
Statement of the Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations, Ambassador Francisco A. Cortorreal, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

Agenda Item 39: Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba
New York, October 26th 2016

Thank you Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

CELAC welcomes the progress made on the normalization process of relations between Cuba and the United States of America, a fact that constitutes the beginning of a new chapter in the history of peace and coexistence among the American nations.

We recognize the will expressed by President Obama of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade that for more than 50 years the United States of America has imposed on Cuba.

However, CELAC regrets that the blockade is still a reality for the Cuban people, its presence as a major obstacle to the normal development of Cuba is undeniable. The report of the Secretary-General confirms the cost of this policy for the country, which causes substantial and unjustifiable damage to the well-being of the Cuban people, is

contrary to the desire for peace of the Latin American peoples enshrined in the Proclamation of Latin America as a zone of peace.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba, is contrary to the letter, spirit, principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and international law.

CELAC reiterates its strong rejection of the application of laws and measures contrary to International Law such as the Helms-Burton Act, including their extraterritorial effects, and the increasing persecution of Cuba's international financial transactions, in disregard of the political willingness of the international community. We urge the Government of the United States of America to put an end to its application.

The United States Congress has the authority to completely eliminate the blockade against Cuba. We recognize the executive measures adopted by President Obama, since January of last year, including the exclusion of Cuba from the list of sponsoring countries of terrorism, in which Cuba should have never been included, demonstrate the extensive capabilities that has the US president to change the unjust embargo policy.

CELAC reiterates its Special Declaration on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against Cuba, adopted at the IV Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Quito, Ecuador on 26 and 27 January 2016 in which we request "the Government of the United States of America to fulfill the successive resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and, in response to the repeated calls from the

international community, to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, which is contrary to International Law, severely and unjustifiably damages the well being of the Cuban people.”

The United Nations Charter, Mr. President, enshrines rights, obligations and principles that have become part of the legal heritage, not only of international law but also of humanity. This should not be subject to violation or impairment by any Member. Member States should adjust their national and international act, to the rights, obligations and the principles enshrined in our Charter.

In 2015, this resolution was adopted with 191 votes in favor, confirming the universality of its claim. For these reasons, once again, CELAC will strongly support the adoption of the resolution “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.” We insist on the inconsistency between the application of unilateral measures, which are not supported by international law and the letter, the spirit and the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

CELAC is counting on the support traditionally given to the resolution submitted today for the consideration of this august body and we reiterate our call to the United States of America to accept the call of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, of all regions of the world, and its own people, to put an end once and for all to the unjust blockade against the Republic of Cuba.