

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. MR. YVAN GIL PINTO, MINISTER
OF THE PEOPLE'S POWER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA, DURING THE 89th
PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA
ITEM 28, ENTITLED "ELIMINATION OF UNILATERAL
EXTRATERRITORIAL COERCIVE ECONOMIC MEASURES AS A
MEANS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COMPULSION"**

New York, 13 June 2024

Mr. President,

1. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honor to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, whose Member States, from the very outset, express their appreciation for the convening of this historic debate on a subject to which they attach particular importance, mindful of the fact, among others, of its direct impact on over a third of humanity.
2. It has been almost fourteen (14) years now since the last time the General Assembly held a proper debate on this item, which was first introduced into this body's agenda back in 1996. Today's debate is, indeed, long overdue and we seize this opportunity, from the very early stages of our statement, to call on this General Assembly to take appropriate measures in order to ensure that, in light of the growing resort to the promulgation and application of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures, this matter be addressed much more periodically.

Mr. President,

3. Unilateral coercive measures, including those applied as tools for political or economic and financial compulsion against any country, in particular, but not exclusively, against developing countries, are illegal. They represent a clear violation, among others, of the very tenets enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, of the most basic norms of international law, including international human rights and humanitarian law, as well as of the provisions of both the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, as contained in General Assembly resolutions 2625 (XXV) and 3281 (XXIX), respectively.

4. One of the most infamous examples of these failed policy of unilateral coercive measures is that of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against the Republic of Cuba for over sixty years now. We renew our unwavering solidarity with the People and Government of Cuba, while urging once again the government of the United States of America to immediately and unconditionally put an end to the blockade and to exclude it from the arbitrary and unilateral list of States sponsors of terrorism, which very existence we denounce and firmly reject. Cuba is, indeed, an example of dignity, resistance and victory over these illegal and anachronistic policies.

Mr. President,

5. The promulgation and application of unilateral coercive measures, which is the subject of today's meeting, have no room or basis whatsoever within the framework of international law. They are certainly illegal. It is important to be clear in this regard, as nations applying these unilateral coercive measures seek to impose a false narrative, in order to deliberately confuse and mislead the international community, as they seek to justify and even legitimize such illegal policies.
6. In this context, it shall be also noted that, different to what some countries pretend to portray, financial transactions or the provision of goods and services necessary for humanitarian assistance and basic human needs are, in fact, affected by the very existence of unilateral coercive measures, including as a result of the fear for "secondary sanctions". Humanitarian exemptions on unilateral coercive measures are a mere fantasy, an illusion that, even if they may exist in paper, the reality is that, in practice, they have proven to be ineffective or rather non-existent, as confirmed, not only by the untold suffering and pain of peoples and nations subjected to such measures, but also by UN independent experts themselves.
7. Therefore, it can be easily concluded that, unilateral coercive measures, apart from creating and deepening the conditions for poverty and inequality, clearly constitute themselves into crimes against humanity and mass violations of human rights, as they clearly seek to deprive entire populations, among others, of their very means of subsistence. We cannot allow to be deceived or convinced otherwise.

Mr. President,

8. Today, unilateral coercive measures are applied against over thirty (30) nations worldwide, including many from our grouping, directly affecting the daily lives of over a third of humanity, particularly of those in more vulnerable situations. This

reality, needless to say, has created a systemic crisis into the entire system of international relations that not only continues to erode multilateralism, but that also increases uncertainty, instability, mistrust and tensions around the world. Therefore, they constitute a world problem, requiring a global solution and, thus, the importance of today's debate.

9. We are currently seeing new generation of these illegal measures, which are now much more cruel and destructive than ever before, using the pain and suffering they deliberately cause as a means for advancing interventionist and destabilization agendas. These tools, which seek to exert pressure, exploitation, domination and subjugation on sovereign and independent nations, represent today the greatest obstacle to the implementation of the development plans of nations subjected to these so-called sanctions, including for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the effective and timely attainment of its SDGs.
10. Unilateral coercive measures, we must clearly say it, endanger the lives and wellbeing of affected peoples, as such unlawful measures impede or disrupt, *inter alia*, access to health-care services, access to and procurement of medicine, medical supplies, equipment and services, and the development, purchase and delivery of vaccines, as well as access to life-saving medicines, thus creating serious impediments to the management and mitigation of diseases, as well as to the treatment of diseases, including, but not limited, to rare diseases, such as epidermolysis bullosa.
11. Unilateral coercive measures also hinder international cooperation and limit the ability of affected States to access and acquire foreign investment and technologies, as well as goods and services necessary to address environmental issues, while such illegal measures also block international funding from lending agencies that support environmental improvement projects. In countries facing environmental degradation, for instance, unilateral coercive measures are a significant contributing factor that exacerbate environmental degradation, thereby affecting people's rights to a healthy and sustainable environment and to an adequate standard of living, and even the right to health, to the extent that the right to life is also being endangered.

Mr. President,

12. Against the backdrop of the emergence of a multipolar world, unilateral coercive measures have also become a means of unfair competition. Reserve currencies are used as weapons, sovereign property is arbitrarily blocked or even confiscated.

As a result, any country that is more or less dependent on Western markets, technology and financial assistance, and which may also have reserves in Western jurisdictions, is prone to facing the risk of a complete loss of its assets. Such aggressive measures are aimed, among other things, at strangling the Global South and undermining the potential for its dynamic economic development, with the ultimate goal of eliminating a competitor and consolidating the position of the developing world as a mere vendor of raw commodities.

13. Unilateral coercive measures, indeed, whether we see it or not, affect us all, either directly or indirectly. On targeted nations, they have a negative impact on the enjoyment and the full realization of human rights, including, among others, the right to development, the right of everyone to a standard of living adequate for his or her health and well-being and his or her right to food, medical care and education and the necessary social services, as well as on the procurement of goods and services, financial and technical assistance, technology transfer and capacity-building. At the global scale, they are deliberately exacerbating the multifaceted crisis humanity is facing today, including its energy and food security dimensions, while severing supply chains and disrupting the markets, and they will continue not only to negatively impact the global economy as a whole, but also cause and prolong human suffering around the world, unless a complete and immediate end is put to all these illegal measures. They also have a direct impact on South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation.
14. How much could Zimbabwe contribute to alleviating the global food insecurity crisis, should it be free from the application of unilateral coercive measures? How much could Belarus contribute to alleviating that very same crisis, should it be allowed to freely trade its fertilizers? How much could Iran, Russia or Syria contribute to alleviating the global energy crisis, should unilateral coercive measures on them be lifted and they could then trade, without limitation or discrimination of any sort, their oil and gas? Wouldn't Venezuela be able to boost cooperation with the Caribbean and others from its region, particularly in the energetic field, through programs such as PETROCARIBE, that provide advantageous compensation mechanisms for the procurement of oil? How much could Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Mali, Nicaragua, Syria and all others subjected to these illegal regimes contribute to overcoming our common challenges, if these so-called sanctions were eliminated and they could all fully pursue their productive potentials? We have a responsibility to building together and making a reality that new and possible world of peace and development for all.

Mr. President,

15. In the absence of the elimination of unilateral coercive measures, and cognizant first hand of their impediments, among others, on the ability to freely carry out commerce and investment amongst independent and sovereign nations, we express, first and foremost, our commitment to a multilateral system anchored on the Charter of the United Nations, as well as our determination to explore potential ways and means to secure a framework or platform that is truly independent and respectful of international law, for carrying out financial transactions and payments between banks worldwide.
16. That is, to identify ways and means to counter, mitigate and redress the adverse impacts of unilateral coercive measures, including through the potential establishment of a safe zone, free of unilateral sanctions, in which we can trade and process payments without hazards or arbitrary impediments of a punitive nature, with the purpose of ensuring both the wellbeing of our peoples and the development of our nations, or through the enactment of concrete a roadmap that would allow to reduce dependency of international trade on national currencies that are prone to being used to implement unilateral coercive measures or to sustain a particular State's monetary hegemony over the global economy.
17. Similarly, we also acknowledge the legitimate claims, in accordance with the relevant norms of international law, by the affected States, whether directly or indirectly, and particularly of States and individuals specifically targeted, by unilateral coercive measures, for compensation from States imposing unilateral coercive measures for the damages incurred as a consequence of the existence, promulgation and application of such unlawful measures, including as a result of the phenomenon known as overcompliance and of their extraterritoriality, which have reduced trade between targeted and non-targeted nations, in fear of the latter from being subjected to the so-called secondary-sanctions.

Mr. President,

18. Allow me now to conclude with six (06) messages:
 - a. First, expressing our gratitude to all groupings and delegations that will be participating in today's debate. We are grateful for their continued solidarity with nations and peoples subjected to the application of unilateral coercive measures, as well as for their continued support to the global cause in favor of the realization of a world free of so-called sanctions.



- b. Second, by urging the Secretariat of the United Nations to present a report with its relevant findings, following the General Assembly's request to monitor the imposition of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion and to study, the negative impact of such illegal measures on the affected countries, including the impact on trade and development. The role of the Secretariat in raising awareness of this matter, which has global implications, cannot be overemphasized.
- c. Third, by calling on all responsible members of the international community to prevent this reality from being minimized or ignored, including within the context of ongoing intergovernmental processes at the United Nations. If we are truly committed to honoring our pledge of leaving no one behind, time has come for us all to redress unilateral coercive measures in a comprehensive and effective manner, in the interest of the wellbeing of "we, the peoples of the United Nations". A first step in the right direction was, for instance, the inclusion of this matter in the recently agreed conclusions and recommendations of the 2024 Financing for Development Forum. We trust this will also be the case in the outcome documents of the upcoming Summit of the Future. We can no longer swipe under the carpet or shy away from discussing this issue, which is even of an existential nature, for millions of people around the world.
- d. Fourth, by firmly calling on all States to refrain from promulgating, recognizing and/or implementing unilateral coercive measures as a political means, including within the context of bilateral relations, with the purpose of, among others, exerting pressure or forcing the sovereign will of another State, including as part of regime-change policies, while urging for political relationships to be based on mutual respect and equal footing, in line with the principle of sovereign equality of States, as foreseen in the UN Charter.
- e. Fifth, by further calling all international organizations and international financial institutions to refrain from recognizing, supporting, implementing or *de facto* complying with unilateral coercive measures, including in its monitoring, reporting or operational activities, in order to avoid bearing responsibility for all the above-mentioned negative consequences of the application of such illegal measures.



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UNITED NATIONS

- f. And sixth, by reiterating our firm commitment to sparing no effort in preserving, promoting and defending the prevalence and validity of the Charter of the United Nations, for which it is necessary, among others, that unilateral coercive measures be lifted in a complete, immediate and unconditional manner.

I thank you, Mr. President.