



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR SIVU MAQUNGO, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON THE NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 8 November 2006)**

Madame President

I have the honor speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China

The Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China at the Second South Summit held in Qatar, June 2005 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 called on all countries not to recognise the unilateral extra-territorial laws enacted which impose sanctions on other states and foreign companies. The Heads of State and Government also recognised that the embargo has caused a high degree of economic and financial damage which has negatively impacted on the welfare and wellbeing of the people of Cuba.

At the 30th Annual G77 and China Ministerial Meeting the Ministers once again firmly 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 emphasized that such actions 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. They, therefore, called on the international community neither to recognize these measures nor apply them

Madame President,

The Group of 77 and China is guided by the basic norms of international law and conduct in its principled support for the need to eliminate coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion. The Group of 77 and China believes that constructive dialogue can foster mutual trust and understanding, as well as engender harmony and peaceful coexistence between nations.

The Group of 77 and China has therefore, consistently opposes all aspects of the embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. The Group of 77 and China views the continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo as a violation of the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of non-intervention and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.

The Group of 77 and China is committed to working towards a better world for all in which the nations no matter how large or small 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 action by the United States of America against the Republic of Cuba has lasted for 49 years with 70% of Cubans having been born under the embargo. Yet, this long-standing economic, commercial and financial embargo has been consistently rejected by a growing number of Member States to a point where the opposition has become almost unanimous.

Therefore, the need to respect international law in the conduct of international relations has been recognised by most members of this august body, as has been evidenced by the growing support for this resolution. The Member States of the United Nations, have been considering this item and the support has grown steadily from 59 Member States opposing the US embargo of Cuba in 1992 to 182 in 2005.

I believe that the presence of such a large number of Member States in this chamber today and their participation in these deliberations are indications of their opposition to unilateral extra-territorial measures. To express their firm opposition to unilateral measures as a means of exerting pressure on developing countries as such measures "are contrary to international law, international humanitarian law, the United Nations Charter and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States."

Madame President,

The Group of 77 and China in accordance with international laws and norms will again support the draft resolution before us today. We do so because this relentless and unilateral action has caused untold suffering to the people of Cuba. Considering the impact that this embargo has had on every day life of the Cuban people, it is therefore, no surprise to see that the overwhelming majority of Member States are here today to join in the support for the Cuban people.

I thank you.