



STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR BURHAN GAFOOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 39: "NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA"

Mr President,

1 I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to express our support for the resolution to end the economic, commercial, and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba.

2 The General Assembly has consistently adopted this resolution by an overwhelming majority since it was first tabled in 1992. ASEAN Member States have voted unanimously in favour of the resolution for the past 15 years. In 2015, ASEAN made a statement at the General Assembly calling for the unilateral embargo against Cuba to be lifted as soon as possible. It is our firm belief that differences between States should be settled through engagement not confrontation, and by inclusion not isolation. All this must be done, bearing in mind the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, non-interference, and non-intervention as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

3 ASEAN welcomes the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States. US President Barack Obama's State Visit to Cuba in March this year, the relaxation of travel restrictions for US citizens to Cuba, and the resumption of direct flights between the US and Cuba are important steps towards the normalisation of bilateral relations. These are key to building better regional relations in the Americas.

4 A more important step will be for the United States to end its economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. This would significantly improve the quality of life and living standards of the Cuban people, and contribute to the economic and social development of Cuba. Bringing an end to the embargo would also advance this Assembly's efforts towards achieving an inclusive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

5 ASEAN encourages the United States and Cuba in their efforts to chart a new way forward. We recognise that much remains to be done. ASEAN joins with the other members of this Assembly in reiterating our support for the lifting of the unilateral embargo against Cuba as soon as possible.

6 I thank you, Mr President.

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