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Official Records

President: Mr. Bozkir (Turkey)

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

Agenda item 42 (continued)

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/75/L.97)

Ms. Tesfamariam (Eritrea): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States on agenda item 42, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. This matter is very important to the African Group and indeed to Africa in general. In February 2020, at the thirty-fourth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, our Heads of State and Government restated their position for the twelfth time, calling for the lifting of the sanctions on Cuba’s people and Government. Similarly, the African Group also reiterates its position that the illegal sanctions, particularly the implementation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, are the main obstacles to Cuba’s realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Africa has consistently been concerned about Cuba’s predicament because of the importance we attach to the achievement of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. It is also clear that as a responsible member of the international community, Cuba has made numerous

positive contributions over the decades to African countries and many others all over the world. In addition, the annual resolution on ending Cuba’s blockade by the United States has represented a call to all countries for many years now, and the African Group will continue to reassert its full support for that resolution.

I also want to express our regret with regard to the setback in the bilateral relations between Cuba and the United States and to call on the United States Government to work to restore positive relations and lift the long-standing blockade imposed on the Government and people of Cuba.

In conclusion, I want to repeat that the African Group remains firmly rooted in its principled position of solidarity with Cuba and its people and Government in calling for the immediate end to this economic, commercial and financial blockade.

The President: In view of the large number of delegations inscribed on the list of speakers for the debate on this item, I would like to propose that the list be closed. Unless I hear any objection, I will take it that the Assembly agrees.

It was so decided.

Mr. Diane (Guinea): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 42, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive

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report on the item we are discussing today (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1).

The Group regrets that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba for more than six decades remains in full application and continues to be enforced. In that regard, we would like to recall here the positive steps taken by the United States Administration between 2015 and 2016, which were not sufficient to effectively end the embargo's impact but were moving in the right direction. We regret the policy established by the recent former United States Administration aimed at reinforcing the embargo on Cuba, which remains in effect despite the change in administrations, and which we believe is an obstacle to the process of achieving normalized relations between both countries. We are deeply concerned about the widening of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo on Cuba, including the full implementation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, and we reject the United States Government's reinforcement of the financial measures it has adopted, aimed at tightening the embargo.

The Group of 77 and China reiterates its commitment to the purposes, principles and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly regarding the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in States' internal affairs, and freedom of international trade and navigation. We believe that it is the duty and responsibility of every Member State to strictly comply with those principles, and that any policy or action that disregards them — in this case, unilateral economic sanctions against Cuba — should be immediately repealed.

The Group of 77 and China is deeply concerned about the debilitating impact that the United States' embargo of 60-plus years has had on Cuba and its people. Between April 2019 and December 2020, the cost of its impact amounted to more than \$9.1 billion. The limited foreign investment and difficulty of access to development credits that result translate directly into economic hardship and humanitarian damage for the people of Cuba. The embargo has also been a severe obstacle to the country's socioeconomic reforms. We are concerned about the possibility that if the economic sanctions continue, Cuba's development potential will be unfairly undermined in both economic and human development terms, and it will be impossible for Cuba to successfully embark on the path towards sustainable

development envisaged in the 2030 Agenda to which all Member States have pledged support.

Cuba has extensively and consistently contributed to the international community for many decades, particularly through South-South cooperation. Its assistance to other countries in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic is a great example of its solidarity with the international community.

We, the members of the Group of 77 and China, reiterate our strong support for the implementation of the recommendations of resolution 74/7 and would like to reiterate our call for an end to the United States' economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. The urgency and necessity of ending it is even clearer in the light of the ongoing global collective efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We therefore appeal to the international community to step up the efforts in support of the lifting of the embargo, not just to improve Cuba's prospects but to help all members of the global community in their quest to fully realize their economic and social development.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): I am speaking on behalf of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM). At the outset, we would like to warmly welcome and convey our respect for Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his report and its annex on this important issue (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1).

For the past 30 years the General Assembly has consistently expressed its overwhelming support for and solidarity with the people and the Government of Cuba through its principled position in favour of the resolutions calling for the lifting of the embargo imposed on this sovereign country by the United States of America. At the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, an overwhelming majority of Member States voted in favour of resolution 74/7. In that regard, the Non-Aligned Movement would like to take this opportunity to once again reiterate its firm opposition to the promulgation and imposition of unilateral coercive measures that are not authorized by the relevant organs of the United Nations and that are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, given their extraterritorial implications and illegal character.

The Non-Aligned Movement has repeatedly reiterated its call to the United States Government to end the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo that it has illegally imposed on Cuba for almost six decades. The embargo, which is a breach of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing inter-State relations, constitutes a violation of Cuba's right to fully interact with the international community.

The Non-Aligned Movement has historically maintained a principled position in rejecting unilateral coercive measures that are not authorized by the relevant organs of the United Nations, that are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations or that contravene the basic principles of the multilateral trading system and are used as a tool to put political or economic and financial pressure on States. That position was reaffirmed at the eighteenth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Baku. The embargo on Cuba is a perfect example of the adverse effects of unilateral coercive measures on a people's well-being, as among other things it prevents them from fully enjoying and realizing their human rights, including the right to development. The past four years have seen a progressive and systematic increase in the aggressiveness of the United States policy on Cuba and on States that maintain or attempt to establish economic, commercial or financial relations with Cuba. During the Trump Administration's last years, the United States implemented more than 240 measures, of which more than 50 were adopted in 2020 alone, in the middle of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The direct and indirect damage that the embargo has inflicted on Cuba is enormous. It affects all the critical sectors of the Cuban economy, including public health, nutrition and agriculture, as well as trade, investment, tourism and banking. The banking sector has been particularly hard hit, most notably since the last consideration of this agenda item (see A/74/PV.27 and A/74/PV.28). The persecution of Cuban financial transactions in third-country jurisdictions, which has had a significant deterrent effect in economic terms, has continued. Between April 2019 and December 2020, the United States Government imposed more than 20 penalties on companies and banks in third countries from the United States itself, amounting to a total of \$3.7 billion. As a consequence, Cuba has also been denied access to markets, international

aid from international financial institutions and technology transfers, which creates serious obstacles to its socioeconomic development. In addition, the embargo is the main impediment to broader access for Cuba to the Internet, people-to-people contacts and the development of cultural, sports and scientific relations.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms that the continued embargo is totally unjustifiable and runs counter to the spirit of our times. It is also an obstacle to Cuba's ongoing efforts to achieve sustainable development, including meeting the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Movement is deeply concerned about the widening extraterritorial nature of the embargo on Cuba, including the full implementation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act. We also reject the enforcement of the financial measures adopted by the United States Government to tighten the embargo, which have resulted in economic damages borne by the Cuban people amounting to \$1.3 trillion when taking into account the depreciation of the United States dollar against the price of gold in the international market. At current prices, the blockade has caused damages during its existence amounting to \$147.8 billion. It is worth highlighting the fact that since we last discussed this agenda item, more than a year ago, the blockade has caused losses of more than \$9.1 billion.

The Non-Aligned Movement considers that the strengthening of the embargo on Cuba that the United States Government has pursued since June 2017 is a serious setback in the process of normalizing the bilateral relations between the two countries. We also strongly condemn the most recent inclusion of Cuba on the United States Department of State's unilateral list of State sponsors of terrorism, announced on 11 January. NAM rejects the politicization of the fight against terrorism, which is detrimental to international efforts to combat it, including through unilateral lists that accuse States and their constitutionally established institutions of allegedly supporting terrorism, and we therefore reject the unfounded accusations claiming that Cuba sponsors terrorism. NAM looks forward to seeing the new United States Administration take the necessary action to reverse this baseless step and move forward with the normalization of relations.

The fact that 187 Member States of our Organization voted in favour of resolution 74/7 during the seventy-fourth session constitutes an expression of unanimity

within the international community in demanding an end to the 59-year-old embargo and full adherence to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law, including those relating to mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. More than 190 nations currently engage economically and politically with Cuba, while the United States of America remains alone in pursuing its unjustified and illegal policy of economic sanction. The member States of the Non-Aligned Movement therefore once again urge the United States Government to yield to the will of an overwhelming majority of the international community and rectify its policies by fully complying with all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, which call for an immediate and complete end to the embargo imposed on Cuba.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement, while reiterating its commitment to the promotion, preservation and strengthening of multilateralism, reaffirms that full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly those relating to sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention, is critical to the effective maintenance of international peace and security. The international community should therefore continue working together to reverse and eliminate the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba, considering its illegal character and extraterritorial implications, among other things.

Ms. Tang (Singapore): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to express our support for draft resolution A/75/L.97, on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba. ASEAN aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Guinea, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

This is the sixth year that ASEAN has made a statement at the General Assembly calling for lifting the United States' embargo on Cuba as soon as possible. ASEAN reaffirms its support for the annual resolution on this topic, which has been consistently adopted by an overwhelming majority since it was first introduced in 1992. ASEAN is firmly committed to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which

underpin the multilateral rules-based order. We believe that differences between States should be resolved through engagement and inclusion, not confrontation and isolation. We also believe strongly that differences between States should be resolved on the basis of the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, non-interference and non-intervention. ASEAN does not support the imposition of unilateral economic, commercial and financial measures on other countries.

Six years have passed since the restoration of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba in 2015, which was an important step towards the normalization of relations between these two countries and remains key to building better regional relations in the Americas. But as noted in the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1), the economic, commercial and financial embargo continues to affect many sectors of Cuban society, including limiting Cuba's ability to procure preparedness and response materials for the coronavirus disease pandemic in a timely and cost-effective manner. ASEAN continues to believe that ending the United States' economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba will contribute significantly to improving the quality of life and living standards of the Cuban people and the economic and social development of Cuba. It would also advance the General Assembly's efforts to achieve an inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ASEAN encourages the United States and Cuba to renew their commitment to an open and constructive dialogue, underpinned by mutual respect. Once again, ASEAN joins other members of the Assembly in reiterating its support for lifting the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba as soon as possible.

Mr. Rodrigue (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on agenda item 42, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

The Caribbean Community aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Guinea, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The General Assembly has been seized of the issue of the embargo imposed by the United States on

Cuba for 30 years. Despite the statements in which delegations have expressed their disapproval and even condemnation of this act, which is considered arbitrary and contrary to international law, as well as the almost unanimous support consistently given to resolutions on the issue, the Cuban people have continued to suffer the disastrous consequences of these unilateral measures. CARICOM strongly deplores the ongoing embargo and reiterates, as it has always done, its continuing concern about the significant negative impact that these measures have on Cuba's socioeconomic development and the general well-being of the Cuban people.

We take note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1), which reproduces the responses from Member States and United Nations bodies expressing the opposition of the international community and public opinion to the adoption and implementation of such measures. We reiterate our strong support for ending this 60-year embargo.

This situation is of great concern to CARICOM member States, which consider that the imposition of such coercive measures is a flagrant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Indeed, the Charter unequivocally enshrines the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of States, the right of peoples to self-determination, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of friendly relations among States. Their observance is of paramount importance to us as CARICOM States.

CARICOM member States continue to enjoy close relations with Cuba, enhanced by years of active socioeconomic and technical cooperation through a wide range of programmes in the areas of, inter alia, trade, health care and human resource training. Those close ties were renewed at the seventh CARICOM-Cuba summit, held in December 2020.

Unfortunately, the far-reaching and extraterritorial measures associated with the blockade are an obstacle to the development of our relations with Cuba — a country in our region with which we share a history and culture and enjoy an exemplary relationship of friendship and cooperation.

As our Heads of State and Government did in the past, we continue to reaffirm their unequivocal opposition to, and rejection of, the imposition of unilateral coercive measures and to call for an

immediate and unconditional end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the Government of the United States. The CARICOM States also oppose the application of extraterritorial laws and measures, such as the Helms-Burton Act.

The CARICOM States continue to enjoy friendly relations with Cuba and the United States of America. However, we regard the lifting of the embargo as a precondition for any meaningful rapprochement between the two countries.

CARICOM will continue to advocate for the normalization of relations between the two countries with a view to putting an end to the hostile environment that threatens regional peace and security and to restoring the harmony that should exist among all the peoples of the Americas.

Finally, as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to cause loss of life and considerable damage to the economies of our countries, we must also acknowledge the solidarity, cooperation and medical assistance provided to CARICOM member States and other countries by the Cuban Government in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. It should be noted that, despite the blockade, Cuba has deployed medical units to CARICOM member States to strengthen their respective national health-care teams in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. That is the case in my country, Haiti, where 348 doctors and other health personnel were sent to help the Government to fight against the pandemic. I would like to express the Haitian Government and people's deepest gratitude for that brotherly gesture and for Cuba's supportive cooperation towards us.

At this difficult time, such solidarity and cooperation are needed now more than ever to eradicate the scourge of the pandemic and to enable the entire world to return to normalcy. The lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba would enhance the prospects for peace, cooperation and development in the region and would fulfil the long-standing and noble wishes of our people.

Mr. Abarry (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on draft resolution A/75/L.97, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", on behalf of the members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba has not only affected Cuba's commercial sector and national economic activities but also had disastrous humanitarian consequences for the Cuban population. Between April and December 2020, the embargo caused more than \$3.5 billion in losses to Cuba, which compounded the damage from previous years, representing a total of more than \$9.1 billion from April 2019 to December 2020. Furthermore, Cuba's success in halting the spread of the coronavirus disease pandemic and in developing a vaccine risks being jeopardized. The embargo has a significant impact on the national health system. That is reflected in the shortage of basic necessities and the difficulties encountered by the national industry in purchasing the materials needed to preserve food and to produce medicines and other products. The general situation remains a source of deep concern.

We strive to work for the benefit of humankind and for the well-being of our peoples. Our leaders here at the United Nations agreed on the Sustainable Development Goals and committed to responding to the aspirations of the international community to ensure that no one is left behind. In that regard, the embargo against Cuba represents an obstacle to its people in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and runs counter to our commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The OIC therefore joins the call of the overwhelming majority to put an end to the embargo against Cuba. The OIC member States support draft resolution A/75/L.97, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", and calls on other Members to vote in favour of the draft resolution, as they did in previous years.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like to extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. I would like to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1) on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba.

Viet Nam aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Republic of Guinea, Azerbaijan and Singapore on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries

and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, respectively.

For almost three decades, the General Assembly has consistently adopted, by an overwhelming majority, annual resolutions calling on the United States to end its economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. However, those long-standing and consistent appeals of the international community have been rejected time and again.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba runs counter to international law and the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is the most unjust and prolonged system of unilateral sanctions ever imposed against a country in our modern world history. It has inflicted enormous damage on all sectors of the Cuban economy and therefore caused untold hardship for generations of Cubans.

Viet Nam's consistent policy is to oppose any imposition of unilateral embargoes or coercive measures on a sovereign State. We share the view that the continuation of the embargo against Cuba is unjustifiable. Now that we are all focusing on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the embargo is a serious obstacle to the efforts and endeavours of the people and the Government of Cuba to fully participate in that process.

Having experienced the tremendous suffering caused by a trade embargo, Viet Nam fully understands the difficulties and damage that it causes. Having established a comprehensive partnership with the United States, Viet Nam also fully recognizes that only constructive dialogue and engagement can foster mutual trust and bring positive change. Today, Viet Nam will therefore vote in favour of draft resolution A/75/L.97.

By voting in favour of the draft resolution, Viet Nam joins the international community in calling on the United States to put an end to its unilateral embargo against Cuba so that Cuba may be free to participate equitably and fairly in economic and trading systems, in accordance with international law. We also urge the United States Government to reverse its current policy trend towards Cuba, not only for the benefit of the people of the two countries but also for peace, stability and development in the region and the world at large.

At the same time, we appreciate Cuba's desire to continue respectful dialogue and cooperation on topics of mutual interest, as well as negotiating outstanding bilateral matters with the United States on the basis of equality, reciprocity and respect for the national sovereignty and independence of each other.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Viet Nam's strong support, friendship, cooperation and solidarity with the brotherly people of Cuba and to renew our unwavering commitment to safeguarding the principles of international law, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, in today's meeting. We thank the Secretary-General for preparing the report on ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1).

Together with the overwhelming majority of the international community, Russia firmly supports the immediate lifting of the United States illegal embargo against Cuba. All the unilateral restrictive measures that Washington imposes on Havana limit the natural inalienable rights not only of Cuban citizens, but also of those of the United States; they are completely illegal and are in flagrant violation of the fundamental principles and norms of international law. The sanctions war unleashed by Washington to achieve its main objective of ousting an undesirable Government is a typical example of open external political pressure in the spirit of the notorious Monroe Doctrine, a blatant interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State and clear disregard for human rights and humanitarian values in general.

That is becoming particularly clear in the current situation. Amid the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), it is important that all countries demonstrate political will, wisdom and foresight, reject trade wars and sanctions and join efforts to fight that common scourge on the basis of mutual understanding, solidarity and support. Unfortunately, at the height of the pandemic, we saw Washington take inhumane, sometimes odious, steps towards Havana. The numbers speak for themselves: the total damage that the United States sanctions inflicted on Cuba's economy in 2020 increased by almost 30 per cent as compared to 2019

and, for the first time, exceeded \$5 billion, while the overall damage that the United States restrictions have caused over their more than 60-year history equals \$144 billion.

Over the past years, the United States leadership has aggressively fuelled the anti-Cuban sanctions hysteria. The decision to include Cuba on the list of State sponsors of terrorism taken by the previous United States Administration on 11 January was the height of absurdity.

We believe that the campaign to discredit Cuban doctors and the sanctions against biopharmaceutical industry, which threatened the health of thousands of ordinary people in many countries of the world, were completely unscrupulous and inhumane. It is encouraging that, even amid such conditions, Havana remains remarkably resilient and continues to provide assistance to other countries by dispatching its doctors — teams of Cuban doctors were sent to 40 States — providing medicines and, in parallel to that, developing its own vaccine for the coronavirus disease, including to cover the needs of third countries. The main goal by which our partners have been guided is clear: it is the selfless provision of medical assistance amid the global challenge posed to humankind by COVID-19.

We take this opportunity to welcome the reported success of Cuban scientists, particularly with regard to achieving the required level of effectiveness of one of the vaccines that they developed. That deserves particular respect given the context of the embargo.

Unfortunately, so far we have not seen any visible changes in the Cuba track of Washington's foreign policy under the current Administration of Mr. Joseph Biden. Speculations that the White House is allegedly considering various options to change its strategic approach are not seen in practice. We hope that the United States Administration will demonstrate common sense in the spirit of previous statements.

To reiterate our unwavering position, we will again vote in favour of draft resolution A/75/L.97, which demands the lifting of the embargo without preconditions. At the same time, we are guided by the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the inadmissibility of any discriminatory measures, infringement of national sovereignty and interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

We call on all Member States to show solidarity with the Cuban people in their struggle for equal conditions to ensure socioeconomic development and to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We greet with affection and respect His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, who is with us at this meeting.

For almost 60 years Cuba has faced an economic, commercial and financial blockade that is illegal because it violates every rule of international law, that is inhumane because it violates the human rights of an entire people and, worse still, that is criminal because it is a policy of calculated cruelty that seeks to cause pain and suffering among the civilian population. It is an aggression that uses economic instruments. It is a collective punishment that, due to its systematic and deliberate nature, constitutes a crime against humanity.

The unilateral coercive measures illegally imposed on Cuba have a greater scope and impact amid the coronavirus disease pandemic. The Government of the United States of America has therefore become a sponsor of economic terrorism by using the pandemic as a weapon of war to advance its narrow national interests and its ambitions for colonial domination.

Despite all this, Cuba has renewed its international solidarity, providing health assistance and technical support. Since last year, as the world has been fighting the worst of the pandemic, Cuban medical brigades have been working on the ground in more than 35 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Europe and the Middle East to save the lives of millions of people. This fact will go down in human history: while the United States has thousands of officials engaged in blackmailing dozens of countries with disease and suffering, Cuba has thousands of doctors in the world to protect health and life.

We greet with admiration the news that Cuban scientists have succeeded in developing the Abdala vaccine, with 92.28 per cent certified effectiveness against the coronavirus disease. With brotherly pride, we welcome that achievement of the Cuban people, who, amid hardship, have achieved one of the greatest victories in the struggle for their freedom and for peace, health and life. That is another great lesson for the world: humankind needs more vaccines, not more blockades by the United States.

The policy of suffocation imposed by the United States of America against Cuba represents the most unjust, harsh and prolonged system of unilateral coercive measures ever applied against any country in modern history. It is a crime that affects us all, for it is a denial of the political, economic and cultural diversity of the planet and of our right to national sovereignty. It is the imposition of the United States national Power over the rights of dozens of countries. It is an attack on the entire system of international relations.

Today economic violence has become the preferred weapon of the United States Government to expand its perpetual war against a third of the world's population. Today the United States is a threat to the security of all humankind, as it is proving that economic aggression has a destructive impact comparable to conventional wars. That practice is an increasing danger to the entire international community. By demanding respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, in the case of Cuba we are therefore defending the right to the security and peace of all the nations of the world.

In conclusion, in Venezuela tomorrow we will celebrate the very day on which, 200 years ago, we achieved our national independence with enormous sacrifices. That struggle is not over. Today we are fighting for our freedom against a coalition of Powers, led by the United States, which is attacking us in order to bring us back to the status of a colony. That struggle is the same one that Cuba is living through today. That is why, on behalf of the free and sovereign people of Venezuela and as a supportive and responsible member of the international community, we will vote in favour of resolution A/75/L.97, which sets out the need to put an end to the embargo imposed against Cuba, while demanding that the Government of the United States of America end its colonial aggression and comply with its obligations under international law. Today we will vote for the independence of Cuba.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of the General Assembly, the highest multilateral forum, to consider the issue that brings us together today, since its periodic review, by its nature, is of great importance to the United Nations, the Latin American and Caribbean region and, of course, my country.

Allow me to reiterate that Mexico pursues a foreign policy based on upholding multilateralism, international cooperation for development, friendship, respect for all

countries, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the self-determination of peoples.

In that regard, we reaffirm that, in the context of relations among sovereign nations, any unilateral measure of an economic or financial nature intended as a means of political pressure to achieve changes from outside in the decisions of another State contravenes the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and undermines international peace and stability.

As it has always done, Mexico categorically condemns the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed for more than five decades against Cuba, as well as the decision to implement Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act — a law that conceals the true intention of the Helms-Burton Act and which has affected not only the sovereignty of the Cuban people but also the national interests of third countries.

Mexico will emphasize as many times as necessary that it is not possible to resolve global problems or undertake major regional changes without international cooperation based on the unconditional principle of the self-determination of peoples.

Given a pandemic such as the one facing us due to the coronavirus disease, putting an end to the blockade on Cuba cannot be postponed. Mexico is convinced that this will contribute not only to reversing the difficult economic situation of the Cuban people, but also to improving the regional environment. We urge the international community to show its solidarity and support so as to promote the well-being, the economic growth and the sustainable development of all nations, without exception.

Mexico reiterates its call on the United Nations to continue to uphold multilateral institutions, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the prevalence of international law, not only because of the principle we share, but also because a more relevant and effective multilateralism will benefit all States and our own national interests.

Mr. Mimouni (Algeria): Algeria aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), the Group of 77 and China, the Group of African States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

At the outset, allow me to convey my warmest welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Today's debate on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba reflects the extreme importance of this issue, which mobilizes the entire international community during each session of the General Assembly and appeals to us collectively regarding the necessity of upholding the guiding principles and the ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which lies at the core of our Organization.

The consecutive annual adoption by an overwhelming majority of Member States of a resolution calling for ending the embargo against Cuba is a powerful message not to be ignored, as it reflects the strong and steadfast support of the international community to lifting the unjustified and unnecessary embargo imposed on Cuba for six decades now.

Algeria reaffirms its solidarity with Cuba and reiterates its stand on the continuation of the tightening of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, in particular in the context of the unprecedented challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with its socioeconomic and health impacts. Such unjustified sanctions have not only exacerbated the suffering of the Cuban people by depriving them of their basic human rights but also obstructed the economic development of Cuba and hampered its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Let me recall that Algeria has always stressed that Cuba, like any other Member State, has the right to freedom of trade and navigation and to expand trade on a mutually agreed basis with any economic partner. Algeria also fully shares NAM's position, which 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 unwavering principles of Algeria's foreign policy, and that is why Algeria expresses its full support and solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba.

We continue to believe that it is important to rebuild the momentum generated in a few years. Engaging in a constructive bilateral dialogue in full respect of the principles of international law and the Charter of the

United Nations will certainly chart a new way forward for the full normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States and lead to the lifting of the long-standing, unnecessary embargo, for the mutual benefit of the peoples of both countries and of the whole region and beyond.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): At the outset, I extend greetings to His Excellency Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, who is with us today.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its unwavering support and solidarity to the Government and the people of Cuba. We also align ourselves with the statements of the Caribbean Community, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China.

Since 1992, the States Members of the Organization have collectively reaffirmed their support for the Government and the people of Cuba by calling for an immediate end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States. Today my delegation stands in full solidarity with our sister Caribbean nation and reiterates its unequivocal support in favour of resolution A/75/L.97, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”.

The unambiguous message of the draft resolution and the near-unanimous support it enjoys does not only signal the international community’s rejection of an antiquated policy; it also represents the overwhelming majority’s firm adherence to the sacrosanct principles of international law, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The blockade against the indomitable Cuban people was unjustifiable, illegal and illegitimate at its inception, and six decades later that still holds true.

President Obama acknowledged that fact and took a courageous and historic decision to put an end to the anachronistic policy of confrontation and isolation. During the past four years, however, there have been efforts to undermine and reverse the small yet significant progress achieved under President Obama’s administration while at the same time progressively and systematically intensifying an aggressive United States policy against Cuba.

We deplore those policies, inclusive of the extension of the economic blockade to permit, under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, the possibility of taking legal

action in United States courts against entities dealing commercially with properties legally nationalized in Cuba during the 1960s, as well as including Cuba on the unilateral list of State Sponsors of Terrorism of the Department of State, as announced in January.

By any measure, the blockade imposed on Cuba remains an unmitigated failure and serves only to aggravate the suffering of the Cuban people. It is also not merely a bilateral issue between Cuba and the United States, but, owing to its extraterritorial nature, it violates the sovereign rights of many other States. We trust that President Biden will continue with President Obama’s bold decision to normalize relations. We hope that he can inspire members of Congress to find solace in their hearts and, in their infinite wisdom, lift the blockade.

In the midst of the pandemic and against disruptions arising from human failings and folly, Cuba continues to demonstrate its resolve and determination to forge ahead. Our Caribbean sister nation epitomizes the spirit of solidarity, integrity and cooperation that is central to our rules-based international system.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, our Caribbean Community brothers and sisters and, indeed, the majority of the Members of the United Nations have benefited and continue to benefit significantly from Cuba’s solidarity and support, especially in the area of health care and humanitarian assistance. We are forever grateful.

The continuation of the blockade would only exacerbate Cuba’s financial woes, complicating its ability in the upscaling of the manufacturing of vaccines to respond appropriately to the pandemic, at a time when the international community has been calling for equitable access to vaccines. In that respect, we applaud the Government in its development of vaccines, including the Soberana and Abdala, with a 92 per cent efficacy, to respond to the pandemic.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines enjoys friendly, robust and mutually respectful relations with both Cuba and the United States of America. We believe that dialogue and constructive engagement between our friends are essential for our hemispheric relations, regional integration and multilateral diplomacy. In that respect, we encourage Cuba and the United States of America to rebuild their relationship and continue towards normalization, which we hope will result in the complete elimination of the blockade.

We will continue to strenuously advocate for the complete lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade, which is critical for the people and the Government of Cuba to achieve full prosperity. We are confident that today's draft resolution will receive, once again, the overwhelming support of the Assembly and serve as a clarion call for the United States to take a just path and correct this unlawful policy. I wish the Assembly peace profound.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the presence of Foreign Minister Rodríguez Parrilla at today's meeting.

China associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Guinea on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The coronavirus disease pandemic continues to ravage the world and is having a serious impact on the socioeconomic development of all countries and in particular developing countries, making it all the more difficult to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All countries should keep in mind that commitment to a shared future for all humankind and join hands in fighting the pandemic so as to promote a better recovery for common development.

However, some Western Powers have resorted to abusive unilateral sanctions, in violation of international norms and the international order, thus having a toxic effect on international relations. The countries of the world all have all the right to adopt countermeasures to resolutely resist and counterattack those unilateral sanctions so as to effectively safeguard their own legitimate rights and interests.

For 28 consecutive years, since 1992, the General Assembly has adopted a resolution, by an overwhelming majority, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, urging all countries to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and the norms governing international law, revoke or repeal any form of laws and measures the extraterritorial effects of which affect the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation. That represents the just call of the international community and must be effectively implemented.

I need to emphasize that the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States against Cuba are contrary to the international trend of peace, development and win-win cooperation. Those measures violate the international consensus on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and undermine the rights to survival and development and the basic human rights of the peoples of all countries. Those measures must be stopped immediately.

It is regrettable that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, instead of being ended, has, on the contrary, recently been intensified. That represents a serious contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, severely restricted the access of the Cuban people to the medicines, vaccines and supplies needed to fight the pandemic. It has also severely hindered the efforts of the Cuban people in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including poverty eradication, and deeply affected Cuba's normal economic, financial and development cooperation with other Member States.

China has always advocated respect for the independent choices of all countries in terms of their social systems and development paths, safeguarding the international order underpinned by international law, defending international fairness and justice and opposing the use of unilateral coercive measures against other countries by military, political, economic or other means.

China and Cuba have always maintained frequent economic trade and personnel exchanges. Friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields has been continuously developed. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, the Chinese Government and the relevant businesses and community organizations on a number of occasions donated supplies to Cuba to help the Cuban people fight the pandemic.

All the countries in the world are a community with a shared future. Dialogue on an equal footing and friendly consultation is the best way of addressing differences. Unilateralism, protectionism and bullying will ultimately backfire. China urges the United States to immediately and completely lift the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and develop normal State-to-State relationships with other Member States in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the

basic norms governing international relations. That is in line with the common interests of the people of the United States and Cuba and is also conducive to regional peace and stability.

China will once again vote in favour of the draft resolution submitted by Cuba (A/75/L.97) under this agenda item. We are convinced that the draft will again be adopted by an overwhelming majority.

Ms. Joyini (South Africa): At the outset, we welcome and acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla.

South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of African States, the Group of 77 and China, and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/75/81) on the implementation of the resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". The imposition of unilateral coercive measures by the United States has caused immeasurable damage to Cuba and its people. That can never be justified.

South Africa is eternally grateful for Cuba's significant contribution, at great sacrifice, to the liberation of our country. We will continue to honour the fallen Cuban combatants who sacrificed their lives for the attainment of a free and democratic South Africa.

The embargo continues to stifle the socioeconomic growth and potential of the Cuban people, causing immense hardship and denying them the most basic of rights. That injustice is even more acute in the context of the devastating health and socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic that we are all confronting. It has imposed additional hardships on Cuba at a time when the principles of human rights and of acting in humankind's common interests are paramount.

Despite those additional burdens, Cuba continues to make a remarkable contribution to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic through the deployment of its international medical brigades. Cuba's solidarity and internationalism are an inspiration to humankind.

The continued illegal blockade of Cuba by the United States and the extraterritorial application of the sanctions on third countries, through the Helms-Burton

Act, continue to severely curtail the potential of Cuba, at great cost. The more recent unjust United States designation of Cuba as a State sponsor of terrorism, together with a repudiation of the suspension of the enforcement of Title III of the United States Helms-Burton Act, is even more damaging.

Despite the immense obstacles that it faces, Cuba has shown tremendous resilience, making great strides in addressing the socioeconomic and development challenges that it faces, playing a leading international role in championing the rights of developing countries and pioneering advances in health. One can only imagine what more this small country could achieve were its true potential allowed to be realized.

South Africa remains unwavering in its support for the legitimate struggle of the people of Cuba to enjoy unobstructed freedom to develop, prosper and provide its people with a life of hope and dignity, which is the inherent right of all nations and peoples.

We call on the new Administration of the United States to urgently reconsider its policies towards Cuba and to remove the unjust yoke it has placed around its neck as a shameful relic of decades past. It is time for constructive dialogue, not further isolation.

South Africa reiterates its principled position in support of draft resolution A/75/L.97, and it calls upon all Member States that believe in human rights to join in this cause and work towards a new chapter of hope and prosperity for Cuba and her people.

Mr. Thomas (Antigua and Barbuda): Antigua and Barbuda aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China.

It has been decades since the United States, a close ally and friend of Antigua and Barbuda, instituted its blockade against Cuba. Time and time again, the international community, through the General Assembly, and such Caribbean countries as Antigua and Barbuda, through their several regional institutions, have long called upon the United States to lift this trade barrier on Cuba and allow its citizens to take part in and benefit from their fair share of globalization. This blockade, which has endured for more than 60 years, has caused more harm than good to the people of Cuba and has brought about much distress to many families and individuals within its shores.

Despite all the difficulties the Cuban people face, especially during the height of the outbreak of the coronavirus, they continue to show a resilience and spirit and solidarity with other countries by providing doctors and nurses to augment the armies of health workers of these nations arrayed against the virus. The Cuban people have shown that, despite the odds against them owing to the blockade, they can continue to make a major international contribution in the global fight against the virus, not only by providing personnel support to others but also by developing their own vaccine. As an island nation, Antigua and Barbuda is indeed proud of and congratulate the Cuban people for their tenacity and spirit of will.

Once again, we are calling for a stop to the policy of the blockade. It is time to turn a new page of peace, cooperation and understanding. The economic, financial and commercial siege applied against Cuba is the main obstacle to the sustainable development of the country. The international community's call for leaving no one behind must be applied to Cuba. To fulfil this promise, Antigua and Barbuda once again calls for an end to the blockade. Antigua and Barbuda looks forward to the day when it may expand trade with Cuba and build upon the generosity that Cuba exhibits in providing technical assistance.

As Antigua and Barbuda has done in numerous previous General Assembly statements, we are yet again calling on two of our friends and partners, the United States and Cuba, to come to the table of diplomacy to discuss peacefully an end to their differences and forge a relationship based on mutual respect and shared responsibility.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): The Philippines aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Alignment Movement.

For the twenty-ninth year, we have witnessed again today a clear expression of solidarity with the Cuban people through an overwhelming support for the draft resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/75/L.97). From 59 votes in favour in 1992, to 173 in 2002, 188 in 2012 and 187 in 2019, the international community once again calls for an end to the 58-year-old embargo, which is an unjust and unjustified economic sanctions policy. It is also the twenty-ninth consecutive year that

the Philippines will support the draft resolution on ending the Cuban embargo.

The extraterritorial nature of the blockade continues to intensify, exacerbated by the decision by the United States to include Cuba in the list of State sponsors of terrorism. It has been reported that, at current prices, damages to Cuba's economy during almost six decades of implementing this policy have reached over \$147.8 billion, including around \$5.6 billion between April 2019 and December 2020.

The blockade presents a main obstacle to Cuba's socioeconomic development. It poses a serious challenge for Cuba's implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It violates international law and runs contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

With cultural and economic ties to the Philippines dating as far back as the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade in the early sixteenth century, Cuba and its people will always have the support of my country. The United States should lift the embargo against Cuba unconditionally and once and for all.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): Namibia welcomes the participation in person at this meeting of the Cuban Foreign Minister, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, who is in the General Assembly Hall with us today.

Namibia aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of African States, the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement.

In our national capacity, I wish to add the following. My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary General for his report on the implementation of resolution 74/7, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1). My delegation wishes to place on record our strong support for draft resolution A/75/L.97, which calls for the unconditional lifting of the embargo against the Republic of Cuba.

For 63 years, the Cuban people have been subjected to an unfair blockade in clear contravention of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. This blockade obstructs the implementation of Cuba's national economic and social development plan, which was put in place to accelerate its implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We

must also not ignore that, at a time when we faced an unprecedented pandemic, more limitations that exacerbate and impose further hardships on the Cuban people were put in place.

The embargo imposed by the United States hinders the normal development of international relations and seriously harms the legitimate interests of many States, institutions and individuals around the world. As a country that upholds the peaceful coexistence of nations, respects the sovereign equality of States and believes in fair and open trade among nations, Namibia cannot condone this. Therefore, as my delegation has done for decades, we continue to stand with and reiterate our firm and unwavering support for the people and the Government of Cuba.

We regret that the aggressive actions imposed by the previous Administration of the United States in 2020 continue to be in place, including Cuba being placed on the list of State sponsors of terrorism. This is contrary to the spirit and position expressed by the United States in 2016, when we all welcomed the change in the United States policy and expressed hopes that the blockade would finally come to an end.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic constitutes a global challenge to the world that deepens pre-existing inequalities and exposes vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems, which in turn amplify the impacts of the pandemic. Obstacles to obtaining medicines and supplies through standard trade channels have made the challenge of fighting COVID-19 particularly severe for countries targeted by unilateral sanctions. Accordingly, we note that the impact of unilateral sanctions on human rights is exacerbated by the deteriorating economic situations in the targeted countries, the impossibility of buying or delivering necessary equipment, food or medication, and the increasing level of overcompliance when banks and organizations refuse to deal with targeted State entities out of fear of violating sanctions regimes.

For Namibia, the Cuban people are family. Notwithstanding all the challenges the Cuban people have had to face and have endured over all these years, we know them to be a resilient people. Cuba has spared no effort in contributing to the welfare of millions of people around the world through her selfless contributions in so many cases where natural disasters or adversity had struck or through science, technological advancements, training and capacity-building support

to the international community and the sending of medical professionals across much of the developing world. Therefore, for us, an end to the Cuban blockade means a fair chance for the Cuban people to unleash their extraordinary talents, their skills and innovation potential to realize their developmental aspirations.

One of the principles under which Namibia is governed is a strong philosophy that reminds us every day that exclusion spells conflict, while inclusiveness spells harmony. My country will continue to stand by the Cuban people and vote in favour of the draft resolution. We appreciate the long-standing solidarity and support of the overwhelming majority of Member States for this important resolution over the years, and we call on all of us as a community of nations to continue to stand on the side of seeking a normalization of relations between the United States of America and Cuba and to seek a better future for the Cuban people by voting in favour of draft resolution A/75/L.97 today.

Mr. Edrees (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to participate in welcoming His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Cuba, Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla, who joins us today.

Egypt aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Guinea, Eritrea, Azerbaijan and the Niger on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Group of African States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, respectively.

I would like also to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1).

I reiterate Egypt's firm position in support of the people and the Government of Cuba, as the unilateral measures imposed in the form of the embargo on Cuba have a negative and direct effect on vital economic sectors as well as radical repercussions for the socioeconomic welfare of the Cuban people. The embargo obstructs access to food, medicine, education and state-of-the-art technology.

The unilateral measures imposed on Cuba have restricted the country's ability to prepare for and respond to the coronavirus disease pandemic, limiting access to the medical equipment necessary to prevent and contain the virus, as noted in the Secretary-General's report. In

this regard, Egypt stresses the importance of upholding the principles of multilateralism, the Charter of the United Nations and international law as well as the need to respect the numerous relevant Assembly resolutions that were adopted by overwhelming majority of the international community.

Egypt reiterates that the continued embargo imposed on Cuba for more than five decades now will not deter the international community from repeatedly calling for the lifting of these measures that run counter to international law.

In conclusion, Egypt urges for the full and immediate lifting of the embargo imposed on Cuba to enable the Cuban people to effectively join international endeavours undertaken by the peoples of the world with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Singh (India): India associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Guinea and Azerbaijan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

We welcome the Foreign Minister of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, who is with us in the General Assembly Hall today. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the issue (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1).

Every year, the General Assembly has rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of people the world over. Last year 187 Member States voted in favour of resolution 74/7, expressing their strong support for lifting the embargo (see A/74/PV.28).

The General Assembly has also called upon all States to refrain from promulgating and applying — and to repeal and invalidate — laws and measures that have extraterritorial effects affecting the sovereignty of other States, in conformity with their obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law. There can be little doubt that the continued existence of this embargo, in contravention of overwhelming world opinion as expressed by this Assembly, undermines multilateralism and the credibility of the United Nations itself.

As the world's largest democracy and a country with an abiding faith in multilateralism, India stands in solidarity with the General Assembly in its unambiguous rejection of domestic laws having extraterritorial impact.

Embargoes such as that against Cuba have the effect of impeding the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected country, in particular women and children. They also hinder the full enjoyment of human rights, including, inter alia, the right to development, food, medical care and social services. Successive reports of the Secretary-General have also established — and this year's report is no exception — that the embargo, particularly through its extraterritorial effects, has adversely affected the Cuban people and the developmental efforts of the country with particularly devastating effects owing to the coronavirus disease pandemic.

At the same time, we would like to acknowledge the notable socioeconomic and developmental achievements of the Cuban people, in particular the high Human Development Index ranking of Cuba and its achievement of the several relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

In 2015, while launching the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders again strongly urged all States to refrain from any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Continuing the embargo will severely impact Cuba's ability to implement the comprehensive 2030 Agenda. Cuba's expertise in health care, achieved despite these conditions, enabled it to respond quickly, effectively and in a substantive manner to tackle the coronavirus disease pandemic.

People-to-people contact holds immense possibilities for fostering better understanding among nations. The international community has to intensify its efforts to promote an environment free of sanctions and embargoes. India hopes that the embargo will be withdrawn at the earliest and supports draft resolution A/75/L.97, proposed by Cuba.

Mr. Pary Rodríguez (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of our sister republic of Cuba, and his delegation, with us here today. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/75/81 and A/75/81/Add.1).

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Guinea, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Government of Bolivia will continue to lend its support by rejecting any unilateral measures by the United States designed to impose economic, trade and financial blockades or to use unilateral coercive measures, smear campaigns and misinformation against any State. Today, after the 2019 coup d'état in my country, Bolivia is once again joining the free and sovereign nations of the world to condemn and reject, in the strongest terms, the unilateral, immoral and criminal economic, trade and financial blockade that the Government of the United States has imposed on Cuba for more than half a century.

The issue under consideration by the Assembly is one of the most important on the agenda of the United Nations. It has received a great deal of attention because it encapsulates the *raison d'être* and the very nature of our Organization, as well as the challenges to it. Our most important debates today focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and of course on recovery in the wake of the coronavirus disease pandemic, with a slogan that says no one is safe until everyone is safe. All of that is proof of the importance of international cooperation and the solidarity needed to deal with such challenges. However, the United States Government is maintaining its old practices of punishing those who do not agree with its views and imposing an unfair blockade on free peoples who have decided to chart their own future. The criminal blockade of Cuba violates the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the human, economic and social rights of the Cuban people.

The blockade on Cuba is illegal. It is not a bilateral issue but a threat to multilateralism itself. It is aggressively extraterritorial and a gross violation of international law that threatens the sovereignty of all States. It infringes international trade rules and freedom of navigation. The inclusion of medicines and foodstuffs in the blockade also undermines the most basic human rights and international humanitarian law.

The blockade on Cuba is unfair. The harm that it does to people is incalculable. It causes suffering and is a gross, flagrant and systemic violation of human rights that affects international cooperation and Cuba's health care, food and education. It harms its foreign trade and investment, construction, tourism and transport sectors, its civil aeronautics industry and its sugar industry.

According to international law, the blockade qualifies as an act of genocide as well as one of economic war.

The blockade on Cuba is anachronistic. It undermines the right of the Cuban people to self-determination and the efforts of the Cuban Government to combat poverty and inequality. If there is genuine willingness to resume multilateral efforts to eradicate poverty and promote inclusion, as well as to implement the targets outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals, as a matter of priority, we must call for the effective implementation of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, which call on the United States Government to put an end to its blockade against Cuba without any conditions.

The United States Government's disregard for the resolutions conveying the international community's almost unanimous rejection of the unilateral blockade on Cuba demonstrate that there are countries that have had a privileged status within the Organization since its founding. They do not respect decisions that do not suit them.

It is time for the Assembly and the United Nations to enforce the decisions they have taken. Bolivia once again staunchly supports draft resolution A/75/L.97, which is before the Assembly. However, we also want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the solidarity that has saved thousands of lives in my country. The Cuban people have demonstrated their solidarity all over the world, not just in my region. I believe today's meeting is more than a demonstration of solidarity with Cuba. It is a way of thanking Cuba for its enormous, excellent and exemplary solidarity with the peoples of the world. We should therefore once again condemn the injustice and demand that the illegal, unfair and anachronistic blockade of Cuba be lifted once and for all.

Today we are not only voting against an immoral economic, trade and financial blockade, we are casting a vote for hope and for the possibility of building a fairer world. For that reason, Bolivia joins the voices of the free peoples around the world demanding that the inhumane and unilateral blockade imposed by the United States be lifted.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba to introduce draft resolution A/75/L.97.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): In 2020, like the rest of the world, Cuba had to face the extraordinary challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Government of the United States used the virus as an ally in its merciless unconventional war. It worked deliberately and opportunistically to increase the measures in its economic, trade and financial blockade of Cuba, which led to losses for our country amounting to approximately \$5 billion.

President Donald Trump applied 243 unilateral coercive measures to restrict the entry of visitors from the United States and harm third-party tourist markets. He took wartime-style measures to deprive us of fuel supplies. He denounced the health services that we provide in many countries. He increased United States efforts to stymie trade and financial transactions in other markets and intimidated foreign investors and trade entities by applying Title III of the Helms-Burton Act. He also impeded the regular and institutionalized flow of remittances to Cuban families, dealing heavy blows to both the public and private sectors and creating obstacles to ties with Cubans living in the United States and to family reunification. All those measures remain in force today and are being fully applied. Paradoxically, they are informing the conduct of the current United States Government at a time when Cuba is experiencing its largest increase in the number of people infected with COVID-19, as well as the highest number of related deaths and greatest adverse economic impact as a result of the virus.

In its election campaign, the Democratic Party promised voters that it would work to swiftly reverse actions taken by the Government of Donald Trump, and specifically that it would end restrictions on travel to Cuba, remittances and bilateral migration agreements, including limits on the issuance of visas. It has been shown that a majority of the people of the United States support lifting the blockade and allowing them the freedom to travel to Cuba. They believe that Cubans in Cuba want to enjoy normal relations with the United States and ensure their families' well-being. Some blame the pernicious inertia on electoral ambitions associated with Florida or on the transparently visible ties between the political and legislative elites in Washington. What will those who voted for President Joseph Biden think of what is happening now?

The harm that the embargo has caused the people is incalculable. No Cuban family has escaped this

inhumane policy's effects. No one can honestly say that the blockade is not having a real impact on the population. In the area of health care, it continues to be impossible to access technology, devices, treatments and appropriate drugs, since we cannot get them from United States companies but have to obtain them at exorbitant prices, using intermediaries or replaced by less effective generic drugs, including for newborns and sick children. But the insidious hit to our financial sector and COVID-19-related expenditures now stands at 2 billion pesos, or \$300 million. That means that the medicines for use in hospitals are in short supply, and they represent the difference between life and death. Every day it is a challenge for people to obtain insulin, antibiotics, antidepressants and drugs for high blood pressure, allergies and other chronic diseases in a timely fashion.

Cuba has tried to protect everyone from the virus. We activated our robust universal health-care system and counted on its highly skilled personnel's selflessness. We mobilized our national scientific potential and world-class biopharmaceutical industry and were fully supported and endorsed by our people, especially young people and students, who were quick to volunteer in high-risk areas and contribute to epidemiological research. That enabled us to swiftly develop highly effective national protocols to treat people infected or suspected of being infected with COVID-19. We found space in our hospitals for all infected with COVID-19, guaranteed the full continuity of our intensive care system and isolated those who had been in contact with the sick. We were able to ensure free antibody and polymerase chain reaction tests and set up molecular biology laboratories in every province of the country.

When the embargo cruelly blocked the supply of pulmonary ventilators, we developed our own national production of ventilators using our own prototypes. All those national efforts have enabled us to keep pandemic death rates relatively low, especially among health-care personnel, children and pregnant and breastfeeding women. It is noteworthy that a small island operating under a blockade has produced five candidate vaccines and approved three of them through intervention studies and health-care interventions. We have administered at least one dose to 2,244,350 Cubans, and we intend to vaccinate at least 70 per cent of the population by the end of the summer and 100 per cent before the end of the year, despite the fact that the blockade is a severe

obstacle to our ability to increase our industrial vaccine production. All this is a demonstration that we have put science at the service of our people and that our public service is effective.

It was during the pandemic the United States Government launched a smear campaign against our medical cooperation efforts. Cuba sent 57 specialized brigades from the Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade to 40 countries and territories, in addition to the more than 28,000 health-care professionals who were already serving 59 nations.

The blockade has also deprived Cuba of the funding it needs to import food production components, which has led to a decline in our production of pork and other goods. Food imports from the United States are strictly licensed and conducted in discriminatory conditions, and the quantities are insignificant given the blockade's extensive damage to the financial sector and the impact of its extraterritorial application in third markets. I am a witness to the suffering and anxiety that Cuban families are enduring because they cannot obtain the most basic items to survive, clearly visible in the long queues they have been compelled to stand in daily during the pandemic. Despite the Government's enormous efforts, the tightened blockade measures have also had a major impact on the lack of goods and runaway price increases amid a pandemic and a global economic crisis. As General Raúl Castro Ruz said on 16 April,

“The damage these measures do to the living standards of the population is neither accidental nor a collateral effect; it is the result of a deliberate attempt to punish the Cuban people as a whole”.

The blockade is a gross, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people, and constitutes an act of genocide according to article 2, sub-paragraph (c) of the 1948 Geneva Convention.

The United States authorities are cynical in their attempts to plant the idea that the Cuban system is failing and that the Cuban Government is inefficient. They say that the coercive measures do not harm the people and have no significant impact on Cuba's economy. But if we look at the data, from April 2019 to December 2020 the blockade resulted in losses of \$9.157 billion at current prices, and damage to the economy equivalent to an average of \$436 million each month. Over the past five years, the losses caused by the blockade were equivalent to more than \$17 billion. The

cumulative damage caused over the past six decades stands at \$147.853 billion at current prices. In gold, it amounts to \$1.377 trillion.

On 10 June, our banking and financial system was forced to temporarily suspend its acceptance of deposits in United States dollars, which was an essential measure, given the obstacles that the blockade created to disposing of or using that currency. It was a step we wanted to avoid, but one that we simply could not put off any longer. This is an economic war of extraterritorial scope being waged against a small country that has already been dealing recently with the effects of the global recession and the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, which has stripped us of vital revenue, including from tourism. As President Miguel Díaz-Canel stated on 19 April,

“No one with a modicum of integrity or with economic data that is available in the public domain can ignore the fact that the blockade is the primary obstacle to our country's development of the country and its quest for prosperity and well-being”.

I wonder what would happen to other economies, including those of rich countries, if they were subjected to similar conditions. What would be the political and social effects on them?

The blockade is a politically motivated act, as perfectly described in the infamous memorandum of Lester Mallory, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, on 6 April 1960. It reads,

“We must quickly implement all possible measures to weaken economic life, thereby depriving Cuba of money and supplies so as to reduce both nominal and real salaries. The goal is to cause hunger and despair, and to topple the Government”.

That was maliciously complemented by an intense campaign of political interference in Cuba's internal affairs with subversive agendas, for which the Government of the United States earmarks tens of millions of dollars of its federal budget every year, as well as additional covert funding. The goal is to sow political and social instability in Cuba in the light of the economic hardship that the United States Government itself causes. It reckons that if it can subject the Cuban people to hardship, promote artificial leaders and encourage disorder and instability, it will be able to

whip up a virtual political movement on social media and bring it into the real world. It is employing vast resources, social laboratories and high-tech tools in a frenzied campaign to discredit Cuba through the disgusting use of lies and manipulation of data. It is stepping up its smear campaign of ideological intolerance, with brutal attacks on those who defend the truth.

Some dream of sowing social chaos, disorder, violence and death. That is not surprising, because those are political weapons that have already been used in other countries, with devastating consequences. A few fantasize about provoking irregular and uncontrolled migration flows between Cuba and the United States. That is a dangerous game. We have warned the United States Government about the dangers of that idea, as it has the legal and moral obligation to honour migration agreements, in particular with regard to the issuance of visas. It is a delicate issue that costs lives.

The States represented here today are the victims of the extraterritorial impact of a blockade that undermines their sovereignty, violates national legislation, subjects them to United States court rulings and harms the interests of their companies that are keen to establish relations with both countries. The blockade is a violation of international law. It is neither legal nor ethical for the Government of a world Power to subject a small nation to decades of an endless economic war with the aim of imposing a different political system and installing a Government that it has designed for it. It is unacceptable to deprive an entire people of the right to peace, development, well-being and human progress. It is intolerable that the Government of the United States has ignored the successive resolutions of the democratic and representative General Assembly for 28 years. In September 2000, Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro said, from this rostrum,

“It must be firmly stated that the principle of sovereignty cannot be sacrificed to an exploitative and unfair order in which a hegemonic super-Power, backed by its own might, seeks to have its say on everything.” (*A/55/PV.4, p.19*)

Cuba demands to be left in peace, to be allowed to live without an embargo and to see an end to the persecution of our commercial and financial ties with the rest of the world. We demand an end to the manipulation, the discrimination and the obstacles that Cubans living in the United States face in terms of their

links to their relatives in Cuba and to the country where they were born. We recognize the efforts of those who, at this difficult time, have persisted in communicating with and supporting their families on the island in the face of hatred and political persecution. Even within the Government of the United States, many argue pragmatically that the blockade should be ended because it is an anachronistic and ineffective policy that has not and will not achieve its objective, but has ultimately discredited and isolated the United States itself.

It is also unacceptable to manipulate the fight against terrorism for political and electoral purposes. In January, nine days before the inauguration of the current Government, President Trump's Administration included Cuba on an arbitrary and unilateral list of States that allegedly sponsor international terrorism, with significant repercussions for the global financial system. No one can honestly claim that Cuba is a State sponsor of terrorism. Recent revelations have made a mockery of the latest of those pretexts. Even so, on 14 May, the United States Department of State once again labelled Cuba — as the previous Administration did in 2020 — a country that does not cooperate sufficiently with the United States' anti-terrorist efforts. Cuba has been the victim of acts of terrorism organized, financed and executed by the United States Government or from United States territory, acts that have cost 3,478 Cubans their lives and left 2,099 injured or disabled. There is more than enough evidence of efforts to cooperate, as well as of effective acts of cooperation in recent years between the authorities in both countries. Our position on terrorism is well-known. We condemn it utterly in all its forms and manifestations.

By sovereign decision and for the good of the entire nation, Cuba has been making sustained efforts for years to update its model and its socialist State, based on law and social justice, with the support of a very large majority of its citizens through a free, direct and universal referendum. That is a bold and highly complex task in any circumstances, made far more difficult in the face of the persistent hostility of United States imperialism, which will nonetheless neither hinder us nor bend the will of current and future generations of Cubans.

I am deeply grateful for the solidarity and aid of our compatriots and Cuba's friends in many parts of the world, including the host country, something that demands great determination in the face of Government opposition and that we very much appreciate. We are

encouraged by the support of the thousands of people all over the world who have gathered to demand that the United States Government put an end to the blockade, among whom are numerous Cubans raising the flag of the Lone Star even here.

On behalf of my country and its worthy and generous people who are resisting and advancing heroically, I submit draft resolution A/75/L.97, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba", for consideration by the General Assembly. Like the virus, the blockade suffocates and kills, and it must cease. We stand for homeland or death, and we shall overcome.

The President: We have heard the last speaker on the debate on this item. We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/75/L.97.

Before giving the floor for explanations of vote or position before the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. Duarte Lopes (Portugal): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. Let me first acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba has a damaging impact on the country's economic situation and a negative effect on the living standards of the Cuban people. External trade and foreign investment can play a crucial role in setting the country on a path towards modernization, reform and sustainable growth, as well as helping it to overcome the economic hardship caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The EU therefore considers that lifting the embargo could facilitate the opening of the Cuban economy to the benefit of the Cuban people.

We acknowledge that the human rights situation in Cuba remains worrying, particularly as regards civil and political rights. We are concerned about that and therefore reiterate our call to the Cuban Government to grant its citizens their internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms in full, including freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and free access to information; to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and to extend a standing invitation to all United Nations special procedures to visit Cuba. We also believe that empowering civil society is essential to the promotion and protection of all human rights and call on the Cuban Government to open spaces for constructive and inclusive dialogue, without preconditions, with the whole spectrum of civil-society actors on the island. A broad spectrum of civil society, both Cuban and European, should also be involved in the implementation of the European Union-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement.

The EU believes that positive change in Cuba is best brought about by closer engagement at all levels — Government, economy and civil society — but also through people-to-people exchanges. We therefore deeply regret the previous United States Administration's introduction of additional restrictions on its relations with Cuba since the Assembly's adoption of its most recent resolution, on 7 November 2019 (resolution 74/7). The measures that further restrict travel, such as the elimination of authorizations to travel to Cuba for professional meetings, conferences and other public activities, curtail the possibility for engagement with the Cuban people even further. The same Administration's redesignation of Cuba as a State sponsor of terrorism without presenting any new facts has created obstacles to international financial transactions with the island. Moreover, the embargo has restricted Cuba's ability to import pharmaceuticals, medical devices and other supplies needed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beyond the damaging impact of the embargo on ordinary Cubans, United States sanctions and other administrative and judicial measures are also negatively affecting EU economic interests. We have firmly and consistently opposed any such measures, due to their extraterritorial application and impact on the European Union in violation of commonly accepted rules of international trade. We cannot allow such measures to impede our economic and commercial relations with Cuba. The EU strongly rejects the United States' activation in April 2019 of Titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act. It breaches the commitments made by the United States in the United States-EU agreements of 1997 and 1998. We will draw on all appropriate measures to address the effects of the Helms-Burton Act, including in relation to our World Trade Organization rights and through the use of the EU Blocking Statute, which protects against the extraterritorial application of those

United States sanctions on EU citizens, businesses and non-governmental organizations operating in Cuba.

For the EU, international cooperation, dialogue and closer engagement, even if it is critical, are the way to go with Cuba. The provisional application of the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement is now in its fourth year. The agreement has put our bilateral relationship on a new and solid legal footing and sets out an agenda for critical engagement with Cuba that will enable us to support and accompany Cuba on its path towards reform and modernization. We are also enhancing dialogue and cooperation on issues on which we still have fundamental differences. To that end, the Agreement has established a human rights dialogue as a key pillar of our relationship. The third formal meeting of that dialogue was held in February.

Following Cuba's adoption of a new Constitution, and in order to overcome the current economic crisis, we call on it to pursue a comprehensive reform and modernization agenda, extending economic, judicial and social reforms and implementing them in a manner that will address the key concerns of the Cuban population, as well as meeting the legitimate aspirations of the Cuban people for more opportunities to participate in shaping the country's future.

With the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement, the EU offers Cuba a consistent and reliable partnership to support it as it seeks to reform its political and economic model, pursue sustainable development and find common solutions to global challenges while we continue to vigorously promote democracy and respect for human rights. It is our considered view that the United States embargo does not contribute to promoting those aims but rather impedes their achievement. Against that background, the States members of the European Union will vote unanimously in favour of draft resolution A/75/L.97.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): The United States stands with the Cuban people and seeks to support their pursuit of freedom, prosperity and a future of greater dignity.

Like other Member States, the United States determines its conduct of economic relationships with other countries in accordance with its national interests. Sanctions are a legitimate way to achieve foreign policy, national security and other national and international objectives. The United States is not alone in that view or in that practice. Sanctions are one set

of tools in our broader efforts with regard to Cuba to advance democracy, promote respect for human rights and help the Cuban people exercise the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We therefore oppose draft resolution A/75/L.97.

We recognize the challenges the Cuban people face. That is why the United States is a significant supplier of humanitarian goods to the Cuban people, as well as being one of Cuba's principal trading partners. Every year, we authorize billions of dollars' worth of exports to Cuba, including food and other agricultural commodities, medicines, medical devices, telecommunications equipment, consumer goods and other items to support the Cuban people.

Advancing democracy and human rights remain at the core of our policy towards Cuba. We are engaging directly with a large swathe of Cuban civil society, empowering the Cuban people to determine their own futures. We are also engaging directly with the Cuban Government to denounce abuses and push for reform. The United States stands with all who defend freedom in Cuba. Cubans, like all peoples, deserve the right to freedom of expression, assembly and culture. No Government should silence its critics through violations of their human rights. We celebrate the diverse backgrounds and ideas of Cuban artists, entrepreneurs, religious leaders, human rights defenders, journalists and environmental activists — just a few of the many people in Cuba with a strong voice and a desire to be heard.

The United States opposes today's draft resolution. We encourage the Assembly to support the Cuban people in their quest to determine their own future.

Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): In our explanation of vote, we align ourselves with the statements made earlier by the representatives of Guinea, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Nicaragua joins the peoples of the world in once again reiterating its rejection of the criminal, illegal and immoral economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on our brother country Cuba and its Government and people. That extraordinary people has waged a titanic battle for 60 years, resisting invasions, acts of terrorism, economic

sanctions, blockades and all the webs of imperialism and its destabilizing actions.

We welcome the presence of our brother and comrade Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, who has travelled here in this extraordinary time of pandemic to share with us the evidence of the deplorable economic, commercial and financial devastation wreaked on the Cuban people by this evil blockade. In spite of the fact that every year since 1992 a vast majority of countries in the General Assembly has called for the elimination of those measures, this obsolete and retrograde policy has continued and intensified. Nicaragua, together with every developing country and the international community as a whole, has seen with concern how the sanctions, unilateral coercive measures and embargo imposed during the pandemic have become a crime against humanity. The blockade directly affects the brave Cuban people's right to development, violating all human rights and undermining the country's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

Cuba has demonstrated how the financial impact of the embargo was exacerbated between April 2019 and March 2020 in sensitive sectors such as health, education and sport and culture to the tune of more than \$5.5 billion. That figure exceeds the amount recorded in the previous year, from April 2018 to March 2019, by approximately \$1.2 billion, bringing the accumulated damages in the nearly six decades since this anachronistic policy was first implemented to more than \$144 billion. We denounce the five packages of measures adopted in 2019 with a view to monitoring and imposing punitive measures on companies, ships and shipping companies transporting fuel to Cuba. The embargo has undermined the efforts of the noble country of Cuba to combat the pandemic, particularly through its extraterritorial component, in order to deliberately deprive the Cuban people of mechanical pulmonary ventilators, masks, diagnostic kits, protective goggles, suits, gloves, reagents and other supplies necessary for the management of the disease.

It is admirable that in its struggle against the blockade and in the face of acts of aggression and policies of defamation, Cuba has been able to send 57 teams from its Henry Reeve contingent to prevent and combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in 40 countries and territories in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean.

True to the motto "doctors, not bombs", that army of white coats has joined the 28,000 professionals who were already selflessly assisting 59 nations in solidarity with victims of earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes and floods or dealing successfully with the dengue and Ebola epidemics. Scientists at the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology of a pandemic-stricken Cuba have developed five vaccine candidates against COVID-19. Cuba has therefore become the first country in Latin America to manufacture its own vaccine and distribute it, universally and free of charge, to its people. It is no coincidence that its vaccines are named Soberana, Mambisa and Abdala in honour of José Martí.

We send a message of love and solidarity to our Cuban brothers and sisters, the Government and people of Cuba and the more than 11 million Cuban hearts for their internationalism and their selfless contribution to all of our campaigns and social programmes in Nicaragua, whether in health, education, sport or many other fields. We are firm in our resolve that our peoples will forever be united in our cause until victory is ours.

We believe that no State has the right to dictate its will to others through unilateral coercive economic measures that violate international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Such practices are illegitimate and illegal and devalue the progress achieved in global economic governance. Nicaragua hopes that the General Assembly's numerous resolutions will be complied with and respected once and for all in order to put an end to this illegal policy towards Cuba. It is time to lay the foundations for a respectful dialogue aimed at resolving the pending bilateral issues between the two countries involved, based on the principles of the equality of States, reciprocity and respect for Cuba's sovereignty and independence.

We are fully convinced that international solidarity with Cuba will continue and that today the Assembly will once again condemn the criminal blockade and all the extraterritorial measures and ramifications that continue to be intensified against our sister republic of Cuba. We want to share a recent statement by our Commander, President Daniel Ortega Saavedra, who said,

"We stand in solidarity with President Miguel Díaz-Canel, Commander Raúl Castro and the people of Cuba. We will accompany the people of Cuba in their struggle for peace, a struggle in

which the people of Cuba are drawing strength from weakness, sending entire brigades to various parts of the world to help in the field of health. They have done it before and they are doing it right now in the face of the pandemic. There are brigades of Cuban doctors going out to distant areas where brigades from developed countries are nowhere to be seen. They are nowhere to be seen, but our brothers, the brigades of Cuban doctors, are there.

“In spite of that act of solidarity and generosity and their struggle for peace, the illegal embargo is being maintained with the same intensity and brutality as when it was tightened by President Trump, and it is being tightened further still. But who is suffering? It is the Cuban people who are suffering under the embargo.”

Nicaragua will always be united with the formidable spirit of Martí, Fidel, Raúl, Díaz-Canel and the great people of Cuba. As it does every year, Nicaragua will vote in favour of draft resolution A/75/L.97. Today, through its united adoption of the draft resolution presented by Cuba, the General Assembly will be defending multilateralism and the Charter of the United Nations, seeking the understanding and peaceful coexistence among nations that we all desire and promoting the culture of peace that we all speak of and yearn for.

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

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/75/L.97, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, 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, Eswatini, 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, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, 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, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, 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

Abstaining:

Brazil, Colombia, Ukraine

Draft resolution A/75/L.97 was adopted by 184 votes to 2, with 3 abstentions (resolution 75/289).

The President: Before giving the floor for explanations of vote after the voting, I would like to remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. Altarsha (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the Permanent Representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and Guinea, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, I welcome the presence here today of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, and commend his participation and remarkable statement on this important General Assembly agenda item. I would now like to explain Syria's vote.

I would like to once again emphasize the steadfast and continued support of the Syrian Arab Republic and its leadership and people for the resilience of our Cuban brothers and sisters in the face of the unjust and illegal United States embargo that they have endured since 1962. We value the positions expressed by our brothers in Cuba that have supported my country in the face of the massive terrorist war that has been waged against us for nearly a decade. The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its full commitment to and support for the United Nations resolutions calling for an immediate end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba. That unjust embargo constitutes a grave violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as of the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy.

As it has in all previous General Assembly sessions, my delegation is proud to have voted in favour of resolution 75/289 today. The result of the voting at the international level was almost unanimous, sending a strong message to the current and former United States Administrations that they should lift the unjust blockade of the Cuban people and change their policies, which are based on pressuring and imposing unilateral sanctions on States whose independent national policies do not suit United States agendas and interests. In addition, the previous Administration used a means of war that is both new and old, placing Cuba on the list of States that it claims are sponsors of international terrorism, a policy that my delegation firmly condemns.

The periodic reports of the Secretary-General and the monthly reports of the Cuban delegation circulated to Member States are more evidence of the suffering of the Cuban people amid the coercive measures that have been imposed on them for many decades. The numbers clearly and explicitly illustrate the harm caused to Cuba and its people on a daily basis as a result

of the suffocating embargo, now exacerbated by the global spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its destructive impact on peoples and economies around the world. That must not continue against the Cuban people, who have always stood by international law and the principles of right, justice and equality while responding to calls for humanitarian and medical assistance from all over the world, in which the latest of their achievements is their manufacture of a vaccine against COVID-19. In addition, their medical teams have fanned out across more than 35 countries, with efforts that play an important role in saving lives.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Syrian Arab Republic, along with Cuba and other countries, continues to be the target of the many illegal unilateral coercive measures imposed outside the framework of the United Nations and international legitimacy by the United States and many other European Union countries. Such measures are acts of economic terrorism that complement the criminal acts committed by terrorist organizations in my country, affecting the daily life of all Syrians by depriving them of their basic needs and limiting the ability of the Syrian Government to provide services and support for those in need.

My country reiterates its call for an immediate and indefinite end to policies that impose coercive measures, while recalling the calls of the Secretary-General and senior United Nations staff, as well as rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council, in that regard. We also recall the right of the Cuban people to realize their economic development and ensure their social welfare.

Ms. Ershadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, we would like to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, at this meeting. In that regard, we express our gratitude for the strong statement he made.

I would also like to align myself with the statements made by the representatives of Guinea, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Niger, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Unilateral embargos and coercive sanctions are only two of a number of methods designed to achieve

national policy objectives that in turn have an adverse impact on the promotion of peace, both regionally and internationally. They are fundamental impediments to establishing not only a peaceful and prosperous world but also a just and equitable international order, which is a vital prerequisite for sustainable development.

For many years, the General Assembly has expressed its overwhelming support for and solidarity with the Government and the people of Cuba through its decisive votes in favour of its annual resolution calling for the lifting of the embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba. Despite those strong calls, and its defiance of both international law and its commitments under the Charter of the United Nations over the course of the past six decades, the United States has continued to impose an economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. Such measures serve no purpose other than to inflict tremendous hardship and suffering on the people of Cuba, especially women and children. We are all aware of the wide-ranging detrimental repercussions of the embargo, not only on the Cuban economy's financial, banking, trade, investment and tourism sectors, but also on the country's health, nutrition, water quality, education and culture.

My country has been experiencing unlawful United States sanctions since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In the past four decades, the rate of unilateral coercive measures it has imposed on the Iranian people has exponentially increased to the extent that it has even targeted imports of medicine and medical equipment. Moreover, it has even introduced unilateral coercive measures against other States for implementing their commitments under Security Council resolutions. A clear example in that regard is the conduct of the United States with respect to Security Council resolution 2231 (2015). In addition to reimposing its unilateral sanctions against Iran — a gross violation of its obligation under the Charter, as well as its strict commitments under resolution 2231 (2015) — the United States currently continues to threaten other States to either violate the resolution or face punishment.

It is regrettable that the new United States Administration has continued the same practice since January. At a time when all nations are mobilizing their efforts to overcome the challenges arising from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak that continues to ravage many parts of the world, those coercive measures have severely hampered our effort to combat COVID-19. They have limited our access to

our financial resources in other countries, restricting our ability to purchase the medicine, vaccines and medical equipment necessary in the fight against the novel coronavirus.

We firmly believe that the international community must work to find solutions to counter such destructive interventions and unilateralism. Iran strongly believes in cooperating with friendly countries, including Cuba, to prudently counter those challenges. Lastly, my delegation would like to reiterate that the United States must immediately and fully comply with its international obligations and cease the application of all unilateral coercive measures.

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea voted in favour of resolution 75/289, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". The Assembly has adopted this annual resolution for nearly three decades with the support of almost all States Members of the United Nations.

In spite of that, the United States has ignored the demands of the international community and continues to impose its embargo on Cuba, creating difficulties for the people of Cuba in their efforts to achieve socioeconomic development. Even in the midst of the catastrophic coronavirus disease pandemic, the sanctions and measures imposed by the United States remain in place in various areas, including finance, economy and trade. The United States has gone so far as to exclude Cuba from the list of countries eligible for humanitarian assistance, blocking even the delivery of essential medicines and medical equipment and thereby seriously threatening the lives and safety of Cuban people.

The unanimous demand of nearly all Member States — including Cuba itself, which aspires to sustainable development in a peaceful environment — is an immediate end to the unilateral and extraterritorial embargo against Cuba. The resolution adopted once again today, which enjoys the support of an absolute majority of the United Nations membership, is a reflection of the desire of the international community to stand firm in support of the just struggle of the Government and the people of Cuba.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea strongly urges the United States

to lift the unilateral and extraterritorial embargo of Cuba immediately and in accordance with all the relevant General Assembly resolutions. We want to take this opportunity to emphasize our firm support for and solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba in their just struggle to safeguard the dignity and sovereignty of the nation and to achieve further economic development.

Mr. Gimolieca (Angola): First of all, I would like to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. I also commend the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting to once again address this vitally important issue, which has lasted for decades despite the efforts and appeals that have been made at the international level.

Angola voted in favour of resolution 75/289, as it has always done for this annual resolution, with the aim of seeing the matter of the embargo on Cuba resolved once and for all. Despite the fact that this subject has been addressed numerous times within our Organization and in other international forums, no real progress has been made and Cuba has not been able to emerge from the situation imposed on it more than 60 years ago. Today, 75 years after the creation of the United Nations, it is regrettable that we are still witnessing unjust and deplorable situations such as the embargo on Cuba at a time when the international political framework could already be more balanced and when old political disagreements that made no sense before and make much less sense now should be resolved and left in the past. Year after year, resolutions in favour of ending the embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba are adopted by an overwhelming majority. However, none of those resolutions have been implemented, in clear disregard for the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the positions expressed by most Member States.

During President Barack Obama's historic visit to Havana in March 2016, it seemed that an opening had been created for a less rigid political climate that might eventually have led to the end of the embargo. However, the process stalled and subsequently receded, returning to the status quo. The economic and financial embargo imposed unilaterally on Cuba affects not only the Cuban people but all those who decide to have trade relations with Cuba. The blockade imposed on Cuba completely deprives its people of their fundamental

right to development and constitutes a violation of the full enjoyment of human rights by the Cuban people.

We must commend the resilience of the people of Cuba, who have suffered the consequences of the blockade for years without losing the spirit of solidarity that leads them to help other countries whenever and however they can. My country, Angola, and the Angolan people are eternally grateful for the help provided by Cuba at times when we needed it most — first in the military area and later in the fields of health and education, in which Cuba excels despite the obstacles caused by the embargo.

The whole world has suffered from the coronavirus disease. The effects of the pandemic will continue to be felt by all of us, and in countries like Cuba, where the economy was already dangerously weakened by the embargo, the Cuban people have been denied the possibility of developing economically and socially and maintaining normal exchanges with the rest of the world. The embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba is the most severe in modern history. Angola would like to reiterate its strong support for the Cuban people and for all resolutions and efforts to end the economic and financial blockade against Cuba, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and with respect for the principles of State sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, as well as the maintenance of international peace and security.

I would like to commend the Member States that, like Angola, voted in favour of the resolution on the need to end the embargo on Cuba. We call on other States to express their support for Cuba and condemn the embargo, as well as to join in collective efforts to ensure that the resolution on the need to end the embargo is implemented and the blockade lifted in its entirety.

Ms. Sweeb (Suriname): At the outset, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba.

Suriname aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Azerbaijan, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Niger, on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Guinea, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Haiti, on behalf of the Caribbean Community. We would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

Suriname voted in favour of resolution 75/289, joining the international community in calling on the Government of the United States to put an immediate end to its obsolete policy and to lift the economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba. My delegation disapproves, in the strongest terms, of the economic, financial and commercial embargo on Cuba and its people. Year after year, decade after decade, an almost full majority of Member States take a stand against the embargo, as it impedes the unlocking of the sovereign nation of Cuba's full potential for economic and social development. Those unilateral coercive measures with extraterritorial implications contravene the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, as expressed in international law and enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Those principles have guided us in our collective commitment to achieving peaceful and sustainable development for all nations.

As the blockade has been in effect for decades, it has continued to cause unnecessary hardship for the people of Cuba. The imposition of additional measures by the United States in the midst of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is further undermining Cuba's efforts to achieve sustainable development and socioeconomic well-being, at an effective total detrimental cost of \$147.8 billion, as has been reported.

Despite those enormous setbacks, the Cuban people, led by their steadfast Government, have been able to develop excellent expertise in medical

science and services, among other things, and have graciously shared their health-care professionals in great numbers with the international community. Such a compassionate act of solidarity should be praised rather than punished in a way that produces oppressive suffering. We also congratulate Cuba on their latest achievement of successfully developing the Abdala COVID-19 vaccine. Suriname, too, has benefited from the generous support of Cuban medical knowledge and services for many years. Most recently, the Henry Reeve medical contingent offered its expertise and assistance in our regional hospitals and health centres. We are deeply appreciative of those expressions of solidarity from our sister nation of Cuba.

My Government regrets that the renewed continuation of the economic and financial blockade has set back the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States. We call for an end to the economic and financial blockade and for a resumption of peaceful negotiations towards the normalization of relations between the two countries. That will also contribute to enhanced peace and stability in the Caribbean, which is so necessary to the development of our region.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote for this meeting. We will hear the remaining speakers at 3 p.m. in this Hall.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.