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

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Report of the Secretary-General — Part II

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III. Replies received from organs and agencies of the United Nations system

Office of the resident coordinator of the United Nations system for operational activities for development

[Original: Spanish]

[14 July 2004]

1. For as long as the office of the resident coordinator has been preparing annual reports on the effects of the embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States of America, it has not been possible to show any real improvement or substantial progress in this area. It is noteworthy now that, at the beginning of May 2004, the United States Government announced new embargo strengthening measures, which entered into force on 30 June 2004. Some of the provisions included in these measures are:

- (a) Restrictions on Cuban imports;
- (b) Restrictions on the weight of accompanied baggage;
- (c) Restrictions on family visits: The new regulations require a specific licence, issued by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), authorizing visits to members of the traveller's "immediate family" only (not including cousins), once every three years and for no more than 14 days. The new regulations reduce to \$50 the daily subsistence allowance for a traveller visiting closest relatives. There is an additional allowance of \$50 for transport costs;
- (d) Reduction in education exchanges: Specific licences are restricted to universities and graduate schools (i.e. not secondary schools) and the validity of such licences is reduced from two years to one;
- (e) Restrictions on exchanges related to sports, clinics and workshops;
- (f) Reductions in family monetary remittances: The new general licence authorizes such remittances only to the senders' closest (immediate) relatives. The total amount that an authorized traveller may carry to Cuba as family remittances is reduced from \$3,000 to \$300.

2. The United States Government has stated that the new measures are designed to use socio-economic suffocation to hasten the replacement of the existing Cuban Government with a transitional administration. In addition, the United States Government has allocated \$59 million to finance various publicity campaigns against the Havana administration.

3. The negative effects of the embargo, which are becoming more pronounced, include:

- (a) Negative effect on Cuban commercial relations with countries other than the United States that fear reprisals for doing business with Cuba. For example, flag vessels from other nations that deliver to, or take on merchandise in, Cuban ports are subject to sanctions and are barred from entry into United States ports for the following six months;

(b) The scarcity and high cost of capital due to the perceptions of high investment risk and uncertainty brought on by the virtual isolation caused by the embargo;

(c) Increased freight, transport and fuel costs, brought about by the importation of goods via circuitous routes and from sources in distant countries that are willing to provide crucial goods;

(d) In spite of determined efforts, which the Cuban Government has not abandoned, it is becoming more difficult to care for vulnerable groups, such as children, older persons, women and persons with disabilities;

(e) The higher cost development projects, including those of the United Nations, which are also subject to the higher costs and limited availability of inputs;

(f) The reduced availability of relevant expertise due to the fear of individuals of various nationalities of reprisals from the United States against them and their families;

(g) The limited sources of technology for Cuba, which in turn make it dependent on technology that is not necessarily the best or the cheapest;

(h) The increased restrictions on scientific exchanges with the United States. As part of the new measures, the United States Government has even prohibited the publication of articles by Cuban scientists in reviews and professional journals. Scientific, technical, sporting and student visits and exchanges were already subject to restrictions;

(i) There is also a negative impact on Cuba's ability to make known the progress it has achieved in health care and education and to find partners for joint projects. This is harmful not only for Cuba but also for developing countries that might benefit from Cuba's progress in the health and education sectors.

4. The Cuban Government has made tremendous strides in the education sector so as to maintain its policy of free education for all and to improve quality. Nevertheless, such advances have come at a much higher cost because inputs cost more and must be brought from far away.

5. The impact has been particularly severe in special education, which by its nature requires specialized means. For example: Braille machines, needed for teaching blind and partially sighted children, have to be purchased at a price higher than which would be available in the United States market. The National Programme for the Construction of Special Schools, halted since 1990, has not resumed.

6. The embargo and its intensification have limited the exchange of professionals between Cuba and the United States, impeding access to new knowledge, techniques and information in general. There are also numerous examples of events, workshops, seminars and technical advisory services that have been affected by the denial of visas to Cubans, in particular after 11 September 2001. Such negative effects have impacted multilateral cooperation programmes. In some such cases, programmes were unable to acquire prepaid equipment and/or software or were forced to restrict the exchange of professionals who were denied entry visas into United States territory.

7. The health sector is still having difficulty in acquiring medicines, diagnostic instruments, equipment and spare parts of United States origin, which must be purchased through intermediaries, driving up costs. The impact on diagnoses is worsening, since 70 per cent of diagnostic equipment and reagent manufacturers are American. This whole situation also affects the technological modernization of hospitals and the availability of necessary inputs for emergency care and treatment of seriously ill patients. The impact on paediatric cancer patients is one of the most glaring examples. Cytostatic serums must be acquired through third countries or in Europe or Asia, prohibitively increasing their cost.

8. The agriculture and livestock sectors have not escaped considerable difficulties, stemming as much from the lack of access to the United States market as from the increased cost of raw materials and inputs that must be imported, including feed, vitamin supplements and veterinary medicines. Access to advanced technology used in the sector is also restricted.

9. From the trade standpoint, the effects of the embargo are manifold and touch most, if not all, sectors of the Cuban economy. They can be summed up as follows: Cuban export products are prevented from entering the United States market and, with the exception of a few food items, the sale of products to Cuba both by companies located in United States territory and by their subsidiaries abroad is forbidden. Furthermore, the embargo perpetuates the so-called Cuba risk and limits the acquisition of new technologies or goods.

10. The effects of the tighter embargo are noticeable in other sensitive areas, for example: international cooperation with developing countries in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Cuba, which has an excellent record in this field, for many years offered the international community the services of doctors, health personnel and medicines to combat the pandemic, particularly in sub-Saharan African countries. Such support is no longer forthcoming on account of the obstacles, costs and fears caused by the embargo.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

[Original: English]
[17 June 2004]

Recent evolution of the economy

1. Cuba has been engaged in a process of institutional and economic reforms for almost 11 years now. The basic rationale and objective of this process has been its reinsertion in the international economy, under very different circumstances from those prevailing between 1960 and 1989, while also maintaining the fundamental objective of social equity.

2. The breaking-up of Cuba's unique links with the former Soviet Union and European socialist countries constitutes a paramount event that propitiated important changes in economic policies and the implementation of structural reforms throughout the 1990s. The process has been troublesome and is not completed yet. The structural bottlenecks of the economy, such as, inter alia, lack of investment, low productivity, outdated technology and aged physical infrastructure, and the continuation of the United States embargo, with periods both of relaxation

and intensification, contribute to the difficulties of the country to improve its economic performance.

3. This strategy has implied important changes in the behaviour and the structure of the Cuban economy. During the recent period, Cuba's transit towards a service economy has continued at a moderate pace, together with a policy of according priority to activities that generate foreign exchange, save energy, use skilled labour and sell their products and services to dynamic markets. These structural changes are reflected in the growth of service exports, which represented around 67 per cent of total exports sales in 2003 (10 per cent in 1989).

4. After averaging 5 per cent per annum in the period 1997-2000, gross domestic product growth in the period 2001-2002 was only 2 per cent, but it recovered in 2003 (2.6 per cent), due mainly to an increase in international tourism, remittances from abroad, goods exports and the impulse given to investment by the reconstruction of damaged areas — mainly housing — caused by three hurricanes that affected the island in the past two years. Non-sugar cane agriculture was also dynamic, but drought affected the agriculture sector as a whole.

5. Following hurricane Michelle, in November 2001, the United States Government authorized the sale — limited and only on this special occasion — of food and medicines to Cuba. The Cuban authorities agreed to the offering on the condition of cash payment. That did not imply changes regarding the stance of the United States embargo, but certainly constituted an unprecedented event in the last decades. In 2003, Cuba bought food and agriculture products from the United States worth US\$ 344 million (US\$ 165 million in 2002). Prices were competitive, owing to the geographical proximity of the suppliers.

6. Following the September 2001 attacks in the United States, the dollar rose from 21 to 26 Cuban pesos. The 21-peso exchange rate remained stable during the previous three to four years, and the 26-peso quotation has been maintained since then. The official exchange rate is still 1 peso to the United States dollar. Prices have been stable in the past two to three years. In some periods, consumer prices have decreased, due basically to regulated prices and to a greater and more varied supply of goods and services. Consumer prices declined 1 per cent in 2003, after a 7 per cent increase in 2002.

7. In 2004, the economy faces new challenges; there could be volatility in prices and in the foreign exchange market as a result of the new measures announced in May by the Government of the United States to strengthen the embargo. The United States Government imposed additional restrictions on United States citizens wishing to travel to Cuba and on remittances sent from the United States to Cuban relatives, estimated in 2003 at US\$ 900 million. There are 1.3 million Cuban Americans living in the United States, of which 115,000 visited Cuba in 2003. After the announcement of these measures, the Cuban Government increased the price of gasoline and other hydrocarbons and of products sold in foreign exchange through the system of foreign exchange recovery stores (*tiendas de recuperación de divisas*). The average increase was 15 per cent, which will cause inflationary pressures in the coming months.

8. Wages have risen and labour productivity has increased, although they are still below the levels of the late 1980s and of international standards. The employment

rate has grown slowly and the unemployment rate has remained at a reasonably low level (2.3 per cent in 2003).

9. In summary, in the period 1999-2003, the process of reforms has continued, albeit at a slower pace than in the initial period (1993-1997), especially with regard to the opportunity provided for non-State economic activities. The Cuban authorities have reiterated that the State will continue to have a predominant role in the economy, and thus the private sector will be limited in its opportunities for development. Nevertheless, the 3,700 agricultural cooperatives and the 147,000 private farmers will continue to be considered as a viable option and to be supported by the State: 76 per cent of the arable land of the country is already exploited by the non-State sector.

10. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has continued collaborating with the Cuban Government in several fields, within the country's framework of policies aimed at the attainment of the best possible integration of Cuba into the world economy while preserving social welfare. ECLAC main activities and collaboration with Cuba in 2001-2004 are described below.

Project to strengthen the national accounts system

11. One recommendation contained in the study *The Cuban Economy: Structural Reforms and Performance during the Nineties* was that the statistics system of Cuba be strengthened: specifically, the Cuban System of National Accounts, which, during the 1990s, was converted from the Material Product System to the accounting system recommended by the Statistical Commission. Following the request of the Ministry of Economy and Planning, a cooperation project was prepared and eventually approved by the Cuban authorities to support the work of the National Statistics Office in this field. With the financial support of the Swedish International Development Agency, the project was started at the beginning of 2002, it will end in 2004 and it is expected to continue in a second stage, which will basically focus on implementing recommendations, until 2007, in accordance with the request of the Cuban Government.

Study on recent Cuban social and economic development

12. In 2003 ECLAC started a collaboration with the Government, with the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), consisting of the elaboration of a study on recent social policies in Cuba. In April 2004, in collaboration with the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Económicas of Cuba, ECLAC published the book *Política social y reformas estructurales: Cuba a principios del siglo XXI*. The study discusses and analyses recent social policies implemented by the Government and their impact on social welfare. The exercise particularly takes into account the difficult conditions the external sector of the country (stagnant external demand, expensive credits and the United States embargo itself) faces and their implications for safeguarding social indicators. It also considers the changing needs of Cuban society, such as caring for a large number of elderly people and the associated costs for public finances. The study updates the database developed previously in the framework of the two books published by ECLAC about the process of institutional reforms and economic performance during the special period. The book will also be published in English.

Energy

13. ECLAC continues to lend technical assistance to energy authorities of the country on matters such as energy policy and rational use of energy. In April 2004 the Energy Unit of ECLAC Mexico organized and participated in a seminar to discuss pricing based on marginal cost tariffs and provided technical assistance to the Electrical Union of the Ministry for Basic Industry.

Capacity-building

14. As part of its technical assistance and capacity-building support, ECLAC organized an internship for Mr. Marino Meriño, Vice Minister in charge of the agroindustry sector and social services in the Ministry of Economy and Planning. Mr. Mariño spent 12 days in Mexico (March 2004), visiting institutions and organizations, public and private; he engaged in other similar activities in Mexico and also received training and assistance from the Agriculture and Social Development Units of ECLAC Mexico.

Seminars and conferences

15. ECLAC staff have participated in seminars and conferences in Cuba on various issues related to economic development, globalization and international trade, among others.

Recurring studies

16. Finally, ECLAC continues to publish the annual economic survey of Cuba (June each year) and the preliminary overview of the Cuban economy (December), including updating and upgrading the country's macroeconomic database.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

[Original: English]
[30 June 2004]

Overall situation of food security and agriculture

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) assessment of food insecurity places the Cuban population at a moderate level of food deprivation. Both the prevalence and the number of people experiencing food deprivation increased during the period from 1990-1992 (benchmark period of the World Food Summit and the Millennium Declaration) to 1995-1997. However, in recent years, from 1995-1997 to 1999-2001, that trend was reversed — both the proportion and the number of people experiencing food deprivation decreased.

2. The value of imported agricultural products followed a downward trend, decreasing from US\$ 837 million in 1999 to US\$ 826 million in 2002. At the same time, exports registered a downward trend, declining from US\$ 785 million in 1999 to US\$ 655 million in 2002. Over the same period, the trade balance changed from US\$ 51.8 million to US\$ 171.7 million. The embargo also affects the import of food products for human consumption, particularly those destined to meet social programmes, as restrictions limit their quantity and quality, thus having a direct effect on the food security of the population.

Effects of the embargo on selected agricultural commodities

3. According to a review of United States policy on Cuba (February 2004), trade with Cuba is becoming more difficult, although new policies aim at placing more restrictions on travel and money inflows from Cuban-Americans than on food sales. News reports indicate that the Government may raise the prices of most “dollar-priced” products (by about 15 per cent on average), in response to the tightening of regulations by the United States. Both policies may adversely affect food consumption.

4. **Cereals.** The production of the 2002/03 cereal crop, consisting mostly of paddy and maize, has been similar to the past five-year average, and no particular food emergencies have occurred. Cereal production is not sufficient to meet domestic demand. About 550,000 tons of rice, an important food staple of the local diet, about a million tons of wheat, mainly from the European Union, and 250,000 tons of maize, for livestock, are imported annually. United States wheat and rice imports have increased following the easing of sanctions.

5. **Oilseeds.** The oilcrop production in Cuba is virtually zero and, as a result, the country depends almost entirely on imports to supply its vegetable oil and meal needs. Commodities dominating imports are soybeans, soy oil and soy meal. Since the United States embargo came into effect, Brazil and Argentina have been the main suppliers of soybeans and derived products. Both Mexico and Canada have, on occasion, shipped (small) volumes to Cuba. Origins of non-soybean oils and meals imported by Cuba include Argentina, Canada, Mexico, the European Union and China. As oilseeds and products are traded widely at competitive prices, supplying Cuba from sources other than the United States has never posed particular problems and presumably has not significantly raised per unit import costs faced by buyers in Cuba.

6. **Raw sugar.** The 2002/03 raw sugar production, the main agricultural export and foreign-exchange earner, was estimated at 2.2 million tons, the lowest level registered in the past 70 years. This result was mainly a consequence of the restructuring of the milling sector and the continuing shortage of agricultural inputs due to scarcity of government funding.

7. **Meat products.** United States poultry exports to Cuba, benefiting from a poultry exemption granted in 2001 to the long-standing embargo, soared to record levels. United States shipments to Cuba rose from nil in 2000 to nearly 75,000 tons by 2003, pushing Cuba into position as the seventh largest export market of the United States. Despite bird flu concerns in 2004, United States exports to Cuba are likely to continue to benefit from the soaring demand for chicken, expanding to an estimated 120,000 tons. Additional major suppliers to Cuba include Brazil and Canada.

8. **Fish products.** Almost all of Cuba’s fish exports consist of high-value products, notably frozen shrimp and lobster, which are in strong demand on the international market. Export earnings amounted to US\$ 93 million and a total weight of 8,793 tons in 2002. On the other hand, fish imports, consisting mainly of low-value fish products, amounted to US\$ 29 million and a total weight of 29,000 tons, which contributed to approximately 26 per cent of the domestic fish supply. Cuba is not receiving all the benefits possible from fish trade. Access to nearby markets is limited, especially those with high purchasing power, and Cuba is

therefore obliged to export to more distant markets, with the resultant higher marketing and distribution costs.

Effects of the embargo on agriculture, fisheries and the food industry

9. The main effects of the embargo on agriculture, fisheries and the food industry should continue to be viewed from two different perspectives:

(a) The problems brought about by the inability to take full advantage of export potential (among other items, coffee, honey, tobacco, live lobsters and aquaculture products) to the nearest market (the United States). This has implied major losses, since it has been necessary to sell to markets located further away, with the resultant higher marketing and distribution costs. Moreover, trade often leads to a transfer of know-how. Cubans are not benefiting from these transfers;

(b) The increase in costs for inputs needed for production (fuel, spare parts for agricultural machinery, animal feeds, phyto- and zoo-sanitary products and fertilizers, as well as top technological products such as herbicides, low-toxicity insecticides and other highly effective pesticides or veterinary pharmaceuticals, and disease diagnostic kits, which in many cases are produced only by United States firms). This directly increases the costs of agricultural, fisheries and livestock production, resulting in decreased profitability, which influences the capacity of the sectors to satisfy local demand. In general, equipment purchased from the United States would decrease the cost of imports by at least 20 per cent.

10. For example, the loss of exports of tropical fruits to the United States equates to a loss of income of some US\$ 25 million. Meat production decreased by 3.6 per cent from 2002 to 2003, after it had already dropped by 22 per cent in 2002 (beef and chicken decreased by 12.1 per cent and 35.9 per cent, respectively, in 2002), due to lack of animal feeds, minerals, vitamin supplements, genetic materials and incubation equipment, among other items. Egg production stabilized in 2003 following a 50 per cent decline in 2002. Other examples have been cited in previous reports.

Technical assistance to Cuba

11. For a number of years, most FAO technical cooperation activities in Cuba have been financed through the technical cooperation programme, the FAO corporate programme and the TeleFood Fund. Moreover, during the past two years about a dozen projects were approved under the aegis of the technical cooperation programme and the TeleFood Fund. FAO support activities have mainly focused on the agricultural and fishing sectors, as well as the conservation of natural resources. In addition, through projects responding to emergency situations, FAO has contributed to alleviating the effects of natural disasters (mainly hurricanes) that frequently afflict the island.

12. Project operations in Cuba are adversely affected by the economic embargo, because of increased costs related to restrictions on fuel acquisition; to the purchase of spare parts for agricultural machinery and transport; to the increased cost of purchasing inputs and products, such as high-quality seeds that have to be bought from distant markets; to access and availability of veterinary medications and vaccines, diagnostic reagents for laboratories; and the increased cost of shipping and

handling. Taken together, these factors have had a negative impact on the effectiveness of development resources.

International Atomic Energy Agency

[Original: English]

[3 June 2004]

Cuba's safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency pursuant to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as an additional protocol thereto, entered into force on 3 June 2004.

International Civil Aviation Organization

[Original: English]

[28 June 2004]

1. The mandate of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is to promote the safe, secure and orderly development of civil aviation in the world. The organization is not directly involved in the implementation of resolution 58/7, which is directed at States.
2. Cuba, a contracting State of ICAO, benefits from assistance through the technical cooperation programme and the regular programme of ICAO, both at headquarters and at the ICAO North American, Central American and Caribbean Office in Mexico. In particular, ICAO has facilitated the participation of Cuba in all relevant regional technical cooperation projects and is assisting the country in improving its international civil aviation infrastructure through national technical cooperation projects.
3. In fact, ICAO cooperation with Cuba has expanded over the past decade. There have been a number of requests from the Government of Cuba and its civil aviation authority for ICAO assistance in the implementation of technical cooperation projects in the areas of flight safety, airport safety, development of aeronautical infrastructure, strengthening of the civil aviation authority, human resources development, training programmes at the managerial and technical levels and modernization of technology.
4. As a result of the embargo, numerous difficulties and constraints have been encountered in the management and implementation of ICAO technical cooperation projects in Cuba, particularly regarding the procurement of spare parts and equipment that are made or that have components made in the United States.
5. Finally, I would like to mention that Cuba is currently a member of the Council of ICAO, having been elected to the Council by the Assembly of ICAO at its thirty-second session, in 1998 and again at its thirty-third session, in 2001.

International Fund for Agricultural Development

[Original: English]
[12 July 2004]

1. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) currently has no lending activities in Cuba. The country has been in arrears to IFAD since 1990 due to lack of payment on servicing the loan associated with the Camalote Rural Development Project. The Government of Cuba has demonstrated on several occasions the desire to resume cooperation with IFAD and to initiate repayment of principal and interest on the loan for the above-mentioned project, but, at the same time, it has expressed its difficulties to devote foreign resources to a financial plan for debt settlement.
2. IFAD has a potentially important role to play in reviving agricultural production for domestic consumption in Cuba, which would thus contribute to improving the livelihood of the rural poor of the country. Potential IFAD support for the Cuban rural economy can be implemented only if a repayment plan to meet arrears is agreed with the Government.
3. The effects of the embargo on the Cuban economy have undoubtedly influenced the decision by the Government to suspend payments to the Fund, thus rendering the country ineligible for IFAD support.

International Labour Organization

[Original: English]
[30 April 2004]

1. Cuba is treated in the same way as any other member State of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and actively participates in the annual International Labour Conference and other consultations organized by the ILO.
2. The ILO Office in Mexico continues its technical cooperation programme on employment and decent work issues in Cuba. The 2004 programme includes concluding a comprehensive study on the linkages between macroeconomic and labour market policies, vocational training, social security, and safety and health at work, from a perspective of decent work. Parallely, the SIMAPRO methodology for productivity improvements, based on human resources development, will be extended within the sugar industry and to other sectors. Finally, two seminars will be held with the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba on the role of the ILO in setting and supervising international labour standards and on social security schemes.
3. The ILO ratifies its view that the United Nations is the appropriate forum to address questions related to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

International Telecommunication Union

[Original: English]
[11 July 2004]

In the context of Cuba, the main challenge is to propose implementation of technical solutions without the use of technologies that have export restrictions to Cuba.

United Nations Children's Fund

[Original: English]

[15 June 2004]

1. The embargo imposed against Cuba affects all spheres of Cuban society, particularly the right of Cuba to protect children, adolescents, women and families, as defined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and as promoted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). While the United States market could be the best economic option for Cuba in many aspects, the ban on commercial exchange imposed by the embargo increases dramatically the costs of crucial consumption items. It also affects key sectors of the economy, such as tourism and sugar and nickel production, as well as oil supply.

2. Cuba's social indicators, particularly for Cuban children, are the highest in the region. However, the embargo poses real and daily challenges to the ability of the Cuban Government to maintain these strong indicators.

3. According to a sentinel site surveillance conducted in 2002, the rate of prevalence of anaemia among children under two years of age is approximately 46 per cent, while the rate among pregnant women in the third trimester was 28 per cent at the national level. Of a population of more than 11 million, approximately 2.5 million, or 23 per cent, were found to have iron deficiency, while access to potable water and sanitation continues to be a problem, especially in the eastern part of the country. Although Cuba's immunization programme provides 100 per cent vaccination coverage against 12 diseases to children, to achieve this goal, which would have a direct impact on the low infant mortality rate, the Cuban Government must pay very high costs, as it cannot import the vaccines from neighbouring markets. Moreover, the construction of day-care centres for children under the age of five has been halted due to lack of resources. As a result, 70.9 per cent of children in this age group attend an informal early education programme at home, with parents being provided orientation on its implementation. In addition, the serious deterioration of school buildings and health installations, with the accompanying dramatic scarcity of basic teaching materials, basic medicines and diagnostic equipment, threaten the indexes achieved in education and health.

4. Operating under its mandate to protect all children, as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNICEF programme focuses on the fundamental needs and basic rights of Cuban children in the areas of education, health, nutrition and sanitation.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

[Original: English]

[23 June 2004]

1. In its resolution 47/19, the General Assembly called upon all States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures whose extraterritorial effects affect the sovereignty of other States, and urged States that have such laws or measures to take the necessary steps to repeal or invalidate them. The Government of the United States has continued to implement its policy with some modifications in the past year.

Legislative developments

2. For almost four decades, the United States has maintained economic sanctions against Cuba. The legislations include the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996 (known as the Helms-Burton Act), the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 1997 and the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Acts of 1996 and 1998, the Foreign Assistance Act, and the Export Administration and Export Import Banks Acts.

3. A significant development in 2002 was the United States House of Representatives vote for the Treasury-Postal Appropriations bill ending the ban on travel, financial restrictions on food sales and limits on remittances. In 2002, with the support of farm state members of Congress, agricultural sales to Cuba continued to increase.

4. In February 2002, Congress removed all legislative provisions relating to Cuba from the fiscal year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill. These included the de-fund of the travel ban, the enforcement of remaining restrictions on agricultural sales to Cuba and the enforcement of any limits on the amount of remittances that could be sent to Cuba, a separate provision in support of cooperation with Cuba on counter-narcotics efforts, and a provision imposing greater accountability by the United States Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control in the issuance of licences for United States citizens to travel to Cuba. The “United States-Cuba Trade Act of 2003” was introduced in early 2003, but it did not make progress in the Senate Finance Committee. However, the amendment concerning travel in the Treasury-Postal Appropriations bill passed overwhelmingly, and the bill entitled “The Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act”, which seeks to eliminate the strict travel ban imposed on United States citizens wanting to travel to Cuba, was introduced in April 2003.

5. These bills, aimed at further liberalization of the sanctions and restrictions, did not make progress, reflecting the increasingly restrictive policies of the current United States Government towards Cuba, but not the opinions and the aims of certain circles that had earlier pursued an easing of the sanctions, which they considered did more harm to United States business than had a political impact on Cuba. This was also proven by extensive studies, as described in the 2001 and 2002 reports to the General Assembly. Motivated by the results of those studies, a bill to provide a framework for consideration by the legislative and executive branches of proposed unilateral economic sanctions, in order to ensure coordination of United States policy with respect to trade, security and human rights was introduced and referred to the Senate in November 2003. The bill was read twice and referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, where it remains. This bill, the “Sanctions Policy Reform Act”, prescribes procedural guidelines and information requirements for legislation and executive actions that must be met before imposition of unilateral economic sanctions intended to achieve foreign policy goals. (The bill excludes, however, any trade remedies or trade sanctions imposed because of market access restrictions, unfair trade practices or violations of United States commercial or trade laws, issues which were frequently discussed in the past within the World Trade Organization with regard to unilateral trade measures applied by the United States.) The bill requires both legislation and executive action to: (a) terminate within two years; (b) provide contract sanctity; (c) target a sanction as narrowly as possible at

foreign Governments, entities and officials responsible for the conduct being targeted; (d) exclude restrictions on the provision of medicine, medical equipment or food; (e) seek to minimize any adverse impact on the humanitarian activities of the United States and foreign non-governmental organizations in any country against which the sanction may be imposed; and (f) direct the Secretary of Agriculture to expand agricultural export assistance through United States market development, food assistance or export promotion programmes to offset any potential damage to incomes of producers of any affected agricultural commodity. The bill further provides authority for the President to adjust the timing and scope of, or to waive, a sanction, and requires the Congress to consider the impact of proposed sanctions on agriculture, energy requirements and capital markets, including also assessments of the likelihood of a sanction achieving specific foreign policy or national security objectives within the stated period of time. The bill establishes an executive branch sanctions review committee to coordinate United States policy regarding unilateral economic sanctions, evaluate the effect of the proposed sanctions and provide appropriate recommendations to the President before their imposition. (See www.usaengage.org/legislative/2003/sanctions/Reform.)

6. In the spirit of the “Sanctions Policy Reform Act” bill, but perhaps also as a reaction to the recommendations spelled out in the May 2004 report to the President by the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba (see the summary below), a number of United States senators and representatives introduced in Congress and the House of Representatives, on 20 May 2004, a bill with the short title “Cuba Sanctions Reform Act of 2004” to require congressional renewal of trade and travel restrictions on Cuba. This bill was referred to the House Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committees on Rules, Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, Financial Services, and Agriculture. The bill, modelled after the “Burma legislation” enacted in 2003, would allow all current sanctions against Cuba, including trade and travel, to expire in one year, unless renewed by Congress on a year-by-year basis. The bill, according to its sponsors, takes a middle ground, common sense approach, of not lifting the embargo, but simply of giving Congress and the public a say in the process. The act stipulates, in detailed manner, the duration of sanctions (continuation of sanctions; renewal resolutions); lists provisions restricting trade and other relations with Cuba (provisions subject to renewal; authority for new restrictions); and provisions concerning travel and annual remittances. (See [Thomas.loc.gov/.](http://Thomas.loc.gov/))

7. As already referred to above, current official United States policy seems to be much more stringent, even for enforcing the sanctions and restrictions against Cuba. This is shown, inter alia, in the recent May 2004 report to the President by the Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, which introduces new initiatives to strengthen implementation of existing sanctions and restrictions. The new initiatives, which were immediately supported by the President, also include a number of changes to current United States policies concerning Cuba. The proposed actions include further limitation of family visits and humanitarian remittances to Cubans; restrictions on passenger charter-flight baggage to 44 pounds; and the elimination of the “fully-hosted” travel category. As in the past, the most affected United States business and foreign relations circles have reacted rather strongly to these initiatives. For instance, the National Foreign Trade Council, USA*Engage and the Association of Travel-Related Industry Professionals announced the creation of the ATRIP-USA*Engage Alliance, committed to build on existing momentum to

ease United States restrictions on Cuba. While endorsing the “Cuba Sanctions Reform Act 2004”, the above associations, as well as a number of others (e.g., United States Council for International Business, Emergency Committee for American Trade, American Farm Bureau Federation), through statements by their representatives, have strongly opposed the introduction of the new initiatives contained in the report, arguing that they will cause economic hardships to United States companies engaged in lawful businesses, especially travel and agricultural businesses, and will also cause further strains in Cuba-United States relations. (See [www.usaengage.org/press_releases/2004/.](http://www.usaengage.org/press_releases/2004/))

Trade developments and implications

8. The approach of the most affected United States business sectors to the new legislative bills manifest the latest reaction of the business community against these kinds of sanctions and restrictions. The considerable part of United States businesses consider that the United States has not achieved its anticipated foreign policy objectives through the sanctions and embargoes. Moreover, they feel that sanctions and restrictions have directly harmed many United States companies by seriously limiting the potential growth of trade and other economic relations with Cuba and with some third country companies. United States companies continue to gradually develop their business ties with Cuba, in spite of the difficult political atmosphere.

9. In the second half of the 1990s and in 2000-2001, Cuba was very active in international trade-related forums to condemn United States policies and legislative and restrictive actions against it. Eventually, when at least some restrictions were considerably relaxed, especially between 2002-2004, the Cuban Government applied a more silent approach, particularly in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Reacting, perhaps, to the recent United States initiatives of May 2004, Cuba made a formal statement in the WTO General Council on 18 May 2004, stating that the resulting material losses stemming from the United States unilateral economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba were calculated at more than US\$ 70 billion, or not less than US\$ 1.6 billion per year. (See WTO document WT/GC/79). Speaking at the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XI) in Sao Paulo on 14 June 2004, the Cuban Minister of Foreign Trade emphasized that Cuba was facing one of the most terrible aggressions of all times as a result of the economic warfare that the United States Government waged against his country. (See www.unctadxi.org/sections/u11/docs/GeneralDebate/GD_U11_Cuba_en.pdf.)

10. According to the latest available trade statistics, total Cuban merchandise exports decreased between 2000 and 2001 (table 1). This decline affected exports of industrial goods. On the other hand, Cuban imports increased in 2001, reaching US\$ 4.3 billion (table 2), which contributed to an increase in the Cuban trade deficit from US\$ 3.2 billion to US\$ 3.6 billion. Due to the United States commercial embargo against Cuba, exporting opportunities to the United States market remain limited. Trade patterns of neighbouring States of the region with similar productive capacities, such as the Dominican Republic, show that exports to the United States could potentially grow to represent more than 40 per cent of total Cuban exports. As evidenced by its heavy reliance on imported industrial goods, Cuba’s challenge is to develop its industrial export sector. The United States trade sanctions limit Cuba’s opportunities for such industrial development.

Table 1
Cuba trade flows (2000-2001)

Exports (in thousands of US\$)

<i>Partner name</i>	<i>Product name</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>
European Union	Agricultural	258 850	311 026
European Union	Industrial	368 800	364 523
Latin America and the Caribbean	Agricultural	19 106	23 862
Latin America and the Caribbean	Industrial	119 448	76 952
Other countries	Agricultural	479 793	581 688
Other countries	Industrial	430 065	306 779
World	Agricultural	757 749	916 575
World	Industrial	918 313	748 253
Total		1 676 062	1 664 829

Table 2
Cuba trade flows (2000-2001)

Imports (in thousands of US\$)

<i>Partner name</i>	<i>Product name</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2001</i>
European Union	Agricultural	331 949	309 755
European Union	Industrial	1 344 848	1 377 139
United States	Agricultural	102	4 932
United States	Industrial	5 095	n.a.
Latin America and the Caribbean	Agricultural	131 583	213 608
Latin America and the Caribbean	Industrial	1 567 774	1 547 179
Other countries	Agricultural	279 637	420 584
Other countries	Industrial	1 181 754	1 376 262
World	Agricultural	743 271	948 880
World	Industrial	4 099 471	4 300 580
Total		4 842 743	5 249 460

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

[Original: English]

[16 June 2004]

From June 2003 to June 2004, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has provided support to the Government of Cuba in the following areas:

Education

(a) Financial contribution to support the Education For All national action plan (follow-up);

(b) Financial contribution to a first international workshop project on education of boys and girls from 0 to 6 years of age in the family and the community;

(c) Financial contribution to a project on the provision of school publications and materials to primary schools in rural and mountainous areas;

(d) Financial contribution to a project on training emergency teachers in primary and secondary levels on sexual education and in the prevention of HIV/AIDS;

(e) Financial contribution to a workshop on the advisory programme for the development of distance education, which included drafting a document on the Virtual Post-Graduate University of the Latin American and Caribbean Pedagogical Institute, to be submitted to potential donors.

Science

(a) Continuation of the implementation of a pilot project for the social-economic evaluation of the southern coast of the province of Havana;

(b) Financial contribution to a workshop on community-based responses to coastal erosion.

Culture

(a) Since April 2003, contribution to the project on strengthening the capacities of the National Centre for Restoration and Museums (CENCREM), whose aim is the preservation of material and intangible heritage. This project is being implemented thanks to a UNESCO contribution (Belgian extrabudgetary funds), and since 2003 important studies have been under way to improve computer equipment and bibliographies of the CENCREM documentation centre;

(b) As part of the project on overall management of cultural heritage, a financial contribution was made to support three technical studies on the World Heritage site Valle de los Ingenios, in Trinidad;

(c) UNESCO included, in November 2003, the "Tumba Francesa de la Caridad de Oriente", as one of the 28 new Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The UNESCO office in Havana has promoted this traditional troupe, sponsoring its presentation in January 2004, on the occasion of the visit of the Deputy Director of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre;

(d) The UNESCO office organized in Havana an international seminar on cultural diversity and tourism, with the participation of experts from Europe, Asia, Africa and America;

(e) Promotion and support was given to trade in handicrafts in Cuba at an international handicrafts fair. Before the fair, training was given, with the participation of an international expert, to a group of artisans from the eastern provinces of the country in the innovative use of traditional techniques;

(f) Assistance in holding an international congress on culture and development in Havana, which is held every two years by the Ministry of Culture of Cuba, with the participation of regional and international artistic, cultural and academic personalities;

(g) The Pablo de la Torriente Cultural Centre, through one of its experts, conducted a study on the current situation of digital art in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be included in the UNESCO Digital Arts Sub-Portal;

(h) UNESCO, in coordination with the international organization Fundación del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano and through a Cuban expert, conducted a study on the current situation of art video and experimental cinema in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be included in the UNESCO Digital Arts Sub-Portal;

(i) Assistance to the Higher Institute for the Arts of Cuba, through strengthening a diploma programme in psychology and pedagogy of art, aimed at the professional training of art professors and teachers in the country;

(j) Assistance in publishing the book *Leer a Martí*, a collection of the prize-winning entries of children and young people in the national contest of the same name;

(k) Assistance to the Institute of Music in organizing the regional seminar on the music industry in the twenty-first century. Eight foreign guests and specialists, as well as Cuban artists, participated in the gathering;

(l) Support to the National Copyright Centre, for organizing a national copyright training course;

(m) Assistance in organizing the World Children Amateur Theatre Festival, with the participation of more than 30 countries;

(n) Together with the Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity and the Higher Institute for the Arts, a pilot course on copyright for music students was organized, in which seven professors, two of whom are international experts, and more than 40 others, participated.

United Nations Environment Programme

[Original: English]
[15 June 2004]

1. As you are aware, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) mandate relates to the global environment, and we therefore do not address those issues with individual countries/Governments in general. Nonetheless, through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, UNEP works closely with the Cuban authorities in areas related to the environment.

2. Activities undertaken by UNEP include technical cooperation activities such as the provision of assistance for the convening of technical meetings, assistance with drafting legislation, the preparation of specific publications, the establishment of two cleaner production centres and training on specific aspects of the environmental agenda.

3. Specific Global Environment Facility projects being implemented and/or planned include:

(a) Support for the implementation of the National Biosafety Framework;

(b) Generation and delivery of renewable energy-based modern energy services in Cuba (the case of Isla de la Juventud);

(c) Enabling activities for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants national implementation plan for Cuba;

(d) Integrating watershed and coastal area management in small island developing States of the Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago);

(e) Establishing benchmarks and indicators for land degradation and sustainable land management in small island developing States (SIDS); a pilot demonstration will take place in Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

4. Cuba is a member of the Governing Council of UNEP and as such participates actively in the formulation of the programme of work that guides UNEP activities on a biennial basis.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme

[Original: English]

[15 June 2004]

1. Human settlements, including housing, infrastructure and services, face particular development challenges in Cuba because it is an island State frequently affected by natural disasters. These challenges are exacerbated by the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba, as well as recent measures that limit capital flows into the country. Human settlements construction and maintenance, as well as reconstruction after natural disasters, require a stable supply of materials, equipment and capital, which is seriously affected by the embargo.

2. Shelter conditions are affected by the insufficient supply of imported building materials. Access to low-cost, affordable cement and construction iron has significantly reduced the coverage of programmes aimed at reducing the qualitative deficit in housing and, equally important, has affected the response to housing reconstruction needs resulting from destructive hurricanes in 2001 and 2002, in both cases primarily affecting the most vulnerable sectors of the population. Restrictions in capital inflows that families use to cover basic needs and housing improvements will take their toll on the sector.

3. Restrictions in access to fuel render inefficient and often environmentally unsustainable the provision of services such as solid waste collection and disposal, sanitation and water supply. Limited access to low-cost chemicals and equipment

for water and wastewater treatment reduces the quality of these services, with resulting impacts on the environment and public health.

4. Despite these restrictions, the country has been able to achieve a level of human settlements development that favourably compares with that of many developing countries. Technological and management innovation has made this possible, but still at a cost that precludes substantial improvements in quality of life, infrastructure and services.

5. UN-Habitat cooperation with Cuba currently focuses on strengthening local capacities for improved urban planning and management. In the past year, these activities have been further strengthened through UN-Habitat collaboration with UNEP and UNDP in expanding its work to several cities in the country. Collaboration programmes aim at the improved mobilization, planning and use of local resources to address urban environmental issues, thus assisting in alleviating the negative effects of the embargo on the urban population.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

[Original: English]

[19 May 2004]

1. The economic, commercial and financial embargo has a negative impact on the country's growth and economic development. Within industry generally in Cuba there is a clear technological lag in relation to international standards. The main problems facing industry include high-energy consumption, low automation levels, obsolete and inefficient technologies, low-capacity utilization and lack of inter-industrial cooperation.

2. The services of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) rendered during recent years are mainly oriented to contributing to the sustainable development of the agro-industrial sector and to satisfying the priority needs of the Cuban people. The integrated programme to support the national strategy on industrial competitiveness in Cuba offers technical and strategic support to improving the sustainability and productivity of the priority industrial sectors in the country, especially the food-processing and sugar industries, introducing important elements to ensure efficiency in the use of energy resources, development of alternative sources of energy and the introduction and adaptation of modern industrial technologies. Through the services offered, UNIDO supports domestic industry to improve its foreign exchange balance and its competitiveness in local and external markets. UNIDO believes that the catalytic impact of the programme is important for the socio-economic development of Cuba.

United Nations Population Fund

[Original: English]

[13 July 2004]

1. Cuba continues to face critical economic difficulties, which have prevailed since the early 1990s following the disruption of trade relations with its former trading partners of Eastern Europe. The United States economic embargo, imposed on Cuba more than four decades ago, has worsened the situation and has contributed to further deterioration in the quality of life of the Cuban population. The lack of

financial resources has led to a shortage of medicines, equipment and spare parts, and to obstacles in renovating hospitals and other infrastructure.

2. The import restrictions imposed by the United States embargo have a direct impact on the population's reproductive health status: although the Cuban population has ample knowledge of the most common contraceptive methods and these methods are in high demand, their availability and quality are severely limited, as are medicines for the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, equipment for emergency obstetric care and other commodities related to sexual and reproductive health. Import restrictions limit Cuba's access to advanced technologies, new medicines and reproductive health products.

3. Despite the scarcity of funds, Cuba has managed to contain the HIV/AIDS epidemic and incidence is low, in comparison with other Caribbean countries. However, the number of HIV-positive cases has increased in recent years, mainly among males between the ages of 25 and 34. Growth of the tourism sector, while contributing to a slight economic recovery, represents a significant risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS transmission. The condom shortfall for AIDS prevention is a major concern. In 2003, the availability of condoms continued to be insufficient to meet the estimated 60 million required to cover yearly requirements. The effect of the blockade has been witnessed in the course of the epidemic, limiting the access of people living with HIV/AIDS to appropriate food, prevention methods and treatment, and thereby affecting their quality of life and increasing transmission. The approval of a grant for \$26.1 million by the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria for the next five years may partly alleviate the situation.

4. With regard to the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and youths, there is a significant demand for information and educational materials related to HIV/AIDS, while prevention of unwanted pregnancies remains a matter of concern. Moreover, the high abortion rate, particularly among women under the age of 20, requires that massive information campaigns, counselling services, training of providers and appropriate contraceptive methods be made available to the population in order to decrease its incidence.

5. The economic embargo has also affected the delivery of services to Cuba's growing elderly population. Due in part to the financial restrictions and consequent shortages of adequate equipment, the Government is unable to fully meet the needs of this population group, particularly in terms of housing, maintenance, medical supplies and equipment for nursing homes and day-care centres. More support will be needed in the future, as the elderly population continues to increase and as the country's demographic transition process continues to advance.

6. The current United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) programme of assistance to Cuba approved in 2003 aims to maintain the country's current reproductive health standards and to improve the quantity, quality and variety of available contraceptives, mainly through the procurement of condoms, intrauterine devices and injectables, as well as to establish and strengthen sexual education in the formal school system, which has been very successful in promoting gender equity and sexual and reproductive rights that impact the country's sexual education policy. Although UNFPA has channelled several bilateral grants to cover contraceptive shortfalls in 2003, development assistance is still insufficient to compensate for the severe limitations related to the economic embargo, and

therefore the provision of contraceptives supplied by UNFPA are limited to women at high risk.

Universal Postal Union

[Original: English]
[7 June 2004]

The Universal Postal Union has always regarded Cuba as a fully fledged member of the organization. As such, Cuba has the same rights and obligations as other Union members. So, for example, in 2003 Cuba benefited from several regional reform and modernization projects, along with operational training projects.

World Food Programme

[Original: English]
[14 June 2004]

1. Despite the fact that the Government has given priority to the import of food, WFP has had to increase its efforts to complement the food basket of vulnerable groups in the eastern provinces, which continue to be the most food-insecure mainly due to recurrent droughts and low food production.
2. Food imports for WFP projects have also been affected in this context in terms of timeliness and cost. Reduced competition, longer routes and delays in finding suppliers have increased costs and have caused delays in the arrival of food to the country. These slowdowns have in turn had an influence on the timeliness and the regularity of food distribution to beneficiaries, affecting in particular vulnerable groups requiring uninterrupted nutritional support.
3. Other import restrictions that have affected WFP capacity to deliver are those on petrol and spare parts for biscuit factories that produce high-energy biscuits that WFP purchases for primary school feeding. Likewise, raw food imports for the production of local food industries, from which WFP purchases in an effort to, inter alia, provide food adapted to local feeding habits, have also been affected by delivery delays and higher costs.
4. Customary annual sugar donations from Cuba to WFP, which are used in WFP projects in other countries in need around the world, have also experienced setbacks, given the difficulty of finding shipping companies willing to carry the product, which has led to adjustments in the routes and cargo stop-overs, which in turn has translated into both higher costs and slow down in delivery time.

World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO)

[Original: Spanish]
[21 June 2004]

1. The World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO) country office in Cuba, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/7, submits its report analysing the effects of the United States embargo on the national health system of Cuba.

2. The negative effects on the procurement of medical technologies and supplies continue to be felt. The measures adopted by the United States Government have had an impact on the delivery of medical care, the prevention of diseases and the promotion of health. Some such effects are: lack of access to information on advances in medical science; denial of visas to Cuban scientists for participation in events in the United States; denial of authorization for American scientists to travel to Cuba and ban on publishing or disseminating articles by Cuban scientists in the United States.

3. The following is a summary of the effects, with examples. Effects are felt in health-care services in: emergency services, care to patients in critical condition, surgery and other specialized services, such as antenatal care, are all affected by the non-availability of medicines, diagnostic means, disposables, spare parts or necessary equipment. The worst effects have been felt in teaching/surgical hospitals, general hospitals and paediatric/obstetric hospitals, as well as in polyclinics and other primary care institutions. The United States companies Pfizer and Genzyme Corporation were asked to submit quotes for the cholesterol-lowering medication Atorvastatin and for Renagel, respectively. No replies were received. The United States company Varian Medical Systems acquired the brachytherapy business of the Canadian company MDS Nordion, which formerly supplied brachytherapy equipment to Cuba. As a result, the Cuban public health system has been unable to purchase the sources of Ir-192 radioactive isotopes used for radiation treatment of cancerous tumours. Consequently, attempts were made to buy brachytherapy equipment from Europe, and a machine was purchased from the Netherlands company, Nucletron. Once the commercial transaction was completed, the company management stated that the computer linked to the machine could not be delivered because it was manufactured in the United States and, thus, its export to Cuba was prohibited.

4. The purchase of cytostatics also poses a serious problem, particularly in paediatric cancer care, which is one of the areas most affected by the embargo. The situation has been aggravated because United States transnationals have bought pharmaceutical laboratories that formerly had contracts with Cuba. For example, it is impossible to obtain the isotope I-125 for the treatment of children with ocular cancer, who must be sent to other countries to be treated. The same applies to children needing transplants.

5. Paying for vaccines in currencies other than the dollar has pushed up their cost. Procuring diagnostic means to monitor measles and rubella through third countries has caused delays in monitoring efforts and added to costs. In clinical laboratory diagnosis, microbiology and similar areas, the companies that manufacture equipment and reagents for diagnostic purposes are, in 70 per cent of cases, United States-owned. It is worth noting that the Beckman Coulter, Dade Behring, Abbott and Bayer companies do not allow the sale of their technologies to Cuba, and some of these are the only ones of their kind in the world. Consequently, the supplies needed for the work of clinical laboratories must be imported from Europe, at much higher prices. The formerly English-owned company Oxoid, supplier of laboratory reagents and culture media, was acquired by a United States company. When requested, through its representative AGEM, to submit a quote on a group of reagents, it replied that such articles could not be supplied for use in Cuba.

6. Transplant, cardiovascular surgery, nephrology and other programmes continue to be seriously affected, because the necessary equipment cannot be procured without permits which the United States authorities refuse to grant. A quote for haemodialysis machines, catheters, dialyzers and lines of disposables was requested from the United States company Baxter, which did not reply. Disposables such as sutures, and vascular grafts, catheters for hemodynamics, extracorporeal circulation equipment, oxygenators, and ventilators for prolonged respiratory support are needed for the country's Cardiocentro network to operate smoothly. A quote was requested from Radiometer, which was acquired by Danaher. Again, there was no reply.

7. The American NGO USA/Cuba Infomed planned to donate 423 computers for nephrology programmes, Cardiocentros and teaching purposes, but on 10 April 2003 it was refused an export licence by the Department of Commerce, which claimed that the shipment would be detrimental to United States foreign policy interests.

8. Gastroenterology services were also affected. Replacement parts were ordered for machines purchased from Wilson-Cook, but no reply was received. Programmes for early detection of gynaecological cancer have experienced inconveniences and delays in the acquisition and replenishment of needed supplies, such as machinery, spare parts and reagents.

9. It is very difficult to procure the medicines, diagnostic means and equipment required to prevent, monitor and control disease. For example: the Pedro Kourí Tropical Medicine Institute in Cuba has been unable to acquire from the United States company, Invitrogen, the ThermoScript RT-PCR System diagnostic kit used to detect the coronavirus that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). There have been difficulties in obtaining diagnostic means for emerging diseases, such as West Nile encephalitis and avian influenza, because of restrictions imposed by the Centers for Disease Control of the United States. The same applies to orders for IgM and IgG antibody testing kits from the United States companies Focus Technologies and Panbio.

10. Cuba could have started triple therapy for AIDS as early as 1996, had it been able to obtain the necessary funds. It had to wait until 2001, when nationally produced generic medicines became available. Many more patients might have benefited. The International Dispensary Association, a Netherlands NGO, ordered the antiretroviral drugs Ritonavir 100 mg, Ritonavir 33.3 mg and Lopinavir 133.3 mg from the United States company, Abbott Laboratories. Abbott replied that it could not supply the drugs until the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) certified that Cuba had exemption for special humanitarian reasons, because of United States Government sanctions against Cuba.

11. In 1995, field trials for protease inhibitors could not take place because Merck Laboratories, which had a contract with the Cuban authorities to conduct them, was refused export authorization by the United States Department of the Treasury.

12. Cuba had a budget of up to \$3,793,994.00 for procurement of the equipment and related supplies for control of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito, vector of the Dengue virus. Had there been no United States embargo, Cuba would have been spared additional costs of \$758,798.

13. In teaching and research, the Latin American School of Medical Sciences, which trains more than 7,000 young people in Latin America, Africa and the

Caribbean, never received the 126 computers intended for it because the export licence requested by USA/CUBA Infomed, the American NGO, was not approved.

14. María Alfonso Valdés could not participate in a training course on the safety of the blood supply, sponsored by WHO/PAHO and held in El Paso, Texas (United States), because she was refused a visa.

15. A project to study the rotavirus (cause of severe illness in infants), which was to be financed by United States scientific establishments, was rejected. The study would have thrown light on the scale of the spread of the rotavirus in Cuba, which is essential if a vaccine is to be found.

16. Scientific publications, such as *Current Contents* and *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Parasitology*, are hard to obtain and are becoming more expensive.

17. It was recently reported that the United States Government was prohibiting dissemination of scientific articles of Cuban origin.

18. On several occasions Cuban officials and scientists were prevented from participating in international scientific conferences and events because they were refused visas for entry into the United States under section 212(f) of the United States Immigration and Nationality Act, which prohibits entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States that would be detrimental to the interests of the United States.

19. Participation by American scientists in events held in Cuba has also been affected. For example, the United States delegation to the Fourth International Symposium on Coma and Death, held in Havana from 9 to 13 March 2004 — approximately 70 American scientists, or 40 per cent of the attendees — was denied permission to travel to Cuba by the United States Government.

20. Cuba lacks access to research grants, in spite of the recognition by the United States scientific community of, and its interest in, the scientific potential of Cuba.

21. WHO/PAHO technical cooperation is limited to the mobilization of scientific, technical and financial resources between the two countries.

22. In the period from 1998 to 2003, the economic impact of the embargo on the Cuban health sector reached \$2,117.6 million.
