



STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JOHN ASHE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA ITEM 19: NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA (New York, 29 October 2008)

Mr. President,

It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in the General Assembly on Item 19: Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial and Financial Embargo Imposed by the United States of America Against Cuba.

The Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China have repeatedly condemned the use of economic coercive measures designed to prevent countries from exercising their right to decide their own political, economic and social systems, and have called on all countries not to recognize the unilateral extra-territorial laws enacted which impose sanctions on other states and foreign companies.

The G77 and China Heads of State and Government have also recognized that the embargo has caused, and continues to cause, a high degree of economic and financial damage, negatively impacting on the welfare and well-being of the people of Cuba. The Group of 77 and China reiterates its call upon the Government of the United States to put an end to the embargo.

The promulgation of such acts not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, but also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment.

The Group of 77 and China urges the United States to effect change in its dealings with the Republic of Cuba in a meaningful way by ending the embargo.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China is committed to working towards a better world for all in which nations, large or small, could co-exist peacefully. The achievement of such peaceful co-existence among nations requires an adherence by all nations to the rule of law, including international law.

The embargo against Cuba contravenes the fundamental norms of international law, international humanitarian law, the United Nations Charter and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States. Its continued imposition violates the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of non-intervention and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.

We believe that the replacement of the embargo with diplomatic dialogue and co-operation will promote meaningful exchange and partnership between countries whose destinies are linked by history and geography.

Mr. President,

Considering the impact that the Embargo has had on everyday life of the Cuban people, the

overwhelming majority of Member States are here today in support of the resolution on the necessity of ending the Embargo. The Group of 77 and China will again support the resolution before us today and would urge all member states to do so as well.

I thank you Mr. President.