



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA Y AMBASSADOR STAFFORD NEIL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON AGENDA ITEM 20: NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA, AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (New York, 8 November 2005)

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China is opposed to unilateral coercive measures against developing countries. The most prominent example is the one we are discussing today the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, which has been in existence for over 40 years despite overwhelming opposition in the international community.

At the Second South Summit held in Doha in June of this year, the Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China issued a strong call for the ending of the embargo. The Heads rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries, and reiterated the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. They called on the Government of the United States to put an end to economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba which is unilateral and contrary to the United Nations Charter, to international law and to the principle of good neighbourliness. They also recognized that the embargo has caused huge material losses and economic damage to the people of Cuba. The Heads therefore called for compliance with the resolutions of the General Assembly and rejected the new measures recently implemented by the United States government aimed at tightening the embargo as a violation of Cuba's sovereignty and the rights of its people.

Mr. President,

The Charter of the UN calls on all states to promote friendly relations and co-operation and to respect international law, the sovereign equality of states, the self-determination of peoples and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Adherence to these principles will contribute to the elimination of tension and confrontation between states. The United States and Cuba are two countries whose destinies are linked by history and geography and it should follow that the embargo and coercive measures should be replaced by dialogue and co-operation.

The people of Cuba are making great efforts to promote social and economic development in the face of considerable obstacles resulting from the embargo which has caused them untold hardships. The oppressive measures against Cuba are contrary to commitments in the global partnership to support the development efforts of developing countries and are in contradiction with the principles of the multilateral trading system. They distort the normal flow of commercial transactions and investment and constitute a serious threat to the freedom of trade and navigation. The difficulties facing Cuba have been compounded by severe losses and damage, resulting from a series of hurricanes which have struck the country during last year and this year, even up to recent weeks. The government and people of Cuba should be given the support of the wider international community to cope with these setbacks.

The Group of 77 and China calls on the United States to heed the voice of the international community to bring an end to the embargo and to move towards a process of normalization of relations through peaceful negotiations with Cuba based on the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of states.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China supports the draft resolution L.9 which is now before us and urges the General Assembly to give it its support.

Thank you, Mr. President.