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Letter dated 2 May 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I would like to express our concerns regarding the negative impacts of unilateral coercive measures on the protection of the environment in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this respect, I would like to bring to your attention information concerning the imposition of unilateral sanctions by the United States through a series of executive orders, laws and regulations against Iran and the Iranian people. These sanctions, which contravene international law and the Charter of the United Nations, have had a severe impact on the enjoyment of the right to a sustainable environment in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The United States of America has implemented a broad and complex network of illegal and unjust financial, economic and trade sanctions against Iran, with the aim of isolating Iran from the financial mechanisms of a number of international environmental agreements and imposing secondary sanctions against non-United States parties that cooperate with Iran on environmental issues.

Unfortunately, the full impacts of such sanctions on Iran are magnified due to various factors. The compliance procedures for these sanctions are complex, time-consuming and expensive, which leads to overcompliance by businesses and institutions. The extraterritorial enforcement of these sanctions and the fear of penalties for inadvertent violations have made many entities hesitant to cooperate with Iran, even when it is environmentally beneficial. This has resulted in a detrimental effect on Iran's environment and its people's ability to enjoy their right to a healthy and sustainable environment.

Like many countries in its region, Iran is facing numerous environmental challenges, including air and water pollution, soil erosion, water shortages, desertification, sand and dust storms and biodiversity degradation. According to data from the World Health Organization, 24 per cent of deaths in the region where Iran is located are linked to modifiable environmental factors. Unfortunately, United States sanctions have exacerbated the existing environmental problems in Iran.

Sanctions imposed by the United States restrict the ability of my Government to acquire the necessary foreign investments and technologies, as well as goods and services, to address environmental issues in the country. Additionally, they block



international funding from lending agencies, such as the Adaptation Fund, the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility, as well as funding from banks and investors, that support environmental improvement projects. These projects include the building of large solar power plants and wind farms, among other renewable energy sources in Iran, to generate electricity. As a result, the percentage of Iran's budget devoted to environmental amelioration has diminished due to these sanctions.

United States sanctions are a significant contributing factor to environmental degradation in Iran, negatively affecting the Iranian people's rights to a healthy and sustainable environment and to an adequate standard of living. It is a global responsibility to cooperate on promoting environmentally sound management and development, as well as on activities that contribute to the protection of human health and the environment. I stress that the unilateral sanctions of the United States against Iran are designed in opposition to these aspirations by degrading Iranians' right to health, to the extent that their right to life is being endangered.

It is important to note that Iran's domestic capabilities for developing, importing and applying environmentally sound technologies have been hindered by the restrictions of these sanctions on the importation of equipment and technology, as well as other goods and services. The sanctions prevent investments and other forms of finance to address the country's environmental conditions, including greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the sanctions impair the ability of Iranian scientists and scholars to engage in international cooperation projects and participate in courses where relevant knowledge on environmental issues is shared.

The United States must comply with its international obligations and duties under multiple treaties, inter alia those derived from various international agreements and conventions, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, to protect and improve the global environment.

In light of the foregoing, the United States must lift all illegal unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran that will harmfully impact the environment. In addition, the United States must bear responsibility for the consequences of such internationally wrongful acts. Furthermore, it must provide guarantees and assurances that it will not reimpose such illegal actions in the future.

The environment is generally assessed as a common heritage of mankind and an integral part of sustainable development. It is therefore expected that the negative impacts of unilateral coercive measures in inhibiting the protection of the environment will be adequately highlighted in the relevant United Nations reports.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 18.

(Signed) Amir Saeid **Iravani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative