



General Assembly

Seventieth session

40th plenary meeting
Monday, 26 October 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Mr. González Franco (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 42

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/120)

Draft resolution (A/70/L.2)

Mr. Khoshroo (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), and would like to begin by extending the Movement's warmest welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to this meeting.

The Assembly, for 23 consecutive years, has expressed its overwhelming support for and solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba through its decisive votes in favour of the resolutions calling for lifting of the United States of America embargo against Cuba. Last year, 188 Member States voted in favour of resolution 69/5 on that subject.

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 and continues to have extremely adverse impacts on the well-being of the Cuban people. The direct and indirect damage caused by the undeserved embargo against Cuba is enormous. It affects all crucial sectors of the economy, including public health, nutrition and agriculture, as well as banking, trade, investment and tourism. It denies Cuba access to markets, development aid from international financial institutions and technology transfers, and it creates impediments for 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, sport and scientific relations. The continuation of the embargo is totally unjustifiable and hampers Cuba's efforts to achieve sustainable development.

The cumulative economic damage to the Cuban people due to the application of the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against Cuba, taking into account the depreciation of the dollar in relation to the price of gold on the international market, amounts to \$833.7 billion. At current prices, over all those years the blockade has caused damages of over \$121 billion.

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NAM considers the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States to be an initial positive step in the process towards the normalization of bilateral relations. At the same time, it should be noted that the implementation of the blockade against Cuba remains unchanged. Indeed, under the current Administration of the United States, the blockade has been further tightened and its territorial implementation further intensified through the imposition of 42 fines on United States and foreign entities amounting to more than \$13.2 billion, the most notorious of which are the \$1.7 billion fine imposed on the German bank Commerzbank and the \$7.6-million fine imposed on the United States company PayPal. While the regulations issued by the United States Departments of Commerce and the Treasury on 15 January were steps in the right direction in areas such as travel to Cuba, telecommunications and remittances, they are limited in scope and modify only certain aspects related to the implementation of the blockade.

Despite the historic decision of the United States President to notify the United States Congress of his decision to remove Cuba from the so-called list of State sponsors of international terrorism — a list on which Cuba should have never been included — that has not meant an easing of the intricacies of all the prohibitions and restrictions established by the blockade laws and regulations imposed against that country. For its part, the United States Congress has not approved any of the bills seeking to eliminate some of the blockade regulations.

Based on all this, NAM upholds its call for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba. We recall that, last year, 188 States Members of the United Nations voted in favour of the resolution on this item. That number signifies near unanimity within the international community in demanding an end to the five-decade embargo and full adherence 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 stands alone in pursuing its unjustified economic sanctions 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 that call for an

immediate and complete end to the embargo imposed on Cuba.

Mr. Morejón Pazmiño (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the special honour to address the General Assembly today on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

CELAC welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba, which opens a new chapter in the history of peace and coexistence between American States. We acknowledge the intention expressed by President Obama to end the economic, commercial and financial blockade that the United States has maintained against Cuba for 56 years.

However, the embargo remains a reality for the Cuban people. It undeniably remains the primary obstacle to Cuba's normal development. The Secretary-General's report (A/70/120) confirms the cost to Cuba of that policy, which causes immeasurable and unjustifiable damage to the well-being of the Cuban people. It runs counter to the desire for peace of the Latin American people, expressed in the proclamation of Latin America as a zone of peace. In our opinion, the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba contravenes the letter and spirit of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

CELAC reiterates its vigorous rejection of the application of laws and measures that contradict international law, such as the Helms-Burton Law, including its extraterritorial provisions, and urges the Government of the United States of America to end its implementation. The United States Congress has the authority to completely end the blockade against Cuba. We note the executive orders issued by President Obama as of January, including the removal of Cuba from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism, on which it has never belonged, which attest to broad powers of the United States President to modify the unjust policy of the blockade.

CELAC reiterates its special declaration on the need for the United States to end its economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, adopted at the third Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Belén, Costa Rica, on 28 and 29 January, calling on the Government of the United States to comply with the series of resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and to respond to the

repeated demands of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to end its economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba. CELAC reiterates its grave concern about and rejection of the intensification of the extraterritorial dimension of the blockade and the growing hindrance of Cuba's international financial transactions, which contradict the political will of the international community.

The Charter of the United Nations enshrines rights, obligations and principles that have become part of the legal heritage not only of international law but of all humankind, and must not be the object of violations or undermining by any Member. Member States must adapt their national legislation in accordance with the rights, obligations and principles enshrined by our founding Charter. For those reasons, CELAC will decisively support draft resolution A/70/L.2, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", and commends the effort of the sister Republic of Cuba to draft language adapted to current circumstances.

We stress the inconsistency between the imposition of unilateral measures that are not supported by international law and the letter and spirit of the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. We reiterate our call on the United States to accept the call of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and all regions of the world, as well as of its own people, to put an end once and for all to its unjust blockade of the Republic of Cuba.

With those words I close my remarks on behalf of CELAC. I will now speak in my national capacity.

Ecuador would like to add that it is cause for sadness to hear the Government of the United States claim to have ended its 50-year embargo. The United States is proposing to change its 50-year blockade not because it has violated inter-American law, international law, the rights of the Cuban people or human rights, but because the embargo has not worked. Ecuador believes that this implies no concession. This is about justice and the dignity of the Cuban people, who have put up 50 years of heroic resistance.

Our peoples will never again accept trusteeship, interference or intervention. Our memory is lacerated by the abuses and violence of the past, even if we are asked to forget them and look only to the future as if nothing had happened. For that reason, Ecuador will

vote in favour of the draft resolution before us not only because it is a just cause. It is deplorable that in the twenty-first century some continue to undermine the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and to hinder the inclusive sustainable economic development of other peoples and States.

Ecuador looks forward with hope towards the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States and hopes that the process will lead to the end to the blockade and the closing of the base at Guantanamo. That will not constitute a concession on the part of any Power; instead, it will represent the triumph of justice and the dignity of the Cuban people, as expressed by the President of the Republic of Ecuador in the general debate of this session (see A/70/PV.15). We reiterate and restate that view today.

Mr. Mamabolo (South Africa): Allow me to register the following remarks on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I wish also to acknowledge the presence of the honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Cuba and the United States. In that context, we welcome the bold initiative of President Raúl Castro and President Barack Obama. That joint initiative is a significant first step towards the full normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States. However, it needs to be followed by the immediate lifting of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. Since it has been amply recognized that the blockade is harmful to the Cuban people, it is high time for the Congress of the United States to put an end to the embargo. The Group of 77 and China supports Cuba's decision to embrace this rapprochement, despite the illegal nature of the imposition of the blockade and the immense human and economic suffering and hardship endured by the Cuban people for over 50 years.

The Group of 77 and China is of the view that, although President Obama performed an act of historical justice when he notified the United States Congress of his decision to remove Cuba from the list of so-called State sponsors of international terrorism — a list on which Cuba should have never been included in the first place — that has not meant an easing of all of the prohibitions and restrictions established by the blockade laws and regulations imposed against that sister

country. It is disheartening to note that the United States Congress has not approved any of the bills seeking to eliminate some of the remaining blockade regulations. However, so far, 10 legal initiatives have been presented in Congress to reinforce several fundamental aspects related to the implementation of that policy and to prevent the approval by President Obama of new executive measures and the implementation of those already adopted.

The Group of 77 and China would like to submit that, following 17 December 2014, the implementation of the blockade against Cuba has remained unchanged. The most notorious proof of that fact are the \$1.71 billion fine imposed on the German bank Commerzbank and the \$7,658,300 fine imposed on the United States company PayPal. Despite some of the positive overtures that have been extended to date by Washington, D.C., it remains a cause for concern that, under the Administration of President Obama, the blockade has been further tightened and its territorial implementation and grip intensified through the imposition of 42 fines on United States and foreign entities totalling \$13,279,148,196.

The Group of 77 and China joins the international community in condemning the unilateral blockade of Cuba and calls on the United States to initiate measures to immediately repeal those inhumane actions designed to illicitly punish a nation. Such measures are contrary to the principles, purposes and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, especially the principle of the sovereign equality of States and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of Member States. The severe economic and financial restrictions that stifle the economic and social development of Cuba further exacerbate the hardships and suffering of the people of Cuba. That must come to an end.

The Group reiterates its unconditional support for the implementation of the recommendations of resolution 69/5 and takes this opportunity to appeal once again to the international community to redouble its efforts to promote constructive and transparent dialogue between the two countries, with a view to achieving the objectives of all the resolutions already adopted by the United Nations on the matter and to ensure the sustainable and further progress of the people of Cuba.

While the regulations issued by the United States Departments of Commerce and the Treasury on 15 January were steps in the right direction in

areas such as travel to Cuba, telecommunications and remittances, those measures are limited in scope and will address only the tip of the iceberg. More commitments are therefore needed. We must also denounce the constraints placed on Cuba's right to carry out financial transactions abroad. All countries deserve to be allowed to do business in an open and just environment, which is a sovereign right that needs to be recognized.

Despite the difficulties that Cuba has experienced due to the economic, commercial and financial embargo, that country, in demonstration of its international solidarity, has consistently supplied medical assistance of the highest quality at the international level. More than 50,000 health workers trained in Cuba are providing services in 66 countries, including in Sierra Leone, on the front lines of the Ebola crisis.

Throughout all these years, the embargo and blockade have caused damages estimated at more than \$121.19 billion. Therefore, in conclusion, the Group of 77 and China reiterates yet again its call for the embargo and blockade against Cuba to cease. It is the most unjust, severe and longest-lasting system of unilateral sanctions ever applied to any country. Failure to do so would cause history to judge harshly the players that are continuing to perpetuate the aforementioned system. This historical injunction remains ever more relevant and timely as we move towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). We also need to make a commitment in this forum not to leave the Cuban people behind.

Mr. Minah (Sierra Leone): It is indeed an honour for me to speak on behalf of the Group of African States on draft resolution A/70/L.2, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

At the outset, the African Group welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba, which we view as a significant step in fostering closer bilateral ties between the two nations. While noting such positive achievements, the Group continues to reaffirm its condemnation of the ongoing economic and financial embargo against Cuba. We note that it has been over 50 years since those crippling sanctions were imposed and that it has been two decades since this item was first placed on the agenda of the General Assembly.

The African Group is aware that the economic sanctions continue to cause great economic hardship for the people of Cuba, particularly the poor and most vulnerable. We call for an immediate end to the economic embargo and reaffirm that it is imperative for the promotion of better standards of living for the people of Cuba, particularly in view of the theme of “leaving no one behind”, as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). We encourage and fully endorse the ongoing spirit of dialogue that continues between Cuba and the United States, aimed at resolving all outstanding issues between the two nations. While reaffirming our full support for the draft resolution that we have gathered today to consider, we continue to reiterate our call on the Government of the United States to lift the long-standing embargo against Cuba.

Speaking in my national capacity, on this day in this Hall, let me say that Sierra Leone adds its voice to all of those who call for a new beginning and a new chapter in the relationship between the two States involved. In particular, Sierra Leone joins its voice with all those asking that the shackles of the past be cut and the promise of a truly diplomatically and economically liberated Cuba be allowed to stand. Beyond consensus, beyond majority and by near unanimity, the Assembly has called for a lifting of the embargo and this year, Sierra Leone believes that we will stand on the right side of history and make that call loudly and emphatically.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

At the outset, the States members of the OIC welcome the significant step of the restoration of diplomatic relations between the Governments of the United States and Cuba, and the importance of that step in furthering the normalization of the bilateral ties between both nations. Nevertheless, and in spite of the aforementioned positive step, the issue of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba remains. Such unilateral action taken by the United States has done harm not only to the Cuban economy, but also to the well-being of the Cuban people and Cuban nationals living abroad, thereby creating unnecessary economic hardship for them.

Furthermore, the decades-long embargo has impeded socioeconomic and development progress. In addition, the unilateral blockade affects not only

Cuba, but also extends to third countries, and entities and companies that face imposed fines for engaging in commercial activity with Cuba. The OIC believes that such unilateral actions run counter to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The OIC reiterates its deep concern regarding the negative impact of the unilateral blockade on the Cuban people and believes that the continuation of the embargo is unjustifiable and hinders Cuban efforts to achieve sustainable development.

The OIC recalls that the text before us has, over the past few years, garnered the overwhelming support of the States Members of the United Nations. Continuing to disregard the international community’s collective will weakens multilateralism and undermines the credibility of the United Nations. The OIC supports draft resolution A/70/L.2 and calls upon the States Members of the United Nations to vote in favour of it.

Mr. Rattray (Jamaica): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The Caribbean Community continues to reiterate its unequivocal opposition to the United States’ imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which has been opposed by the overwhelming majority of the international community for the past 23 consecutive years. The unilateral imposition of extraterritorial laws on third States is contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, and the embargo itself runs counter to the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade that this body consistently champions.

The punitive embargo is of particular concern to CARICOM, which shares a history, culture and brotherhood with the people of Cuba. Cuba is the most populous State of the Caribbean region and an integral part of the Pan-Caribbean process. Caribbean ties with Cuba have historical significance, cemented by years of active cooperation at various levels. The States members of CARICOM continue to maintain close relations with Cuba through a wide range of programmes of cooperation in areas including trade, health care, infrastructure and human resource development. Our future regional development is in many ways reliant

upon our collective advancement and progress. In that context, we view the embargo as not only a punitive act against Cuba, but as an impediment to our shared regional development.

CARICOM welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States. We believe that this is an important positive step in the process towards the normalization of bilateral relations between the two States. We also applaud President Barack Obama's expressed intention to open a new chapter in the relations between both nations. We commend him for recognizing that the blockade is harmful to the Cuban people and for urging the United States Congress to put an end to the punitive policy.

While the regulations issued by the Departments of Commerce and the Treasury on 15 January concerning travel to Cuba, telecommunications and remittances are steps pointing in the right direction, they are still limited in scope and only modify some aspects related to the implementation of the blockade. We remain guardedly optimistic that the recent overtures made by the United States will be complemented by an increased willingness to consider the opinions and concerns of its international friends and partners. On that issue, global opinion could hardly be conveyed in a more convincing or consistent manner. Our welcome of the recent pronouncements and actions of the United States Government carries with it the expectation that the remaining historical wrongs will be righted expeditiously.

CARICOM reiterates its support for the right of the Cuban people to self-determination in a manner beneficial to their social and economic development. Indeed, Cuba's peaceful, generous and cooperative international stance merits nothing less. We therefore call once more for an end to the embargo, which has preserved a state of tension between two neighbouring countries and generated great concern and widespread unease throughout our subregion.

CARICOM continues to enjoy friendly relations with both Cuba and the United States. Our two neighbours — a mere 90 miles apart — have produced great scholars, scientists and global leaders. They possess proud and noble histories and are populated by friendly, open and loving peoples. Recent developments have renewed our hope for the full normalization of Cuba-United States relations. However, we consider the lifting of the embargo to be a prerequisite for any meaningful rapprochement. It is within this context that

CARICOM States declare our unstinting support for draft resolution A/70/L.2 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Mr. Scappini Ricciardi (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am honoured to speak in this debate on behalf of the States members of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and associated States. At the outset, I wish to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and his delegation.

Like many States represented here, MERCOSUR and its associated States, having closely followed regional and international political developments, welcome the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America, and cannot but recognize that they represent a positive initial first step towards the normalization of relations, leading to greater stability in Latin America and the world. MERCOSUR congratulates both parties on their bold initiative. However, nine months after the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two States, the embargo imposed unilaterally by the United States of America continues to incur significant humanitarian and economic costs that prevent the normal development of Cuba.

Since the signing of the Treaty of Asunción, MERCOSUR has continued to defend the principles of respect for sovereignty and good-neighbourliness and rejected unilateral, extraterritorial and coercive measures, which in this particular case have caused irreparable damage to Cuba and its people. In that light, MERCOSUR considers that the economic, trade and financial blockade constitutes a violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the norms of international law, non-intervention and non-interference in internal affairs, the peaceful settlement of disputes and freedom of international trade and navigation.

MERCOSUR and its associated States reaffirm their commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate tool in resolving disputes and an effective way to promote international cooperation and understanding among peoples. We believe, now more than ever, that in this new context, the time has come to put an end to the unilateral embargo.

In conclusion, MERCOSUR again supports and endorses the draft resolution entitled "Necessity

of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”, which has been submitted for the twenty-fourth consecutive time to the General Assembly, and urges all Member States to vote for it.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country, Malaysia.

We express our support for draft resolution A/70/L.2, on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba. ASEAN aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and that made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Since this text was first introduced in 1992, the General Assembly has consistently adopted it by an overwhelming majority. ASEAN member States have voted unanimously in favour of the resolution for the past 14 years. It is our firm belief that differences between States should be settled through engagement, not confrontation; by inclusion, not isolation; and in accordance with the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

In that regard, ASEAN welcomes the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States. We also welcome the lifting of a number of restrictions on travel and remittances by the United States since 16 January. Those are important first steps toward the normalization of bilateral relations, and have been rightly hailed as key to better regional relations in the Americas. We believe that this positive move will be mutually beneficial to the peoples of both countries and contribute to peace, security and stability and enhanced cooperation in the region.

Going forward, an even more important step will be for the United States to end its economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. This would significantly improve the quality of life and living standards of the Cuban people and contribute to the economic and social development of Cuba. Ending the embargo would also

advance the Assembly’s efforts towards achieving an inclusive post-2015 development agenda.

ASEAN strongly urges the United States and Cuba to take this opportunity to chart a new way forward. We recognize that much remains to be done. We encourage the United States and Cuba to commit to open and constructive dialogue, without preconditions and underpinned by mutual respect. ASEAN joins the other members of the Assembly in reiterating our strong support for the lifting of the unilateral embargo against Cuba as soon as possible.

Mr. Montaña (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, Mexico rejects the unilateral measures against the Republic of Cuba, including the imposition for more than 50 years of an economic, commercial and financial embargo that runs counter to international law and relations among States. We firmly believe that multilateralism is and will continue to be the best way to resolve disputes and to ensure peaceful coexistence among States.

As we have done in previous years, today we reiterate that the only organs that can impose political, military or economic sanctions are the Security Council and the General Assembly. No State should use force to impose unilateral measures that affect the development and prosperity of other peoples. About a year ago, in Veracruz, Mexico, the Heads of State and Government of the Ibero-American Community of Nations reiterated their vigorous rejection of laws and measures that run counter to international law, and urged the Government of the United States to comply with the 23 resolutions adopted by the General Assembly with a view to ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against the Republic of Cuba. The third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States issued a similar declaration urging the President of the United States to use the powers granted him by the Constitution to make significant changes to the way in which the embargo is being imposed.

We recognize that each State is free and sovereign. In line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, we must respect the self-determination of the peoples of the world. Sustainable development for all peoples must be given priority over economic and political interests. We therefore welcome the measures taken by the Cuban Government to meet its international commitments in the area of development, which will

benefit its people. In spite of the adverse circumstances it has faced for over 50 years, the Republic of Cuba has attained high levels of human development. Cuba will no doubt be a strategic partner in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which will help to build fairer and more equitable societies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mexico welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America, which will lead to the full normalization of relations between the two neighbouring and friendly countries. We firmly believe that a renewed relationship between the two countries will also help to decisively strengthen dialogue and cooperation among all of the nations of the hemisphere. As part of this process, Mexico believes that ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba would help to shift and improve its economy and ensure its full reintegration and access to financial flows and international investment that would indisputably benefit our region.

Mexico recognizes and supports the process of updating Cuba's economic and social model, which will allow us to support each other when needed. The visit to Havana this month by our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Claudia Ruiz Massieu, shows that both countries are interested in strengthening dialogue and cooperation and deepening bilateral relations. The Government of Mexico is consolidating its political and trade relations with Cuba in an effort to strengthen the economic complementary agreement.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore that Mexico has always maintained brotherly bonds of friendship, solidarity and respect with the people of Cuba, and we once again reiterate our support for the draft resolution submitted for consideration by the General Assembly.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia eagerly endorses the statements made by the representatives of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Ecuador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and Paraguay on behalf of the Southern Common Market. I welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and his delegation to the General Assembly today.

Like others who have spoken today, we wish to highlight the process leading towards the normalization of bilateral relations between Cuba and the United States

of America. When the President of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, visited New York last year, he said that he had faith that the United States and Cuba could achieve a working relationship that would enable the United States to lift the embargo. That is why my country welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and is optimistic about the willingness expressed by President Obama to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. We firmly believe that such political will will serve as a basis to make this a reality that would benefit the people of that sister Latin American nation.

Since resolution 47/19 was adopted on 24 November 1992, my Government, like all Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean and the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the Organization, has expressed its support for Cuba and voted in favour of the resolutions on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. The 188 votes cast in favour of resolution 69/5 reflect the support and solidarity of Member States and reaffirm the need to end a policy that has lasted for more than 50 years. My country believes, as we have said on previous occasions, that the embargo runs counter to international law and the spirit and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

In line with the resolution, my country reaffirms its policy of respect for international law and adherence to the principles of political independence, the self-determination of peoples, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. Consequently, Colombia does not support such measures, which run counter to the economic and commercial development and the welfare of the 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.

Mrs. Nguyen Phuong Nga (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Viet Nam endorses the statements made earlier on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. We thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report (A/70/120), which lays out the

position of Member States on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba and the assessments by United Nations agencies of the impact of the embargo.

Since the adoption of resolution 47/19, on 24 November 1992, the General Assembly has repeatedly adopted resolutions calling upon the United States of America to end its economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, the most recent of which is resolution 69/5, adopted on 28 October 2014 by 188 votes in favour. Viet Nam's principled position opposes the imposition of any unilateral embargo and coercive measures by one State on another, and today we will vote unreservedly in favour of draft resolution A/70/L.2 in its entirety.

Through its vote, Viet Nam wishes to reiterate its firm conviction that the United States of America's blockade against Cuba for more than five decades is contrary to international law and the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and causes untold hardship for the Cuban people. That policy runs counter to the common desire of all nations in the world to build sound and equal international relations, regardless of their political systems and based on respect for each nation's rights to choose its own path of development. Viet Nam joins other members of the Assembly in calling for the immediate lifting of the unjustified unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which our leaders adopted one month ago, has established a new paradigm for development, cooperation and solidarity among the peoples of the world. However, that ambitious Agenda will not be realized if the fundamental freedoms and rights of States Members of the United Nations are still being disregarded.

Viet Nam welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America. We are encouraged by the United States President's explicit intention to open a new chapter in relations with Cuba, urging the United States Congress to lift the blockade. We hope that this important historic opportunity will not be missed. The continuation of the blockade against Cuba poses an essential obstacle to the normalization of relations between the two countries. Lifting the embargo would be beneficial for the people of both Cuba and the United

States of America, as well as for peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the world.

Despite the detrimental repercussions of the embargo, Cuba has overcome difficulties and made important contributions to the common efforts of the international community to address global challenges. My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate Viet Nam's friendship, cooperation and solidarity with Cuba. We will continue to do our utmost to help the fraternal people of Cuba to overcome difficulties and challenges caused by the embargo.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): Let me start by welcoming Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and assure him of Egypt's continued support and solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba.

Egypt welcomes the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America, and welcomes the United States President's willingness to work to lift the blockade imposed on Cuba for more than five decades. We also recognize the advancements made in the regulations issued by the Government of the United States of America in some areas. We hope that those steps will lead to the normalization of bilateral relations in all their aspects between the two countries.

However, while that progress constitutes a step in the right direction, it remains insufficient, as the imposition of the blockade has remained unchanged, and the laws and regulations underpinning it continue to be in force and implemented with the utmost severity. We still believe that the United States of America needs to take many steps and brave decisions towards the immediate lifting of the embargo imposed against Cuba for the full normalization of their relations. For five decades, the United States of America has imposed stringent restrictions on the Cuban people's access to food, medicines, education and high-technology goods. The embargo has had detrimental repercussions on many sectors of the Cuban economy, generating unnecessary shortages and suffering for the Cuban people.

We believe that the embargo continues to be an absurd and morally insupportable policy, which has not served the purpose of breaking the Cuban people's determination to control their own future. Despite all the detrimental repercussions and adverse impacts of the embargo, the Government of Cuba has made

enormous efforts to meet the needs of its people. The more than 54 years of the embargo against Cuba have proved that, in this globalized world, the Cuban people can still survive, thanks to their perseverance, resistance and hope.

Finally, Egypt hopes that the dialogue between the two countries, based on mutual respect and observance of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, will lead to the immediate lifting of the embargo and normalization of the bilateral relations in all its aspects. In the current new context, we once again urge the United States of America to avail itself of this historic opportunity and immediately and fully comply with all 23 General Assembly resolutions on the subject, which were adopted by the overwhelming majority of the international community, and lift the unjustified embargo, which should never have existed and must cease once and for all. Egypt will continue its full support and solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela endorses the statements delivered by the representatives of Ecuador, the Islamic Republic of Iran and South Africa on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 plus China respectively.

The embargo imposed against Cuba by the United States of America represents a system of unilateral sanctions that is the most unjust, severe and long-lasting embargo ever imposed against any country in modern history. It has inflicted a massive human cost on the Cuban population. It is also a flagrant violation of the principles of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the rights to self-determination and development of peoples.

The brutal blockade of Cuba was basically designed to break the Cuban people's determination to build a free and sovereign homeland. In addition to the economic, commercial and financial blockade, the sanctions system against Cuba has included a set of successive prohibitions and unilateral coercive measures that have had a cumulative impact on our Cuban brothers over more than 50 years and have resulted in economic losses totalling more than \$830 million. The sanctions also affect any organization or country, of which we are one, that attempts to maintain fraternal and cooperative relations — economic, technological, commercial

or financial — with our sister republic of Cuba. The embargo on Cuba is, therefore, an effort not only to damage its people's development but also to isolate them. The vote here today in the Assembly on draft resolution A/70/L.2, the text of which will undoubtedly be adopted for the twenty-fourth time, will once again confirm not only that the United States has failed in its attempt to isolate Cuba, but that it is the United States Administration that has completely isolated itself through its own policy.

Conversely, today's adoption of the draft resolution will send a clear, strong message to the United States that not only should it end the economic, commercial and financial embargo that it has imposed on Cuba, but it should also cease its long-term practice of claiming to be the world's policeman and imposing its political and economic decisions and visions on the rest of the world extraterritorially, in violation of international law and of respect for other countries' sovereignty. The United States economic sanctions on Cuba are reprehensible, both because they are illegal under international law and because they are examples of the punitive measures that the United States often imposes in response to pressures and interests from extremist groups outside its own political system.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela commends the atmosphere of dialogue that has led to the restoration of bilateral relations between the Governments of Cuba and the United States of America, and we would like to highlight President Obama's acknowledgement that the sanctions policy has failed every American Government for more than 50 years. We should add that the sanctions policy has not only been a failure for the United States Government, but it has also led to an extraordinary political and moral victory for the Cuban people in their resistance and steadfastness.

We would also like to emphasize that, if the United States Government wishes to maintain cooperative, friendly relations with the rest of the world, and with our region of Latin America and the Caribbean in particular, it should stop interfering in our internal affairs, stop imposing sanctions as it has done for 50 years to Cuba and is now doing to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and stop attempting to impose its own political and economic ideas on others. Our relations must be based on respect for our peoples' self-determination and sovereignty.

We would like today's draft resolution, aimed at ending the economic, commercial and financial

blockade of Cuba and certain to be adopted by an overwhelming majority in the Assembly today, to function as an instrument reflecting what is right and the need to enforce international law that will contribute to ensuring that the United States Congress abolishes all of its coercive measures linked to the economic blockade of Cuba, such as the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act and the 1996 Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, and that the United States finally learns the lesson that its national legislature does not have the power to legislate against the world.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will vote in favour of the draft resolution out of the conviction and determination that the Cuban embargo has been a huge injustice and offence against the law that must end once and for all.

Finally, we would like to welcome the presence here today of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Cuba's Minister for Foreign Affairs, and through him send a message in the spirit of Chávez and Bolívar to the entire Cuban people and to former President Fidel Castro and President Raúl Castro, a message of solidarity, recognition, brotherhood and friendship, in the confidence that victory is ours. We shall overcome!

Mr. Mukerji (India): India associates itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We also welcome Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to the Assembly today.

At the outset, I would first like to recall that today's debate is taking place in the context of some welcome developments in the bilateral relations between Cuba and the United States. In that context, I would like to stress that India warmly welcomes the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States. We congratulate the Governments and the peoples of both nations on that historic event.

Every year, for more than two decades now, the General Assembly has considered the issue of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba. Each time, it has consistently 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 all over the world. The Assembly has also called on 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, any laws and measures that have extraterritorial effects that impinge on the sovereignty of other States. There can be little doubt that the continued existence of this embargo in opposition to world opinion, as expressed by the Assembly, undermines multilateralism and the credibility of the United Nations itself.

As the world's largest democracy, with an abiding faith in multilateralism, India stands in solidarity with the international community in its unambiguous rejection of domestic laws with extraterritorial impact. Embargoes on a country are an obstacle to the full ability of its people, particularly children and women, to achieve economic and social development. They also hinder their full enjoyment of human rights, including, among other things, the right to development, food, medical care and social services.

Successive reports of the Secretary-General — and this year's report (A/70/120) is no exception — have established that the United States embargo on Cuba, particularly through its extraterritorial effects, has adversely affected the Cuban people and their country's development efforts. It has also had a negative impact on the Cuban economy, which has been forced to bear considerable extra costs in sourcing products, technology and services, and it has discouraged investment and technology collaboration between Cuba and third countries. In that context, we would like to acknowledge the Cuban people's notable socioeconomic and development achievements, in particular Cuba's high *Human Development Index* ranking and its achievement of several Millennium Development Goals ahead of schedule, despite the difficult conditions that the embargo has imposed on it. Cuba's acknowledged expertise in health care, achieved despite those conditions, enabled it to respond quickly, effectively and substantively to the Assembly's call on all nations to respond to the Ebola crisis in Africa. In that context, the embargo is very ironic.

While launching the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), world leaders have once again strongly urged all States to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. In view of that consensus on the part of world leaders, the international community should redouble its efforts to promote an environment free from

sanctions and embargoes. In that context, and logically, India hopes that the recent positive developments in relations between Cuba and the United States will lead to a speedy end to the embargo. Until then, we support draft resolution A/70/L.2, submitted by Cuba, and wish our brothers in Cuba every success.

Mr. Boukadoum (Algeria): First of all, I warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and wish to convey through him the greetings of the people and the Government of Algeria to our sisters and brothers in Cuba.

Algeria aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by the representative of Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States and by the representative of Kuwait on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. We also support the statements delivered earlier by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Caribbean Community and by the representative of Paraguay on behalf of the Southern Common Market.

Algeria reiterates its stand concerning the continuing economic, commercial and financial embargo unilaterally imposed by the United States of America against Cuba for more than a half-century. The consecutive annual adoption by an overwhelming majority of the members of the General Assembly of a draft resolution calling for the lifting of the embargo against Cuba reflects the strong desire of the international community to put an end to that situation. Let me recall that Algeria has always stressed that Cuba, like all other Member States, has the right to freedom of trade and navigation and to expand trade on a mutually agreed-upon basis with any economic partner. Algeria has also fully shared the position that has regularly rejected the imposition of unilateral acts or extraterritorial regulations impeding the development of any country and all forms of coercive economic and trade measures. That position reflects the abiding principles of Algerian foreign policy.

I would like to stress that a year ago, Algeria welcomed the courageous and bold involvement of Cuban doctors in the global fight against the Ebola epidemic. We thought that it was the right move and example to follow, as well as an inspiration for the kind of standard relationship that we all strive for and benefit from. We were very happy to learn that all those who

wanted to create the current more positive atmosphere have supported that remarkable move. In that regard, I would like to conclude by welcoming the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States of America and Cuba, and we see as extremely positive signs other measures and actions taken recently that will ultimately pave the way for a full normalization of relations.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of my Pacific neighbour Nauru and my own country, Solomon Islands, on agenda item 42, in relation to draft resolution A/70/L.2, calling for the lifting of the 53-year-old economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

Seventy years ago, States made a solemn commitment to stand up for the equal rights of big and small States. We ask our friend and partner, the United States of America, to maintain an open policy and embrace trust and confidence in restoring the rights of Cuba and its people that have been denied them by the blockade. Let us observe the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of international law to promote good-neighbourly relations and make it possible for the Cuban population to freely practice their political and economic system. We must recognize Cuba's convictions, principles and values, which govern its progress and prosperity. We should allow the Cuban population to enjoy the same quality of life as all its neighbours. Only last month, leaders of the world adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution/70/1). Our new Agenda calls for a genuine and durable partnership, a new political relationship and a new form of international cooperation, so that we can meaningfully transform our world.

Every year, the Assembly adopts, by an overwhelming majority, a draft resolution that seeks to protect commercial freedom, economic rights and financial justice for the Cuban people. This is the twenty-fourth year that the General Assembly is dealing with a more than five-decades-old issue that has seen 11 United States Presidents and three Cuban Presidents. Given those facts, optimism and change are, nevertheless, in the air. There is a new dawn breaking in Cuban and American relations, which Nauru and Solomon Islands join all in welcoming. The rapprochement of the two Governments is a welcome development. The restoration of diplomatic relations

this year between the two countries is an essential step towards re-establishing full respect and civility between the two close neighbours, which are set 90 miles apart from one another geographically.

It must be noted that the economic, commercial and financial blockade by the United States on Cuba remains in place, although incremental changes are slowly taking place. The United States has an opportunity to break with the past and better understand its neighbour, Cuba. The United States of America must continue to put in place policies that allow for the full integration of Cuba into the global system and eliminate obstacles that hamper cooperation. Allow me to suggest normalizing relations by having the United States of America's legislative branch repeal laws that have been used to enforce the embargo.

When the United States and Cuba cooperate, the whole world stands to benefit. As others before me have stated, we have witnessed that fact in the fight against Ebola, and we know that the world will benefit if the blockade is lifted. Let us have faith in our people working together to free themselves from fear and want and to live in dignity. On this occasion, the Governments and the people of Nauru and Solomon Islands would like to thank the Government and the people of Cuba for the medical scholarships provided to Pacific small island developing States students. In the last three years, more than 60 Cuban-trained Pacific islands doctors have returned to serve their people. We thank Cuba for their solidarity and friendship with our subregion of the Pacific. Solomon Islands and Nauru support draft resolution A/70/L.2 in its entirety, and we call on all peace-loving countries to support the draft resolution as presented.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, we would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for having prepared a comprehensive report (A/70/120), which outlines the position of Member States in favour of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States against Cuba.

Our position of principle remains unchanged. We believe that 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, is not justified under current conditions and that it is a relic of the past that causes significant damage to the

socioeconomic development of Cuba, as well as to the development of regional and international cooperation. The continuation of sanctions, which is a vestige of the cold war, amounts to an effort to intentionally hinder the Cuban people's implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which contains a direct appeal to all States:

“to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries” (*resolution 70/1, para. 30*).

We note the decisions of the Government of the United States to introduce a certain easing of the embargo regime. We consider that to finally end the embargo would be a logical outcome of the process that began with the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. The United States should make all necessary efforts to comply with the demands of its own domestic public opinion. That would not only be in the interests of Cuba and the United States but would also contribute to improving the situation around the island and allowing the Cuban people to enjoy their legitimate rights to a life of dignity, and contribute to bolstering trade relations in the Caribbean.

Guided by the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which specify that any measures based on discrimination or intervention in a country's internal affairs are unacceptable, the Russian Federation, like the majority of Member States, is resolutely in favour of a rapid lifting of the embargo against Cuba. Generally speaking, Russia opposes any economic pressure against sovereign States, which usually only aggravates confrontational trends in international relations. Bearing that in mind, Russia will vote, at this seventieth session of the General Assembly, in favour of the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, trade and financial blockade.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I, too, wish to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla. My delegation endorses the statements made by the representatives of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, of Ecuador on behalf of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and of Paraguay on behalf of

the Southern Common Market and associated States. We also wish to make the following comments in our national capacity.

Brazil heartily welcomes the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America. We are pleased that the countries chose to engage in dialogue in order to reach that historic decision and overcome anachronistic animosities. That decision can have positive effects for the entire American continent. Despite significant political advances, the welfare of the people of Cuba continues to be affected by the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the Government of the United States.

Brazil reiterates its firm opposition to the embargo against Cuba, as well as the extraterritorial application of domestic trade laws and the adoption of discriminatory trade practices. Such measures constitute a violation of the basic principles of international law, notably the respect for sovereignty and the freedom of trade and navigation. They also affect human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law, as they are detrimental to the populations, especially to women and children, whose protection ought to be a priority, especially the poorest and most vulnerable segments.

While we acknowledge the statement made by the President of the United States in regard to the need to work towards putting an end to the embargo against Cuba, as well as the measures that have been adopted to modify the application of the embargo, we are concerned about the upsurge in the extraterritorial dimension of the blockade, along with the increasing intimidation imposed in relation to Cuba's international financial transactions.

It is vital that the United States Congress engage, as soon as possible, in a discussion on the elimination of the blockade against Cuba. In the meantime, we call on President Obama to do everything within his executive powers to reduce the impact of the blockade. That would not only be in line with the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, but would also constitute a measure that is necessary in order to ensure that the United States complies with the General Assembly's call urging Governments that have not yet complied with resolution 69/5 to take the urgent measures necessary to eliminate discriminatory trade practices and put an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargoes adopted unilaterally.

Brazil welcomes Cuba's progress in updating its economic model. We wish to continue on that path, but we need support from other partners near and far. Cooperation with Cuba is systematically impeded by the illegal, illegitimate and inhumane economic embargo. My delegation votes in favour of taking advantage of the space for dialogue and cooperation that has been recently established, so as to bring an end to the embargo, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. As we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, putting an end to the embargo against Cuba would convey a strong message of renewed commitment to the founding principles of the Organization in the sense of promoting a culture of peace and cooperation in the world.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In September, the United Nations Summit on the post-2015 development agenda unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which has opened up new prospects and opportunities and defined new goals for global development and international development cooperation. We should strengthen cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, so as to embark on a development path that is equitable, open, comprehensive and innovative with a view to achieving common development.

Under these new circumstances, it is necessary to immediately put an end to the economic embargo and sanctions against Cuba. For 23 consecutive years, the General Assembly has adopted, by an overwhelming majority of votes, resolutions on the need to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. In those resolutions, the Assembly urges all countries to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law and to repeal or invalidate any laws or measures that are of an extraterritorial nature and infringe upon the sovereignty of other States or the legitimate rights and interests of entities and individuals under the jurisdiction of other State and have an adverse impact on the freedom of trade and navigation.

It is regrettable that the resolutions have not been effectively implemented over the years and that the

American economic, trade and financial embargo against Cuba remains in effect. That not only violates the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, but it has also inflicted enormous economic and financial losses on Cuba, impeding the efforts of the Cuban people to eliminate poverty, promote economic and social development and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. It has hampered the right of the Cuban people to exist and develop and has adversely affected economic, commercial and financial interactions between Cuba and other countries.

China has always advocated respecting a country's right to autonomously choose its social system and approaches to development and has opposed using military, political, economic or other means to apply unilateral sanctions against other countries. China has consistently strictly observed and implemented relevant General Assembly resolutions. China and Cuba have maintained normal economic and trade relations and have exchanged mutual visits, which has led to mutually beneficial and friendly cooperation in diverse areas. That has been in line with the wishes of the peoples of China and Cuba and has been conducive to the economic and social development of Cuba.

Against the background of multipolarity in a world of economic globalization, cultural diversity and the democratization of international relations, there has been a general trend for countries to carry out exchanges and cooperation on the basis of equality. Dialogue based on equality and friendly consultations offers the best way to resolve disputes. In July, the United States and Cuba decided to restore diplomatic relations, taking an important step in the normalization of relations between the two countries. We hope that the United States and Cuba will maintain dialogue and consultation and strengthen the momentum of the efforts to improve relations between the two countries.

China has noted that the United States has started to partially lift bans on tourism, commerce and telecommunication with Cuba and has the intention to push for the ultimate lifting of the trade embargo. We hope that the United States will completely abrogate its policy of economic blockade and sanctions against Cuba as soon as possible and that the two sides will develop normal inter-State relations in accordance with the purposes and principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of international relations. That will be in the common interests of the

United States and Cuba, as well as of the peoples of the two countries, and will be conducive to the stability and development of the entire region of the Americas, as well as to the common development of the international community. China will again vote in favour of draft resolution A/70/L.2, submitted by Cuba under this agenda item.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin my statement by welcoming the presence here today of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and his delegation. At the same time, I would like to welcome the presence of the Bolivian Minister of Mining and Metallurgy, Mr. Félix César Navarro Miranda.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia associates itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Southern Common Market.

Today, the Agence France-Presse news agency reported the dramatic case of Noemi Bernardez, a 7-year-old cancer patient who needs the drug temozolomide for her chemotherapy treatments. Noemi, who lives in the Cuban province of Cienfuegos, has a 70 per cent chance of surviving her disease if she can get that drug, but only 20 per cent if she cannot. As the report of the Secretary-General (A/70/120) clearly points out, because of the unilateral application of the criminal blockade against Cuba, Noemi's chances of survival are reduced.

The Secretary-General's report once again makes plain the global rejection of the United States of America's arbitrary and unilateral imposition of an economic, commercial and financial blockade against the Cuban people — and against humankind. The embargo affects international cooperation, health and nutrition, education and culture, foreign trade and foreign investment in Cuba. It also has financial and banking repercussions and restricts the potential for the development of tourism, transport, civil aviation and other areas of the Cuban economy. The embargo is an example of the unilateralism with which the United States acts in the world. Notwithstanding the blockade, however, Cuba serves as an example of social development, cooperation and solidarity. Bolivia joins the concert of nations in again repudiating, in the strongest terms possible, the criminal blockade, which

has become one of the deepest open wounds affecting the spirit of the whole human family.

The United States is unilaterally imposing an unjust blockade, an illegitimate blockade, an immoral blockade, an illegal blockade. The blockade violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which all of us support, not only in word but in spirit. The blockade violates the principle of the sovereign equality of States, the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, and the principles of independence, multilateralism, respect for international law and self-determination. It violates every human right, and in particular economic, social and cultural rights.

We are all victims of that blockade owing to its extraterritorial character. It is not only Cuba but the international community that is attacked unilaterally in violation of international law by the embargo imposed by the United States of America. Today presents us with an opportunity not only to vigorously condemn this violation of international law, this genocidal blockade, but also to honour and express thanks for the solidarity of Cuba. Bolivia continues to be a beneficiary of that absolutely unconditional solidarity, despite the conditions imposed by the blockade on Cuba. We now also have an opportunity to honour the dignity and endurance of the valiant Cuban people.

I would like to conclude my statement by repeating the words that Che Guevara uttered a few decades ago, recalling a phrase from José Martí: “When one man is struck, every true man should feel the blow on his own face”. In that light, Cuba, as a paragon of solidarity, gives the world a choice today. We must bear in mind that girl Noemi. If homeland is synonymous with humankind and if the embargo is synonymous with death, the choice has become homeland or death.

We shall overcome.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, to introduce draft resolution A/70/L.2.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Last 17 December, United States President Barack Obama acknowledged that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba had failed, that it was obsolete and had not met the goals envisaged and had harmed the Cuban people and isolated the United States Government. Since then, President Obama has

reiterated that the blockade must be lifted. He has asked the American Congress to proceed in that direction instead of acting against the will of American citizens, who clearly support its repeal. He has committed to engaging in the debate for that purpose and to use his executive powers to modify its implementation.

During the Summit on sustainable development leading to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and during the recent general debate, more than 60 Heads of State or Government and delegations expressed appreciation and congratulations on the announcement of the new course in the relations between the United States and Cuba, including the restoration of diplomatic relations and embassies, and many called for the embargo to be completely abolished. The interest and hopes aroused by those discussions and the subsequent vote, which will take place under new circumstances, is therefore understandable.

Given the almost unanimous demand on the part of the international community, symbolized by the favourable vote of 188 Member States last year (resolution 69/5), the participation of Cuba in the Summit of the Americas in Panama this year and the call by a clear majority of American society and the Cuban diaspora settled here, the United States Government has announced a new policy towards our country. But the measures adopted by the United States Administration, which entered into force on 16 January and were later expanded on 18 September, although positive, only modified in very limited way certain elements related to the implementation of the embargo. Many of them cannot be implemented unless others are adopted that would finally allow Cuba to freely export and import products and services to and from the United States of America, to use American dollars in its international financial transactions and operate accounts in that currency in third countries' banks, and to have access to credit and financing from private entities and international financial institutions.

The problem is not that the Cuban authorities hamper the implementation of those measures and that the Cuban system would need to be modified in order to facilitate the process, as some United States officials have asserted. The problem is the relentless and systematic existence of the embargo. We must not confuse reality with the wishes and expressions of good will. In such circumstances as we are now facing, one can only judge based on the facts. And the facts show, in

a crystal-clear manner, that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba is still being fully and completely implemented.

Ten months after the announcements made on 17 December 2014, no tangible, substantial modification has been introduced in the implementation of the embargo. Cuba's removal from the spurious list of State sponsors of international terrorism was the inevitable correction of an absurdity, but that has hardly had any impact on the implementation of the embargo, which is based on a far more comprehensive system of previously established laws and sanctions.

Just a week ago, a \$1.116 billion fine was imposed on a French bank, *Crédit Agricole*, which must be added to the \$1.71 billion fine imposed on the German bank *Commerzbank* last March for carrying out transactions with Cuba and other States. In recent weeks, the secure messaging system SWIFT cancelled a service contract that covered the first payment by the American company *Sprint* to initiate direct phone calls, and several other bank transfers to Cuba for the operation of charter flights were withheld.

The meagre Cuban food purchases in the United States of America, which were among the few exceptions to the embargo approved in 2000 by the United States Congress, have declined significantly in the past year, because they are subject to discriminatory and onerous conditions. Each purchase must be authorized by a license, and the granting of credits is prohibited. Cuba is forced to pay cash and in advance through banking entities of third countries and is prohibited from using its own vessels to transport those products.

Something similar has been happening with the imports of medicines and medical equipment that our country needs, and since 1992 United States legislation has imposed conditions on them as well. Cuba is required to report on the final recipient of the medication it purchases. It is not allowed to make payments directly, but only through third parties and in a currency other than the United States dollar, which obviously entails additional difficulties, delays and costs.

Numerous other examples could be mentioned. The example of the case of the *Elekta* company, which confirmed on 2 September that it will not be able to supply the National Institute of Oncology and Radiobiology nor any other hospitals in Cuba with the radioactive isotope *iridium-192*, which ensures the normal operation of the brachytherapy equipment that

is indispensable for higher quality treatments and more accurate cancer therapy. That is because its supplier, the United States company *Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals*, refused to sell that isotope to Cuba. The American company, *Small Bone Innovation, Inc.*, has refused to supply prosthetic wrists and hand joints to the *Frank País Orthopedic Hospital* for patients with rheumatoid arthritis. Last June, the United States company *Sigma-Aldrich* refused to supply the company *Quimimpex* with the products, services and technical information that are indispensable to the chemical industry; and the North American company *Columbiana Boiler Company* informed *Quimpex* that it was not allowed to export the cylinders needed to transport chlorine destined for the treatment of drinking water.

The embargo is a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cubans. It contravenes international law and has been described as an act of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948. It is the main obstacle to the economic and social development of our people. The human damage it has caused is inestimable. Seventy-seven per cent of Cubans have been suffering from the embargo since the day they were born. The shortages and deprivation that it causes to all Cuban families are incalculable. According to rigorous and conservative estimates, the economic damage it has caused after more than half a century amounts to \$33,755,000,000, based on the price of gold. At current prices, that amounts to more than \$121,192,000,000, which is a figure of enormous magnitude for a small economy like ours.

I hope the representative of the United States of America will not come here now to tell us that draft resolution A/70/L.2 does not accurately reflect the spirit of dialogue or the generous attitude of his Government; or repeat the hackneyed line that the United States of America is the social benefactor of the Cuban people, which wishes only to control its own destiny; or inflate the figure of \$900,000 in donations that Cuban civil society received in 2015, which the embargo hampered and our people appreciated; or refer to the family remittances, which are the result of difficult savings on the part of Cubans living here, as if they were Government funds; or consider as a commercial exchange the export licenses that have been granted but have not actually led to any concrete exports.

While it is up to the United States Congress to adopt a decision ending the embargo, the President has broad

executive powers to substantially modify the practical application of the embargo and its humanitarian and economic impact. We share the hope that the United States Congress will change an ineffective, cruel and unjust policy, anchored in the past, and make decisions based on the values and feelings of its citizens.

Historically, the United States has tried to impose its domination and hegemony over our country and, since 1959, to change the political, economic and social system that our people freely chose in the full exercise of their self-determination. Several voices for the United States Government have stated that the announced policy concerning Cuba means a change in methods, rather than in objectives. If that is the case, the process of normalizing relations between the United States and Cuba will face serious obstacles. The lifting of the blockade will be the critical element that will give meaning to the progress achieved over the past several months in relations between the two countries and set the pace on the road to normalization.

As President Barack Obama acknowledged, lifting the blockade serves the national interests of the United States and reflects the will of that country's citizens. It would be in no way acceptable or productive to require Cuba to make internal changes as a precondition for lifting or lightening the embargo. Cuba is willing to accept the opportunities and face the challenges of a new era in relations between both countries, but it will never negotiate its socialist system or its internal affairs. Nor will it allow any blemish on its independence, which was won at the price of the blood of its finest sons and daughters and through the enormous sacrifices of many generations, dating back to our first wars of independence in 1868. As President Raúl Castro Ruz reiterated, both Governments must find a way to coexist in a civilized manner, despite their profound differences, and, wherever possible, go forward together, for the benefit of the peoples of the United States and Cuba, through dialogue and cooperation based on mutual respect and sovereign equality. There is no enmity between the peoples of the United States and Cuba. The Cuban people expressed their solidarity with the American people during the terrible terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina. We appreciate and recognize the progress that has been recently made and reflected in the reopening of the embassies, the visits by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Commerce to Cuba and the exchange of delegations. That is in addition to the implementation of a bilateral

steering commission, the expansion of areas of dialogue and cooperation, particularly in the fields of aviation and aviation security, combating drug trafficking, illegal migration and human trafficking, cooperation in law enforcement, environmental protection and health, among others.

We are sincerely interested in developing fruitful relations, including offering quality tourism to United States citizens, who enjoy the freedom to travel to Cuba, expanding cultural, sporting, scientific and academic exchanges and multifaceted cooperation in areas of common interest, trade and investment. Based on the premise of our significant differences and in the spirit of back-and-forth discussion, we have initiated a bilateral dialogue on human rights. To that end, we have been guided by the principles that are contained in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, which was signed in January 2014 in Havana by the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and by the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. That could also be a modest contribution to the quest for an alternative way for all of us as human beings and nations to relate to one another in an era marked by global crisis, the inevitable impact of climate change, non-conventional wars that have unleashed ongoing atrocious conflicts, new forms of terrorism, the existence of huge nuclear arsenals, extraordinary spending on nuclear armaments and the risk of pandemics.

Fifteen years ago in this very Hall, the history-making leader of the Revolution Fidel Castro Ruz stated,

“Humanity should be aware of what we have been so far and what we cannot continue to be. Our species has now enough accumulated knowledge, ethical values and scientific resources to move towards a new historical era of true justice and humanism;

“Nothing in the existing economic and political order serves the interests of humankind. Thus this order is unsustainable and must be changed.”
(A/55/PV.4, p. 20)

This year, 23 years after the adoption of the first of the resolutions emphasizing the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America (resolution 47/19), we have achieved remarkable progress. This

crowning achievement is due to the tireless resistance, the selfless efforts and firm convictions of our people and the leadership of the history-making generation of the Revolution, headed by Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz and President Raúl Castro Ruz. We are deeply grateful to all of the Governments and their peoples, parliaments, political forces, social movements, representatives of civil society and international and regional organizations that, year after year, especially in the General Assembly, have upheld, with their voices and their votes, the fairness and urgency of lifting the embargo. We have made it this far thanks to the ever-growing support of the American people aimed at achieving that laudable goal, and we express our gratitude to them. We know that the road that lies ahead of us is long and difficult. As long as the blockade continues, we will continue to put forward a similar draft resolution in the General Assembly. The Cuban people will never renounce their sovereignty or the path they have freely chosen to building a more just, efficient, prosperous and sustainable socialism, nor will they abandon their quest for a more equitable and democratic international order.

We have sponsored draft resolution A/70/L.2, which recognizes the reality of the rigorous and oppressive implementation of the embargo against Cuba and, in new preambular paragraphs, also recognizes and commends the progress achieved during the past year.

On behalf of the heroic, selfless and supportive Cuban people, I ask the Assembly to vote in favour of draft resolution A/70/L.2, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/70/L.2.

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

Mr. Godard (United States of America): Last year, on 17 December, President Obama announced a new direction in United States policy towards Cuba. At the same time, President Castro Ruz spoke to the Cuban people about beginning a new relationship with the United States. Since then, the United States has taken a range of historic measures designed to begin normalizing United States-Cuban bilateral relations, including by adjusting United States regulations related

to Cuba. Presidents Obama and Castro have met twice since then. Although normalization will be a long and complex road, we have made considerable progress.

We regret, therefore, that the Government of Cuba has chosen to proceed with its annual draft resolution (A/70/L.2). The text falls short of reflecting the significant steps that have been taken and the spirit of engagement President Obama has championed. As a result, the United States cannot support it. If Cuba thinks this exercise will help move things forward in the direction both Governments have indicated they wish, it is mistaken.

On 20 July, the United States and Cuba established diplomatic relations and re-opened embassies in one another’s capital cities. Secretary of State Kerry travelled to Havana on 14 August for the ceremonial flag-raising at the United States Embassy, marking the first time a United States Secretary of State had been to Cuba since 1945. Secretary Kerry welcomed the occasion as a day for pushing aside old barriers and exploring new possibilities. Indeed, he praised both President Obama and President Castro for “the courageous decision to stop being the prisoners of history and to focus on the opportunities of today and tomorrow”.

Since that day, the United States has met with Cuban Government officials in Havana to set a broad agenda for bilateral cooperation. We have agreed to hold dialogues in law enforcement, counter-narcotics and human rights. We have worked with Cuban health-care professionals to deliver improved care to the poorest populations in our hemisphere. We have discussed ways to address the environmental and climate change challenges we face in the years ahead. By the end of the year, we hope to announce several concrete accomplishments that will benefit both our peoples.

As we all know, President Obama has also called on Congress to lift the embargo as soon as possible and has taken executive action to adjust regulations to facilitate many transactions involving Cuba. President Obama has argued that removing the embargo will increase economic opportunities for the Cuban people through increased trade and commerce and improve technology and information flow to the island, a goal we all share.

We do not expect Cuba or the United States to forget the past overnight. We realize that fully normalizing our bilateral relationship will require years of persistence and dedication on both sides. We find it unfortunate

that despite our demonstrated bilateral progress, the Cuban Government has chosen to introduce a draft resolution that is nearly identical to those presented in years past. Nevertheless, the United States will not be bound by a history of mistrust. We remain committed to the hard work of pursuing genuine bilateral cooperation with Cuba for the benefit of both countries and for the hemisphere.

The United States also remains committed to promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in Cuba, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We will continue to advocate for universal rights on the island and to build and strengthen connections between the Cuban and the American people.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaragua would like to explain why it will vote in favour of the people and the Government of Cuba, together with the entire international community.

We wish to welcome our brother Mr. Bruno Rodríguez, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and his delegation. He has provided us with extensive information about the impacts today of the criminal economic, financial and commercial embargo against his people and Government.

We reaffirm our unconditional support for and solidarity with the people and the Government of Cuba for their heroic gesture, the Cuban Revolution, which showed us the first steps towards dignity and the restitution of rights to the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. More than five decades of resistance, full of bravery and sacrifice have elapsed since the infamous day when a disgraceful imperialistic law authorized the President of the United States to establish an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, with the aim of provoking disillusionment and discouragement; creating economic dissatisfaction and hardship; denying access to supplies; and causing hunger, desperation, violence and the overthrow of the legitimate Government of Cuba.

Yet Cuba stands before us. Its people and its Government, our brothers in solidarity, represent the dignity and sovereignty of our peoples. They were always the first to respond to our needs in the face of disasters and emergencies. They taught us to read, trained doctors and technicians, cured our diseases and helped us to create conditions for our well-being and our happiness on Mother Earth.

The embargo, which has been increasing in terms of its measures and scope, is in fact a policy of genocide. It has had a negative impact on the economic, social and cultural rights of the people of Cuba and amounts to a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of an entire people.

Our President, Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, in referring to the embargo, has affirmed that the time has come to end it. The situation has changed. Even in the United States, the majority of the population is against the embargo. Conditions have been established to enable President Barack Obama to decide to take this step even if it goes against the system. We also recall that the policy of embargo and sanctions has not led anywhere. The best proof of that is that, after 56 years, President Obama recognized that the embargo against Cuba had been a failure.

Today we welcome the fact that President Obama has finally decided to take the first steps to begin the process of normalization and the re-establishment of relations between Cuba and the United States, which should be done based on the legitimate interests of each party, starting with the legitimate interests of the Cuban people and of the international community, to put an immediate end to the blockade. We firmly believe that global solidarity with Cuba and its people will continue to be resolute until this criminal embargo ends.

The Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Caribbean Community, the Southern Common Market, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and others have once again reiterated their rejection and condemnation of the policy of the Government of the United States and shown their complete solidarity with Cuba and its demand to put an immediate end to the blockade.

Despite the re-establishment of relations, the United States has intensified its inhumane embargo and its measures with extraterritorial dimensions, heavily impacting exports and imports. The embargo has resulted in a lack of access to foreign loans and international markets and has impacted the health and education systems and the right to food. In short, it has adversely affected all aspects of Cuban life.

Nicaragua condemns the criminal blockade and all the measures and extraterritorial ramifications. Nicaragua rejects any coercive and unilateral economic

measures to attempt to break the will and spirit of peoples and Governments. It is unacceptable to use those policies to compel an independent population to change its regime. The embargo continues to be the main obstacle to sustainable development and economic and social programmes in the fraternal nation of Cuba. It is totally inconsistent with the recently approved 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

This year we have seen courageous decisions that, in the short term, have led to changing situations that have been maintained for more than five decades in relation to Cuba. We maintained the hope that, in the General Assembly, we can continue to take bold decisions and to vote unanimously in favour of lifting the embargo. We have always listened very carefully to the speaker who preceded me, and we had hoped to hear something different this time. Regrettably, once again we heard the same rhetoric as in previous years, the same arrogance attempting to justify the unjustifiable, arguing for the continuation of a situation against the fraternal people of Cuba, which is the result of the implementation of an obsolete and anachronistic policy that they themselves have referred to as a failure. The entire world rejects it.

No, Cuba was not mistaken in presenting draft resolution A/70/L.2; the whole world supports it.

To conclude, while reiterating my delegation's vote in favour of the draft resolution introduced by Cuba, which we are about to vote on, we wish to recall the words of the beloved former President of Chile, Mr. Salvador Allende, who was murdered by dark forces, as we all are aware. Some day, America will speak in the voice of the continent, in a united voice of the peoples, a voice that will be respected and heard because it is the voice of the people who are the masters of their own destiny.

Today Latin America and the Caribbean, in speaking for the continent, demands that the United States Government once and for all rectify its policies against our continent. It should immediately put an end to the criminal embargo against Cuba. It should close the prisons in Guantánamo and return Guantánamo to its legitimate owner. It should recognize and finally accept the will of our peoples to be the masters of our own fates and, abandoning its imperialist designs and policies, once and for all establish friendly relations, cooperation and respect on equal terms for all the peoples and the Governments in our region.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/70/L.2, entitled "The 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, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia,

Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Draft resolution A/70/L.2 was adopted by 191 votes to 2 (resolution 70/5).

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

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): 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, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; and Iceland, a European Free Trade Association country and member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

The re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America and the calls of President Obama on Congress to start working towards the removal of the embargo have created a new situation for all parties concerned. The EU warmly welcomes those initiatives and encourages their further implementation through appropriate steps by both parties.

In the meantime, however, the main restrictive measures are still in place. They are even more of an anachronism given the new circumstances. The United States trade policy towards Cuba is fundamentally a bilateral issue. However, beyond the damaging impact of the embargo on Cuban citizens, the direct and indirect effects of extraterritorial legislation and

unilateral administrative and judicial measures also undermine EU economic interests.

American legislation such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Act of 1996 extended the effects of the embargo of the United States of America to third-party countries. Within the framework of its common commercial policies, the European Union has firmly and continuously opposed such extraterritorial measures. While we acknowledge the decisions of the United States Government to lift restrictions on remittances and family travel to Cuba, thereby allowing the provision of certain financial, telecommunication and Internet services, and to remove restrictions on the export of tools and building materials to support the Cuban people, we cannot accept that unilaterally imposed measures impede our economic and trade relations with Cuba. To address that 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 resident in Europe against the consequences of those laws.

At the summit between the European Union and the United States of America held in London in May 1998, an agreement was reached on a set of measures that aimed to mitigate the problems caused by extraterritorial legislation. It covered waivers to Titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act, a commitment by the United States Government to oppose future extraterritorial legislation of that kind and an understanding on the disciplines for strengthening investment protection. It is vital that the United States of America fully observe and implement that agreement.

While EU-Cuba political relations are strictly guided by the 1996 common position, both parties are engaged in a negotiating process to define a new and ambitious framework. Since 2014, the European Union and Cuba have begun negotiating an agreement on political dialogue and cooperation to strengthen relations and create an enabling framework for more effective dialogue, improved cooperation and expanded economic relations. Human rights are at the core of EU external relations, including with Cuba. A first high-level discussion took place in June 2015. The EU remains determined to pursue a comprehensive dialogue with the Cuban authorities and all sectors of Cuban society. We reiterate the right of Cuban citizens to make independent decisions about their future.

We also reiterate our call on the Cuban Government to grant its citizens full, internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms 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. In addition, following the visit of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, we encourage the Cuban Government to invite other special rapporteurs to visit Cuba. We welcome the continued broad application of the Cuban citizens' freedom to travel, as well as the substantial amnesty granted to prisoners on humanitarian grounds on the occasion of the visit of Pope Francis. We note with concern the continued high frequency of short-term arrests and appeal for all freedoms to be fully respected and protected.

The existing restrictions on the rights to the freedoms of expression and assembly stand in contrast to Cuban achievements in health care and education. Similarly, the slow progress of economic modernization greatly hinders the economic development of Cuba. In that context, we recall the adoption by the Cuban Parliament in August 2011 of a set of economic and social reforms, and we hope that they will be expanded and implemented in a way that will address the key concerns of the Cuban population. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America contributes to the economic problems in Cuba, negatively affecting the living standards of the Cuban people, while having consequences in the humanitarian field as well.

The lifting of the United States embargo could facilitate an opening of the Cuban economy for the benefit of the Cuban people. Together, we again express our rejection of all unilateral measures directed against Cuba, which negatively affect the interests of third parties and therefore violate commonly accepted rules of international trade.

We urge the Cuban authorities to bring about real improvements in all the areas that we have just mentioned. Through its cooperation and the future framework agreement, the EU is ready to support Cuba on its path of reform and modernization. Considerable progress has been achieved in a constructive spirit, including on human rights, governance and civil society. We are encouraged by the knowledge that no subject will be off limits during those processes. Given

that context, the member States of the European Union voted unanimously in favour of resolution 70/5.

Mr. Zuain (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to welcome Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and congratulate him on the historic vote that we have just witnessed.

Argentina fully supports the statements delivered by the representative of South Africa, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; by the representative of Ecuador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States; and by the representative of Paraguay, on behalf of the Southern Common Market. I would like to make several additional comments on behalf of the people and the Government of Argentina.

Year after year we meet to adopt by an overwhelming majority a draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Despite its repetitive nature, the appeal retains its validity. In fact, its ethical, political and historical foundations have been strengthened by the passage of time, the persistence of the grievance and the increase in international support. During the past 20 years, we have seen that increase transform this cause into a universal claim. Besides being global in nature, this is a Latin American and Caribbean cause that unites the countries of our entire region in a strong and consistent position of solidarity.

The Argentine Government wishes to express how pleased and optimistic it is about the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States. It congratulates both Governments on their decision to take the path of dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues on the basis of equality and mutual respect. However, we note with concern that, despite some progress, the embargo against the Cuban people continues to stifle them in a disgraceful manner. We therefore hope that, first and foremost, the United States complies with the commitments outlined and that the rapprochement and dialogue between the two countries can quickly and effectively lead to the lifting of the unjust and illegal embargo suffered by the Cuban people and Cuban nationals living abroad for more than half a century.

In spite of the new context, the embargo continues to exist and to impede the economic, financial, social and cultural development of the Cuban people. In terms

of trade, just to give one example, Cuba is prevented from freely exporting and importing its products and services to or from the United States, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba clearly explained a few minutes ago. Notwithstanding the measures announced by President Obama, which represent progress towards changing the implementation of some aspects of the embargo, the laws and regulations that support this policy remain in force and are rigorously implemented by the agencies of the United States Government, constituting a financial, economic, social and cultural straitjacket to which Cuba continues to be subjected.

This is an unjust embargo because it punishes an entire population, causes serious economic damage and impedes development. It should not be forgotten that the cost to the Cuban economy of this inhumane action has exceeded \$120 billion. It is a massive and systematic violation of the most fundamental of human rights.

We wish to recall that the embargo was motivated by the refusal of a country to accept that a sovereign people could elect its own political system, its own way to organize and develop itself and, in a nutshell, to choose its own fate. It was an absurd and morally unsustainable decision on the part of the United States and has even failed in its purpose, which was to crush the Cuban people.

Argentina strongly opposes the use of unilateral coercive measures, the extraterritorial implementation of national laws and the adoption of discriminatory trade practices. We therefore join and support the Cuban call for the lifting of the embargo and the laws and regulations that underpin that policy, which are rigorously implemented by the United States.

For these reasons, Argentina reiterates its commitment to the full implementation of the recommendations of the General Assembly in its resolution 69/5, and again urges the international community to redouble its efforts aimed at the fulfilment of all the objectives that are set out in the resolutions of the General Assembly designed to ensure respect for the sovereign rights of the Cuban people to aspire to their prosperity and sustainable development.

Consequently, Argentina once again rejects the embargo policy against Cuba imposed by the United States, a practice that has been in effect for more than half a century, which in addition to being morally unjustifiable and to having a serious humanitarian

impact is contrary to the spirit of multilateralism. We therefore hope that the process of normalization of relations that has begun between the two countries leads to an early end being put to the embargo.

My country takes this opportunity to also renew its absolute commitment to the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in their internal affairs, and freedom of international trade and shipping. We also call for the prompt return of Guantánamo to Cuba, another unjust and illegitimate act on the part of the United States.

Argentina hopes that this is the last resolution that the General Assembly will adopt on this issue and that next year its content will be fully implemented by the United States, so that the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba may be relegated to the past — an unjust past and one that the peoples and the Governments of the world, by actions of solidarity of the kind witnessed this morning, will prevent from being repeated.

Mr. Ja Song Nam (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Democratic People's Republic of Korea wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as with the one made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The diplomatic recognition of Cuba by the United States symbolizes a total failure of the hostile policy of the United States against Cuba, which has persisted for decades. However, the essence of the anti-Cuba policy of the United States remains the same; the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba is still in place.

It is the unanimous demand of Member States that the United States put an end to the unilateral economic, trade and financial embargo against Cuba as soon as possible, so that Cuba can achieve sustainable development in a peaceful environment.

The facts show that the United States embargo against Cuba, which has lasted for several decades in an attempt to overthrow the legitimate socialist system chosen by the Cuban people, is doomed to failure. An attempt to change a sovereign State's political and economic system or overthrow a legitimate Government through sanctions and blockade is a rampant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and other international laws, which stipulate the principles of respect for

national sovereignty, the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in others' internal affairs.

According to data released by the Cuban Government, the total economic loss suffered by Cuba owing to the embargo has reached astronomical proportions. The extraterritorial Helms-Burton Act, which expands the scope of the sanctions to other countries wishing to develop peaceful economic and trade relationships with Cuba, is hampering the joint efforts of the countries in the region that aspire to peaceful and stable development.

In accordance with its consistent stand against all forms of interference in the internal affairs of States and sanctions against sovereign States, the delegation

of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as in the past, voted in favour of resolution 70/5, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". We once again strongly urge the United States to lift its embargo against Cuba once and for all.

In conclusion, I would like once again to extend our full support to and solidarity with the Cuban Government and the Cuban people, who are fighting to safeguard the dignity and sovereignty of their nation in the face of the United States embargo.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.