



# General Assembly

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Official Records

*President:* Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

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

## Agenda item 40

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

#### Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/98)

#### Draft resolution (A/69/L.4)

**Mr. Dehghani** (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the honour 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 the Movement's warmest welcome to the General Assembly His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Today the General Assembly is prepared to express, for the twenty-third time, its support and solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba through a decisive vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/69/L.4) calling for lifting of the United States of America embargo against Cuba. Last year, 188 of the 193 Member States voted for the resolution on the same subject (resolution 68/8).

The Non-Aligned Movement has always reiterated its strongest opposition to unilateral coercive measures with extraterritorial effect. NAM has repeatedly reiterated its call on the Government of the United States of America to put an end to its unilateral economic,

commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which is contrary to international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States. It also violates Cuba's right to interact with the international community.

The embargo has had grave adverse impacts on the well-being of the people of Cuba. The direct and indirect damage caused by this undeserved embargo against Cuba is enormous. It affects all crucial sectors of the economy, such as public health, nutrition, agriculture, banking, trade, investment and tourism. It denies Cuba access to markets, development aid from international financial institutions and technology transfers and creates impediments to the socioeconomic development of the country. The embargo is also the main obstacle to broader access to the Internet, the exchange of ideas and the development of cultural, sports and scientific relations. The continuation of the embargo is totally unjustifiable and runs counter to Cuba's efforts to achieve sustainable development. In addition, the measures the United States has taken unilaterally encroach upon the rights and legitimate interests of Cuban nationals and third-country nationals.

Despite the enormous pressure the people of Cuba have endured and the hardships they have been through as a result of the embargo during the past decades, they are indeed worthy of praise for the significant progress they have made, especially in areas such as education, health care and international cooperation. The role of Cuba in the global fight against Ebola is just the most recent example, where the largest number of health care workers deployed in the Ebola-infected

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countries in West Africa is from Cuba. Cuba's response to Ebola was and continues to be far more robust than that of many countries that are far wealthier, and it is further proof of the constructive role that Cuba plays in international affairs.

We again recall that last year 188 States Members voted in favour of this resolution — an almost unanimous vote in demanding an end to the five-decade embargo and emphasizing the need to fully adhere to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of Cuba. Currently, over 190 nations engage economically and politically with Cuba, while the United States remains alone in pursuing its unjustified policy.

The Non-Aligned Movement once again urges the United States of America to yield to the will of the overwhelming majority of the international community and to rectify its failed policies by fully complying with all General Assembly resolutions calling for an immediate end to the embargo imposed on Cuba.

**Mr. Llorenty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 134 Member States that form part of the Group of 77 and China at this 30th plenary meeting of the General Assembly on agenda item 40, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

For a moment, let us imagine a Cuban newborn with a blood circulation defect that needs immediate administration of a scarce or unavailable medicine, such as nitric oxide, to survive. The baby's life is at risk, but because of the financial, economic and commercial blockade of the United States policy against Cuba, the medicine cannot be bought directly from the manufacturer. That example illustrates how human lives are threatened and how public health care is undermined by the embargo.

Sadly, the embargo also severely impacts sectors such as education, culture, sport, finance and banking, foreign trade and foreign investment. Furthermore, international cooperation provided and received by the Cuban people is extremely affected by the blockade. There are also substantial costs to Cuba's strategic economic sectors, such as construction, tourism, industry, communications, energy, mining and transportation.

In an open violation of all the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, the Government of the United States of America has been systematically suffocating Cuba for more than five decades, causing irreparable human and social damage as well as huge material and economic losses for the people of Cuba, seriously threatening the freedom of trade and investment in that sisterly nation.

Once again, the Group of 77 and China demands the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the inhumane and genocidal economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and exhorts the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to prevent the application of coercive unilateral economic measures and unsolicited listings against developing countries. The Group denounces the persecution of Cuba's international financial transactions abroad, which has been exacerbated by the United States Office of Foreign Assets Control in recent years, and firmly rejects the inclusion of Cuba in the list of States that sponsor terrorism published by the State Department of the United States in a unilateral manner.

Despite the countless difficulties and limitations experienced by Cuba due to the blockade, the country has consistently provided generous medical and humanitarian international assistance of the highest quality. Currently, there are more than 50,000 Cuban-trained health workers providing services in 66 countries. Recently, a medical team of 165 professionals was sent to Sierra Leone to help on the front line of response efforts to Ebola.

I would like to recall the words of President Nelson Mandela:

“During all my years in prison, Cuba was an inspiration and Fidel Castro a tower of strength ... [Cuban victories] destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressor [and] inspired the fighting masses of South Africa ... a turning point for the liberation of our continent — and of my people — from the scourge of apartheid ... What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than Cuba has displayed in its relations to Africa? Cuba is an example in the delivery of the most services while expecting nothing in return.”

In conclusion, the Group firmly urges strict compliance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions on the issue of the blockade and expresses

its deep aspiration that the days of the embargo are coming to an end and that they will soon be relegated to the pages of history. As President Evo Morales Ayma rightly stated, “The world is with Cuba”.

Allow me to say a few final words in my national capacity.

I would like to thank Cuba’s Foreign Minister, comrad Rodríguez Parrilla, for being in the Assembly today. Quite simply, Bolivia would like to thank Cuba. They might temporarily be able to cut off economic flows. They might temporarily be able to hamper foreign trade. They might temporarily be able to prevent medications from reaching Cuba. But they will never be able to block Cuba’s independence, sovereignty, rebellious nature or the absolute solidarity of the Cuban people. I wish to thank Cuba very much — until victory always!

**Mr. Msosa** (Malawi): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. I join colleagues who have spoken before me to add our voice on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

More than 50 years have elapsed since the sanctions against Cuba were imposed. More than two decades have passed since this item was placed on the agenda of the United Nations. The General Assembly has adopted resolutions on this agenda item year in and year out, yet the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba has not been lifted.

The African Group is of the view that economic sanctions against Cuba have caused great economic hardship, especially for the poor and vulnerable populations in the country. We believe that an immediate end to the economic embargo against Cuba is necessary, and it can serve to promote social and better standards of life for the people of Cuba. In that regard, we encourage the spirit of dialogue to be employed to resolve the issue and therefore allow Cuba to continue to effectively contribute to global development.

In June, at the twenty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Malabo, our Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their full support for the resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, financial and commercial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. We therefore reiterate the call of our principals inviting the

Government of the United States of America to lift the long-standing embargo.

**Mr. Mendoza-García** (Costa Rica) (*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 introduction of draft resolution A/69/L.4, 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 successively adopted, each 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-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 68/8 with the same title, with the overwhelming support of 188 States Members of the United. Since 1992, 22 resolutions of the most representative and democratic organ of the United Nations, namely, the General Assembly, have each time called for an end to the embargo imposed against Cuba. Today we are meeting to consider once again this draft resolution, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States wishes to ratify its support for what will be the twenty-third resolution of the General Assembly on the question.

It is important to reiterate the reasons underlying the convictions of CELAC on this subject. In our view, the commercial, economic and financial embargo imposed on Cuba is contrary to the letter and spirit and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law. The Charter enshrines rights, obligations and principles that have become part of the legal corpus, not only of international law but of humankind. It must not be violated or undermined by any Member. Member States must align their national and international behaviour with the rights, obligations and principles enshrined in our constituent Charter. CELAC reiterates the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, inter alia, the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs, the freedom of trade and navigation, as well as the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba began in 1959 and has continued

to this day. Today we observe that the embargo has been transformed into a strict system of unilateral measures that has continued over time, creating severe economic losses for the Cuban people that are felt in the most sensitive areas of Cuban people's life.

We express our deep concern at the strengthening of the extraterritorial dimension of the embargo, as well as at the increasing persecution of Cuba's international financial transactions in disregard of the international community's political will, as reflected in the draft resolution. CELAC reiterates its concern, already expressed in resolution 68/8, regarding the application by Members States of laws and regulations such as the Helms-Burton Act, the extraterritorial effects of which affect the sovereignty of other States and the legitimate interests of entities and 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 are conducting business with Cuba in accordance with international law, including the norms established by the rules-based World Trade Organization. In the last year, several restrictions and fines were imposed on international companies, some of them belonging to members of our Community.

CELAC member States call for an end to the persecution of Cuba's international financial transactions abroad, which have been exacerbated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States in recent years. We would like to recall that at the CELAC Summit held in Havana on 29 January, the member States of our Community issued a special declaration on the need to put an end to the economic, trade and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America 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 urged the Government of the United States to put an end to the application of that Act. In that context, CELAC member States also adopted on 29 September a special communiqué on the strengthening of the extraterritorial dimension of the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States of America against Cuba, as well as the increasing persecution of Cuban international financial transactions.

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States is strongly in favour of 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 that exists between the application of unilateral measures that have no backing in international law and the letter and spirit and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We make an urgent appeal to the United States of America to align its relevant national legislation with the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly resolutions, the views of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and all the regions of the world, and the voice of its own people. CELAC is counting on the support traditionally given to the draft resolution submitted today for consideration by this body, which refers to the adverse effects being inflicted on one of our members.

In conclusion, we call for respect, without excuses, for the sovereignty and self-determination of the Cuban nation.

**Mr. Alyas** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am very pleased to address the Assembly today on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), whose established position, consistent with international law, is based on rejecting some States' use of unilateral sanctions against others, and on putting an end to the sanctions against Cuba. In that regard, I refer to the Secretary-General's report on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba (A/69/98), and the General Assembly's inclusion of this crucial item on its agenda in 1991. The debate on the subject has continued since then, without reaching a definitive solution.

The OIC looks forward to finding a way to deal definitively with this situation. Despite the minor progress that has been achieved through some measures aimed at mitigating the sanctions, the effect of those steps is still limited. The embargo continues to affect, and has greatly affected, the general welfare of the Cuban people, obstructing their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, eradicate poverty and ensure such basic human rights as education, food, national progress and health care.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the OIC's general support for the right of every State to take whatever measures that seem necessary to it in order to advance its development in accordance with international law. The OIC opposes any unjustified unilateral action that might affect the sovereignty and

interests of another State and its people. The OIC calls for an end to the embargo on Cuba, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

**Mr. Goddard** (Barbados): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

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

For the past 22 consecutive years, CARICOM member States have gathered in this same setting to add our voices to the many others opposed to the imposition by the United States of its economic, commercial and financial embargo on the Republic of Cuba. Today we reiterate our long-standing position on the issue. For 54 years, the people of Cuba have endured severe economic loss and stagnation, preventing the expansion of their country's commercial ties with the rest of the world and with all the consequences that flow from that.

As a bloc of States, the Caribbean Community greatly values the strength that lies in its collective capacity, its will and its 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. Accordingly, CARICOM has remained unstinting in its solidarity with Cuba and in calling for an end to the unilateral and unwarranted extra-territorial application by the United States of its Helms-Burton Act, 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.

Last year, 188 of the 193 States Members of the United Nations voted in favour of resolution 68/8, under the same agenda item as today's draft resolution (A/68/L.4), representing an overwhelming majority of the international community in their demand for an end to a blockade that has stifled the people of Cuba for more than 50 years. In spite of 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 adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, have maintained warm and fraternal relations with Cuba that have

remained resilient despite the continually evolving hemispheric and international geopolitical landscape.

In the Caribbean subregion, Cuba has built hospitals and clinics, provided medicines and furnished doctors, nurses and other health-care professionals. Additionally, students from the Caribbean Community have benefitted from free university educations in Cuba, and Cuba has been unselfishly generous to the CARICOM member State of Haiti after the earthquake there. CARICOM looks forward to the upcoming fifth CARICOM-Cuba Summit, to be held on 8 December in Havana. We note with appreciation that Cuba is in the process of mobilizing 160 doctors and nurses — the largest medical contingent from any single country — to travel to West Africa to offer assistance in the fight against Ebola there.

The CARICOM member States also continue to maintain excellent relations with all countries in the region. In that spirit, we join the international community in calling for an immediate end to the embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba and its people. We furthermore urge the Government of the United States of America to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Government of Cuba aimed at normalizing their relations. Such a step would remove a source of tension and conflict in the region and improve the prospects for peace, development and cooperation within it.

In support of the principles of international law and the United Nations Charter, CARICOM, as in previous years, fully supports 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 will vote in favour of its adoption by the Assembly.

**The President:** Before proceeding any further, I would like to propose that the list of speakers be closed, in view of the large number of speakers already inscribed on it.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR): Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela and my own country, Argentina. The associated States of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru and Suriname also align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Every year since 1992, the General Assembly has adopted a resolution calling for an end to the embargo on Cuba, with the support of the vast majority of Member States and world opinion. The humanitarian and economic costs the embargo imposes on the Cuban population, as well as the anachronistic rationale behind it, are evident to all. Despite repeated calls from the international community and the General Assembly, those resolutions have not been implemented. Without a doubt, such disregard for the international community's collective will undermines United Nations credibility and weakens multilateralism.

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 and their sovereignty, and promote respect for international law.

MERCOSUR and its associated States believe that the embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, in particular the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, the freedom of international trade and navigation, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. However, the embargo also 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, which has been in place for over half a century, continues unchanged. We also see with concern an increase in restrictions on Cuba's financial transactions with third countries that prevent greater transparency through direct dialogue.

The member and associated States of MERCOSUR reject on principle unilateral and extraterritorial measures. We believe that such 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 reaffirming our unwavering support for the new draft resolution (A/69/L.4), MERCOSUR and its associated States reiterate their 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 more than an example of obsolete policies that have no place in today's world. In that sense, MERCOSUR and its associated States believe that the time has come to put an end to a unilateral embargo that is morally unjustifiable, legally indefensible and contrary in all its aspects to international law. By adopting the draft resolution, the General Assembly will prove once again its undeniable political will to defend the ideals of freedom, solidarity and respect for sovereignty and international law.

**Mr. Churkin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's discussion of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for preparing a comprehensive report (A/69/98), which lays out the positions of Member States on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo of Cuba by the United States of America and includes an assessment by bodies and agencies of the United Nations system of the impact of those sanctions.

We believe a swift lifting of the anti-Cuban embargo is an objective and long-overdue necessity. We believe that unilateral economic pressure by the United States on Cuba, for purely political purposes, runs counter to international law and the Charter of the United Nations and has had a pernicious impact on the entire system of international relations.

Now, on the eve of the adoption of the post-2015 global development agenda, the matter of the embargo on Cuba is particularly crucial and pertinent. Its ongoing existence threatens possibilities for the country's further progressive development and meeting future sustainable development goals. Against that background, the Cuban people, while subject to sanctions and experiencing significant deprivation because of them, has acted as a responsible member of the international community and, despite the deadly

threat, were among the first people to assist West Africa in fighting the Ebola epidemic.

Guided by the fundamental principles of the Charter on the inadmissibility of any discriminatory measures or interference in a State's domestic affairs, the Russian Federation and the majority of States Members of the United Nations are decisively in favour of lifting the Cuban embargo urgently. More broadly, we also favour rejecting political and coercive pressure on sovereign States, which stokes confrontational tendencies in international relations.

Given those reasons, the Russian Federation supports the draft resolution of the Assembly's sixty-ninth session on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (A/69/L.4) and will vote to adopt it. We urge all Member States to vote for it as well.

**Mrs. Morgan** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico rejects the unilateral actions against the Republic of Cuba, including the imposition for more than five decades of the economic, commercial and financial blockade, which is contrary to international law and the foundation of relations between States.

We recognize that each State is free and sovereign. In accordance with the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations, we must respect the free self-determination of the peoples of the world. We reiterate in this forum that the only bodies with the capacity to apply political, economic and military sanctions are the Security Council and the General Assembly. No State should use its power to impose unilateral actions that affect the development and prosperity of other nations.

Despite the adverse circumstances it has faced for more than 50 years, the Republic of Cuba shows high levels of human development, and its achievements with regard to the targets in the Millennium Development Goals are more than satisfactory. The full and sustainable development of all persons should come before any political or economic interest, and that is why we commend the actions carried out by the Cuban Government to meet its international commitments in the area of development for the benefit of its people. We emphasize that historically Cuba has transformed solidarity into a priority of its foreign policy, as confirmed by its support in the head-on fight against Ebola in Africa and its prevention activities in the

region, which is another of many examples of how Cuba improves the quality of life in developing countries.

Mexico recognizes and supports the process of modernizing Cuba's economic and social model, and we support each other when so required. Mexico wishes Cuba every success in that important task, which is crucial for the sustainable future of its economy and the welfare of its population. The Government of Mexico is consolidating its political and trade relations with Cuba, taking as a framework the strengthening of the Economic Complementation Agreement No.51. In a context of change, Mexico believes that the elimination of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba would facilitate the restructuring of its economy, allowing its full reintegration and access to international trade and investment, with clear benefits for our region.

Mexico has never broken its fraternal bonds of friendship, solidarity and respect for the Cuban people. Once again, we express our support for the draft resolution submitted for the Assembly's consideration to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba .

**Mr. Narang** (India): At the outset, I wish to acknowledge the presence here of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

India associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and also with the statement delivered by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The five-decade economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba is the subject of discussion for the twenty-third year in succession in the General Assembly. In all those years, the Assembly has repeatedly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of people the world over. The Assembly has also called upon all States, in conformity with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, to refrain from promulgating and applying, and to repeal and invalidate, laws and measures that have extraterritorial impacts affecting the sovereignty of other States.

The continued existence of the embargo, in contravention of world opinion as expressed by the Assembly, undermines multilateralism and the

credibility of the United Nations itself. The embargo is a violation of the right of a sovereign State to development and to enjoy the freedom of trade, economy and navigation. India strongly supports the unambiguous rejection by the international community of domestic laws having extraterritorial impact. Embargoes impede the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected country, in particular children and women. They also hinder the full enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to development, food, medical care and social services, among other things.

This embargo, particularly through its extraterritorial effects, is adversely affecting the Cuban people and the development efforts of that country. At a time of slow global recovery from the global financial crisis and overall deceleration in global growth, the embargo has had a deleterious impact on the Cuban economy. The denial to Cuba of access to the United States market, investment, technology, financial services and scientific, educational, cultural and sporting institutions has had enormous consequences. The Cuban economy has been forced to bear considerable extra costs for sourcing products, technology and services from third countries located thousands of kilometres away. Moreover, the extraterritorial application of the United States embargo has discouraged investment and technology transfer and has suppressed other forms of business collaboration between Cuba and third countries.

The report of the Secretary General on the agenda item under consideration (A/69/98) is illustrative of the detrimental impact the embargo has had on international efforts to undertake socioeconomic advancement in Cuba. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean notes in its report how the embargo seriously impairs the economic development of the island and inflicts grave harm on the Cuban population, including by curtailing the positive effects of measures recently implemented in Cuba in connection with its economic and social policy guidelines and the updating of its economic model. The Commission pointed out that the embargo forces Cuba to pay extra insurance and freight charges and more for foreign exchange transactions, which in turn drives up the credit risk premiums in trade with Cuba.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) assertion that the embargo has very negative implications for Cuba's food supply and agriculture and that it has a direct effect the food security of

vulnerable segments of the Cuban population is indeed a serious one. In fact, as FAO attests in its submission, the embargo even affects the operation of entities and international organizations like FAO in Cuba, raising their operating costs and costs of procuring essential supplies and processing financial transactions. On the human side, the International Labour Organization has pointed out how the restrictions imposed on the transfer of remittances from Cuban workers living in the United States limit the available family income of their Cuban relatives at home.

The Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system for Operational Activities for Development has documented what it calls the pervasive impact of the embargo on the social, economic and environmental dimensions of human development in Cuba, affecting the most vulnerable socioeconomic groups of the Cuban population in particular.

In today's age of the Internet, when the United Nations repeatedly emphasizes the importance and the catalytic role of information and communications technologies, it is paradoxical that the embargo has contributed to a significantly low level of Internet penetration in Cuba, as the submission of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development notes. In that context, in spite of the difficult conditions imposed upon it, the human development achievements of Cuba, in particular its high Human Development index ranking and its achievement of several Millennium Development Goals before the deadline, are even more remarkable and commendable.

The continued existence of the embargo and its devastating effects on a developing country are particularly incongruous in a year when the international community is getting together to chart a new collective vision for sustainable development under the post-2015 development agenda. India believes in the need to create and strengthen an enabling international economic environment capable of providing equal opportunities to all countries. Even more important, we feel that the international community needs to redouble its efforts to promote an environment free from sanctions and embargoes.

I would like to conclude by affirming that India joins other nations in calling for an immediate end to the United States embargo against Cuba, and that India supports the draft resolution to be introduced by Cuba today.

**Mr. Boukadoum** (Algeria): First, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and to convey through him the greetings of the people and the Government of Algeria.

Algeria wishes to associate itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the representative of Malawi on behalf of the Group of African States, and the representative of Saudi Arabia on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Algeria reiterates its deep concern about the continuation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo unilaterally imposed by the United States of America against Cuba for more than five decades. For many years now, members of the General Assembly have adopted almost unanimously a resolution calling for the lifting of that embargo. Through those resolutions, the international community has continued to affirm that Cuba, like all other States Members of the United Nations, has the right to freedom of trade and navigation and to expand its relations with all its economic partners.

Algeria's principled positions are well known and remain unchanged. In accordance with the principles of its foreign policy, Algeria cannot accept the very idea of the extraterritorial application of laws nor all forms of coercive economic and trade measures. They contradict international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Every Member State should respect the principles of the Charter, including in particular the sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity and non-intervention and non-interference in a country's internal affairs.

No one can deny that the blockade has a negative effect on the well-being of the Cuban people on a daily basis and causes huge material losses and economic damages to Cuba. Those consequences have been exacerbated by the adverse effects of the ongoing global economic and financial crisis, which has seriously compromised Cuba's development efforts. That is highlighted in the report of the Secretary General (A/69/98), which presents the views and information provided by more than 120 countries and by a great number of entities and agencies of the United Nations system concerning the implementation of last year's resolution 68/8. The embargo frustrates efforts

to achieve all the internationally agreed development goals, including the all-important Millennium Development Goals, and negatively affects South-South cooperation and international cooperation generally.

We must add that we are convinced that the lifting of the embargo against Cuba will benefit everyone. Cuba has demonstrated its positive and constructive share in international relations. Today I have to mention Cuba's extremely positive commitment to the international fight against Ebola. It deserves praise and respect.

One must also recall the long-standing positions of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the Group of 77 and China on this issue. Accordingly, Algeria will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

**Mrs. Nguyen Phuong Nga** (Viet Nam): As this is the first time I take the floor at this session, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to serve as the President of the General Assembly. I would also like to extend my warmest welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Since 1992, the General Assembly has adopted, by an overwhelming majority, annual resolutions calling for the lifting of the embargo unilaterally imposed by the United States against Cuba. We share the view of the international community that the embargo contravenes the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It also violates universally recognized norms governing relations among States, such as sovereign equality, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, the right of self-determination and peaceful coexistence.

The embargo has resulted in enormous suffering for the Cuban people, hindered international investment and commercial relations of other countries with Cuba, as well as Cuba's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It also constitutes an obstacle to the future implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Despite hardship, the Government and people of Cuba have attained significant achievements in many important areas, especially education and health care. We appreciate Cuba's continued active contribution to

promoting international cooperation to address global challenges. The deployment of 165 Cuban medical professionals in West Africa to fight against the ongoing Ebola crisis has clearly demonstrated that Cuba is an active and responsible member of the international community.

Viet Nam champions peaceful solutions to all disputes and differences between States in accordance with international law, as dialogue and negotiation — not violence, coercion and embargoes — are key to a just and lasting peace. Viet Nam joins the international community to call on the United States to fully implement the General Assembly resolutions and to end its five-decades-old embargo against Cuba. That would significantly contribute to peace, stability and development in the world.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate Viet Nam's friendship, cooperation and solidarity with the people of Cuba. Viet Nam will do its utmost to help Cuba overcome the difficulties and challenges caused by the embargo.

**Mr. Wang Min** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

For 22 consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted, by an 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 comply with the Charter of the United Nations and norms of international law and to repeal or invalidate any laws or measures with extraterritorial effects on the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate rights and interests of entities and persons under their jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation.

Regrettably, however, over the years those resolutions have not been implemented effectively, and the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba has not been lifted. That has not only violated the purposes and principles of the Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, but has also inflicted huge economic and financial losses on Cuba. It impedes efforts by the Cuban people to eradicate poverty, promote economic and social development and attain the Millennium Development Goals. It impairs their

rights to survival and development and adversely affects normal economic, commercial and financial relations between Cuba and other countries.

At a time when the recovery of the world economy is still weak and the international community suffers from a multitude of challenges, such as the food and energy crises and climate change, the existence of the embargo and sanctions against Cuba is even more unjustifiable.

The Chinese Government has always maintained that relations between countries should be based on the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. The right of all countries to independently choose their social system and path of development should be respected. The unilateral imposition of military, political, economic or other sanctions against certain countries should be opposed. For its own part, China has always strictly observed and implemented the relevant General Assembly resolutions. At present, China and Cuba have maintained normal economic and trade relations and conducting personnel exchanges over the years. Our mutually beneficial and friendly cooperation in various areas continues to grow. That is consistent with the aspirations of the two peoples and is conducive to Cuba's economic and social development.

Against the backdrop of a multipolar world, economic globalization, cultural diversity and the democratization of international relations, there is an irreversible trend towards communication and cooperation on an equal footing among all countries. When differences arise between countries, dialogue on an equal footing and consultation on a friendly basis are the best means of reaching a solution.

Like most other countries, China hopes that the United States, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the General Assembly's resolutions, will end its embargo against Cuba as soon as possible and that relations between the two countries will continue to improve, thereby promoting stability and development in the entire Latin American and Caribbean region.

China will again vote in favour of draft resolution A/69/L.4, to be submitted by Cuba under this agenda item.

**Mr. Beck** (Solomon Islands): Allow me to join others in welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba to New York.

I would like to begin by aligning this statement with the statement delivered by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation takes the floor to speak on agenda item 40 and, in particular on draft resolution A/69/L.4, entitled “Necessity of ending economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by United States of America against Cuba”. My delegation thanks His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his annual report (A/69/98). Solomon Islands and eight other Pacific small island developing States made submissions to the report, joining the more than 150 countries that contributed to the report’s content.

This item has come before the General Assembly for the last 21 sessions, and this is the twenty-second session in which we, the international community, continue to consider it.

All of us, particularly small developing States, value international law and multilateralism. Our interests are better served when everyone operates under the same rules and in strict compliance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and various legal instruments. The Charter for us is our first and last line of defence of our sovereignty and security. Multilateralism for us is an equalizer. The draft resolution before the Assembly upholds the Charter’s principles and calls for respect for the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. That is central to all our foreign policies.

Draft resolution A/69/L.4 also is about the freedom of international trade, the freedom to choose one’s political system and the freedom to adopt one’s own economic system. Cuba has demanded that freedom peacefully and multilaterally for more than two decades now. It is now more than 50 years since United States unilateral embargo was imposed on Cuba. The long and firm grip of the United States over Cuba has challenged the notion that everyone is born equal. We on the periphery of the international system keep calling for a just, fair and equitable system. We hope that those with absolute power will provide that space. In that connection, the draft resolution speaks of our interests.

To our friend and partner the United States, we say: in the name of justice, freedom and human rights, cast off the chains of the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba; allow freedom and good neighbourly relations to grow roots between the two

States; replace confrontation with engagement, open the doors of diplomacy and allow the seeds of mutual cooperation to bear fruit.

Because of a crisis in the past century, the United States of America imposed an embargo against Cuba. Because of a crisis in the twenty-first century, an opportunity exists to reset relations between the two neighbouring States. The United States contribution in combating Ebola and garnering international support against it, and Cuba’s human-resources response to affected countries, send a message of hope to the world. Both countries, united against a common cause, can do more for the world. My delegation appeals for strong political will on the part of the United States to lift the embargo on Cuba and to allow trust and confidence-building cooperation between the two Governments to develop and expand.

My delegation wishes to acknowledge the resilience of the Government and people of Cuba, as stated by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla last month at the General Assembly (see A/69/PV.15). In the five decades of the blockade, Cuba has sent out 324,000 health workers assisting 158 countries and trained more than 38,000 medical doctors in 121 countries. Eight Pacific small island developing States have sent just under 200 medical students to Cuba for training. Solomon Islands saw its first 100 medical students graduate last July. More than 20 are expected to graduate next summer. Health remains a prerequisite for sustainable development. Cuba continues to invest in our youth, which will not only change our health system as more doctors serve among our people but will also create a healthy, vibrant and productive society. We thank Cuba for that.

Solomon Islands supports the draft resolution in its entirety. We do so in solidarity with Cuba. We vote for peace, equality and justice.

**Mr. Mahmoud** (Egypt): I would like first to welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and assure him of Egypt’s continued support and solidarity.

In an era in which the free people of the world are taking the lead in shaping the future of global cooperation and in bridging the gaps in views and goals, focusing on paving the path towards the sustainable development goals and setting aside the grudges of the past; in a world marked by years of suffering and tears — a cost that made the world wiser and more

mature — unfortunately we still hear echoes from the past that insist on recalling the ugly age of confrontation and unilateral aggressive measures, which the world surpassed a long time ago.

On 19 October 1960, the United States imposed its unjust and unjustifiable unilateral embargo on Cuba, which has lasted longer than any other embargo in the modern era. The world has profoundly changed since then. Yet, “el bloqueo” persists, in total violation of international law, the principles of the United Nations Charter and the principles of the Organization of American States — the regional organization to which the United States belongs. Needless to say, the extraterritorial measures imposed by the embargo contravene the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in their internal affairs and the freedom of trade and navigation as paramount principles in the conduct of international affairs.

For five decades, the United States has tightened limits on the Cuban people’s access to food, medicine, education and high-technology goods. The embargo has inflicted damaging repercussions not only on the financial, banking, trade and investment sectors of the Cuban economy, but also on health, nutrition, water quality, education and culture. The economic sanctions against Cuba have cost the country \$3.9 billion in foreign trade over the past year, raising the overall estimate of economic damage to \$116.8 billion over the past 55 years. In spite of the detrimental repercussions of the embargo, the Government of Cuba has made enormous efforts to meet the needs of its people.

What has been proven over the course of more than 54 years of the embargo against Cuba is that in this globalized world, Cuban people can still survive, thanks to their perseverance. The embargo is a relic of the Cold War that is increasingly hard to justify morally or politically. We do not need to remind ourselves that insistence on an historical mistake for years will never make it right.

Finally, we once again urge the United States to immediately and fully comply with the General Assembly resolutions that since 1992 have called for the immediate end of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba.

Egypt will continue sending a clear message to the United States:

*(spoke in Spanish)*

End the embargo now and long live the Cuban people!

**Mr. Moncada** (Venezuela) *(spoke in Spanish)*: We welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

Venezuela endorses the statements delivered by the representatives of Costa Rica and the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

Our country reiterates its rejection of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba for more than 54 years. It is an illegal policy that flagrantly violates international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, non-intervention, the legal equality of States, respect for sovereignty, refraining from threats or the use of force, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The United States has deliberately ignored calls by the international community urging it to take urgent measures to stop that immoral policy. With its dismissive attitude towards world opinion, the United States has become the most isolated country in the world.

The embargo is an aggressive action that seeks to overthrow the Government of Cuba and, as such, violates the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. The United States is thereby losing all authority when it seeks to accuse other countries of deficiencies.

Venezuela reiterates its strongest condemnation of the enactment and enforcement of laws contrary to international law, such as the Torricelli Act and the Helms-Burton Act, and their extraterritorial effects, which affect the freedom of international trade and prevent third countries from undertaking economic, financial and commercial transactions with Cuba. The United States Government does not have universal authority over the sovereignty of other States, and its intention to convert its national laws into universal laws is spurious.

The embargo systematically violates the human rights of Cuban citizens, in particular their economic and social rights, making it difficult for the Government of Cuba to buy food, medical equipment, medicine

and services on the international market to meet the basic needs of its people. Generations of Cubans have therefore been victims of the effects of that measure, which deals a serious blow to their quality of life.

The embargo also attempts to extend itself to the financial arena. The United States illegally threatens and punishes financial institutions beyond its territory for performing perfectly legal transactions with the Government of Cuba. In that regard, we reject the harassment by the United States authorities of banks that work with that brother country despite United States efforts to economically suffocate Cuba. We must denounce the fact that the Cuban Consulate in Washington, D.C., has been deprived of financial services for over a year.

Unfortunately, the United States' conduct runs counter to the spirit of the Charter, and its violations of human rights run counter to the letter of the Charter. Venezuela will continue to demand that the United States Government respect the fundamental rights of the Cuban people.

Finally, Venezuela will once again vote in favour of draft resolution A/69/L.4, demanding an end to that destructive policy.

**Mr. Mamabolo** (South Africa): We wish to acknowledge the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

My delegation would also like to align itself with statements delivered by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Malawi on behalf of the Africa Group.

We would also like to commend the Secretary-General for his report (A/69/98) entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". This is the twenty-third consecutive year that the Assembly considers a draft resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/69/L.4). We meet here again because the United States has ignored the overwhelming will of the international community that that debilitating embargo be lifted.

The embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States violates the rights of the people of Cuba in every

social sector and is a long-standing obstacle to its right as a country to develop. The future and dreams of Cuban children continue to remain bleak and blurred by the draconian legislation that imposed the blockade, which fails to recognize the sovereignty of States and their responsibility to protect their citizens under international law.

The blockade against Cuba must end now, lest history blame us for failing the Cuban people. All countries deserve to enjoy the fruits of globalization, which needs to be made meaningful and tangible for their people. The United States' unilateral action is counter to the letter and the spirit of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and other international laws.

The United States has a historical and moral responsibility to end the embargo, as it is counterproductive and pugnacious in its form and nature. Yet the United States Government persists with its intransigence, as illustrated by the recently approved Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2014, which reiterates clauses prohibiting United States banking institutions from engaging in financial transactions with several countries, including Cuba. The United States blockade policy against Cuba is rendering it impossible for that sister country of ours to have an unfettered right to export and import products and services to and from the United States and is being barred from using the United States dollar in its international financial transactions or to have accounts in that currency in third-country banking institutions. That is, *inter alia*, inconsistent with the values espoused under the Doha Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development, and the goals that we are attempting to set for ourselves in the post-2015 development agenda process.

The imposition of the embargo negatively impacts foreign trade and the promotion of foreign direct investment in Cuba. The Cuban Government has in the past asked the World Trade Organization to rule against the four-decade-long United States embargo. That is another example to indicate that Cuba seeks to act in accordance with the rules-based global governance system and strives to comply with international rules governing relations, both economic or political, among States.

Cuba is also barred from accessing bank credit in the United States and credit from affiliates in third countries or from international financial institutions,

such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank. Those measures continue to harm the Cuban economy and must be stopped now.

The blockade is an enormous assault on the social and psycho-social fibre of the Cuban people, and it imposes serious obstacles upon its economic, cultural and social development. That illegal policy touches on each and every aspect of the existence of the Cuban people, and its effects run deep.

Despite all the challenges imposed by the blockade, the Cuban people have remained staunch and resilient in their national consciousness and identity, so as to keep on fighting this injustice. They remain hopeful that one day victory will be realized. The Cubans are a peace-loving nation. They are not at war with the United States, nor do they wish to engage in any belligerent exchanges with the Americans and their allies.

In spite of the embargo, Cuba's goodwill as a responsible international partner is evident all over the world, as is illustrated in its early and heroic interventions to assist in the fights against the spread of Ebola in West Africa. Ironically, even the United States has now agreed to cooperate with Cuba in that global crisis.

Currently, our Deputy Minister of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Mr. Luwellyn Landers, is in Cuba leading the South African delegation participating in several events to commemorate 20 years of freedom and diplomatic relations between the two countries. South Africa has been a beneficiary of Cuba's ongoing assistance in support of the five priorities of the South African Government, through joint programmes in health, labour, social development, housing and infrastructure. More than 1,800 South African students are currently receiving medical training in Cuba this year, under the auspices of the South Africa-Cuba health cooperation agreement, with a further 620 students preparing to join the group in October. More than 420 South African students from disadvantaged backgrounds have graduated in Cuba as medical doctors, providing much-needed primary health-care services to their local communities.

South Africa unequivocally supports the Cuban people in their struggle for economic freedom through the lifting of the economic, financial and commercial blockade. The United States Government should heed the calls of the international community and allow

the people of Cuba to break free from the unjust and archaic act of economic repression against the Cuban people. I wish to reiterate here that South African will support the draft resolution (A/69/L.4) to be introduced by the representative of Cuba.

**Ms. Mejía Vélez** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Common Market of the South and associated States.

I would like to welcome Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and his delegation who are here today. As everyone who has taken the floor before me has said, the commercial, economic and financial embargo imposed against Cuba is contrary to international law and to the spirit and principles that inspired the Charter of the United Nations.

Since the adoption of resolution 47/19, on 24 November 1992, Colombia, together with all of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and the vast majority of the Member States, has expressed its support for Cuba by voting for the annual resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba." That support was reflected in the 188 votes in favour of resolution 68/8, adopted at the previous session of the General Assembly, which emphasizes the need to end that policy, which dates back over 50 years, as has been expressed on various occasions by the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón.

In accordance with this year's draft resolution (A/69/L.4), my country reaffirms its policy of respect for international law and the principles of political independence, the free self-determination of peoples and non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations.

Colombia does not support the kind of measures that run counter to the economic, commercial development and welfare of Cuba's population. My country considers it indispensable that Member States make progress in building links of cooperation and friendship based on

multilateralism and the principle of sovereign equality, enshrined in Chapter I of the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. De Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to welcome Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, who honours us with his presence in the Hall.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Common Market of the South. We would now like to deliver the following statement in our national capacity.

Brazil reiterates its firm rejection of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, as we reject the extraterritorial application of domestic trade laws and of discriminatory trade practices that hinder the development of Cuba and ultimately affect the lives and well-being of its citizens. Brazil calls upon Governments not complying with resolution 68/8 to take urgent steps to decisively eliminate discriminatory trade practices and to end economic, commercial and financial embargoes adopted unilaterally.

As a founding nation of the United Nations, which next year will celebrate its seventieth anniversary of promoting a culture of peace in the world, Brazil calls upon all Governments to show respect and commitment to international law, diplomacy, the peaceful settlement of disputes, trade and economic cooperation, and respect for the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

In addition to the adverse impacts of unilateral measures on the Cuban people, the extraterritorial nature of those measures shows that they are in contradiction with the basic principles of international law, in particular respect for the sovereignty and the freedom to trade and to navigate. We consider the effects of the embargo unacceptable, especially when they have an impact on humanitarian aid.

Unilateral blockades and embargoes — apart from being illegal under the Charter of the United Nations — are contrary to human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law, and they harm populations, especially women and children, who should be protected as a priority, especially the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population.

Brazil welcomes the progress that Cuba has made in modernizing its economic model. To continue on that path, Cuba requires the support of its partners near and far. Cooperation with Cuba, however, is systematically hampered by an illegal, illegitimate and inhuman economic embargo.

The Government of Brazil will continue not only to oppose the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, but we will also develop a growing and promising relationship of social, political and economic friendship with that country to promote its development, in the spirit of Latin American and Caribbean integration, according to the principles of solidarity.

Today there is consensus among Latin American and Caribbean countries with regard to the impossibility of future Summits of the Americas taking place without the participation of Cuba. There are no Americas without the full participation of Cuba in all areas of regional relations. Brazil will vote in favour of the draft resolution entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba” (A/69/L.4).

**Mr. Silwamba** (Zambia): I appreciate this opportunity to contribute to the discussion on this important agenda item.

Zambia aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General’s report (A/69/98) and the views expressed therein. Zambia has been supporting, voting and speaking in favour of the resolutions on this agenda item for over two decades, the period in which the Assembly has been considering the item. Today, we again reaffirm our full support for this year’s draft resolution on the subject (A/69/L.4).

Zambia continues to be greatly concerned that, after 52 years of the embargo and 22 consecutive annual Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the unilateral coercive measures against Cuba, little has changed on the ground. In keeping with the norms of international law, including the overwhelming annual votes in the Assembly, Zambia strongly urges the Government of the United States of America to lift the embargo. Zambia regrets the untold suffering that the decades-long economic, commercial and financial embargo has

caused the Cuban people. In particular, the right of Cubans to influence their own development path has been severely restricted, with access to international technology and expertise in critical sectors such as finance, technology, education and health greatly curtailed.

Zambia therefore strongly supports the United Nations decisions on the subject, particularly through the most recent resolution (resolution 68/8), which reaffirmed the resounding call to end the sanctions on Cuba. It remains Zambia's concern that the continued application of laws such as the 1996 Helms-Burton Act create extraterritorial effects that affect the sovereignty of third States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and the freedoms of trade and navigation.

My delegation applauds and admires the people of Cuba and their leadership for their resilience, hard work and dedication to the advancement of their great country despite the embargo. They have remained steadfast and have risen above the challenges to succeed in various fields for the benefit of themselves and friends abroad, including many Zambians.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reassure the people of Cuba of Zambia's continued solidarity on this issue, and welcomes the law passed in March 2014 by the Government of Cuba aimed at further attracting foreign investment and easing travel restrictions.

**Mr. Pisarevich** (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Belarus has repeatedly underscored the unacceptable nature of the use of coercive economic measures and believes that economic sanctions are essentially a way of exerting political pressure on sovereign States. The imposition by the United States of economic sanctions on Cuba runs counter to the Charter of the United Nations and a number of international commitments, and creates artificial barriers. Unilateral sanctions, economic pressure and coercive measures taken against independent States are counterproductive and can lead to a stoking of tensions in relations between sovereign States and in the international arena as a whole. Belarus supports the principle of equal and mutually respectful dialogue, which can assist in settling disagreements.

Belarus, like Cuba, is has experienced and is continuing to experience the negative impact of the imposition of economic sanctions by the United States and the European Union. They are mainly intended to deprive ordinary citizens in Belarus of their rights.

Despite the clear signal coming from the international community on the need to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, the United Nations has failed to respond properly to the United States' actions against Cuba and other sovereign States. That is prompting other Western countries to use the same nefarious practices as a way of subordinating the independent policies of States to their own political ambitions.

In line with Human Rights Council resolution 19/32, on 5 April 2013 there was an interactive dialogue in Geneva on unilateral coercive measures and their impact on human rights. Following that, a report was drafted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/27/20). The report noted that the participants in the meeting were unanimous in their assessment that policies consisting of unilateral coercive measures lead first and foremost to violations of human rights, such as the rights to food, work, health care and education. Thus, as the report notes, entirely innocent civilians not only fail to receive help in asserting their rights, but are doubly punished.

We welcome the creation of the mandate of a Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures. We trust that the Special Rapporteur will significantly strengthen activities aimed at drawing the attention of the international community, including the population of those countries who impose unilateral measures themselves, to the counterproductive nature and harm caused by such measures, which undermine the basis for development. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Secretary-General and other senior United Nations civil servants should take appropriate measures to end the use of individual measures of economic sanctions. Belarus is in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Cuba (A/69/L.4).

**Mr. Mwinyi** (United Republic of Tanzania): We are taking the floor to extend our solidarity to the Cuban Government and people, who continue to suffer under a 50-year-long unjust economic, commercial and financial embargo. It is with profound regret that Tanzania, an ally of both the United States of America and Cuba, once again stands at this rostrum to speak

about this unfortunate situation, which continues unchanged despite the many resolution on the subject adopted by this body.

The situation is regrettable for two main reasons. First, the delay in resolving the matter continues to undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the United Nations, the main goal of which is the preservation of world peace and security, the promotion of human rights and social justice, and the advancement of economic prosperity for all. Every unfulfilled or unimplemented resolution or decision adopted by this body is a great failure for its entire membership. Secondly, it is regrettable that a friendly nation and founder of this world Organization continues to ignore repeated petitions made by the overwhelming majority of nations in this Hall calling for the immediate and unconditional cessation of the embargo against Cuba. The embargo may be a bilateral matter, but its prolongation has extraterritorial ramifications.

We strongly believe that the time has come for the United States of America and Cuba to mend their diplomatic relations and join forces against the common enemies of humanity, namely, poverty, disease, illiteracy and climate change.

We have witnessed the sacrifices of many countries, including the United States of America and Cuba, who have deployed medical personnel, troops, equipment and resources to the Ebola battlefield in the Western African States of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. The Ebola outbreak has exposed the true foes of humanity. From the ravages of the outbreak, we must build a stronger united front against those enemies and not against each other. Truly, we cannot afford to miss this historic opportunity.

Let me conclude by citing the words of Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, founder of the Tanzanian nation, who said at this very rostrum in September 1983:

“We may not like each other. We may distrust each other. But neither liking nor distrust is relevant. In this twentieth century our nations have to work together in order to survive. The alternative is to die, all of us, and all our peoples. The choice is ours: cooperation slowly and painfully built up, or inevitable and pervading chaos, insecurity and disaster ... Let us decide to work together for the good of humanity.” (A/38/PV.14, paras. 47 and 48)

**The President:** I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to introduce draft resolution A/69/L.4.

**Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Today is the twenty-third time that the General Assembly is considering this issue, which is of such importance for the international community, as it has to do with international law, which protects all States, whether big or small, rich or poor, and guarantees their independence and the exercise of their national sovereignty, which is the basis for sovereign equality. It is also directly linked to the enjoyment of human rights by all persons and all peoples. This matter concerns freedoms of trade and navigation, which protects the interests of States, companies and individuals.

However, we are gathered here at a very odd international juncture characterized by serious threats to international peace and security: terrible wars, terrorist acts of extreme cruelty, the risk posed by the existence of huge nuclear arsenals, and unbelievable levels of military expenditures, which are of no use in solving any of the serious problems facing the world's population, which is quickly approaching 8 billion. This is a crucial moment in terms of the impact of climate change, which leads to, among other catastrophic consequences, unprecedented famine, extreme poverty across entire regions and massive waves of migration. We are living in an age characterized by a systemic global crisis with its constituent economic, food, energy and water components.

Together with poverty, which takes a higher toll on human lives than wars, we are at increased risk of serious diseases such as Ebola, which could become one of the worst pandemics in history, if not stopped and eradicated in the affected nations of Western Africa through urgent and effective cooperation by all. As was recently stated by President Raul Castro Ruz:

“This noble and urgent endeavour demands the indispensable commitment and dedication of every nation in the world, to the extent of everyone's possibilities. We are of the view that this grave problem should not be politicized, as that would distract us from the main objective, which is to help confront the epidemic in Africa and prevent it in other regions.”

All of those factors present an unprecedented combination of old and new problems that could

make human life unsustainable. None of them can be resolved, if we do not change our attitude and our way of dealing with and shaping reality and engage in genuine cooperation in the interest of the survival of humankind. As recently written by Comrade Fidel Castro:

“Any sensible person knows that political decisions that entail some risk for highly qualified staff involve a higher level of responsibility for those who call on them to fulfil that risky task. That is something far more difficult than sending soldiers to fight and even die for a just political cause, who do so because they believe it to be their duty. Medical staff who are prepared to go anywhere to save lives, even at the risk of losing their own, offer the best example of solidarity that human beings can show.”

It is a fact that, in recent times, the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba has been tightened and that its extraterritorial application to every region of the world has been reinforced, in particular through the imposition of huge and unprecedented fines in the amount of \$11 billion against 38 banks, including the French bank BNP Paribas, for having transactions with Cuba and other countries.

The cumulative economic damage, which has been huge for a small economy like ours, amounts to \$1,112,534 million, calculated on the basis of the price of gold. That price is being manipulated by those who created the harmful monetary system currently in force, which is already feeling the effects of the insurmountable crisis that has struck the poorest countries.

The human damage caused by the blockade is increasing. Already, 77 per cent of Cubans have been born under the blockade. Our families' suffering cannot be measured. There are many international conventions that proscribe the blockade, including the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The exercise of their human rights by an entire people is being impaired. The economic development of the country is seriously hampered.

Although our health-care and social systems have managed to prevent any loss of human life, no honest person, whether in the United States or anywhere else in the world, could support the devastating consequences of the blockade. Despite everything, our national

culture, our education system and our guarantee of equal rights and opportunities allow us to be a nation that is educated and compassionate.

On both sides of the Florida Straits, the peoples of the United States and Cuba have always had close links. Despite the systematic slanderous campaigns launched against our country for the past half century, the people of the United States supported the return to his family of the Cuban child who was kidnapped in 1999. Cuba extended every possible assistance in the immediate aftermath of the terrible terrorist acts of 11 September 2001, when thousands of flying planes were left without a place to land, and, later, helped fill the gap in the supply of antibiotics at the time of the anthrax attacks in the United States.

In 2005, truly concerned about the damage that was being caused by hurricane Katrina, we offered medical assistance to the people of New Orleans. That led to the establishment of the Henry Reeve medical contingent, which specializes in the management of disaster situations and epidemics. It is named after a heroic young American who fought for Cuba's independence back in the nineteenth century. That contingent is deployed in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. Its prestigious name was borne by the brigade that assisted Pakistan in 2005 in the aftermath of the earthquake there. It has continued to engage in fruitful cooperation with United States military medical personnel, which started in El Salvador after the earthquake of 2001 and in Guatemala in 2002 and 2003 to treat onchocerciasis, or river blindness. In 2010, after the earthquake in Haiti, the United States and Cuba also cooperated to assist that long-suffering nation.

The Cuban Government has invariably shared information on planned terrorist actions or attacks against the United States with that country's Government. Despite the old tensions and the attempts by violent extremists and terrorist groups to inflame them, there has not been a war, nor have any young Americans died in Cuba. Despite having been slandered, Cuba has never been a threat to the national security of the United States. There is no hostility between our peoples. Cuba hospitably welcomes the few Americans who are allowed by their Government to visit or who brave the legal consequences that might result from doing so and those who come to offer humanitarian assistance, such as Pastors for Peace, or to study medicine.

There are well-known opinion polls that show the increasing and majority support from absolutely all sectors of United States society for the lifting of the blockade and the normalization of bilateral relations. It is particularly noteworthy that that support is even more marked in Florida, as confirmed by the electoral trends in the most recent presidential elections.

Political personalities of the most diverse stripes and scholars have recognized that the policy has failed to meet its purpose and has not served the national interests of that Power. It is enough to read the editorials published by *The New York Times* in recent weeks. Religious leaders have cited legitimate and indisputable ethical and humanitarian reasons to ask for change. American citizens are demanding the right to travel to the only place on the planet where they are prevented from going and to receive direct and personal information on the reality of the situation in Cuba.

Entrepreneurial organizations and businesspeople believe that the blockade harms their economic interests. The majority public opinion is opposed to maintaining the current state of affairs and is expressing that in an increasingly critical way. Cuban émigrés have suffered under discriminatory measures and have had to cope with numerous obstacles hindering family reunification and travelling in both directions, excessive costs imposed on them, political manipulation and even terrorist violence. The majority want peace and well-being for their families and their people and normal ties with their mother country.

What is the point of encouraging the illegal use of information technologies instead of authorizing mutually beneficial businesses in the area of telecommunications? What is the point of preventing Cuba's connection to nearby submarine cables, thus limiting and hindering our connectivity? The blockade is harmful to Cuba, but it is also harmful to the United States. The absurd and ridiculous inclusion of Cuba on the list of States sponsors of international terrorism, which has been used to justify the imposition of additional financial sanctions, is to the discredit of the United States.

The 16 years that three Cuban anti-terrorist fighters have been unjustly imprisoned under false pretences have not weakened them. On the contrary, they have become heroes, examples for future generations of Cubans and a source of pride for those whose sacrifice paved the way towards a new Cuba.

The decision to end the blockade will be welcomed at the global level and will have a singular impact on global peace and the peaceful settlement of conflicts and differences.

After the limited but welcome measures of 2009 and 2011 on family visits, remittances from Cubans who settled in United States territory and travel licenses enabling certain categories of United States citizens to engage in exchanges of various sorts, the technical dialogue has been expanded to include other issues, and cooperation has been enhanced in areas such as the fight against drug trafficking, transnational crime and trafficking in persons; the prevention of oil spills; search and rescue operations; air safety; and other specific areas. The reaction of United States society and the international community to those modest advances has been one of support and encouragement.

President Barack Obama has been entrusted with every constitutional prerogative and does not require support from Congress to modify certain crucial aspects of the blockade and introduce a new and decisive dynamic in bilateral relations. We invite the Government of the United States to establish mutually respectful relations based on reciprocity, sovereign equality, the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We can seek solutions to our differences through respectful dialogue and cooperation in areas of common interest. We can live and deal with each other in a civilized manner, despite our differences.

Cuba will never renounce its sovereignty or the path freely chosen by its people to build a more just, efficient, prosperous and sustainable socialism — nor will it give up in its quest for a different international order or cease in its struggle for worldwide equilibrium.

At this difficult and special juncture, I ask members to vote in favour of draft resolution A/69/L.4, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”, in order to give weight to the idea that the serious problems currently facing humankind require us to change our way of relating to each other, so that we can solve those problems and preserve peace and human life.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/69/L.4.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and shall be delivered by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Godard** (United States of America): As do all Member States, the United States conducts its economic relationships with other countries in accordance with its national interests and its principles. Our sanctions toward Cuba are part of our overall effort to help the Cuban people freely exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms and determine their own future, consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the democratic principles to which the United Nations itself is committed. We therefore stand in opposition to the draft resolution.

The Cuban Government uses this annual draft resolution in an attempt to shift blame for the island's economic problems away from its own policy failures. The Cuban Government now publicly recognizes that its economic woes are caused by the economic policies that it has pursued for the past half-century. We note and welcome recent changes that reflect that acknowledgement, such as those that allow greater self-employment and liberalization of the real-estate market. But the Cuban economy will not thrive until the Cuban Government permits a free and fair labour market, fully empowers Cuban independent entrepreneurs, respects intellectual property rights, allows unfettered access to information via the Internet, opens its State monopolies to private competition and adopts the sound macro-economic policies that have contributed to the success of Cuba's neighbours in Latin America.

The United States remains a deep and abiding friend of the Cuban people. The Cuban people continue to receive as much as \$2 billion per year in remittances and other private contributions from the United States. That support has been made possible by United States policy choices. By the Cuban Government's own account, the United States is one of Cuba's principal trading partners. In 2013, the United States exported approximately \$359 million in agricultural products, medical devices, medicine and humanitarian items to Cuba. Far from restricting aid to the Cuban people, we are proud that the people of the United States and its companies are among the leading providers of humanitarian assistance to Cuba. All of that trade and assistance is conducted in conformity with our sanctions programme, which is carefully calibrated

to allow and encourage the provision of support to the Cuban people.

The United States places the highest priority on building and strengthening connections between the Cuban people and the people of the United States. United States travel, remittance, information exchange, humanitarian and people-to-people policies, which were updated in 2009 and 2011, provide the Cuban people with alternative sources of information, help them take advantage of limited opportunities for self-employment and private property and strengthen independent civil society. The hundreds of thousands of Americans who have sent remittances and travelled to the island, under categories of purposeful travel promoted by President Obama, remain the best ambassadors for our democratic ideals.

The United States strongly supports the Cuban people's desire to determine their own future through the free flow of information to, from, and within Cuba. The right to receive and impart information and ideas through any media is set forth in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the Cuban Government's policies that continue to prevent the enjoyment of that right. The Cuban Government now claims to share our goal of helping the Cuban people to access the Internet. Yet the Cuban Government has failed to offer widespread access to the Internet through its high-speed cable with Venezuela. Instead, it continues to impose barriers to information for the Cuban people, while disingenuously blaming United States policy.

Moreover, the Cuban Government continues to detain Alan Gross, a United States citizen who was sentenced to 15 years in prison for facilitating Internet access for Cuba's small Jewish community. The United States calls on Cuba to release Mr. Gross immediately, allow unrestricted access to the Internet and tear down the digital wall of censorship that it has erected around the Cuban people.

The draft resolution only serves to distract from the real problems facing the Cuban people, and therefore my delegation will oppose it. Though Cuba's contributions to the fight against Ebola are laudable, they do not excuse or diminish the regime's treatment of its own people. We encourage this world body to support the desires of the Cuban people to choose their own future. By doing so, it would truly advance the principles upon which the Charter of the United Nations was founded,

and the purposes for which the United Nations was created.

**Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, the international community meets in the General Assembly to discuss and approve the draft resolution submitted by the sister Republic of Cuba entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

Nicaragua, in explaining its vote on the draft resolution, would like to begin by quoting a Cuban comrade, who, while recently visiting Nicaragua, said in reference to our country: “Our patriotic sentiments, our spirituality are linked to Nicaragua and all that hurts these people we feel at first hand”. Nicaragua will vote in favour of the draft resolution because we share those sentiments, our people and Government feel at first hand all that happens to the brother people and Government of Cuba. There have been fifty-five years of blockade, economic war and aggression, which represents, to our knowledge, the most prolonged and ruthless such exercise in contemporary times.

We wish to emphasize that the statements of support for the people and Government of Cuba recently expressed by representatives of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Caribbean Community, the Union of South American Nations, the Southern Common Market and the African Union are the most irrefutable proof that the world almost entirely rejects and condemns that criminal blockade.

We appreciate the information provided by our fellow Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, that the United States Administration not only continues to maintain the blockade, but has not taken any steps toward ending that illegal and unjust policy. The United States continues to reinforce its inhumane embargo and its use of extraterritorial measures, especially in the banking and financial sectors, and to prosecute those who engage in international financial transactions with Cuba, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

It is against that backdrop that we would like, once again, to denounce before the Assembly the fact that the Consulate of the Republic of Cuba in Washington, D.C., has been deprived of financial services for the past year. As always, we are saddened and infuriated when

we see how those measures impact the development and lives of the Cuban people, as detailed by the Foreign Minister. The effects on imports and exports and the lack of access to international credit impacts the Cuban people’s health and education system, their right to food and their lack of access to international markets. In short, the measures inflict damage in all spheres of the Cuban people’s lives. The blockade is the main obstacle to the sustainable development and economic and social programmes of that sister-nation.

Today, we would like to indicate that, despite this war of aggression and embargo, that heroic people will never surrender, and we are convinced that we can continue to count on them, on their solidarity and unconditional support, for any emergency or needs that any of our peoples have. Today, faced with the Ebola epidemic, Cuba is as always at the forefront of helping humanity, in defence of developing countries and also, why not say it, in defence of developed countries.

Nicaragua once again condemns the inhumane and criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba. We demand its immediate cessation. We demand the return of the occupied territory of Guantanamo, the immediate and unconditional release of the five Cuban anti-terrorist heroes, the cessation of the recent immoral, illegal and covert activity called ZunZuneo and the immediate removal of Cuba from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism, which is nothing more than the United States Government’s justification and pretext for intensifying its aggressive practices and policies against Cuba.

Unfortunately, and despite what we heard this morning in this Hall, the same United States delegate once again put forward the same incongruous arguments and fallacies that the United States puts forward every year to justify its criminal blockade policy. Once again, the United States is trying to confuse the General Assembly with its arguments that convince no one, a reflection of its stubborn and outdated policies, selfishness, its imperial arrogance and exceptionalism.

Nicaragua will once again vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/69/L.4) and urges the rest of the international community to once again vote in favour of Cuba, reject the United States policies, their pretensions and justifications, and to continue walking alongside Cuba, in solidarity, united in cooperation, hand in hand, to eradicate the inequities that afflict our peoples, as we seek to eradicate poverty and improve health, education, happiness and well-being for all.

In conclusion, I wish to quote our President Ortega Saavedra, who, in referring to the embargo, has said:

“It is time to end this blockade. The situation has changed, including within the United States, the majority of people are against the blockade. The conditions have been created for President Barack Obama to decide to take that step, even if it goes against the system. Every day, it is increasingly clear that Cuba is not isolated from the world, that it is the American policy that remains alone and isolated. That is the reality.”

Hopefully, the United States will decide to rectify its policies and end its own isolation. We invite the delegation of the United States and the United States Government to join the international community in putting an end to this ancient history, and to build together a future of friendship, mutual cooperation and respect.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/69/L.4, 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, Cabo 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, 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-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, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

*Against:*

Israel, United States of America

*Abstaining:*

Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau

*Draft resolution A/69/L.4 was adopted by 188 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions (resolution 69/5).*

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

**Mr. Lambertini (Italy):** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

United States trade policy towards Cuba is fundamentally a bilateral issue. However, the effects and side effects of extraterritorial legislation and unilateral administrative and judicial measures also influence business decisions in the EU and have a negative effect on EU interests. American legislation such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 has extended the effects of the United States embargo to third-party countries. In the framework of its common commercial policy, the European Union has firmly and continuously opposed such extraterritorial measures. While we acknowledge the decision of the Government of the United States to lift restrictions on remittances and family travel to Cuba, we cannot allow unilaterally imposed measures to interfere with our economic and commercial relations with Cuba.

In order to address the problem, in November 1996 the EU Council of Ministers adopted a regulation and a joint action to protect the interests of natural or legal persons residing in Europe from the consequences of those Acts. At the summit between the European Union and the United States held in London in May 1998, a package was agreed on that also sought to alleviate the problems created by extraterritorial legislation. It covered waivers to Titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act, a commitment by the United States Government to resisting future extraterritorial legislation of that kind, and an understanding regarding the disciplines for strengthening investment protection. It is vital that the United States implement that agreement.

The European Union's policy towards Cuba was set out in a common position in 1996. In a reaffirmation of its validity, in June 2008 the European Union lifted the restrictive measures that had been imposed on Cuba in 2003. A dialogue with the authorities in Havana was resumed without preconditions and on a basis of reciprocity and non-discrimination. Five ministerial political dialogue sessions have been held with the Cuban Government to address issues of common interest, including human rights — a question at the core of our relations with all third countries, including Cuba. We reaffirm our determination to pursue a results-oriented, comprehensive dialogue with the Cuban authorities and with representatives of civil society and the peaceful pro-democracy opposition, in accordance with EU policies, as well as the right of Cuban citizens to make independent decisions about their future.

We reiterate our call on the Cuban Government to grant its citizens full, internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms, including freedom of assembly and expression and free access to information. We call on it to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and, in the wake of the visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, to extend invitations to other Rapporteurs to visit Cuba. In that context, we welcome the Cuban Government's adoption of a migration law in 2013 as an important step towards granting full freedom of movement to Cuban citizens.

Cuba's existing restrictions on rights and freedoms undermine and offset its achievements in health care and education. Similarly, Cuban domestic economic policy seriously hampers its own economic development. In that context, we note the Cuban Parliament's adoption in August 2011 of a package of economic and social reforms, and we expect them to be extended and implemented so as to address the Cuban people's key concerns. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States contributes to Cuba's economic problems, producing negative effects on Cubans' living standards, as well as consequences in humanitarian areas. Lifting the embargo could help open up the Cuban economy to the people's benefit. We once again unite in expressing our rejection of all unilateral measures directed against Cuba that negatively affect the interests of third parties and thereby violate commonly accepted rules of international trade.

We urge the Cuban authorities to bring about real improvements in all the aforementioned areas. While the EU continues to have concerns and criticisms about governance and human rights in Cuba, in April it nevertheless launched a negotiation process with Cuba. We are encouraged by the fact that no subjects will be off-limits in that process, including human rights, governance and civil society, and respect for the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Against that backdrop, the member States of the European Union unanimously voted in favour of today's resolution (resolution 69/5).

**Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to welcome Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and to express to him once again my country's full support for the Government and friendly people of

Cuba in the face of the unjust embargo that consecutive United States administrations have unrelentingly imposed on Cuba for many years.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Iran, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Bolivia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The embargo imposed on Cuba for many decades has created a deplorable precedent in dealings between States in a manner that contravenes international law. It has arbitrarily subjected Cuba and its people to a great deal of economic, political and social hardship. It has deepened their suffering and put the United States in direct confrontation with the international consensus declares that the embargo should be rejected. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs has said, the embargo has resulted in material losses to Cuba of more than \$1 trillion.

For the twenty-third consecutive time, the General Assembly has met to reaffirm, by an overwhelming majority, the illegitimacy and inhumanity of the embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba and its people. It is contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, notably the principles of equal sovereignty among States and non-interference in their internal affairs. It also runs contrary to international instruments pertaining to human rights, international humanitarian law and international trade.

Regrettably, despite all the many resolutions adopted by an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly and other decisions proclaimed by other political, regional and international organizations, the embargo on Cuba imposed in 1959 is still in force. It is as though nothing had happened and as if our discussions of international law and the United Nations Charter were the mere idle chatter of the weak. The fact that 188 States voted in favour of today's resolution (resolution 69/5) testifies once again to the fact that almost all our members consider that the embargo is illegitimate and should be lifted.

The fact that Israel, together with the United States, is one of only two States to have voted against the resolution is proof that it continues to turn a blind eye to international law and to support illegitimate practices against other States Members of the United Nations, as it has been doing with respect to the Palestinian people and to the Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan. The

Israeli vote is self-explanatory and adds insult to injury regarding the United States policy.

My country confirms once again that the coercive unilateral measures imposed by the United States, the European Union and their allies represent a blatant violation and breach of the principles of international law. They are also an instrument for imposing Western hegemony on other countries and peoples, designed to interfere in the internal affairs of other States in a manner that is contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. The embargo is also a tool for advancing the collective punishment policies embraced by the United States and the States members of the European Union with a view to weakening other States or putting pressure on them in order to change the national choices and policies available to them as independent nations. We recall, in that regard, the disastrous impact of the economic embargoes on Iraq and Libya, especially on the civilians of those countries.

Accordingly, Syria would like once again to condemn and reject the oppressive and coercive measures imposed by the European Union and the United States against the Syrian people. We would like to highlight the negative impact of those unilateral illegitimate measures, as they stand in the way of the access of ordinary Syrian people to basic commodities, such as food, medicine, medical equipment, fuel, agricultural products and other items, as well as civil aviation and communications tools. Those measures represent a blatant breach of the human rights of the Syrian people, in addition to the grave damage to the Syrian economic. We further note that, when States that impose coercive measures on the Syrian people go on to deplore the situation of the Syrian people, it is pure hypocrisy on their part.

I would like to remind the Assembly that the imposition of coercive and unilateral measures violates relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 68/200, entitled "Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries", and resolution 68/162, entitled "Human rights and unilateral coercive measures", in which the Assembly condemned rejected unilateral economic measures, considering them to be an obstacle to commercial and trade relationships among countries and violations of international human rights instruments. Under that mandate, the General Assembly is called upon to take the necessary steps to put an end to the unjust embargo policy and other

unilateral aggressive or coercive measures that some States embrace in contravention of the international law framework. Such measures can be seen as constituting aggression and as being in violation of the United Nations Charter. In that regard, my delegation hopes that all types of embargoes and other unilateral coercive measures imposed on Cuba and on other countries, including my country, Syria, will be lifted.

My delegation calls once again for the lifting of the unjust, inhuman and unethical Israeli embargo imposed on the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan. We hope that the voice of the international community, as expressed by the General Assembly and other international organizations, will be respected by the United States, and we hope that the United States legislative authorities will harken to that voice and the resolution just adopted.

Based on the foregoing, my country, Syria, voted in favour of resolution 69/5.

**Mr. Phansourivong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic): I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report under agenda item 40 (A/69/98). My delegation wishes to align itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We are here once again to express our sympathy for the innocent and peace-loving people of Cuba, who have continued to endure the misery resulting from the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against them. Under the embargo, the Cuban Government is unable to utilize its full capacity to eliminate poverty, promote economic and social development and attain the Millennium Development Goals. In addition, the embargo violates international law and is against the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It also constitutes a transgression against the right of a sovereign State to peace, development and security.

The General Assembly has called upon all States to refrain from promulgating and applying law, regulations and measures that affect the sovereignty of other Member States and from repealing and invalidating laws, if so doing has a similar impact. States have the right to participate freely in international, financial and commercial systems, based on the notion of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and no

nation has the right to interfere in the sovereignty, internal affairs and legitimate interests of entities or States, despite their different sociopolitical systems. Since Cuba is an independent State, it has the right to choose the political system and the path of development that best suit its specific conditions.

Last year, 188 States Members of the United Nations voted in favour of resolution 68/200, and again this year, 188 Member States have just voted in favour of resolution 69/5, which is irrefutable proof that the battle for the lifting of the blockade is recognized and supported by the vast majority of the international community. Therefore, the blockade must be immediately and unconditionally lifted.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic joins the majority of the States Members of the United Nations in supporting the Cuban people in this fight. As States Members of the United Nations, we should do everything we can to help Cuba to fully reclaim its legitimate right to become integrated into the global economy. In that spirit, my delegation voted in favour of resolution 69/5.

**Mr. Estreme** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the fact that the General Assembly has adopted, by an overwhelming majority, a new resolution on the blockade against Cuba (resolution 69/5). We would like to congratulate the Cuban Government and the Cuban mission to the United Nations on the excellent work that they have done.

Argentina voted in favour of resolution 69/5 so as to demonstrate once again our firm opposition to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba, the use of unilateral coercive measures, the extraterritorial application of certain national trade laws and the adoption of discriminatory trade practices. Argentina rejects the embargo policy against Cuba that has been carried out by the Government of the United States of America for practically half a century. In addition to being morally unjustifiable, it violates the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law and the spirit of multilateralism.

Argentina reiterates its absolute commitment to the principles of sovereign equality among States, non-interference in internal matters and the ability to be free to trade and navigate. The embargo is immoral, unjust and illegal. It is very clear to the international community that the embargo is the main obstacle to the economic and social development of the Cuban people.

The figure given by the Foreign Minister of Cuba a few moments ago shows the full extent of the consequences of those measures on all aspects of life for Cubans. The embargo, which has been condemned in successive General Assembly resolutions with virtually unanimous support, has had serious humanitarian and economic effects that cause irreparable harm to the well-being of the Cuban people.

As we have stated earlier today, the embargo impacts on basic matters, such as health, education, diet, tourism, transportation, industry and culture, just to mention a few areas. It also produces harm to all areas of the country's economy. It functions as a barrier impeding the country's access to international financing on favourable conditions that would enable it to obtain cutting-edge technology and attract foreign investment and direct investment, all of which prevents Cuba from becoming fully part of the international economic system. As an example, the damage to Cuba's foreign trade over the past year was an estimated \$3.9 billion, and in a conservative estimate, has led, during the years of the United States' economic and financial embargo, to damage to the Cuban people of more than \$116.88 billion.

However, despite the limitations imposed by the blockade, Cuba has been able to be an actor and a leader in various areas of cooperation and international solidarity. We cannot fail to mention the Cuban contributions in the area of health. The recent decision of the Cuban Government to train and send hundreds of physicians to West Africa, at the risk of their own lives, to help tackle Ebola is an example of the solidarity of the people that has not been vanquished.

Since this will be the Secretary-General's last report on the subject, Argentina should like to express

our support for it. We would like to highlight one of the pillars of the bilateral links between Argentina and Cuba. We have an Argentine law relevant to Cuba that establishes our approach to the extraterritorial nature of foreign laws in our country. Article 1 of that law states that foreign laws will be inapplicable and have no legal effect if they attempt to generate extraterritorial legal effects by imposing an economic embargo on a particular country with the aim of producing a change of Government or affecting that country's right to self-determination.

Argentina stands in solidarity with Cuba, and we express our full support for the international community's struggle for Cuba. We adhere to the principle of the legal equality of all States with regard to their sovereignty. We affirm that strict respect must be given to all differences, whether economic, political or of another kind. The blockade against Cuba must stop. The system of unilateral sanctions is the most persistent and severe measure of that kind applied against any country. Every year since 1992, the General Assembly has expressed its opinion on that matter and has, by an overwhelming majority, called for respect for international law and for the fulfilment of the aims and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rights of the Cuban people to choose for themselves their own destiny. We hope that we will not have to adopt additional resolutions of this kind in the future. We hope that the unjust embargo imposed on the Cuban people will, once and for all, be lifted by the Government of the United States.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in the explanation of vote after the vote for this meeting.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*