the Cuban people's legitimate claims has grown. Last year's version of the resolution was adopted by 191 votes to 2, showing that the request for the immediate lifting of the embargo represents the overwhelming opinion of the international community.

As we all focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United States embargo is an obstacle to the efforts and endeavours of the people and the Government of Cuba to participate in that process. As a country that experienced and suffered under a United States trade embargo for 19 years, Viet Nam fully understands those difficulties and damage. The reality of the relations between Viet Nam and the United States shows that only constructive dialogue and engagement can foster mutual trust and bring positive change. Embargoes and similar imposed measures only make the problem worse. Furthermore, they run counter to the shared desire of every nation of the world to build sound and equal international relations, regardless of differences in their political systems and while ensuring that each nation's right to choose its own development path is respected.

Viet Nam reiterates its consistent opposition to any State's efforts to impose unilateral embargoes or coercive measures on another. We will vote in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.3 today in a demonstration of our desire to join the international community in calling on the United States to put an end to its unilateral embargo of Cuba and enable it to exercise its freedom to participate equitably and fairly in economic and trade relations with all of its partners around the world in accordance with international law, and to freely build its own future. We urge the United States Government to reverse its current policy towards Cuba, in the service of benefiting and meeting the needs of the two countries' peoples and for the sake of durable peace and sustainable development in the region and the world at large.

In that regard, we greatly appreciate Cuba's desire to continue dialogue and cooperation on issues of mutual interest and to negotiate pending bilateral matters with the United States on a basis of equality, reciprocity and respect for the other's national sovereignty and independence.

By voting in favour of the draft resolution, Viet Nam once again reaffirms its strong support for friendship, cooperation and solidarity with Cuba and, at the same time, renews its unwavering commitment to safeguarding the principles of international laws as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. Kim Song** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea extends its full support to draft resolution A/73/L.3, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", based on the principled stand of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of 77 with regard to rejecting any form of unilateral economic sanctions.

My delegation strongly condemns the blockade of Cuba as an infringement of its sovereignty, a crime against humanity and a violation of human rights, in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations. All States Members of the United Nations demand an end to the unilateral economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba and call for the creation of a peaceful environment for sustainable development.

For almost six decades now, since the foundation of the Republic of Cuba, the United States has imposed a unilateral blockade on it in violation of international law. Cuba's economic losses due to the blockade amount to tens of trillions of dollars. In November 2017, the United States Departments of the Treasury, State and Commerce decided to impose additional obstacles in order to further limit opportunities for the American business community in Cuba. That clearly shows that there has been no change in the intention of the United States to effect regime change in Cuba through a deep-rooted economic blockade.

My delegation is convinced that the successful adoption of today's draft resolution with the full support of the overwhelming majority during the session — as large as in any previous Assembly session on this resolution — will reflect the unanimous wish of the international community, which has continued to



lend its support and solidarity to the rightful struggle of the Government and the people of Cuba.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to once again express its strong support and solidarity to the Government of Cuba and its people, who have been struggling vigorously to safeguard the dignity and sovereignty of a nation confronted with a unilateral blockade by the United States.

**Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Caribbean Community, and would like to offer the following remarks in its national capacity.

Jamaica is profoundly disappointed at the continued need for the General Assembly to meet for yet another year in this manner to consider yet another draft resolution (A/73/L.3) on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. Jamaica has consistently argued against the embargo, imposed in violation of international law. It is an affront to the collective expression of the international community, which has consistently called for it to be lifted. The overwhelming view of the international community was made manifest yet again last year by the fact that 191 Member States voted in favour of resolution 72/4 to lift the 56-year-old policy of economic blockade.

Jamaica is concerned about the fact that despite the progress that has been made in recent years towards a rapprochement between the United States and Cuba, we are now witnessing increasing moves aimed at strengthening the embargo, thereby weakening the prospects for meaningful dialogue between the countries. We would like to point to the evidence for the strengthening of that policy. First, the restrictions on Cuba's international financial transactions, including with multilateral organizations, have intensified. Secondly, the United States Administration tightened the blockade of Cuba on 16 June 2017 with the signing of a national security presidential memorandum entitled "Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba". Thirdly, on 8 November 2017, the United States Departments of Commerce, Treasury and State issued new regulations and provisions for putting the memorandum into effect. Finally, on 10 September, the United States Administration extended the application against Cuba of the Trading with the Enemy Act to

14 September 2019, thereby maintaining the legal framework on which the 1962 blockade policy on Cuba is based.

We are also concerned about the fact that tourism from the United States to Cuba remains effectively illegal, despite the restoration of diplomatic relations in 2015 and the removal of Cuba from the United States list of State sponsors of terrorism. Besides that, we note that the United States Departments of the Treasury, Commerce and State are being used to investigate and prosecute those who establish or consider establishing normal financial, commercial and economic relations with Cuba. The extraterritorial application of United States laws violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations as well as international law. Indeed, it represents a permanent threat to the stability of a Member State of the Organization and contravenes the principles of multilateralism.

I would like to point out that although United States policy and law technically make an exemption for trading in raw materials for food and medicine, in conformity with international humanitarian law, the extraterritorial reach of the United States sanctions and the implications of de-risking by correspondent banks effectively result in blocking basic humanitarian trade. In fact, Cuba is even unable to trade food and medicine with subsidiaries of United States companies in third-party countries.

The situation is even more worrisome against the backdrop of reports of the continued impact of the embargo on the existence of ordinary Cubans. In an environment in which the international community has agreed to focus its attention on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it seems ill-advised that the embargo should be maintained even as we proclaim the need to leave no one behind. The embargo constitutes the principal obstacle to the development of the Cuban economy.

In addition to the attainment of the SDGs, the embargo hinders Cuba's national plan for economic and social development. That therefore confirms that the embargo represents a violation of the right to peace, development and security of a sovereign State.

Jamaica has always maintained that engagement with Cuba is essential. We have had a long and fruitful relationship with Cuba, one of our closest neighbours, which has witnessed the development of a vibrant and dynamic cooperation framework, despite the challenges

wrought by the embargo. Our relationship has prompted the Government of Jamaica to approve a motion, over the past nine years, by the House of Representatives in support of our Cuban brothers and sisters.

It is for those reasons that we will vote in favour of this draft resolution, as originally submitted, and as we have done in previous years.

**Mr. Lal** (India): India associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf of Group of 77 and China, and Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We welcome the Foreign Minister of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, here today. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report on this issue (A/73/85).

Every year, for more than two and a half decades, the General Assembly has considered the issue of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed more than five decades ago by the United States on Cuba. Every year, the Assembly has rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of people the world over. Last year, 191 Member States voted in favour of resolution 72/4, expressing their strong support for the lifting of the embargo.

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

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

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

At the same time, we want to acknowledge the notable socioeconomic and development achievements of the Cuban people, particularly the country's high ranking on the human development index and its earlier achievement of several of the Millennium Development Goals.

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

Cuba's expertise in health care, achieved despite its problems, enabled it to respond quickly, effectively and substantially to the call made to all nations in the General Assembly three years ago to respond to the Ebola crisis in Africa.

People-to-people contact holds immense possibilities for fostering better understanding among nations. The international community should intensify its efforts to promote an environment free from sanctions and embargoes. India hopes that the embargo will be withdrawn as soon as possible and supports draft resolution A/73/L.3, as submitted by Cuba.

**Mr. Matjila** (South Africa): Before I address the issue at hand, allow me to convey South Africa's heartfelt condolences to the United States of America following the tragic mass shooting that took place in Pittsburgh a few days ago. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the bereaved families and to those who are still fighting for their lives. That incident serves to underscore once more the need for all of us to stand united against all forms of hatred and violence.

I would like to recognize the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, at this important debate, which seeks an end to the injustice of the embargo on Cuba.

Turning to the important issues under consideration, South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf of the Group

of 77 and China, the Kingdom of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

South Africa welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/73/85) on the implementation of resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

Cuba continues to demonstrate its commitment to South-South cooperation by sharing its experience, knowledge and human resource development, among other things, with other developing countries as a manifestation of solidarity among the peoples and countries of the South. It can never be overemphasized that the ties of friendship and camaraderie between South Africa and Cuba are deep-rooted and enduring. At great sacrifice, Cuba made a significant contribution to the liberation of South Africa from apartheid, for which we remain eternally grateful.

Those bonds of friendship have continued and deepened under South Africa's democratic system, with South Africa and Cuba enjoying excellent bilateral relations across a wide range of sectors in pursuit of our mutual quest of lifting up our peoples and others all over the world from the terrible burdens of poverty, socioeconomic marginalization and deprivation.

South Africa remains steadfast in its long-standing support for the annual resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. The imposition of unilateral coercive measures by a major economy such as the United States on one of our fellow developing countries and one of its geographically closest neighbours has done immeasurable damage to the development of the people of Cuba and as ever remains unjustified. Indeed, the United States itself recognized that fact during the Obama Administration when it began to pursue the normalization of diplomatic relations and a gradual relaxation of the embargo. Regrettably, that progressive step has since been reversed and the people of Cuba are once again faced with monumental obstacles to the fulfilment of their basic human rights, including the right to development and the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

South Africa also remains deeply concerned about the extraterritorial application of the unilateral

and illegal embargo of Cuba by the United States, a regressive policy that prevents third countries from pursuing normal trade and investment opportunities with Cuba, further undermining our collective sustainable development efforts.

It is a testament to the fortitude of the Cuban people that despite those odds, Cuba has continued to make significant strides in addressing its people's socioeconomic and development challenges. One of those achievements is Cuba's commendable health sector, which rivals that of many developed countries. South Africa continues to benefit from a wide range of cooperative arrangements with Cuba in this area, as well as others.

South Africa rejects draft amendments A/73/L.9 through A/73/L.16, introduced by the United States, to this year's draft resolution (A/73/L.3), which clearly represent an attempt to divert attention from the serious human rights violations that the embargo inflicts on the people of Cuba. South Africa urges the United States to resume cordial diplomatic relations with a view to advancing the end of the deplorable Cuban embargo, a relic of a bygone era that undermines the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations that as Member States of this Organization we are all committed to. It therefore goes without saying that South Africa will once again vote in solidarity with Cuba, and calls on all Member States, including the developed countries, which seem very quiet right now, to voice their condemnation and vote in favour of the draft resolution in question, urging the international community to work together to free Cuba from the political, economic, commercial and financial shackles of an embargo that has been in place for more than half a century.

**Mr. Gertze** (Namibia): We are pleased to welcome the Foreign Minister of Cuba to our meeting today.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements by the Permanent Representatives of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Namibia welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/73/85) on the implementation of resolution 72/4, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

For close to 60 years, the Cuban people have been subjected to an unfair, unnecessary and unjust

economic, commercial and financial blockade, imposed in an unsuccessful attempt by the United States to effect Government change in the Republic of Cuba. In 2016, we were happy to note a change of tone on the part of the United States Government and hoped that the blockade would come to an end right then. Instead, we have seen heightened tensions, not because the people of Cuba have demonstrated any ill will towards the United States of America but merely because they continue to exercise their sovereign and democratic right to have a Government of their own choice.

I would like to remind the Assembly that the blockade, contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations, violates the right of the Cuban people to health care, food, education, sports, culture and development. In essence, it is a violation of human rights and the dignity of the Cuban person. Furthermore, it continues to have a severe impact on Cuba economically, affecting foreign trade, investment and, of course, the economy generally. We note that the Cuban people and Government continue to be denied income from the export of goods and services, which remain the areas most affected by the embargo. The people of Cuba must be allowed to participate in the international economic system without restrictions.

Namibia would like to remind Member States of the current United States Administration's signing on 17 June 2017 of a directive entitled "National security presidential memorandum on strengthening the policy of the United States toward Cuba", which marked a setback in the bilateral relations between the two nations. We once again urge the United States to lift the economic embargo on Cuba. Namibia has taken note of the draft amendments A/73/L.9 through A/73/L.16 proposed by the United States to draft resolution A/73/L.3, which calls for an end to the embargo. They seem to represent an attempt by the United States to justify the blockade, which has been shown to be outdated and in fact constitutes a serious violation of the human rights of the entire Cuban people. It is regrettable that at a time when, through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the world has committed to ensuring that no one is left behind, such amendments, and the continuing embargo, will in effect leave Cuba behind. We call on Member States not to allow those attempts, as they will surely weaken our commitment to multilateralism.

In conclusion, Namibia continues to stand by Cuba against the unjust blockade and calls on the

international community to support the Cuban people in ensuring that it is unconditionally lifted.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/73/85) on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. The Russian Federation has consistently adhered to a principled position on the annual General Assembly resolution on this subject presented by our Cuban friends. We stand in solidarity with an overwhelming majority of the members of the international community and have made concerted efforts to that end. We firmly condemn the United States embargo on Cuba and advocate for it to be lifted immediately and completely. Both Chambers of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation have once again adopted an appeal to the General Assembly and the Parliaments of the States Members of the United Nations reiterating our condemnation of Washington's destructive course of action. Those texts have been circulated as General Assembly documents under agenda item 43.

We view the continuing commercial, economic, and financial blockade of Cuba by the United States as an odious relic of the Cold War and a glaring example of unilateral, illegitimate sanctions. We consider the use of such unlawful practices to be an anachronism that is counterproductive, completely unjustified in the context of today's realities and entirely inconsistent with the goal of ensuring the progressive development of international cooperation.

Russia welcomed the decision of the United States of America on 26 October 2016 to abstain in the voting on resolution 71/5, as a result of which not a single vote was cast against it for the first time in a quarter of a century. Nevertheless, despite Washington's own acknowledgement of the futility of further attempts to isolate Havana, the blockade remains in effect, significantly damaging Cuba's economy and preventing its citizens from enjoying their legitimate right to a decent life, particularly in socially important areas. Moreover, a number of mitigating measures introduced by the previous United States Administration either have yet to enter into force or are not operating as they should, creating serious obstacles in Cuba's path to full integration into the global financial and economic system and preventing it from effectively developing its cooperation with foreign partners. Cuba's inability to participate in the operations of international credit

institutions and its exclusion from the standard system of inter-State transactions seriously complicates Havana's access to external loans and generally accepted ways of paying for export and import operations, which significantly reduces Cuba's purchasing power and hinders its trade growth.

In the area of goods, the embargo imposes stringent restrictions with regard to complex technological systems, for which United States-manufactured components may not exceed 25 per cent. This particularly affects equipment for oil drilling, information and communications technology, aviation and cutting-edge medical technologies, among other things.

Cuba's lack of free access to the investment market is a major obstacle to its development of trade and economic relations. Despite one-off investments from individual, mostly European, companies, a majority of States, with one eye on the United States, have so far refrained from large-scale cooperation with Cuba in this area. The lack of major systemic investments in the island's energy, transport, logistics and port infrastructure is a significant brake on the Cuban economy's development. We hope that under the current United States Administration the process of normalizing Cuban-American relations will not be frozen or reversed. We assume that the accumulated positives from the rapprochement between Washington and Havana will be maintained and will receive substantive development in terms of resolving the fundamental issues in their bilateral relations on an equal and mutually respectful basis.

Today the Russian Federation will once again vote in support of the draft resolution (A/73/L.3), which demands that the blockade be fully lifted. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for equal and fair treatment of all members of the international community, leaving none behind. It is essential that we lend a helping hand to those in particular need of our support. We call on everyone here to show solidarity with the Cuban people in their struggle for equal conditions for ensuring their socioeconomic development, and to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

**Mr. Gómez Camacho** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is extremely important for Mexico to be participating in today's discussion and reaffirming our commitment to ensuring that international relations foster economic growth, social development and the peaceful settlement of disputes within a framework of mutual respect. In

that conviction, we supported the essential process of normalizing relations that we saw between Cuba and the United States in recent years.

Mexico reiterates its rejection of unilateral action against the Republic of Cuba, including the more than five decades of an economic, trade and financial embargo that runs counter to international law and to the maintenance of friendly and cooperative relations between States. We also reject the implementation of discriminatory national trade laws designed to produce extraterritorial effects. We hope for a resumption of the necessary dialogue between the United States and Cuba. We continue to believe that relations between neighbours on the American continent will benefit from building ties that correspond to today's major and deep-rooted interactivity between peoples and understanding between Governments, for which we need greater openness and a freer flow of people, goods, technologies and ideas.

Mexico firmly believes that ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo would enable Cuba to improve its people's standard of living, since it would have access to the international financial system, like any other State, as well as greater flows of trade and investment, which would benefit the entire region. It would also enable it to make progress in the comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the adverse circumstances that the country has faced for more than 50 years, Cuba has high levels of human development, as recently acknowledged in the United Nations Development Programme's *2018 Regional Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean*. Its achievements in the areas of universal and free access to basic services, the eradication of poverty and putting an end to hunger are impressive.

The peoples of Mexico and Cuba share a historical and intimate relationship that has been strengthened through flexible, serious and trusting political dialogue, a broad and solid legal framework and a growing exchange of trade and investment that has revitalized our agenda through issues of common interest, based on realities in both countries. Mexico will continue to support the Government of Cuba's actions aimed at updating its model of economic and social development and to closely monitor the process of constitutional reform under way that seeks to adapt Cuba to new

times and new needs. The embargo does nothing to foster change.

**Mr. Ma Zhaoxu** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the presence of Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba.

We associate ourselves with the statement made earlier by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out an overall plan for global sustainable development, opening a new era and charting a clear path for national development and international cooperation. We have now entered the third year of its implementation, but the progress that has been made in implementing the goals of primary concern to developing countries, such as the eradication of poverty, gives no cause for optimism. All countries should uphold the principles of mutual understanding, joint development and shared results, with an awareness that we are part of one community with a shared future for humankind. We must jointly tackle our common challenges, create new opportunities, seek new momentum for development, complement one another's advantages and achieve win-win results, and do all of that with a heightened sense of urgency. Against that backdrop, the economic blockade and sanctions regime imposed by the United States on Cuba should cease immediately.

For 26 consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted by an overwhelming majority the annual resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", which calls on all countries to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law and to revoke or abolish any laws or measures that have extraterritorial effects on the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under those States' jurisdictions and on freedom of trade and navigation. For many years, however, there has regrettably been no effective implementation of those resolutions, and the economic, commercial and financial embargo that the United States has imposed on Cuba remains in place to this day. That runs counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the Assembly, causing huge economic and financial losses to Cuba. It hampers the efforts of the Cuban people to eradicate poverty

and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and undermines their right to life and development, as well as adversely affecting normal economic, commercial and financial exchanges between other countries and Cuba. China consistently advocates for respecting countries' right to choose their own social systems and development paths independently, and we are opposed to the imposition of unilateral sanctions on other countries, whether by military, political, economic or other means.

China always strictly abides by and implements the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. China and Cuba have maintained economic trade and personnel exchanges. Our friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in all fields continues to move ahead. This is in line with the wishes of the peoples of China and Cuba and promotes Cuba's economic and social development.

The world today is undergoing profound changes such as have not been seen in 100 years. Peace, development, cooperation and win-win benefits have become the leitmotif of our time. Exchanges based on maintaining an equal footing between nations and cooperation for mutual benefit represent a major trend. Dialogues between equals and friendly consultations are the best way to resolve differences.

In recent years, the United States and Cuba have resumed their diplomatic relations, taking important steps to normalize relations between the two countries. China hopes that they will continue to advance this process and that the United States will completely end its embargo policy against Cuba as soon as possible. Both parties should move with the historical trends of our times by developing normal inter-State relations in accordance with the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms of international relations. That will also serve the common interests of the two countries and their peoples, advance peace and stability throughout the Americas and contribute to the common development of the international community.

China will once again vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/73/L.3) submitted by Cuba under the agenda item entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

**Mr. Llorenty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/85).

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

At the outset, we would like to welcome the presence here today of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and his delegation.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba is perhaps one of the most important issues on the agenda of the United Nations, given that it encapsulates the very *raison d'être* and meaning of our Organization, as well as the challenges that threaten it. Under the blockade of Cuba, we have seen the principles of respect for the sovereignty, equality and self-determination of peoples systematically violated for more than half a century. With the blockade of Cuba, the importance of resolving our differences within the framework of a common rules-based order for all States has been ignored with impunity.

For more than 26 consecutive years, the international community has almost unanimously reaffirmed the importance of ending the United States blockade of Cuba. However, for the twenty-seventh time, we are meeting here again to demand that a single country, the United States of America, refrain from applying unilateral measures and comply with the obligations and commitments it assumed upon becoming a State Member of our Organization. How can it not be significant that one of the most powerful Members of the United Nations, a permanent member of the Security Council and the host country of our Organization, refuses to comply with the obligations inherent in its participation within it? It is time for the General Assembly and the United Nations to enforce the decisions that their membership has determined.

The United States blockade of Cuba is illegal because it violates the Charter of the United Nations and the international laws that govern us all. It is unjust because it affects Cuba's development, financial and banking operations, foreign trade and industry. It is immoral because it affects the health, nutrition and education of the Cuban people.

The United States blockade of Cuba must be lifted. We have been repeating this for 27 years in this Hall and have often been met with silence in response. At other times, we have seen measures intensified and

strengthened, hindering Cuba's legitimate development aspirations and undermining the human rights of the Cuban people. For that reason, it is truly cynical to try to distort the meaning of today's draft resolution presented by Cuba (A/73/L.3), which refers to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals and respect for human rights, in both of which Cuba is an example for all humankind.

We will not use this opportunity to go into great detail about the clear achievements of Cuba in these fields, evidenced by a free, healthy, cultured, educated and participatory population. We prefer to dedicate these few minutes to paying homage to the spirit of solidarity of that small island, which, despite all its difficulties and the criminal blockade it endures, has been able to provide disinterested help to the rest of the world in the fields of medicine, education, technology, sport and art and culture.

When racism and colonialism subjugated our brothers in Africa, Cuba was there. When illiteracy plagued many of our peoples, Cuba was there. When Ebola, malaria and other diseases attack the poorest on our planet, Cuba is there. When hurricanes strike our brothers in the Caribbean, Cuba is there. When earthquakes hit our brothers in Asia, Cuba is there. Most importantly, Cuba is there to set an example with dignity and the unwavering strength that serves as a guide for us all and keeps hope alive.

I urge members to look around, to look at what happens in our Organization and to see what is taking place in every aspect of our work. A deliberate and calculated attack is being waged on multilateralism. Let them see what happened with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and what is happening with the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, the attacks on the International Criminal Court and the Human Rights Council, on agreements on denuclearization and disarmament, the unilateral military actions, the threats of the use of force against Member States and the proliferation of unilateral sanctions. We are not talking only about Cuba today but about the entire multilateral system, which is under threat.

What should we do? We must fight. We must fight to defend the multilateral system, the United Nations and international law. We must strive to defend the principles and purposes that unite us as an international community. Only by winning that fight will we be able

to give succeeding generations the possibility of a better future.

Cuba is still perfectly described today in the words that Commander Ernesto “Che” Guevara used in right of reply in this very Hall 54 years ago:

“The whole Cuban people trembles with indignation whenever an injustice is committed, not only in America, but anywhere in the world.” (*A/PV.1300, para. 57*).

Here we can say what we have said so many times before, as expressed by José Martí: “Every real man should feel on his cheek the slap that another man receives on his cheek”. That is how the Cuban people feel as a whole. The intent is to deliver a slap in the face of that small, united island, that great, dignified island. And it is up to all of us to tremble with indignation, feel the slap in our own face, denounce injustice once more and demand that the illegal, unjust, immoral blockade by the United States of Cuba be ended once and for all.

**Mr. Boukadoum** (Algeria): We have heard the statements made by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), and Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States. They all spoke up on our behalf, and my country, of course, aligns itself with the statements of all those groups.

The continuing annual adoption by an overwhelming majority of the members of the General Assembly of a resolution calling for the lifting of the blockade against Cuba is a message that cannot be ignored. It reflects the strong and steadfast support and desire of the international community to put an end to the unjustified, unnecessary and harmful embargo that has now been imposed on Cuba for six decades. Algeria will continue to speak up and voice its opposition to all our friends on the continued economic, commercial and financial embargo of our sister country of Cuba and its strengthening. Those unjustified sanctions not only exacerbate the sufferings of the Cuban people by depriving them of their basic rights, they also obstruct Cuba’s economic development and hamper its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

I want to recall that my country has always stressed that Cuba, like any other Member State, has the right to freedom of trade and navigation and to expand trade,

on a mutually agreed basis, with any economic partner. Algeria has always fully shared NAM’s position, which regularly rejects the imposition of unilateral acts or extraterritorial regulations impeding the development of any country, as well as all forms of coercive economic and trade measures, and reflects unwavering principles of Algeria’s foreign policy.

Let me add that Algeria considers Cuba to be more than a friend. That country stood by us in dire times. Cubans have expressed such solidarity in many parts of the world. I would like to acknowledge, as a notable example, the commitment and the undeniable expertise that Cuban doctors have always demonstrated well beyond their borders. For example, when many looked the other way, Cuban doctors went to fight the Ebola crisis in western parts of Africa. They did so on behalf and for the sake of the whole international community, with no payback whatsoever, and they were praised afterwards by the whole membership and the international community.

Today more than ever, it is important to rebuild the momentum and advance the positive achievements that we have all witnessed in recent years in the relations between Cuba and the United States of America. Engaging in a constructive and respectful bilateral dialogue, in full respect for the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, will certainly pave the way solidly for the full normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States and lead to the lifting of the long-standing, unnecessary embargo, to the mutual benefit of the peoples of both countries, the region and beyond it the whole world.

**Ms. King** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I come to the rostrum today to reiterate our well-known position in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.3, as presented by the Cuban delegation.

We align ourselves fully with the statements made earlier on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of 77 and China, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Since 1992, the United Nations has called for an end to the embargo through this annual resolution, and today the urgent importance of ending it remains. The embargo is inhumane, a violation of international law, an example of unilateral action and contrary to



the Charter of the United Nations and the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs.

No country in this Hall has the right to tell the United States how to conduct its foreign policy, who its friends should be or how to determine its national interests. Even if such a right existed, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would not presume to exercise it against its cherished friend and neighbour to the north, the United States, with which we enjoy excellent cooperation. But every country in this Hall is obligated by the Charter to oppose instances where national foreign policy decisions morph into violations of international law or sustained disregard of the Charter principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States.

Every attempt to justify this embargo has failed to convince 191 Member States. It is an affront to us all that the legislature of one country can make a decree on the trade matters of another, thereby affecting third countries. The ever-shifting allegations of one State about another are not sufficient grounds for imposing an embargo or sanctions of any kind. Rather, this is a matter that we must discuss and decide on here at the United Nations.

In the meantime, we have begun the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which has set goals to guide the creation of the future we want, and which aims to leave no one behind. We, the peoples of the international community, are determined to take bold and transformative steps to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. What place, then, does this embargo have in our modern world? And in an interconnected world of open borders and the free movement of people, goods and capital, how can the champions and architects of globalization simultaneously legislate the isolation of one State or place extraterritorial restrictions on commerce, global trade and the movement of individuals?

It is counterintuitive to impose an unjust obstacle to Cuba's development, on the one hand, while on the other criticizing Cuba in its noble efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. As we all know, the implementation of the Goals is a work in progress across the board, and we caution against invoking the Goals in an attempt to score geopolitical points. The fact remains that despite the embargo, Cuba has made tremendous development gains.

In addition, Cuba has remained a staunch and abiding partner in the development of our country, even in times of global hardship. Cuban universities have graduated many hundreds of Vincentian students and are currently hosting even more, free of charge. Its surgeons have performed operations on thousands of Vincentian patients, without charging them a penny. Its doctors have brought quality medical care and expertise to the most remote areas of our country, and etched in the recent memory of Vincentians are the Cuban engineers, architects and workers who laboured to build us a modern hospital and our first international airport.

We consider the lifting of the embargo to be a prerequisite of any meaningful rapprochement between Cuba and the United States, not a negotiated end result. While in the past there have been positive indications of flexibility, there have recently been reminders of unilateral rigidity. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful that the position of the overwhelming majority of States on that matter will be heard, and we encourage Member States to remain in solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba.

In that context, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates its unequivocal call for the removal of that absurd embargo and unstintingly supports draft resolution A/73/L.3, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, as originally presented by the Cuban delegation.

**Mr. Khoshroo** (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude for the recent report compiled by the Secretary-General (A/73/85), which demonstrates the strong position taken by States and international organizations on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

We offer our warm welcome to Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, the Foreign Minister of Cuba, and his delegation. I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Iran's full support for the people and the Government of Cuba against the long-lasting, unilaterally imposed, unlawful and immoral embargo.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of 77 and China, and the States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

However, I would also like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Undoubtedly, the economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba is the most unjust and longest-lasting example of unilateral sanctions imposed on a country in the modern history of our world, and a vivid example of the unilateral way in which the United States acts in the world. In fact, the behaviour and one-track mindset of some of that country's high-ranking officials keep them increasingly isolated from the realities of today's multilateral world. The United States long-standing obstinacy and pathological tendency to impose unilateral sanctions, particularly under the current Administration, which pursues the obsolete policies of the Cold War, have inflicted enormous damage on every sector of the Cuban economy and caused the Cuban people untold hardship by preventing them from fully enjoying their human rights.

The strengthening of the extraterritorial application of the blockade and the intensification of that policy have had profound adverse effects on Cuba's international financial and loan relations. The blockade constitutes a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cuban people. It violates the Charter of the United Nations and international law and constitutes an obstacle to international cooperation.

Regrettably, in the twenty-first century, United States officials still use and resort to hostile rhetoric in the spirit of the Cold War, instead of learning lessons from their short-sighted and disastrous policies on Cuba and in our region, the Middle East.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which has been subjected to the unilateral coercive measures of the United States for more than 37 years, including unprecedented economic and financial sanctions, fully shares the valid concerns of the Government of Cuba, which is suffering from the recklessness and disregard of the United States for international values and institutions. Enjoying a close relationship with the Cuban people, the Iranian people have demonstrated their unwavering resilience during the past 37 years, despite the difficulties and constraints that the sanctions have created.

In that context, I must point out how the United States is addicted to the imposition of sanctions as an instrument to achieve its bilateral goals. The conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

in 2015 between Iran and the 5+1 group, which was endorsed by Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) and adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, is a good example of the fact that the United States is a perfidious player on the international scene. Resolution 2231 (2015) was supposed to put an end to the sanctions imposed on Iran. It is tragic that the United States, a permanent member of the Security Council and one of the principal negotiators of and parties to the agreement and the drafting of the Council resolution, is now punishing and threatening sovereign States, not for violating but for abiding by a Security Council resolution.

The economic war that the United States has initiated under the rubric of new sanctions not only targets the Iranian public but also has harmful repercussions for the peoples of other countries, and has disrupted the state of global trade. The reimposition by the United States of sanctions against Iran, after its unilateral withdrawal, has shown that the United States is utterly untrustworthy and that it is a colossal mistake to count on its commitments.

The message of today's meeting is a reaffirmation of the fact that the time for interventionist policies and interference in the farthest reaches of the world is long over. The era of coups d'état, invasions and destabilization and the policies of walls, sanctions and aggression that threaten the peace and security of the world are over. The message being sent today through our unanimous condemnation of unilateral coercive measures, particularly unilateral embargoes and sanctions, is that the preservation of interests and security in the world, in the least costly manner, is possible only through cooperation, solidarity and coordination among countries in the framework of multilateralism.

However, it is unfortunate that we are witnessing the rise of rulers in the world who think they can secure their interests better — or at least, in the short-term, ride public sentiments and gain popular support — by fomenting extremist nationalism and racism, as well as by trampling global rules and undermining international institutions. Confronting multilateralism by resorting to unilateral actions, including the imposition of an embargo and sanctions, is not a sign of strength. It is rather a symptom of intellectual weakness and betrays an inability to understand a complex and interconnected world.

**Mrs. Taremba** (Zimbabwe): My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States. Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his report (A/73/85), which has once again highlighted the widespread negative impacts of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba.

Two years ago, when we considered this agenda item (see A/71/PV.32), it seemed as if we might be on the cusp of a great moment in history, where one of the most unjust vestiges of a troubled history might finally be on the verge of resolution. At that time, Zimbabwe joined many Member States in commending what we hoped was the first of many steps to be taken towards normalizing relations between the United States and Cuba.

Sadly, the developments since April 2017 have dashed the optimism of that time. We are very disheartened by the fact that at a time when we all should be joining hands to promote the eradication of poverty and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, some of us are devising more stringent ways to keep a sovereign country from realizing its right to development and ensuring that its citizens are not left behind as the rest of the world prospers. In a globalized world, where progress is spurred by increased collaboration and people-to-people contact, it is sad and somewhat incomprehensible that so much capital would be expended to perpetuate the economic, commercial and financial isolation of a small developing country and its people.

Zimbabwe reaffirms its condemnation of the promulgation and application of unilateral coercive measures that have an extraterritorial impact. Such measures are contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and run counter to the principle of the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their domestic affairs. Furthermore, they undermine international trade regulations and practices and interfere with the right of third-party countries and private entities to take their own decisions on trading with affected countries.

On that basis, Zimbabwe stands firmly with the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations in opposing the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. The embargo is the

single biggest obstacle to socioeconomic progress in Cuba, as well as the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. It is also an unacceptable violation of the human rights of Cuban nationals, as well as a threat to their aspirations for prosperity.

While the world has been advancing and economies have been modernizing and developing, Cuba has been kept shackled for 60 years and its development hindered on the basis of an outdated policy that belongs to the past. It is time that that unjust embargo was consigned to the annals of history where it belongs. We are convinced that relations between the States concerned will greatly benefit from a move towards policies that are relevant today, not those based on a past that should be consigned to dusty history tomes.

Given Cuba's willingness to engage in dialogue, we encourage reciprocal steps from the other side for the benefit of both peoples and the international community as a whole.

**Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Arab Republic of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity. At the outset, I welcome our dear friend, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. His friendly country, Cuba, should fully trust that the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to support the steadfastness of the Cuban people and Government as they deal with the unjust blockade imposed on them by the United States since 1962.

Syria will not forget that its friends and brothers in Cuba have stood by its side in the face of the terrorist war that we have been subjected to for the past eight years. Syria will not forget that Cuba has continued to support its position in the face of the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan. My country takes pride in the fact that many of its men and women have received education in medicine and engineering at well-known Cuban universities that continue to be a beacon of science and knowledge despite the unjust United States blockade, which has continued for almost six decades.

My country fully and unconditionally supports draft resolution A/73/L.3 and believes that its contents, especially its operative paragraphs, reflect the position of the United Nations, which rejects unilateral coercive economic measures, since they constitute a collective punishment imposed on the entire population and undermine the United Nations system while infringing on its privileges. In addition, they constitute an obstacle to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, impede international commercial exchange and are an obstacle to people's enjoyment of their human rights, as described in human rights instruments.

We in the Syrian Arab Republic, a people who have suffered for many decades as a result of such unilateral coercive economic measures, will continue to pose a moral question about how the representatives of certain countries can call from the rostrums of the United Nations for the accelerated implementation of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for no one to be left behind, while their own Governments impose unilateral coercive economic measures against Cuba, Syria, Iran, Venezuela, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Palestine, the Russian Federation and China, among other countries.

Today we are only 12 years away from the deadline for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. No one can argue that the economic embargoes that certain Governments have imposed on many countries around the world do not directly obstruct their goal of achieving socioeconomic development. On that basis, the credibility of the United Nations, including its Charter, its resolutions and the 2030 Agenda, is now at stake, particularly given that last year, 191 States Members of the United Nations gave the Organization an unconditional and absolute mandate to put a final and irreversible end to the unjust economic embargo that has been imposed on the Cuban people for the past 56 years (see A/72/PV.38). That mandate has witnessed dissent only from the United States and its minion, Israel.

We owe the Cuban people and their leadership and Government a debt. Our friend Cuba has always taken the side of right, justice and equality. It has responded to calls for medical and humanitarian assistance from all over the world. No one can forget the role that their doctors and citizens played in combating the Ebola epidemic on the African continent, when doctors from other Western States were fleeing Africa because they

were afraid to confront the disease. Meanwhile, Cuba sent hundreds of doctors to deal with the epidemic.

We must all remember that this historic country has continued to progress despite the challenges of the embargo. It has continued to propagate science and modern medical technology throughout the world. In most cases, Cuba has provided its services to the peoples of the world while asking nothing in return in order to prove that the will of a free people cannot be crushed, thereby exposing the false allegations that certain Governments use to impose economic embargoes on other countries.

More precisely, everyone knows that it is the Governments of States that have economic, political and military clout that impose unilateral sanctions. That clout makes them believe that they can punish countries that oppose their policies of global domination or their deceitful attempts to sway international opinion on the pretext of defending human rights or combating terrorism. At the same time, those powerful Governments grant protection to the most vicious dictatorships in the world. They shield sponsors of terrorism and provide political and military support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine and Arab territories.

My country categorically rejects draft amendments A/73/L.9 to A/73/L.16, submitted by the United States delegation to draft resolution A/73/L.3, which is before us today. We believe that the only reason to propose those draft amendments is to impede the work of the General Assembly, undermine the unified position against the economic embargo imposed on Cuba and challenge the consensus that is opposed only by the United States and Israel. Above all, the party that has submitted the draft amendments is not morally, legally or politically qualified to talk about human rights either in Cuba or any other country in the world.

From a technical perspective, the draft amendments do not fall within the context of the agenda item under consideration or the main objective of the draft resolution, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Moreover, they include unacceptable language and attempt to set a serious precedent in the history of the United Nations. The party submitting the amendments seeks to justify the economic embargo that it imposes on Cuba, and to establish a false legal basis for the unilateral coercive economic measures that it has imposed on many

countries and peoples throughout the world. Its idiotic attempt has been exposed, and we do not think anyone in the Hall has been swayed by its deception.

The periodic reports of the Secretary-General and the information and assessments that they include on the damages and losses caused by the unilateral coercive economic measures imposed on Cuba prompt us today to discuss a new approach that goes beyond simply calling for an end to the economic embargo on Cuba. Instead, we call for the implementation of the Organization's recommendations for seeking justice and compensation for the victims of those measures and establishing an international register of unilateral measures that affect human rights. We also support the idea of issuing a declaration by the General Assembly on unilateral measures and the rule of law.

Syria therefore calls on the General Assembly to establish effective mechanisms to put an end to hostile policies of embargoes and unilateral economic measures, which are of course a violation of international law. We call for the Governments of Member States that resort to imposing illegal economic embargoes to be held fully responsible, politically, economically and financially, for the economic losses of the countries targeted by such illegal blockades. Such measures lead to the collapse of vital economic sectors that provide basic services to citizens, particularly in the areas of health, education, nutrition, agriculture, industry, commerce, communications and technology.

In conclusion, I would like to recall Mr. Idriss Jazairy, Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, who after a recent visit to Syria said,

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

That evaluation was made by a high-level United Nations representative, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights. It applies to the tragic circumstances and suffering endured by all peoples subjected to such measures. We believe that the time has come to put an irreversible end to the policies of economic sanctions that some Governments of Member

States adopt. That is the right course of action if we are truly committed to the principles of equality and justice, as well as the right of all peoples of the world to well-being and development without discrimination or limitation.

**Mr. Amayo (Kenya):** Kenya would like to align itself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt, Venezuela and Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively.

Kenya believes that unilateral sanctions and blockades are inappropriate as instruments of international relations and diplomacy. Such actions, when applied unilaterally, undermine multilateralism, a key value of the United Nations that we all cherish. Unilateral sanctions and blockades are generally harmful and in many cases politically self-serving. Furthermore, as we have seen, they often strengthen rather than weaken the targeted countries. In the long run, they tend to be unsustainable and largely cause pain and suffering to the weak and vulnerable members of society. As the United Nations, we can do better in holding ourselves to a higher ideal and standard than those condoning the choice and use of unilateral sanctions and blockades.

The United Nations should therefore uphold no sanctions or blockades that do not meet the threshold of precise, swift and determinative action. It is also not justifiable to apply sanctions in perpetuity. That is even truer if they are applied against a Member State simply because that country does not adhere to the cultural values or political ideals of another Member State or group of States.

My delegation believes that the time to end the sanctions and blockade against Cuba is indeed long past. Let the people of Cuba be free to enjoy the unhindered social and economic freedoms that the rest of the international community possesses. Let us not allow sanctions and blockades, unilateral or otherwise, to stand in their way. The people of Cuba deserve their inalienable right to live in peace and harmony with all of their neighbours in the Americas. As a nation and country that is recognized by the United Nations, they deserve the chance to exercise their free will on matters of their own self-determination. It is for those reasons that Kenya always votes in favour of the annual resolution on the necessity of removing that undue burden on the Cuban people.

With the recent improvement in the diplomatic relations between them, we urge the United States to consider lifting the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba.

**Mrs. Coye-Felson** (Belize): We have addressed the General Assembly on this issue before and we will continue to return to express our unwavering support for Cuba and its people and our unstinting support for the resolutions that have been adopted year after year on the lifting of the blockade against Cuba. Belize aligns itself with the statements that have already been made by the representatives of Egypt, Venezuela, El Salvador and the Bahamas, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and our own regional group, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We affirm our support for draft resolution A/73/L.3, based on the universal acceptance that international law affords no exceptions for violations of the rule of law. By consistently and overwhelmingly rejecting the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo of Cuba and its people as a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, the General Assembly itself affirms that no-exception rule.

Belize continues to engage with Cuba in a constructive and mutually beneficial partnership that has its most immediate effect at the individual level. Today, 90 Cuban doctors are working all over Belize, helping to save lives. That is in addition to those who treat Belizeans with complex medical cases free of cost at medical facilities in Cuba. Since 1999, more than 200 Belizeans have matriculated from Cuban universities and now apply their skills at home. Many others have received training in areas such as agriculture and disaster management.

We highlight those cases as evidence of the integral role that Cuba plays in Belize and the wider Caribbean, as was stated earlier by the representative of the Bahamas on behalf of CARICOM and has been echoed by many other speakers in this debate. Those cases are also evidence of what the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belize observed during the general debate as the failure of the blockade to pressure the Cuban Government into submission (see A/73/PV.15). He pointed out that Cuba has been able to survive and thrive to a degree that has garnered international recognition, especially for its gains in public health, education and the arts.

As a fellow small island developing State that desires nothing more than a fair and equitable global order with the rule of law as its guarantor, in which all of our peoples have equal opportunities to achieve their greatest potential, Belize stands in solidarity with Cuba and repeats its urgent call for lifting the blockade of Cuba and its people.

**Mr. Phansourivong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic): The Lao People's Democratic Republic aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Egypt and Singapore on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of 77 and China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively. I would now like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has consistently believed that in an era of an interdependent world, unilateral measures with extraterritorial implications taken by one country against another country are not only contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law but also affect the livelihoods of the people and hinder the economic and social development of the country on which those measures are imposed. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has therefore neither promulgated nor introduced such laws or measures.

We support draft resolution A/73/L.3 and all the related General Assembly resolutions that call for the ending of the embargo of the Republic of Cuba. The imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo on the Republic of Cuba, apart from being contrary to the principles and purposes of the Charter and international law, also restricts Cuba's economic and social development and causes hardship to the Cuban people. We therefore call for lifting the embargo on Cuba, and the sooner the better.

**Ms. Ferreira** (Angola): The Republic of Angola associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Kingdom of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Angola considers the persistence of the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo that the United States has imposed on Cuba for 56 years to be an unjust and retrograde measure that inflicts serious

damage on the Cuban economy, with grave consequences for its people, especially those who are most vulnerable. It has been an obstacle to Cuba's full realization of economic and social development, and consequently to its people's full enjoyment of basic human rights, including the right to development, sustenance, health care and social services. That will certainly affect the implementation of Cuba's national economic and social development plan and have a negative impact on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Angola hoped that the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries would encourage the United States authorities to adopt new measures aimed at ending the embargo, while respecting the right of the Cuban people to freely exercise their right to decide their political, economic and social interests, in order to ensure their country's sustainable development. However, we regret that in recent months there has been a setback in diplomatic relations between the two countries and that the United States Government has decided to tighten the economic, commercial and financial blockade by imposing additional obstacles to the already limited trade opportunities between Cuba and the United States. We therefore defend the position that dialogue and cooperation between the two countries should be resumed as soon as possible in order to overcome that setback.

Angola reaffirms its commitment to respecting, preserving and promoting the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law, as they constitute the essence of multilateralism and a collective effort to maintain international peace and security, economic growth and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The embargo is contrary to international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and has inflicted enormous damage on the Cuban economy. We therefore call on the United States authorities to put an end to their economic, commercial and financial blockade.

The extraterritorial nature of the embargo is reflected in the financial persecution of third-country banks and the imposition of new fines on institutions for violating the rules of the United States Government in relation to Cuba. According to the Cuban authorities, between April 2017 and March 2018 the embargo caused losses to the country amounting to \$4,321,200,000.

The progress achieved between 2015 and 2016 showed that Cuba and the United States can coexist in a cordial way, while respecting their differences. Angola therefore encourages the United States and Cuba to continue to build a relationship based on dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect to the benefit of both countries and peoples. In that context, Angola supports and will vote in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.3, on ending the embargo on Cuba.

**Mr. Biang (Gabon)** (*spoke in French*): Gabon associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States, Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Gabon has always voted in favour of the annual resolution of which a draft has been submitted for our consideration today (A/73/L.3), in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which are founded on cooperation among States and the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs.

My country remains concerned about the continuing economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba and its consequences for the Cuban population, including Cubans residing outside Cuba. It is clear that the embargo is having a negative impact on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in both Cuba and the region as a whole.

Gabon strongly hopes that the United Nations resolutions echoing the collective call for the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States of America will be respected and implemented, thereby enabling Cuba to participate in and benefit from international trade. It is important to preserve the traditional text of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly more than 20 years ago (resolution 47/19), which has remained faithful to the reality on the ground over the past 26 years.

We are convinced that only the principles of dialogue and cooperation will help to create a climate of trust and calm and enable significant progress to be made on the issue. Gabon therefore maintains its position and will vote in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.3.

**Mrs. Chen** (Suriname): At the outset, we welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba here today.

Suriname aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Bangladesh, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Bahamas, on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

My delegation disapproves in the strongest terms of the continuation of the economic, financial and commercial embargo against Cuba and its people. Year after year, an overwhelming majority of nations takes a stand against the embargo imposed by the United States of America, as it impedes that sovereign nation in unlocking its full potential for economic and social development. That unilateral coercive measure, with extraterritorial implications, is not in line with the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries that are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and have guided us in our collective commitments to achieving the peaceful and sustainable development of all nations.

As the blockade has been in effect for decades, it has caused and continues to cause the people of Cuba unnecessary hardship and gravely undermines the country's efforts to achieve sustainable development. My Government regrets that the renewed continuation of the economic and financial blockade has set back the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States, which also negatively affects trade relations with other nations in our region.

Suriname will vote in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.3. By voting in favour, we join the international community in calling on the United States to put an end to its obsolete policy and to lift the economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba.

**Mr. Mero** (United Republic of Tanzania): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for her leadership of this session. I also want to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Morocco, on behalf of the Group of African States, Egypt, on behalf of Group 77

and China, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

To put it briefly, Tanzania has consistently supported the Cuban people by voting in favour of the annual resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo of Cuba on humanitarian grounds.

The economic and commercial embargo has a dampening effect on any nascent development of a the country and its people and on their prospects. It denies opportunities to communities in their aspirations to address poverty and to have access to various opportunities related to trade, investment, financial and commercial activities. Cuba is a developing country that works hard to improve the lives of its people. Despite its resolve to strive for their development, it is being challenged by the vagaries of climate change and more frequent storms, which have a negative impact on any prospects for development. The Cuban people would like to be connected to the United States economically in order to attract investment and trade opportunities. Those are the hopes of the new generation of Cubans, who are the majority. It is a fact that the embargo hurts ordinary people who hope that the situation will end so that their economic hardship improves.

In 2015, many world leaders gathered in this very Hall welcomed the historic and momentous decision taken by the United States and the Republic of Cuba to restore diplomatic relations. For most of us, it signalled the beginning of harmonious coexistence, with high hopes and expectations. However, with the passing of time, we believe and see that minimal efforts have been made to meet those hopes and expectations of ultimately lifting the embargo that has affected the people of Cuba for many years. We hope that through the power of reason and the same diplomatic means that led to the re-establishment of the two countries' ties, there will be a complete removal of the embargo against Cuba and that a new dawn of cooperation will follow, not only for the two countries involved but for the entire region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

**Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt, Venezuela and El Salvador on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, respectively.



Nicaragua once again condemns the unjust embargo imposed on our heroic brother people of Cuba, a people recognized for their solidarity, internationalism and willingness to always serve all humankind. When he welcomed the inauguration of Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President Daniel Ortega Saavedra of Nicaragua reaffirmed that Cuba is a country that has continued to lead the OurAmerica and Caribbean revolution, while defending sovereignty, dignity and a remarkable capacity for resistance and life.

It is an honour to welcome the presence of our brother and friend Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, and his delegation, who, as always, will provide us with extensive information about the terrible impact and the economic, financial and commercial damage to the Cuban people that have resulted from the imposition and strengthening of the embargo, its unilateral and extraterritorial measures and all their ramifications.

According to the report of the Secretary-General (A/73/85), that outdated and obsolete policy has translated into a cost of more than \$933.6 billion. The measures are pointless and unfounded, especially in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for no one to be left behind and for us all to come together in a partnership of fair cooperation and solidarity in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Cuban people need us. We cannot remain silent in the face of such injustice.

Nicaragua joins the voices and universal call of the international community, which has demanded an immediate end to the embargo of Cuba year after year. Today we want to send a message of hope and to stand in solidarity with Cuba's more than 11 million people by saying clearly that Cuba is not alone. Today and always, we are united as brothers and sisters through the love, strength and courage of our peoples. Our solidarity with Cuba will continue until the immoral embargo ends. Nicaragua will always remain unconditionally at Cuba's side to jointly build a better world. The hatred, interference and embargo must stop. We have had enough of unilateral economic, financial and commercial coercive measures being used as political instruments and weapons to put pressure on and subjugate our peoples, while preventing the attainment of the provisions of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

For almost 60 years, Cuba has resisted the imposition of these dishonourable measures that seek to hinder the progress of an entire people and its revolution, which is a symbol of dignity and an example of solidarity and cultural and scientific development to the world. The embargo, whose purpose is to create discouragement, economic dissatisfaction and hardship, deny supplies and bring about hunger, desperation and the overthrow of the legitimate Cuban Government, has failed. The Cuban people will not surrender or sell themselves. Their courage and bravery have confirmed that for almost six decades. That is why, with great pride, we join in affirming that Cuba is respected.

At a time when the international community is striving to achieve the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and has agreed on all the actions we need to counter the threat of climate change, it is inconceivable that the right to development is being denied to our brother people and Government of Cuba through unilateral coercive and criminal measures, in order to fulfil imperialist agendas and political interests.

The embargo, whose measures and scope have intensified, violating all the rules of international law and the principles of international trade, peaceful coexistence among States and non-interference and non-intervention, has had a negative impact on the economic, social and cultural rights of the Cuban people. It has affected their right to development, constituting as it does a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of an entire population's human rights. Despite the attacks and abuses of the embargo, which violate the Charter of the United Nations, Cuba remains firm and resolute. Its people and Government continue to represent the dignity and sovereignty of the Latin American and Caribbean peoples and the spirit of José Martí, Simón Bolívar and Nicaragua's own General Sandino.

Cuba is the embodiment of solidarity. Our Cuban brothers and sisters have always led the way in responding to the needs of humankind and to catastrophes and emergency situations all around the world, sharing with love their lives, hearts, abilities and knowledge. That Cuban solidarity has always supported us in a number of ways in our Sandinista people's revolution, teaching us to read, educating our doctors and technicians, helping to treat our illnesses and creating the conditions for our well-being and happiness on Mother Earth.

It is time to reflect. The path to take is not one of imposition, arbitrary hegemony, threats or aggression or imposing unilateral financial and economic measures. It is one of unbounded respect for the inalienable rights of peoples, no matter how small or great they may be. It is one of multilateralism, friendship, understanding and peaceful coexistence among nations. That is how we can promote a culture of peace and how we all will gain many more friends in the world and foster peace, harmony and solidarity.

There is an international consensus in that regard. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Caribbean Community, the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and other groups and States have once again reiterated their rejection of the policy of the United States Government. They have reiterated their full solidarity with Cuba and called for an immediate end to the embargo. In that call, the international community is asking for an end to the negative effects on Cuba's exports and imports, for Cuba to be given access to international credit and markets, and for an end to the damage to its education and health-care systems, which incidentally benefit us all.

Nicaragua reaffirms its condemnation in the strongest terms of that criminal embargo and all its extraterritorial measures and ramifications. We reject all unilateral coercive financial and economic measures, which constitute a real obstacle to the eradication of

poverty and the sustainable development of our peoples. We hope that as the Government of Cuba very clearly states, friendly relations and dialogue under equal conditions can be established and that the United States will resume the path begun by the Administration of former President Obama. But we hope that this time it will move forward definitively with the lifting of the embargo and, in addition, return to the Cuban people Guantánamo, their legitimate territory.

We express our firm solidarity with Cuba, the Cuba of José Martí, Fidel Castro and Raúl Castro, in these challenging times, whose extent we still cannot measure but can foresee, anticipate and continue to resist by struggling to overcome them. To the dear people and Government of Cuba, we echo the words of our Commander Daniel Ortega and Vice-President Comrade Rosario Murillo to Cuba's President Miguel Díaz-Canel:

“We greet with affection and eternal fraternal recognition the heroic Cuba that will forever and with absolute loyalty carry on the legacy of Fidel and Raúl”.

Nicaragua will vote in favour of draft resolution A/73/L.3, to be introduced by Cuba. We unite our voices with the millions of people who, on all continents and in all countries — and even more so in the United States — chant in unison Cuba yes, embargo no.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*