



General Assembly

Sixty-seventh session

35th plenary meeting
 Tuesday, 13 November 2012, 10 a.m.
 New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Jeremić (Serbia)

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

Agenda item 41

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/118)

Draft resolution (A/67/L.2)

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 41, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. I would like, first of all, to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

The Group of 77 and China expresses its deep concern at the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo unilaterally imposed for half a century now by the United States of America against Cuba.

The Group of 77 and China states, as it has done on many occasions before, that the embargo against Cuba contravenes the fundamental norms of international law, international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States. Its continued imposition violates the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of non-intervention and non-interference in each other’s domestic affairs.

The measures announced by the Government of the United States two years ago related to a certain relaxation of restrictions on travel and the transfer of remittances have had a very limited effect and have not changed the framework of laws, regulations and provisions of the embargo, which is still in place. In fact, the embargo continues to impose severe economic and financial restrictions on Cuba. The embargo has caused, and continues to cause, a high degree of economic and financial damage, has a negative impact on the welfare and well-being of the people of Cuba and constitutes a very significant hindrance to Cuba’s economic and social development.

The deepening impact of the ongoing global economic and financial crisis and the continued embargo by the Government of the United States, including by imposing sanctions and applying extraterritorial national laws against third countries’ citizens, institutions and companies that establish economic, commercial and financial relations with Cuba, will contribute to further aggravating the hardships for the people of Cuba.

Furthermore, the embargo frustrates efforts towards the achievement of all the internationally agreed developed goals, including the all-important Millennium Development Goals, and negatively affects regional cooperation in the area.

The Group of 77 and China has always been firmly against the embargo. At the second South Summit, held in Doha in 2005, the Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China firmly rejected the

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

12-58675 (E)



Please recycle

imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and called upon the Government of the United States to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the Charter, international law and the principle of good-neighbourliness, causes huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba.

Today, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate once again its long-standing and principled position on this important matter, and recalls the ministerial declaration of the thirty-sixth annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group, held in New York in September. The Ministers firmly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterated the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. They emphasized that such actions not only undermined the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, but also severely threatened the freedom of trade and investment. They therefore called on the international community to neither recognize those measures nor apply them.

We recall that, last year, 186 Member States voted in favour of the resolution introduced by the representative of Cuba (resolution 66/6). That represented an overwhelming majority of the international community demanding the end to the five-decades-old embargo and full adherence to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of a State Member of the United Nations.

The Group of 77 and China is committed to working for the achievement of peaceful coexistence among nations. Such a goal requires adherence by all nations to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to the peaceful conduct of relations among nations and to the rule of law, including international law.

The Group of 77 and China will again fully support the draft resolution against the embargo (A/67/L.2) and urges all Member States to do so.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I would like to propose that the list of speakers for the debate on this item now be closed. Unless I hear

any objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to that proposal.

It was so decided.

Mr. Goddard (Barbados): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), namely, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

CARICOM aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as with those to be made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

This is the twenty-first consecutive occasion that we meet in this forum to raise the sustained chorus of opposition to the United States imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against the Republic of Cuba. While in some parts of the world twenty-first birthdays are especially commemorated, the twenty-first year of the adoption of the annual draft resolution on the Cuban embargo should instead give the Assembly pause for reflection. The embargo has persisted for too long, in spite of the unambiguous reproof of an overwhelming majority of Member States, as demonstrated by the annual adoption of the text of the draft resolution before us (A/67/L.2).

In view of the significant challenges that the hemisphere of the Americas has faced, it is all the more regrettable that this measure continues to be unilaterally applied. The recent passage of hurricane Sandy through the Caribbean region at the end of October, prior to its landfall on the eastern coast of the United States, brings clearly to the fore one of our region's most real and present threats. However, it has also revealed a resilience of spirit and unity that emerges as one of our greatest strengths. In that regard, CARICOM wishes to express its collective regret and sadness at the loss of life and damage wrought by this hurricane within the countries of the Caribbean, including on the eastern coast of Cuba and, more recently, in the United States of America.

With the increasing frequency of natural disasters and the persistent impact of the global economic crisis,

the unacceptable humanitarian cost of the embargo is becoming even more acute. Cuba's safety, advance preparedness and pace of recovery are compromised by the embargo's many direct and indirect effects. Indeed, it is in such times of national crisis that the fundamental injustice of the Cuban embargo is brought into sharpest relief. When viewed in the light of the generosity and selfless assistance that Cuba has kindly accorded to other States in times of need, the unilateral application of the embargo against Cuba is seen to be especially ill-conceived. Such events underscore the significant need not for intensification of punitive measures but, rather, for greater regional and international cooperation and solidarity.

As a bloc of States that are small in size, the Caribbean Community attaches great value to the strength that lies in collective capacity, will and a firm stance on common principles that promote our shared objectives. Those principles include adherence to the Charter of the United Nations, multilateralism, sovereignty and free trade. It is in that spirit that the Caribbean Community has remained unstinting in its solidarity with Cuba and in calling for an end to the embargo, which runs counter to both the letter and spirit of the Charter and serves no justifiable legal, political or moral purpose within contemporary international relations.

The annual report of the Secretary-General on the embargo, contained in document A/67/118, presents an impressive catalogue of submissions by some 145 Member States. They reveal a shared perspective of opposition to the unilateral application of the embargo and its many extraterritorial effects, as well as support for respecting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Also striking, in that regard, are the submissions of some 26 entities of the United Nations system, detailing the reach of the embargo even into their manner of conducting work in Cuba.

Despite such significant challenges, Cuba continues to show itself to be a key regional and international partner and actor. CARICOM member States, in keeping with our policy of mutual respect, good-neighbourliness and respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, have a camaraderie with Cuba that has remained cordial and resilient even through a continually evolving hemispheric and international geopolitical landscape. Cuba maintains Embassies in all independent countries of the Caribbean Community

and continues to show itself to be an integral part of the Caribbean. In that context, CARICOM and Cuba have developed and enjoy mutually beneficial programmes of cooperation and trade in a number of key areas, including physical education and sports, accounting, the natural sciences, the humanities, the economy, special education, health and medicine. In that regard, CARICOM also profoundly appreciates Cuba's proposal for other areas of cooperation with the Community, such as the treatment of physical disabilities, the arts, language training, agriculture and fisheries, water and infrastructure.

In the Caribbean alone, Cuba has built hospitals and clinics, provided medicines and furnished doctors, nurses and other health-care professionals — contributions that continue to be received and remembered with the utmost appreciation. Students from the Caribbean Community have benefited from university educations in Cuba free of charge, and Cuba has unselfishly extended much generosity to the CARICOM member State of Haiti, following the devastating earthquake there. During the fourth CARICOM-Cuba Summit, held in December 2011 in Port-of-Spain, the Heads of State and Government of CARICOM issued a statement strongly rejecting the imposition of the embargo and its extraterritorial effects, and celebrated the outcome of the Summit in its reinforcement of the strong fraternal bonds between CARICOM and Cuba.

The CARICOM member States also continue to value and enjoy long-established, warm and friendly relations with the United States of America. It is in that spirit that we urge its Government to heed the calls of the international community to end the embargo. In that regard, we also encourage engagement in a constructive process of dialogue and normalization of relations. We believe that would be in the interest of all parties and would significantly contribute to greater peaceful development and cooperation within the Americas.

At the risk of discrediting our efficacy as an organization, we must not be content to be a mere symbol of change. Accordingly, CARICOM delegations fully support the draft resolution before the General Assembly entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", and we will vote in favour of its adoption.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde): Speaking on behalf of the African Group on this perennial and critical item, allow me to start by voicing the African Group's support for

the statements just made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Caribbean Community.

Last year, the Assembly heard an overwhelming majority make repeated calls for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba. Today, we presume, will be no exception, as countries around the world ask for more positive action in dealing with the decisive challenges and threats of today. The possibility of remaining silent in the face of this blockade of Cuba, whose people continue to suffer its adverse consequences, has been inconceivable for Africa and many other regions. The situation has been characterized as a negation and flagrant violation of the cherished universal principles of the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States, big and small.

In a resolution adopted at the African Union summit in July 2012, African leaders reiterated their call inviting the United States of America to lift the long-standing and unjust economic and trade embargo imposed on the people of the Republic of Cuba.

Africa's vote today in favour of draft resolution A/67/L.2 will be a concrete step in advancing the position taken by the African Union at its summit. As Winston Churchill said,

“Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfils the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things.”

At this point, I would like to make reference to the successful conclusion of the High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (see A/67/PV.3), held in September. The General Assembly's status quo on this situation runs counter to the letter and spirit of the Declaration of the High-level Meeting (resolution 67/1), highlighting, among other things, the aspirations of all leaders to a more equitable and just world. It is also counterproductive for Cuba's progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as well as an obstruction to advancing regional integration in that region of the western hemisphere.

We think that the path of history today is built by and open to those who decidedly choose openness and an outstretched-hand policy, instead of other, less productive ways. Political will is more than ever needed everywhere. Today, more and more leaders in the world understand that no people in the twenty-first century will accept to live under castigation, oppression or lack

of dignity. “For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others”, said Nelson Mandela.

In closing, I would like to join others on behalf of the African Group to extend our deepest condolences to all countries affected by Hurricane Sandy for the loss of life and property.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) on the occasion of the presentation of draft resolution A/67/L.2, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

Since the adoption of resolution 47/19 on 24 November 1992, the General Assembly has adopted every year a resolution emphasizing the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. It will be recalled that, at its sixty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/6 with the same title by an overwhelming majority of Member States. Since 1992, 20 resolutions of the General Assembly, the most representative organ of the United Nations, have called for an end to the embargo imposed against Cuba.

It is important to place on record the reasons underlying the convictions of CELAC on this subject. The main reason is that, in our view, the commercial, economic and financial embargo imposed on Cuba is contrary to the letter, spirit, principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The Charter of the United Nations enshrines rights, obligations and principles that have become part of the legal corpus not only of international law, but of humankind. That corpus must not be violated or undermined by any Member State.

Member States must align their national and international behaviour with the rights, obligations and principles enshrined in our constituent Charter. In that connection, CELAC reiterates the full applicability of the Charter of the United Nations and of the principles enshrined in it, including the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs, freedom of trade and navigation, and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba began in 1959 and continues to this day. We observe that the embargo has been transformed into a strict system of unilateral measures that has continued over time and is creating huge injustices for the Cuban people. The embargo in itself, as a unilateral measure, runs contrary to the multilateralism, openness and dialogue promoted by the Charter of the United Nations.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States reiterates its concern, expressed in resolution 66/6, regarding the application by States Members of the United Nations of laws and regulations, such as the so-called Helms-Burton Act, the extraterritorial effects of which affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction, and the freedom of trade and navigation.

The unilateral measures applied under the embargo imposed on Cuba are affecting many companies that conduct business with Cuba in accordance with international law, including the norms established by the World Trade Organization. In the past year, several restrictions and fines have been imposed on international companies, some belonging to the members of our Community.

We recall that at the CELAC summit held in Caracas, Venezuela, on 3 December 2011, the States members of our Community issued a special communiqué on the need to put an end to the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba, in which they reiterated their strongest condemnation of the application of laws and measures contrary to international law, such as the Helms-Burton Act, including its extraterritorial effect, and called on the Government of the United States to put an end to the application of that Act.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States supports the adoption of the draft resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". We emphasize the inconsistency between the application of unilateral measures that have no backing in international law and the letter, spirit, principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We urge the United States of America to make the necessary adjustments to its international behaviour in this regard, aligning its national legislation with the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the United Nations and the views of the countries of Latin

America and the Caribbean and, in general, of all the regions of the world

We recall the appeal made by our heads of State in Caracas on 3 December 2011 to the Government of the United States of America,

"in accordance with the successive resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and in response to repeated calls from the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba" (*A/67/118, p. 12*).

CELAC appreciates the support traditionally given to the draft resolution introduced today for the consideration of the General Assembly, which refers to the adverse effects inflicted on one of our member States. We also appeal to the States members of the General Assembly to heed the force of the arguments and the evidence provided by the facts and oppose the unilateral measures undermining the Charter of the United Nations, its principles and spirit, as well as international law and its institutions.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): I have the pleasure, on behalf of the States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to deliver the following statement in my country's capacity as Chair of the OIC group.

We offer our sincerest condolences to and stand in solidarity with the Governments and people of all countries affected by Hurricane Sandy for the tragic loss of life and the devastation it has caused.

We express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his report on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (*A/67/118*). The report once again indicates that, besides the Member States, the United Nations system, various international forums and non-governmental organizations have also tirelessly and repeatedly expressed their rejection of the unilaterally imposed sanctions on Cuba.

It is important to recall that the Assembly first decided to include the current item as a critical item on its agenda in 1991. The discussion continues 20 years later, with little progress to record. We therefore wish to address the situation with a sense of great urgency.

The activities of the OIC are guided by the principles of international law. The OIC upholds the right of every nation to follow its own and unique way of development

and therefore condemns any form of unilateral action that affects the sovereignty and interests of another State and its people.

We have recently seen dramatic changes in the Middle East and North Africa, demonstrating the people's struggle to steer the course of their own development. Those have resulted in unexpected and profound political transformations. Hence, the application of justice cannot be confined only to the national level. It should also extend to the international sphere and to relationships among Member States.

The OIC does not agree with any external regulations that infringe, impede or delay the development of any country, including in the economic, commercial and financial spheres. Some of the measures meant to relax restrictions have had only limited effect, as the embargo is still in place, thus severely impacting the overall well-being of the Cuban people. Further, the embargo frustrates efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It has impeded efforts to eradicate poverty and violated basic human rights to food, health and education, humanitarian assistance and overall national progress.

The already harsh situation in the country is further aggravated by the ever-more frequent and devastating storms and hurricanes caused by climate change and Cuba's geographical susceptibility to such natural disasters.

The OIC underlines that the imposition of arbitrary unilateral laws contradicts the regulations and directions of the World Trade Organization, which prohibit the adoption of measures likely to hinder international free trade and shipping and the widest partnership possible between two partners.

Finally, the OIC, like the overwhelming majority of the international community, calls for lifting the embargo on Cuba in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Mrs. Ribeiro Viotti (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). The associated States of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru also join in this statement.

First, I would like to welcome the presence of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. MERCOSUR was founded on the

principles of solidarity, interdependence and good-neighbourly relations. We believe that tolerance is the foundation that has made possible the historic convergence on our continent of peoples from all corners of the world. We are linked to our Latin American neighbours by the desire to live in peace, promote mutual understanding, defend independence and equality among States, including sovereignty, and to promote respect for international law.

MERCOSUR and its associated States believe that the embargo against Cuba violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, in particular equality among States, non-interference in their internal affairs and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Moreover, it contravenes the norms of the multilateral trading system that link members of the World Trade Organization.

The embargo violates the principles of justice and human rights. It generates shortages and suffering for the entire Cuban population. It limits and delays economic and social progress, and prevents the achievement of international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. We therefore lament the fact that the unilaterally imposed embargo against Cuba continues unchanged. We also see an increase in restrictions on financial transactions between Cuba and third countries that prevent greater transparency through direct dialogue.

The States members of MERCOSUR and associated States reject, out of principle, unilateral and extraterritorial measures. We believe that those measures cause irreparable harm to the well-being of peoples and obstruct regional integration processes. We also condemn the application of unilateral, coercive measures that contravene the principles of free trade. In again reaffirming our unwavering support for the draft resolution contained in document A/67/L.2, MERCOSUR and its associated States reiterate our commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate instrument for settling disputes and an effective way to promote international cooperation and understanding among peoples.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba is nothing but than an example of obsolete policies that have no place in today's world. In adopting the draft resolution, the Assembly will prove once again its undeniable political will to defend the ideals of freedom, solidarity and respect for sovereignty and international law.

Mr. Khazaee (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the pleasure to address the General Assembly today on behalf of the 120 Members of the United Nations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

I take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and to express to him and the people of Cuba the Movement's full support and solidarity.

I also extend our deep condolences to the Governments and peoples of all countries affected by Hurricane Sandy for the tragic loss of life and the devastation it provoked.

The Non-Aligned Movement, as it has done on many previous occasions, unequivocally rejects blatant violations of multilateralism that run counter to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law. The Movement has also reaffirmed its steadfast commitment to ensuring the continued viability of all provisions of international law that, together, form the core of our multilateral work and inspire our collective efforts to maintain peace and security, achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable development, and ensure full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

At the sixteenth NAM Summit, held in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, from 26 to 31 August, the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement reiterated their call on the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which, in addition to being unilateral and contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the principle of good-neighbourliness, is causing huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba. They once again urged strict compliance with resolutions 47/19, 48/16, 49/9, 50/10, 51/17, 52/10, 53/4, 54/21, 55/20, 56/9, 57/11, 58/7, 59/11, 60/12, 61/11, 62/3, 63/7, 64/6, 65/6 and 66/6. They expressed deep concern over the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo against Cuba and rejected the reinforcement of the measures adopted by the Government of the United States aimed at tightening the embargo, as well as other recent measures carried out by the Government of the United States against the people of Cuba. They reiterated that those measures constitute a violation of Cuba's sovereignty and a massive violation of the human rights of its people.

For the past two decades, an overwhelming number of the States Members of the United Nations have voted in favour of the resolution calling for the lifting of the United States embargo against Cuba. Each year, we have made it clear that the blockade is not only in violation of international law, but is also counter to the purposes and principles of the United Nations set forth in its Charter, of which the United States of America is itself a founding signatory. The embargo violates Cuba's right to do business with the rest of the international community and, in the process, frustrates the country's efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The embargo has had and continues to have a high degree of adverse impact on the well-being of the people of Cuba. The direct and indirect damage caused by the embargo against Cuba is enormous. It affects all crucial sectors of the economy, including those most vital for the well-being of the Cuban people themselves, such as public health, nutrition and agriculture, as well as banking, trade, investment and tourism.

We salute the Cubans for what they have achieved so far, including their significant progress in the areas of education and health care, despite the huge difficulties they encounter. Yet we stress once again that the embargo imposed continues to impede socioeconomic progress and creates unnecessary economic hardship. It is clear that the embargo denies Cuba access to markets, development aid from international financial institutions and technology transfers, which are all important for the development of the Cuban economy and for the well-being and advancement of its people.

The United States Administration has in the past claimed that it would reach out to the Cuban people and engage with them. Yet those words, regrettably, have not been translated into concrete actions. The punitive measures imposed against the whole Cuban nation persist, and with them the enduring suffering of its brave people.

Moreover, the unilateral blockade has had an extended negative effect on companies and citizens from third countries, thereby violating their sovereign rights. The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its deep concern at the harmful impact on other countries of widening the extra-territorial nature of the embargo, which we consider to be an added argument in favour of the prompt elimination of those unfounded sanctions.

We recall that last year 186 Member States voted in favour of resolution 66/6. That number represented a large majority of the international community demanding an end to the five-decade-old embargo and full adherence to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of Cuba. The Non-Aligned Movement believes that the continuation of the embargo is unjustifiable and runs counter to Cuba's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

The Non-Aligned Movement once again urges the United States of America to immediately and fully comply with all General Assembly resolutions calling for an immediate end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba and, once and for all, to yield to the will of the overwhelming majority of the international community, which will today vote in favour of the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the embargo against Cuba, thereby enabling the valiant people of Cuba to fully prosper and enjoy their sovereignty, independence and right to self-determination.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/67/118), which underscores yet again the widespread rejection by the international community of the embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, as well as the serious economic losses suffered by the Cuban people as a result of the blockade and its negative effects on their quality of life and well-being.

Similarly, allow me to associate myself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Chile on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and to welcome Cuban Minister for Foreign Affairs Parrilla to the Assembly.

The Government of Mexico comes before the Assembly to reiterate its opposition to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and its rejection of the use of coercive actions that are contrary to international law and thus to the Charter of the United Nations. We are convinced that such measures have severe humanitarian consequences, in clear contradiction to their supposed goals. They also represent a rejection of negotiation, diplomacy and dialogue as the appropriate means to solve disputes between States.

Various organs and entities of the United Nations system, as well as the report of the Secretary-General, documented the negative impact of the embargo and

other unilateral measures on Cuba's economic and social development. It harms sensitive sectors that have a direct impact on the lives of the people and also has negative repercussions on third countries.

The international community's overwhelming call against the embargo on Cuba is irrefutable proof that that kind of action cannot be the outcome of unilateral decisions nor can or should it be of an extraterritorial nature. We must not forget that the political, economic or military sanctions imposed on States can emanate only from Security Council or General Assembly decisions or recommendations.

Mexico has therefore supported all initiatives against the blockade and related unilateral measures, both in the General Assembly and in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and other forums, among which I would highlight the Organization of American States, the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, the Ibero-American Summit and CELAC. That is also why we will continue to support Cuba's inclusion in mechanisms for dialogue and for global economic, trade and financial exchanges, in line with the will and sovereign decisions of that country, in order to promote cooperation and development.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands), Vice-President, took the Chair.

For Mexico, dialogue and negotiation remain the appropriate way to settle disputes and to ensure peaceful coexistence among States. In the case before us today, the virtually unanimous rejection by the international community proves us right.

Our closeness to Cuba and the Cuban people and our own convictions make clear to us understand the urgent need for the blockade to end. For that reason, Mexico will, as it has always done, vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted for our consideration at this meeting (A/67/L.2).

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): I thank you, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to address the General Assembly.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made earlier in this meeting by the representatives of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

This is the twenty-first year in a row that we are here to consider the draft resolution submitted by Cuba (A/67/L.2). In all those years, the Assembly

has emphatically rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with an extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of the world over.

While doing so, the Assembly has also called upon all States to respect their obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law and to repeal and invalidate laws and measures that have extraterritorial effects on other States. In spite of its rejection by the Assembly year after year, the United States embargo on Cuba remains in full force. We see that as a violation of world opinion and as an act that severely undermines multilateralism and the credibility of the United Nations itself.

The half-century-old United States embargo on Cuba has brought immense suffering to its people. The embargo, which perhaps has no parallel in history, is a transgression of the right of a sovereign State to develop and to enjoy freedom of trade, economy and navigation. The embargo has denied a life of respect and basic living standards to the people of Cuba and has severely undermined the country's progress, including sustaining the Millennium Development Goals, which it achieved long before their adoption.

The impact of the embargo during the present global economic slowdown has been particularly severe on the Cuban economy. Spiralling food and energy prices have made matters worse. The embargo has denied Cuba access to United States markets, investment, technology, financial services and scientific, educational, cultural and sports institutions. Cuba has had to pay enormous extra costs for sourcing products, technology and services from third countries located thousands of kilometres away.

The extraterritorial application of the United States embargo has discouraged investment, technology transfer and commercial and other forms of business collaboration between Cuba and third countries. The denial of technology and related scientific support, particularly due to the extraterritorial application of the embargo, has severely impacted health care, which is a commitment under the Millennium Development Goals, in the country. It has also undermined Cuba's ability to provide health assistance to developing countries as part of South-South cooperation.

The report of the Secretary-General on the agenda item under consideration (A/67/118) illustrates the detrimental impact that the embargo has had on

international efforts to undertake socioeconomic progress in Cuba. The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Havana has noted the high cost and negative impact of the embargo on the development and humanitarian cooperation implemented by the United Nations system.

There is a huge potential for strengthening economic and commercial ties between Cuba and the United States, especially in the tourism sector. Taking advantage of limited openings under the United States Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000, the United States has become the largest exporter of agricultural products to Cuba. Congressional efforts in the United States to relax or lift the embargo lend further credence to the annual United Nations resolution calling for its lifting.

People-to-people contacts between the United States and Cuba hold immense possibilities for fostering a better understanding. The steps taken by the United States Administration in January 2011 to reduce restrictions on travel and remittances to Cuba are positive developments. However, it is far from making a fundamental change in the complex framework of laws and regulations that are part of the embargo against Cuba. Much more needs to be done.

India joins other nations in calling for an immediate end to the United States embargo. India supports the draft resolution to be introduced by the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Hassan (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our full support for the statements delivered earlier in this meeting by the representatives of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; of Cape Verde on behalf of the African States; and of Kazakhstan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, under agenda item 41, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our full solidarity with the people of Cuba and all those who have suffered the negative effects of Hurricane Sandy. We offer our warm condolences to the families of the victims of that hurricane.

The Sudan condemns and rejects the unilateral and coercive embargo imposed against Cuba by the United States, in flagrant violation of the Charter of

the United Nations, the principles of human rights, and the right of peoples to choose their own political systems. My country has also been subjected to such an heinous crime. It requires us all to work hard and to exert pressure on the United States Administration, which threatens the dignity and economic development of a United Nations Member State.

The Sudan categorically rejects the package of resolutions and legislation adopted by the United States, including the Trading with the Enemy Act and its repercussions. We also reject the embargo that has been in place since 1959 and taken a severe toll on the economy, development and social and psychological well-being of the Cuban people, to which a price cannot be affixed. It has also hindered their political, diplomatic, bilateral and multilateral relations with other peoples and countries.

The Sudan has lost precious economic and social resources as a result of such policies. We therefore call upon Member States to take fair and equitable actions and measures and to accelerate the reform of the United Nations system, including the Security Council, because it should not be possible for one country to enjoy the right of veto and thereby violate the sovereignty of another country and the Charter of the United Nations and threaten international peace and security.

In conclusion, we call upon the international community to put an end to the commercial, financial and economic embargo imposed on Cuba, the Sudan and other countries, as well as to the use of unilateral coercive measures. That will guarantee a world in which peace and justice can prevail. The aggressive actions of the United States is a crime that must be halted, as it alienates developing countries and hinders their achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's debate of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/67/118) presenting the views of Member States that disagree with and reject the unilateral, extraterritorial, economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

The basic position of the Russian Federation is well known and unchanging. Our country, alongside the overwhelming majority of the members of the

international community, strongly condemns the economic, commercial and financial blockade by the United States of America against Cuba. We believe that the perpetuation of the embargo represents an outdated relic of the Cold War that has no place among current realities.

The sanctions that have been in effect for a half century have clearly demonstrated their inability to influence the Cuban people in their sovereign choice of a development model. Their sole consequence has been the worsening living conditions of the Cuban people, the creation of artificial barriers to growth of the country's economy, and encroachment upon the interests of third countries.

We expect that the decisions of the United States Government to relax some aspects of the blockade, in particular some of the restrictions on visits by United States citizens to relatives in Cuba, and on sending monetary and postal transfers will be followed by other actions aimed at lifting the blockade once and for all. We are convinced that the lifting of sanctions and the subsequent normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States will contribute to improving the situation of the Republic of Cuba, facilitate the implementation of the ambitious socioeconomic reform programme that began on the island in 2011, aimed at modernizing the national economy and raising the standard of living of the population.

Guided by the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations concerning the inadmissibility of any discriminatory measure or interference in the internal affairs of States, Russia has consistently called for the prompt repeal of the embargo and, in general, for a reduction of political pressure and coercion, which exacerbate the confrontational tendency in international relations.

In that context, the Russian Federation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/67/L.2 before us.

Ms. Hafid (Indonesia): In contributing to the debate on agenda item 41 concerning the embargo imposed against Cuba since 1961, the delegation of Indonesia associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The General Assembly has once again convened to consider the 51-year-old unilateral policy banning economic, commercial and financial activity with Cuba. The embargo imposed during the Cold War of the

twentieth century has been detrimental to Cuba. While the people of Cuba have endured the embargo valiantly, it has imposed a forbidding cost on them. Furthermore, it has impacted the economic and commercial relations of third countries. The sanctions exceed the jurisdiction of national legislation and encroach on the sovereignty of other States that deal with Cuba.

In the context of the twenty-first century, there are numerous reasons to question the validity of the embargo. Much has changed since it was initially imposed. The world of 2012 is very different from that of 1961. Despite the impact of recent crises on the global economy, nations have opted to work together to overcome the difficulties created by the crises. That testifies to the fact that globalization has created the conditions for true global solidarity and partnership among the community of nations.

The continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba violates the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs, international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States. The Charter is clear on the need for nations to develop friendly relations among themselves. It is equally emphatic about the need for nations to refrain from action that will threaten the political independence of others or lead to intervention in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

The embargo undermines relations between the main parties. Instead of dialogue to resolve differences, what we have is an undesirable standoff that does not allow for an exchange of views to normalize relations. Not only do political complications result from the embargo, but the economic, commercial and financial hardship it has caused can hardly be justified on humanitarian grounds. It is a great burden on a poor developing country whose people would benefit tremendously from cooperation rather than confrontation.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo has caused hardship for the people of Cuba. Therefore, Indonesia remains steadfast in its opposition to the embargo. While it is true that some small, meaningful changes — such as the easing of travel restrictions to Cuba and the removal of obstacles to transfer of remittances — have occurred in recent times, the

preferred outcome is for the embargo to be lifted completely.

The lifting of the embargo would be in keeping with the spirit of the times. It would also demonstrate unambiguous respect for the principles of non-intervention embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Cuba will also be able to exercise its right to develop, unhindered by restrictions on its trade and other business activities. The tensions that now exist between the two nations will also dissolve.

Indonesia therefore urges renunciation of the application of extraterritorial laws and measures that affect the sovereignty of other States, the lawful interests of their subjects or other persons under their jurisdiction and freedom of trade and navigation. Indonesia calls for the immediate cessation of the embargo. It is Indonesia's hope that the near future will see a thawing of the frosty relations that now keep those two important neighbouring States apart. We believe that it is time for peaceful coexistence.

Mr. Escalona Ojeda (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We express our deepest solidarity with the statements made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We also offer our fraternal greetings to and solidarity with Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the brotherly Republic of Cuba.

On 25 October 2011, the General Assembly adopted for the twentieth time a resolution against the embargo imposed by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba (resolution 66/6). It was a historic vote whereby 186 countries expressed their support to that heroic people. Only two countries opposed that resounding global expression of feeling. Venezuela has firmly supported the 20 resolutions adopted by the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority, and denounced the brutal, illegal embargo against the people of Cuba.

The Government of Venezuela reiterates its strongest rejection of the implementation of unilateral measures with extraterritorial effect. Such actions contravene the norms and principles of international law, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and other international legal instruments. They violate unhindered navigation and the norms of the international

trade system, inter alia. The implementation of the extraterritorial provisions of the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts severely harms the Cuban economy and affects third countries. They are an affront to the dignity of the world's peoples, who rebel against such outrages.

The embargo that has been inhumanly imposed for over 50 years undermines the human rights of the Cuban people. It is a despicable practice that Venezuela strongly rejects. It punishes civilians while seeking to produce a change of Government in socialist Cuba. It has not achieved that goal and never will. The embargo has set back international relations to an era when the law of the jungle prevailed and power was based on lawless violence. It is an expression of a barbaric policy at the heart of the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, the Cuban people stoically and heroically overcome that unjust practice. Despite the calamitous effects, that brotherly nation continues to move forward with a policy of solidarity, even beyond its own borders.

There is no bilateral embargo against Cuba, as the Government of the United States claims. What exists is an extraterritorial embargo that affects third countries. The Government of the United States impedes economic relations between Cuba and other countries, in blatant violation of State sovereignty and the right to free trade. It flouts international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The advocates of imperialism claim that Cuba represents a threat to the region. That is a terrible lie. For Venezuela, the people of Latin America, the Caribbean and the entire world, Cuba has, on the contrary, represented an element of hope and support based on its solidarity activities in health, medicine, education and sport, inter alia, that contribute to social well-being. Cuba has contributed generously and practically to eliminating the material, cultural and spiritual poverty of peoples.

While President Barack Obama has managed to connect with the majority sentiment of the Latin American population living in the United States, he should also echo the strongly held feeling of the people of the continent in order to finally end the inhuman embargo against the Cuban people. If the new Government of President Obama moves forward in that direction — and there is no doubt that he possesses the foreign policy capacity to do so — he will be acting on the right side of history.

There have been repeated international demands against the embargo against the Cuban people. On 20 October 2011, the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, meeting at the ministerial level in Caracas, Venezuela, adopted a declaration entitled “Ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba”. On 3 December 2011, the Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Caracas, Venezuela, at the summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, issued a special communiqué on the need to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. On the occasion of the sixth Summit of the Americas, which took place in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, on 14 and 15 April, all of the States of Latin America and the Caribbean rejected the embargo and expressed their support for the Cuban people. It is also important to remember that the Heads of State and Government of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement, meeting in Tehran on 30 and 31 August, once again repeated their appeal to the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its call on the Government of the United States of America to comply with the provisions of the 20 resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba. Venezuela will vote wholeheartedly in favour of draft resolution A/67/L.2 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Let me begin by welcoming the report submitted by the Secretary-General under agenda item 41 (A/67/118).

The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For 20 consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted by overwhelming majority resolutions on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, urging all countries to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and international law and to repeal or invalidate any laws and measures

with extraterritorial effect that affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction, and the freedom of trade and navigation.

Regrettably, however, those resolutions have not been effectively implemented over the years, and the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba is yet to be lifted. This practice has inflicted enormous economic and financial losses on Cuba. It is estimated that Cuba's economic losses directly resulting from the embargo had exceeded \$108 billion by December 2011. If the depreciation of the United States dollar against the price of gold in international markets is taken into account, the figure would rise to \$1.066 trillion.

The embargo has caused a shortage of supplies and commodities and dealt a heavy blow to Cuba's economy. It stands as the major stumbling block to Cuba's economic development and social progress. Moreover, the embargo has brought huge suffering to the Cuban people and violated their fundamental human rights, including their rights to food, health and education as well as their rights to survival and development.

We note that one of the most prominent features of the embargo in the past year has been interference with Cuba's international financial transactions. This has not only hit Cuba's economy hard, but also affected normal economic, commercial and financial interactions between other countries and Cuba, and thereby impaired the interests and sovereignty of third countries.

The embargo against Cuba constitutes a serious violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, and has been firmly rejected by the vast majority of Member States. The call of the international community on the United States Government to change its policy towards Cuba, lift the embargo and normalize its relations with Cuba, as reflected in this year's report of the Secretary-General, is growing ever stronger.

The Chinese Government has always believed that inter-State relations should be developed on the basis of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and respect for the rights of other countries to independently choose their own social system and development path. China is opposed to any unilateral sanctions against other countries by military, political, economic or other means.

Meanwhile, China has strictly followed and implemented the relevant General Assembly resolutions. China and Cuba have maintained normal economic, trade and personnel exchanges. The friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields between our two countries is on the rise. This is not only in line with the desires of the two peoples, but also conducive to the economic and social development of Cuba.

In today's world, dialogue, exchanges and harmonious coexistence represent the mainstream of international relations. Exchanges and cooperation on an equal footing among countries have become the prevailing trend. Dialogue on an equal footing and friendly consultation are the best means to settle disputes. China hopes that the United States will follow the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions and end its embargo against Cuba as soon as possible. China also hopes that the relationship between the United States and Cuba will gradually improve.

China will again vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Cuba under this agenda item (A/67/L.2).

Mr. Mootaz Ahmadein Khalil (Egypt): Allow me first to welcome Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and to assure him of Egypt's full support.

I would also like to align myself with the statements made by the representatives of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Cape Verde on behalf of the Group of African States, and Kazakhstan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

A little over 50 years ago, an unjust and unjustifiable unilateral embargo was imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. The world has profoundly changed since then. Nevertheless, the embargo persists, in total violation of multilateralism, the norms of international law, and the principles of the United Nations Charter. The embargo is an anachronism from a bygone era.

The embargo against Cuba is the longest and toughest system of sanctions ever applied against any country in modern history. Its extraterritorial effects violate the sovereignty of many Member States. It must be lifted. One hundred and eighty-six countries voted last year in favour of resolution 66/6 on this

matter — the twentieth resolution adopted on this issue. This is not only the plea of the Cuban people and their leaders; it is the request of the overwhelming majority of Member States.

Despite the undue economic and social hardships caused by the embargo on the Cuban people, they have made significant progress in many areas, including education, health care and gender equality. We praise them for these achievements under difficult circumstances. At a time when peoples in our region are bravely fighting for freedom and justice and some of them, as in my own country, Egypt, are establishing the foundations of a genuine democracy of their own, it is troubling that the United States continues to adopt coercive measures to prevent a neighbouring nation from freely deciding its own political and economic system.

History has shown that cooperation and engagement are more effective than isolation and estrangement. It is high time for the embargo to end. It has lasted unwarranted for over half a century. Fifty years late is better than never. The re-election of President Obama last week proves that the American people strongly support multilateralism and the values of the United Nations. It offers the American Administration a fresh opportunity to rectify this historic injustice inflicted on Cuba. We hope that this opportunity will not be missed.

Mr. Morejón (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me first welcome the presence in this Hall of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and convey through him our sincere congratulations to the Cuban people on the overwhelming majority that will most certainly adopt draft resolution A/67/L.2, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”, later today.

I would also like to re-emphasize the solidarity of the people and Government of Ecuador with the victims of the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy and the subsequent floods that killed scores of Cubans and did great damage to their brotherly country. On 5 November, the Ecuadorian Government sent nine tons of humanitarian aid, including a water-purification plant, as part of our policy of solidarity and support for risk management and rehabilitation.

Ecuador hopes that this unequivocal message sent by the most representative and legitimate organ of the United Nations, together with the preceding

20 resolutions on the matter, will be implemented in its entirety and put an end to the enactment and enforcement of laws and provisions, such as the so-called Helms-Burton Act of the United States of America, whose extraterritorial effect undermines the sovereignty of other States and constitutes an economic, financial and commercial blockade against Cuba and its people.

The delegation of Ecuador will of course vote in favour of the draft resolution because our Constitution condemns any form of interference in the internal affairs of other States, whether through armed incursion, acts of aggression, occupation or economic or military blockade. Similarly, Ecuador believes that the failure to adopt specific measures to abolish the provisions and measures that constitute the embargo against Cuba, as noted in the draft resolution, is a clear violation of the principles of sovereign equality among States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, the freedom of trade and navigation enshrined in the Charter, and numerous other international legal instruments.

Ecuador has maintained a consistent and coherent position on this matter, to the extent that we did not accept an invitation to the most recent Summit of the Americas, where an attempt was made to veto Cuba’s participation, although ultimately it was agreed that the Cuba embargo should be discussed. My country also considers it unacceptable that, as we discuss the post-2015 development agenda and the integration of the pillars of sustainable development, among other positive aspects of the United Nations agenda, we continue to see economic statistics reflecting the damage inflicted on Cuba’s trade and external affairs, which seriously harms Cuba’s people and hinders its efforts to fulfil its internationally agreed development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, Ecuador encourages beneficial and complementary commercial exchanges with Cuba, such as the recent round of negotiations held in Havana with a view to increasing bilateral trade in goods and services in the textile, fisheries, construction, food processing, tourism and pharmaceutical sectors, among others.

For those reasons, Ecuador associates itself with the views expressed by the representatives who spoke earlier on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Southern

Common Market and associated States, and calls once again for full implementation of today's draft resolution and for an end to this infamous blockade, which the entire international community considers shameful.

Mr. Llorenty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation, I would first like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report (A/67/118) on the agenda item that is the subject of today's meeting, highlighting the general and global rejection of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed arbitrarily and unilaterally by the United States of America on the Cuban people.

We take this opportunity to endorse the statements made earlier today on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Southern Common Market.

At the outset, we would like to make it clear that the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia firmly rejects and repudiates the use of unilateral measures by any State seeking to impose an economic, commercial or financial embargo with detrimental humanitarian results and in flagrant contravention of the principles and standards of international law. This blockade is unjust, illegitimate, illegal, extraterritorial and opposed to the goals, purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and thus to the foundations of international law: respect for State sovereignty, non-interference in the affairs of other States, and freedom of navigation and trade. In this specific case, it violates the Cuban people's right to exercise their sovereignty, to free self-determination and to development, and it undermines the Cuban Government's efforts to eradicate poverty and inequality.

We recall that this is the twenty-first time that such a draft resolution has been submitted to the Assembly, and the twenty-first consecutive time that we will reject the unilateral embargo. The United States is flouting the global call for an end to an injustice that harms the people not only of Cuba but of the entire world. This unilateral and noxious position and attitude of the United States have been characterized by President Evo Morales from this rostrum as genocidal, immoral and in violation of the human rights of an entire people. We therefore reject the economic and financial embargo on Cuba. Bolivia condemns the coercive nature of this

measure, affecting as it does not only Cuba but every other country around the world, to the extent that it imposes limits on their sovereignty.

We fully endorse and support Cuba's international efforts to fight the embargo, which hinders the development and well-being of its people. We commend the struggle and valour of the revolutionary people of Cuba, which, despite the difficulties entailed by the embargo, continues to move forward in dignity. It has demonstrated its solidarity with countries around the world through its cooperation and economic assistance. We recognize Cuba's efforts to collaborate with the people of Bolivia and other countries, despite the damage inflicted by the United States on its economy, and guided by the wise words of former President Fidel Castro, to the effect that solidarity does not mean giving a great deal but sharing what one has, even if it is not much.

While some countries — in this case, the country imposing the blockade — send armies with soldiers with huge arsenals, Cuba has armies of doctors and teachers who enthusiastically cure and teach people in the neediest areas of Latin America. While those who impose the embargo also impose war and death, Cuba stands for solidarity, life, dignity and human value. The actions carried out voluntarily by the Cuban Government with respect to the Bolivian people are invaluable, and we are profoundly grateful for them.

If, as the President of the United States stated in this very Hall, democracy truly exists; if the resolutions of the General Assembly truly matter; if the international rule of law is truly respected; and if it is true that the Government of the United States upholds equality and freedom, then its President must immediately lift the inhumane embargo against the people of Cuba. The victory of the Cuban people will be the victory of solidarity over arrogance, of justice over coercion, and of the principles of the United Nations over attempted imperial punishment.

In conclusion, I wish to recall Ché Guevara, who almost five decades ago in this Hall echoed the wise words of José Martí: "Every genuine human being should feel on his own cheek the blow struck on the cheek of any other human being" (*A/PV.1300, para. 57*).

Mr. Pham Vinh Quang (Viet Nam): The Vietnamese delegation would like to align itself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

and the statement made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China.

Viet Nam's delegation once again welcomes the theme of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, "Bringing about adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means", as well as the President's other high priorities, including the rule of law and advancing the revitalization of the General Assembly aimed at enhancing the role, authority, effectiveness and efficiency of this body, with a particular focus on implementing the resolutions adopted by the Assembly.

Over the past 20 years, the General Assembly has almost unanimously adopted 20 consecutive resolutions calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba. Yet the blockade and the sanctions remain and continue to impose severe economic and financial restrictions on Cuba. This issue therefore merits additional attention under the theme of this session of the General Assembly.

The blockade has had a tremendous impact on the lives of the Cuban people and the development of their country. According to the report submitted by Cuba to the Secretary-General, the loss and damage caused by the embargo to the Cuban economy exceed \$1 trillion (see A/67/118). Cuba has made significant progress in development. We admire the resilience of the Cuban people, but the embargo plus the deepening impact of the global economic and financial crisis continue to impede the socioeconomic advances and efforts of Cuba towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Most of the international community, including the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China, on many occasions has clearly stated that the embargo contravenes the fundamental norms of international law, international humanitarian law, and the fundamental principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, especially the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs and the self-determination of States. Viet Nam shares the views expressed by the international community in its continued opposition to the embargo.

In this context, Viet Nam goes along with the call contained in the outcome document of the sixteenth NAM Summit, in which the Heads of State and Government of NAM reiterated their call on the

Government of the United States to put an end to the embargo because of its unilateral nature, contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the principle of good-neighbourliness. In the same vein, Viet Nam supports the statement of the G-77 and China on this matter.

For all the reasons I have mentioned, Viet Nam will join the large majority of Member States in voting in favour of the draft resolution (A/67/L.2) to be introduced by the Cuban Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla. On this occasion, Viet Nam wishes to reiterate its support for and solidarity with Cuba. Viet Nam once again urges the United States, in conformity with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, to fully comply with relevant General Assembly resolutions calling for an immediate end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to introduce draft resolution A/67/L.2.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (spoke in Spanish): I would like to reiterate the most heartfelt condolences of the people and the Government of Cuba to the people of the United States, the city of New York, the people who have been directly affected and particularly the relatives of the victims, for the loss of human lives and the great material damage caused by Hurricane Sandy. We likewise offer our condolences to the peoples and the Governments of the Bahamas, Haiti, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Canada in connection with the same events, as well as to Guatemala and Mexico for the recent earthquake that affected those countries.

On 6 April 1960, Under-Secretary of State Lester D. Mallory wrote the most concise, accurate and enduring definition of the objectives of the blockade against Cuba. They were, he wrote,

"to cause disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship... to weaken the economic life of Cuba ... denying money and supplies... to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of Government".

To date, this vision has embodied the inhumane, failed and anachronistic policy of 11 successive United States Governments under which 76 per cent of Cubans have been born. Our country has never been at war

with or carried out any hostile action against the United States. It has never consented to the perpetration of terrorist actions against the American people.

In 2008, presidential candidate Obama electrified Americans with his energy, his origins and his words “Yes we can”. Three months later, having been elected President, he announced “a new beginning with Cuba” and said:

“We can move United States-Cuba relations in a new direction ... [and] launch a new chapter of engagement that will be sustained throughout my administration.”

However, the reality of the past four years has been characterized by a persistent tightening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade, particularly in its extraterritorial dimension, despite the fact that the Assembly has approved, by a consistent and overwhelming majority, 20 consecutive resolutions calling for an end to this policy.

Keeping this policy in force is not in the national interest of the United States. On the contrary, it harms the interests of its citizens and companies, especially in times of economic crisis and high unemployment. Those citizens and companies are, according to polls, demanding a change of policy.

What is the point of encroaching on Americans’ constitutional and civil rights and freedom of travel by preventing them from visiting the island when they can visit any other place on the planet, including places where their country is waging wars? What is the point of giving up on a new market of 11 million people? What is the point of continuing to waste hundreds of millions of dollars of taxes paid by American citizens on the useless and illegal subversion of Cuba? What is the point of damaging Cuba’s relations with other States, including its allies, with extraterritorial measures that violate international law? What is the point of adopting an approach that is diametrically opposed to one that encourages enhanced economic relations with States with a different political system?

The blockade also harms the legitimate interests of and discriminates against the Cuban emigres who have settled here in this country, and who overwhelmingly favour the normalization of relations with their home country. It harms the credibility of the foreign policy of the United States and isolates it. It makes the United States adopt costly double standards. For 50 years, it has proved to be ineffective in achieving its goals and

has been an insurmountable obstacle in the country’s increasingly uncomfortable relations with Latin America and the Caribbean.

Should the blockade come to an end, the United States Government would avoid any further discrediting of its humanitarian policies and would cease to be a consistent violator of the human rights of Cubans. The United States could refrain from including our country on spurious lists, such as that which classifies it as a sponsor of terrorism, with the sole purpose of justifying the implementation of additional measures against financial transactions, thereby doing great damage to the effectiveness and credibility of the international struggle against that terrible scourge.

There is no legitimate or moral reason to maintain the blockade, which is rooted in the Cold War. It is just a weapon in the hands of an increasingly exiguous, isolated, violent and arrogant minority that exploit it for electoral gain. They show contempt for the voice of the majority and cannot resign themselves to the fact that the Cubans are firmly resolved to decide their own destiny.

The use of less strident and threatening rhetoric and the adoption of certain partial measures relaxing the travel restrictions on United States residents of Cuban origin and others for academic, scientific or cultural purposes have failed to conceal the tightening of the blockade over the past four years. The report of the Secretary-General (A/67/118), to which a significant number of delegations and agencies present here contributed, broadly documents the multiple and diverse impacts not only on my country but also on many of the Governments represented here.

In November 2011, the Treasury Department hit the New York branch office of the German bank Commerzbank with a fine of \$175,500 for serving as consultant to and guarantor of a Cuban national for a payment to be made to a Canadian company. In June 2012, the Department of Justice announced the imposition of a \$619 million fine on the Dutch bank ING for alleged violations of the regime of sanctions against Cuba and other countries. This was the largest fine ever imposed on a foreign bank. In referring to this unprecedented event, Mr. Adam Szubin, Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Treasury Department, stated menacingly:

“Our sanctions laws reflect core United States national security and foreign policy interests and

OFAC polices them aggressively. Today's historic settlement should serve as a clear warning to anyone who would consider profiting by evading United States sanctions."

During President Obama's Administration, the fines imposed have amounted to \$2,000,259,732 — twice as much as under both terms of the George W. Bush Administration. The enforcement of the blockade has exceeded all conceivable limits. In December 2011, the Hilton Hotel of Trinidad and Tobago, which is the property of that country and operates under a management contract with the Hilton hotel network, received categorical orders from OFAC to prevent the celebration of the fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Caribbean Community countries and Cuba on its premises. This was a scandalous act of disrespect to all Caribbean nations and the international community.

In July, two executives from the French branch office of the travel agency Carlson Wagonlit Travel were fired for selling tourist packages to the island. The company runs the risk of being fined \$38,000 dollars for each trip sold. On 10 May, less than a year after the first and very limited licences were granted to allow United States citizens to travel to Cuba for educational purposes and for people-to-people exchanges, the Treasury Department prohibited trips to recreational sites and financial transactions involving tourism activities and established new and stricter measures to ensure that all itineraries and programmes were in line with the policy against Cuba. At the same time, it was announced that any violation of these restrictions would be subject to a \$65,000 fine and the suspension of licenses.

The human impact of the blockade is massive and impossible to calculate. The blockade has led to hardship, shortages and difficulties that affect every family, every girl and boy, every woman and man, the handicapped, every senior citizen and the ill.

The William Soler Pediatric Cardiology Centre has no access to Levosimendan, a medication that is used to treat heart problems associated with cardiac capacity in small children. The hospital is unable to use this medicine because its supply has been denied, as it is manufactured by Abbott Laboratories. The cardiovascular surgery service of that same hospital treats between 100 and 110 children younger than 1 year of age every year. More than 90 per cent of

those children require nutritional supplements before undergoing surgery for a better prognosis. Our country does not have access to parenteral nutritional supplements — that is, supplements administered intravenously — produced in the United States, which are recognized to be among the most effective and of highest quality.

The impossibility of acquiring tissue laminates for skin expansion used in preparing skin transplants and the need to purchase them in distant markets at a higher price complicate and prolong the treatment of boys and girls suffering from severe burns by increasing their time spent in surgery and at the hospital.

The pacemaker and electrophysiology service of the Institute of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery does not have a non-fluoroscopic anatomical three-dimensional mapping system, which is used to analyse the points of arrhythmia in the human heart, as a result of the withdrawal of the United States company St. Jude. That prevents treatments and catheterizations to cure complex arrhythmias from being carried out. Consequently, we are forced to send those patients to third countries to receive treatment.

On the evening of 6 November, President Obama referred to the cure of the eight-year-old girl Erin Catherine Potter, who suffers from leukaemia and lives in Mentor, Ohio. On 28 October 2009, we explained in this Hall that the Cuban children who also suffer from lymphoblastic leukaemia and reject the usual medicines cannot be treated with the drug Elspar, created to treat patients with such intolerance, because its sale to Cuba by the firm Merck and Co. is prohibited. Those children also deserve compassion and relief.

On 26 October 2010 (see A/65/PV.36), in this Hall we denounced the fact that our ophthalmologic services could not use transpupillary thermotherapy to cure retina cancer, or retinoblastoma, which makes it possible for children to preserve their affected eye. Since that date, 15 children — including Lianna Aguilera Fera, 1 year old; Maria Sánchez Rosales and Rochely Mendoza Rabelo, 2 years old; and Erika Rodriguez Villavicencio, Fidel Valdés Márquez, Giovanna Alvarez Torrens and Magdiel Leyva Suárez, 3 years old — have suffered that loss because the United States Government prevents the purchase of the necessary medical equipment from the company Iris Medical Instruments.

Given its express purpose and direct effects, the blockade against Cuba qualifies as an act of genocide

according to subparagraphs (b) and (c) of article II of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It is a mass, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of an entire people.

We strongly oppose the unilateral coercive measures and the economic sanctions that only cause harm to human beings. As was expressed at this rostrum by the historic leader of the revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz,

“we want a world free from hegemonies, nuclear weapons, interventions, racism, national or religious hatred, where there is no outrage upon the sovereignty of any country, where there is respect for the independence and free determination of peoples, a world free from universal models that fully disregard the traditions and culture of all the components of humankind; free from cruel blockades that kill men, women, children, youths and senior citizens like silent atom bombs.”

As stated in the Secretary-General's report, the economic damage accumulated over more than 50 years until 2011 amounted to \$1,066 billion, more than a trillion dollars, according to a rigorous and conservative calculation based on the devaluation of the dollar against the price of gold. Any sensible person can imagine the living standards and development levels that we could have achieved if we had had those resources.

The blockade is one of the main causes of the economic problems of our country and the major obstacle to its economic and social development. It violates international law. It is contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and a violation of the right to peace, development and security of a sovereign State. It is an act of aggression and a permanent threat against the stability of a country. It is also a gross violation of the norms of international trade, freedom of navigation and the sovereign rights of States because of its extraterritorial character. Since the blockade is a unilateral policy, it should cease unilaterally.

The United States people, towards which Cuba has feelings of friendship and respect, have just re-elected President Barack Obama. During the electoral campaign, he repeated dozens of times that he continues to be the President of change and that he will move forward. President Obama has the opportunity to launch a new policy towards Cuba, different from

that implemented by his 10 predecessors for more than half a century. It will surely be difficult and he will face serious obstacles, but the President of the United States still has the constitutional powers to pay heed to public opinion and generate the necessary momentum by means of executive decisions, even without the approval of the Congress. There is no doubt that this would be a historic legacy.

He would make a serious miscalculation and would make things all the more difficult in the future if he decided to wait for a new generation of Cuban leaders or for the impossible collapse of our economy. That option would ensure that he will go down in history as the eleventh president to make the same mistake.

I reiterate, on behalf of President Raúl Castro Ruz, the firm willingness of the Cuban Government to move towards the normalization of relations with the United States through a respectful dialogue, without preconditions, on the basis of reciprocity and sovereign equality, without in any way undermining our independence and sovereignty.

Today, now, I again submit to the United States Government the proposal of an agenda for a bilateral dialogue aimed at moving towards the normalization of relations, including on such fundamental topics as the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade; Cuba's exclusion from the arbitrary and illegal list of countries that sponsor terrorism; the abrogation of the Cuban Adjustment Act and the wet foot/dry foot policy; compensation for economic and human damages; the return of the territory occupied by the Guantánamo naval base; an end to radio and television attacks; and the cessation of financing for internal subversion.

An essential element of this agenda is the release of the five Cuban anti-terrorist fighters who remain cruelly and unjustly imprisoned in this country. An act of justice or at least a humanitarian solution would earn the gratitude of my people and a response from our Government.

The President returned to the Chair.

Likewise, I would also offer the United States Government the possibility of negotiating several cooperation agreements in areas of the greatest mutual interest, such as the fight against drug trafficking, terrorism and human smuggling, and for the full normalization of migratory relations, as well as for the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and

the protection of the environment and our common oceans. We would also propose returning to the talks that were unilaterally suspended by our counterpart concerning migration issues and for the resumption of postal services.

Whatever the circumstances, our people shall defend its achievements, no matter what the cost. It will uphold its ideals. It will recover from natural disasters, such as that which struck Santiago de Cuba and the eastern and central provinces a few days ago, and will resolutely continue to update and develop our socialism with all and for the well-being of all.

On behalf of this heroic people, its children, its women and its elderly, I ask all Governments committed to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, the norms of the multilateral trading system, freedom of trade and navigation and the refusal of the extraterritorial application of a national law, to vote once again in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/67/L.2, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

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

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/67/L.2. Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Godard (United States of America): The United States strongly supports the desire of the Cuban people to freely determine their own future. It is the Cuban Government, however, that continues to deprive them of that aspiration.

Like other Member States, the United States determines its conduct of economic relationships with other countries in accordance with its national interests and principles. Our sanctions policy toward Cuba is just one of the tools in our overall effort to encourage respect for the human rights and basic freedoms to which the United Nations itself is committed. We therefore stand in opposition to draft resolution A/67/L.2.

The Obama Administration's priority is to empower Cubans to freely determine their own future. The most effective tool we have for accomplishing that is building

connections between the Cuban and American peoples. Those connections give Cubans the support and tools they need to move forward, independent of their Government. United States citizens engaging in well-defined, purposeful travel are the best ambassadors for our democratic ideals. The hundreds of thousands of Cuban-Americans who have sent remittances and travelled to the island since we eased the way for them early in the Obama Administration are a central part of a strategy to ensure that Cubans have the opportunities that they deserve. The Administration's travel, remittance and people-to-people policies are helping Cubans by providing alternative sources of information, taking advantage of emerging opportunities for self-employment and private property, and strengthening independent civil society.

In contrast, Cuba's draft resolution seeks to identify an external scapegoat for the island's economic problems, when they are principally caused by the economic policies that the Cuban Government has pursued for the past half century. While we note and welcome Cuba's recent changes to allow greater self-employment and liberalize the real estate market, Cuba still has one of the most restrictive economic systems in the world. Irrespective of United States policy, it is unrealistic to expect the Cuban economy to thrive until the Cuban Government opens State monopolies to private competition, fully empowers Cuban entrepreneurs, respects intellectual property rights, allows unfettered access to the Internet, and adopts the sound macroeconomic policies that have contributed to the economic success of many of Cuba's neighbouring countries in Latin America.

I want to make clear that the United States is in fact a deep and abiding friend of the Cuban people. In 2011, the Cuban people received an estimated \$2 billion in remittances, made possible by the Obama Administration's policies. In 2011, United States companies exported \$352 million in agricultural products, medical devices, medicine and humanitarian items to Cuba. Indeed, by the Cuban Government's own account, the United States is in fact one of Cuba's principal trading partners. Additionally, in 2011 the United States authorized over \$1.2 billion in private humanitarian assistance in the form of gift parcels filled with food and other basic necessities, as well as non-agricultural and medical donations. Far from restricting aid to the Cuban people, we are proud to be one of the leading providers of humanitarian assistance. As we share with the Cuban people the experience of

having withstood the wrath of Hurricane Sandy, we extend our condolences to them and others in the region.

We remain committed to policies that support the welfare of the Cuban people, despite the arrest and continued detention of Alan Gross, a 63-year-old American citizen who was sentenced to 15 years in prison for facilitating Internet access for Cuba's small Jewish community. The United States again calls on Cuba to immediately release Mr. Gross.

The United States continues to call on the Cuban Government to finally allow Cuban citizens to enjoy the internationally recognized political and economic freedoms to which this body is committed. The international community cannot in good conscience ignore the ease and frequency with which the Cuban regime silences critics, disrupts peaceful assembly and impedes independent journalism. As of September 2012, the number of short-term, politically motivated detentions had already surpassed the nearly 4,000 similar detentions recorded for all of 2011.

The draft resolution before us serves only to distract from the real problems facing the Cuban people, and therefore my delegation will oppose it. We encourage this body to support the desires of the Cuban people to determine their own future freely. By doing so, it would truly advance the principles of the United Nations Charter and the purposes for which the United Nations was created.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, through you, Mr. President, to thank our dear comrade Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, for the important update he has given us this morning on the negative impact and consequences of the criminal and illegal blockade imposed unilaterally by the United States of America against Cuban children, women and men.

For the twenty-first time the General Assembly, representing the people and Governments of the world, will express in an unequivocal and almost unanimous way its call for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade. The Assembly will speak out against the suffering of the Cuban people. It will speak out for an end to the imperial and irrational policies of the United States of America and for an end to its unilateral, extraterritorial economic measures. Nicaragua will once again vote in favour of draft resolution A/67/L.2.

We reiterate our commitment and thanks to, support of and solidarity with the generous Cuban nation, whose only sin has been to set a good example for the peoples of the world with their unconditional solidarity with and commitment to the poorest people on the planet, teaching literacy, caring for the sick and offering programmes for the disabled. The world benefits more and more from Cuba's militant solidarity, its ambassadorship for peace and development, its doctors, teachers and engineers, who share their knowledge and their lives with our peoples, helping us to climb out of the penury of the poverty we have inherited.

I would like to share with the Assembly what our comrade President, Comandante Daniel Ortega, said recently about our cooperation and exchange with Cuba.

“We learn much from our Cuban brothers, we have learned much and we are learning much right now. The contributions our Cuban brothers have been making to us over these years are immense. And the great deal that they do, they do without making too much noise about it. Indeed, some things have to be done in silence, to quote the famous Cuban television series.”

Cuba contributes support to the whole of humanity. That derives from the spirit and practice of Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, the Cuban people themselves and the ideals of people in the mould of José Martí.

Today, yet again, sadly, we heard the perpetrator of the blockade try to justify what the world with one voice has declared unjustifiable, all in an attempt to break the spirit of a people who will never surrender, who possess the will of Martí and an absolute determination, who have proudly defended their sovereignty and their socialist revolution and who are exemplars of solidarity and high thinking in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Government of the United States obsessively persists in its criminal blockade at all costs and in defiance of the General Assembly. The rejection of that retrograde policy grows ever stronger. Even American citizens themselves are calling for an end to the blockade.

After 21 years, and well into the twenty-first century, it is past time to end those American measures that violate international law, human rights, international humanitarian law and the United Nations Charter. The General Assembly has been categorical in that demand. The United States must stop disregarding what is a universal clamour. What a beautiful gesture it

would be if the United States finally heeded our voices and our calls for it to rectify its policies!

The blockade is still the greatest obstacle to Cuba's economic and social development. We hope that the Government of the United States will reconsider and desist in its criminal blockade. We also hope that it will reconsider and desist in supporting self-avowed terrorists who walk the streets freely in North America and collaborate in planning terrorist attacks against the people and Government of Cuba. As part of our call for reconsideration of the wrong-headed United States policies towards Cuba, we also demand that the United States immediately and unconditionally free the five heroic Cuban patriots held in prison in the United States — heroes who proudly and bravely defended their country against attacks and terrorist acts perpetrated from United States soil.

Now more than ever it is our duty to energetically condemn the criminal blockade against Cuba — a blockade the United States makes more intense and harsher every year — and to condemn all unilateral coercive, extraterritorial measures that violate international law and accepted norms of free trade. Those measures represent a grave threat to peace and multilateralism, a disgrace to human values and an obstacle to mutual understanding and coexistence among nations.

Let us once again here in the General Assembly join our voices in a call demanding that the Government of the United States, on this twenty-first consecutive occasion, put an end to its criminal, inhumane blockade against the heroic and generous people and Government of Cuba. We will again vote in favour of its removal.

To conclude, I want to say yet again that imperialist policies and acts of aggression in our Latin American region are unacceptable. The Latin America and Caribbean region is now more than ever united and committed to policies that promote peace and good neighbourliness, foster friendly relations, unity and cooperation and support sustainable development and the people's well-being, without external interference, imperialist encroachments, blockades or coercive economic measures.

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/67/L.2, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu,

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Palau, United States of America

Abstaining:

Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of)

Draft resolution A/67/L.2 was adopted by 188 votes to 3, with 2 abstentions (resolution 67/4).

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

Mr. Sarki (Nigeria): First of all, we would like to congratulate the Foreign Minister of Cuba on his statement. We also wish to thank the delegation of the United States for its statement explaining its position in regard to resolution 67/4, which was just adopted by Member States by an overwhelming majority.

Nigeria is fully committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the principles of the sovereign equality of all States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation. Nigeria believes in the inalienable right of every State to decide on the development model that suits its environment, people and culture. In that regard, Nigeria favours the lifting of all unilateral punitive sanctions to settle political disputes, especially when applied extraterritorially.

The adoption of the resolution by 188 votes in favour indicates the desire of the international community and the overwhelming majority of the Assembly to see an end of the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. For decades, the Cuban people have been subjected to untold hardship due to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on their country by the United States of America. As a sovereign and independent nation, the Cuban people have the inalienable right to self-determination and to choose the form of Government that they want. They also have the right to exercise their sovereignty and self-determination devoid of all threats, pressures and interference in their internal affairs. The respect of the territorial integrity of all nations is also a cardinal principle of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations.

My delegation recalls that, at the seventeenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in June/July 2011, the African Union (AU) adopted a resolution calling on the United States of America to end the economic and trade embargo on Cuba so that the people of that country could enjoy the legitimate prospect of sustainable development. Nigeria will continue to abide by that AU resolution and all United Nations resolutions calling for the end of the economic blockade against Cuba. We believe that the continued embargo against Cuba runs counter to the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade that all States hold so dearly and that the United Nations has admirably championed over the years.

In that context, we supported the resolution and oppose the needless and collective punishment of innocent people. We favour the dismantling not only of the structures for the enforcement of the embargo, but also of the underpinning logic for its existence.

Mrs. Tembo (Zambia): I thank you, Mr. President, for according me this opportunity to contribute to this important agenda item. Zambia aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier today by the representatives of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Cape Verde on behalf of the African States.

Zambia has been supporting, voting and speaking in favour of the resolution on ending the embargo against Cuba for the last two decades that the General Assembly has considered the issue. Today, we again remain steadfast and reaffirm our full support for resolution 67/4.

We unequivocally call upon the Government of the United States of America to lift the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on the people of Cuba. That embargo violates international law, the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter with regard to the sovereignty, equality of States and non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs. It runs counter to the freedom of international trade and navigation.

The extraterritorial embargo constitutes a contravention of a sovereign State's right to peace, development and security. Over the past 50 years, the people of Cuba have suffered heavily due to the effects of that unjust, unfair and inhumane embargo. It is unfortunate that the economic, commercial and

financial embargo against the people of Cuba has been maintained and further tightened despite the growing and categorical demand of the international community, especially the General Assembly, for its elimination.

The embargo has chained the people of Cuba and adversely stifled the growth of their economy. The United States has frozen more Cuban assets and punished more foreign companies that have conducted transactions with Cuba. It is estimated that the embargo has caused economic damage of about \$1 trillion in the past five decades. That loss is not just to the people of Cuba but to the whole world economy.

My delegation, however, applauds and admires the people of Cuba and their leaders for their resilience, hard work and dedication to the advancement of their

great country despite the embargo that was meant to shackle them. They have remained steadfast and risen above their problems to succeed in various fields for the benefit of themselves and friends abroad, including many Zambians. To the Zambian people, Cuba is an all-weather friend and needs the support of the international community on this issue.

We strongly believe in the principle that injustice to one is injustice to all. The injustice that has been perpetuated against the people of Cuba over the past 50 years through the embargo can happen to any Member State of this great global body — the United Nations. Therefore, my delegation demands that the Government of the United States unconditionally lift the embargo against the people of Cuba.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.