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Official Records

President: Mr. Kutesa (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Al-Mughairy (Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 40 (continued)

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/69/98)

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speaker in explanation of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines voted in favour of resolution 69/5, and we align ourselves fully with the statements delivered this morning on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/69/PV.30).

Previous versions of this resolution have been adopted for the past 22 sessions of the General Assembly, and have enjoyed near-unanimous support over the years. Indeed, today was no different. There is no other example of the international community speaking so overwhelmingly and so consistently. However, the embargo remains stubbornly in place, and its negative impacts have intensified.

The embargo has been and continues to be a violation of International law. It is contrary to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines takes the floor to re-emphasize our deeply held conviction that the ongoing embargo is a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the rights of an entire people. Moreover, the embargo against Cuba is not merely a bilateral matter, between Cuba and the United States, but, due to its extraterritorial nature, it violates the sovereign rights of many other States.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believes that this blockade is not only illegal but morally unsustainable. Thomas Paine, in the introduction to his famed essay entitled “Common Sense”, wrote:

“A long habit of not thinking a thing wrong gives it a superficial appearance of being right and raises at first a formidable outcry in defence of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason.”

And so it is today, with respect to this blockade. Citizens across the United States are joining the international community by increasingly voicing their disapproval and calling for the lifting of the unilateral sanctions. Opposition to this inhumane policy is now almost universal in nature. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines therefore feels compelled to recall the words of President Barack Obama in his inaugural address to the United Nations in 2009. President Obama told us then: “The world must stand together to demonstrate

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that international law is not an empty promise” and that:

“No one nation can or should try to dominate another nation. No world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will succeed. ... The traditional divisions between nations of the South and the North make no sense in an interconnected world, nor do alignments of nations rooted in the cleavages of a long-gone cold war.

“The time has come to realize that the old habits and the old arguments are irrelevant to the challenges faced by our peoples.”
(A/64/PV.3, pp. 11 and 10)

We believe that the time has indeed come for the right thing to be done. And as President Obama enters the final phase of his presidency, we hope that his understanding of what is just will soon be accompanied by the requisite action to make it so.

The Cuban people have given freely of themselves in a manner that has touched the hearts of the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. No dollar amount can adequately reflect the value of their support, solidarity and partnership. Our appreciation cannot be overstated. We also join the international community in applauding the Cuban Government for its response to the Ebola virus and its efforts to combat it. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains unequivocal in its call for the removal of this constraint on the development of our Caribbean neighbour.

Mr. Ja Song Nam (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea): It is the consistent policy of the Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to oppose every kind of sanction, including economic, commercial and financial embargoes on sovereign States. The United States blockade of Cuba is a legacy of the Cold War, designed to overthrow the legitimate social system chosen by the Cuban people. The unilateral and extraterritorial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba constitutes an obvious infringement on Cuba’s sovereignty, in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and is a violation of human rights that tramples on people’s right to life and development. It deserves to be condemned as strongly as possible by the United Nations and the international community.

The criminal policy of the imposition by the United States of an embargo on Cuba for more than half a century has caused economic and social losses to Cuba

amounting to more than \$1.1 trillion, as well as affecting third-party countries that have normal economic and trade relations with Cuba, and thus remains the main obstacle to the country’s socioeconomic development and its people’s well-being. This inhumane and anachronistic policy should therefore be terminated without delay, in conformity with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the demands of the international community. Today the States Members of the United Nations - including Cuba, which aspires to sustainable development in a peaceful environment - have unanimously demanded an end to the unilateral economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba by the United States.

Consistent with our customary stand in opposition to any kind of interference or sanctions against sovereign States, the delegation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea today voted in favour of resolution 69/5, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America on Cuba, as it has for similar resolutions in the past, and once again strongly urges the United States to abandon its blockade of Cuba immediately. The Government of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea fully supports the efforts of the Government and people of Cuba to end the United States embargo, and will continue to further expand and develop its economic and trade relations with Cuba in the future.

In conclusion, we reiterate our strong support for and solidarity with the struggle of the Cuban Government and people to safeguard their national dignity and sovereignty against the attempts by the United States to impose a unilateral blockade.

Mr. Elnor (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the participation in this morning’s meeting (A/69/PV.30) of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

The Sudan associates itself with the statements delivered this morning by the representatives of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Malawi on behalf of the African Group, and Saudi Arabia on behalf of the members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

We voted with complete conviction today in favour of resolution 69/5, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo

imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Once more, and for the twenty-third time, the General Assembly has renewed its categorical rejection of the unjust unilateral sanctions policy imposed by the United States on Cuba. Through today's vote, the international community has spoken unanimously in expressing its total condemnation of such coercive measures, which are contrary to international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and marine and trade freedoms, as well as the rules and customs that have traditionally regulated international economic and financial relations among States.

The overwhelming majority – 188 countries – voting in favour of the resolution highlights the illegality of the aggressive United States policies against Cuba, which have continued for the past 55 years. It emphasizes Member States' unity of support in the face of dictatorial and hegemonic policies, interference in the internal affairs of another State and the imposition of coercive unilateral measures against another nation in an attempt to affect their national choices and their social and economic systems. That is illegal, unacceptable and undemocratic, and it deserves the total condemnation of the international community.

Year after year, the General Assembly renews its rejection of individual unilateral coercive measures that have a negative effect on the economic and social development of developing countries in particular and run counter to the outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (resolution 66/288, annex) and relevant documents adopted in the past at meetings and summits of the Group of 77 and China, NAM and developing countries as a means of settling political accounts.

Since 1997, my country has been dealing with a unilateral and unfair embargo imposed on it by the United States and renewed last week. It has adversely affected every area of life, including bank transactions, access to loans, the ability to import spare parts and cooperation with other countries seeking to meet the Millennium Development Goals and to achieve peace and security. For that reason, and through our expression of solidarity with the friendly Government and people of Cuba, we reject such illegal embargo policies, which have had an impact on every aspect of our lives, at the national, regional and international levels, and have had a serious impact on the poor and vulnerable.

We wish to express our complete solidarity with Cuba as well as our appreciation for its humanitarian

role in fighting the Ebola epidemic in Africa. We also express our solidarity with all nations, especially developing countries, that reject unilateral and illegal measures. We call for the lifting of the embargo and sanctions on Cuba and oppose all similarly illegal and inhuman policies that weigh upon other countries.

Ms. Carrion (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

Next, I would like to align my statement with the statements made on behalf of the Southern Common Market, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of 77 and China (see A/69/PV.30).

As in previous years, Uruguay has voted in favour of the resolution presented by the delegation of Cuba (resolution 69/5) on the understanding that the embargo against that country is contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and contravenes the rules of international law, in particular the rules governing international trade and those involving members of the World Trade Organization.

Uruguay's position fits into the broader context of defending multilateralism, non-intervention and the peaceful settlement of disputes, which are fundamental principles of our diplomacy. In addition, this situation affects another fundamental principle, that of the legal equality of States. It is precisely out of respect for that principle our country rejects any unilateral or extraterritorial coercive measure that violates the rules of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter, the clearest contemporary example of which is the embargo unjustly imposed against the Republic of Cuba.

The Eastern Republic of Uruguay has expressed on several occasions and reiterates at this time its direct opposition to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba, which severely affects the welfare of the Cuban people. Indeed, the blockade, contrary to the principle of justice and human rights, represents a collective punishment of the Cuban people as it generates shortages, seriously damages the Cuban economy and limits and retards the country's development.

Out of principle, Uruguay rejects and does not recognize in its national legislation the extraterritorial application of domestic laws of other States. In that

regard, we condemn the application of unilateral coercive measures by the United States against Cuba, which are a form of pressure and an obstacle to dialogue and the necessary rapprochement between the parties that we hope to see resumed. By voting in favour of resolution 69/5, Uruguay reiterates its commitment to multilateralism as a legitimate instrument for the peaceful settlement of disputes between States and an effective tool for promoting international cooperation, human rights, security and understanding among peoples.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): I would like first to welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

The delegation of Indonesia associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, respectively (see A/69/PV.30).

Faithful to its history and to its national character, Indonesia is a country committed to peace, justice and equality. For that reason, Indonesia stands before the General Assembly to once again declare our unstinting support for ending the embargo against Cuba. We must without delay overcome this relic of another time, for it has no *raison d'être* in the millennium that we are building together. I will give the Assembly four valid reasons bringing the embargo to an end.

First, it is against the very principles of the sovereign equality of all Member States and of non-intervention and non-interference in each others' domestic affairs, as stipulated in the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter clearly sets forth the need for Member States to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. The continued imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba clearly violates the Charter. All Member States are equal. None is above any other, as we are bound by the principles of friendly relations among nations under the Charter. At the United Nations, dialogue has always been the form put forward by any civilized nation to resolve differences. There should be cooperation rather than confrontation.

Secondly, the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba has caused significant economic and social hardship that can hardly be justified on humanitarian grounds. It has caused years of deprivation for the people of Cuba, especially for vulnerable groups such as children, women and older persons. That is a great burden for a developing country whose people would benefit tremendously from the good faith of developed countries. The Assembly has also been discussing an ambitious vision to eradicate poverty through an inclusive post-2015 development agenda. That agenda would be inclusive only if those who are most vulnerable, including the people of Cuba, were involved in the process and were able to enjoy the benefits of development without any constraints being brought to bear by foreign hands.

Thirdly, the sanctions are a counterproductive policy that has curbed opportunities and economic benefits for Cuba and other countries, including countries that hold economic and commercial ties with Cuba. In that process, the sovereignty of other States and their jurisdiction in national legislation has been encroached upon. Cuba is not the only victim. We, developing countries, trade partners and financial investors, are also victims of this undeserved embargo.

Fourthly, our regional experience in South-East Asia has immensely increased our confidence in the idea that engagement does more good than isolation in advancing the noble causes to which all States Members of the United Nations subscribe. The time is ripe for relations between the parties involved to be transformed through constructive engagement. Cuba should be able to exercise its right to develop and grow, unhindered by restrictions to its trade and other business activities.

While it is true that some small but meaningful changes have occurred in recent times, such as the easing of restrictions on travel to Cuba and the removal of obstacles to the transfer of remittances, the preferred outcome is for the embargo to be lifted completely. Indonesia urges States to renounce applying laws or measures of an extraterritorial nature that affect the sovereignty of other States, the lawful interests of their subjects or of other persons under their jurisdiction, and the freedom of trade and navigation.

Indonesia voted in favour of resolution 69/5 and reiterates the call for the immediate cessation of the economic, commercial and financial embargo against

Cuba. Our message is very simple. Our message is very clear. This embargo has to end.

Mr. Shava (Zimbabwe): I would like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, to this Hall.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Malawi on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/69/PV.30).

Once again, Zimbabwe wishes to express its concern over the illegal and ruinous economic, commercial and financial blockade of Cuba by the United States. Zimbabwe is dismayed that, instead of being removed, the embargo is actually being reinforced, resulting in greater suffering for the people and tremendous disruptions to Cuban business activities and financial transactions. The majority of States Members of the United Nations have continued to reject, as they did today, the passing of national laws with extraterritorial impact and all other coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, which are mainly targeted against developing countries that seek to reassert their sovereignty. Zimbabwe, another victim of ill-conceived, illegal and immoral sanctions, fully understands their impact.

During the past 20 years, Zimbabwe has stated that the embargo against Cuba contravenes the fundamental norms of international law, international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and all the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States. The embargo is also a violation of the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of non-intervention and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs. Those principles were reaffirmed in the Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (resolution 67/1) adopted on 24 September 2012, in which Heads of State and Government strongly urged States to refrain from promulgating and applying unilateral economic, financial and trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.

Zimbabwe therefore joins other countries in condemning the punitive embargo on Cuba, and calls for its unconditional lifting so that the people of Cuba

can be left alone to pursue their economic and social destiny.

Mr. Kihurani (Kenya): In explanation of vote, Kenya associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; and Malawi on behalf of the Group of African States (See A/69/PV.30).

Kenya voted in favour of resolution 69/5, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". As in previous years, Kenya remains opposed to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba, based on the fact that the application of unilateral and extraterritorial economic and financial embargoes violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Kenya condemns the use of economic coercive measures designed to prevent countries from exercising the right to decide their own political, economic and social systems. Therefore, it calls upon Member States not to recognize the embargo against Cuba, which has had a negative impact on the well-being of the Cuban people.

Kenya's consistent opposition to the embargo against Cuba is also based on the fact that Cuba remains an integral part of the international community, and Kenya maintains bilateral relations and cooperation with Cuba. Kenya continues to engage with Cuba in a constructive and mutually beneficial manner. In addition, Cuba, being an integral part of the international community, should not be isolated or excluded from participation in regional and international processes. Indeed, Cuba itself has always remained very engaged with the African continent. Few countries in the world have shown the solidarity that Cuba has shown towards Africa. Its contribution has been and continues to be manifested through the provision of military, education and health assistance, as well as in a variety of other fields. Its particular focus on collaboration in the medical field has also seen Cuba provide the largest number of doctors from any country to assist Africa in tackling the Ebola epidemic. That is a demonstration of true friendship and support from our Cuban brothers and sisters. We commend Cuba, we salute Cuba and we celebrate Cuba.

Various United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations

Development Programme, have drawn the attention of Member States to the negative impacts of the embargo, particularly to how the unilateral measures have harmed Cuban children and hampered Cuba's ability to acquire necessary technical or medical equipment, especially those materials that are under United States patent.

Kenya calls for the lifting of all unilateral measures that affect or alter free trade and regional socioeconomic cooperation. The embargo, being extraterritorial in nature, violates international law and international trade rules and runs counter to the principle of trade liberalization. It has constrained the efforts of the Government and people of Cuba to eradicate poverty, improve their living standards and achieve their desired level of economic and social development.

In Kenya, we believe that the principles of non-intervention must be respected and upheld. The embargo represents a major impediment to the right of development of sovereign States and their peoples. The right to development is a basic human, economic and cultural right. Therefore, the embargo remains an obstacle to the call for achieving the global development agenda expressed in the outcome document of the Millennium Summit (resolution 55/2).

Despite the incredible challenges posed by the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, Cuba's commitment to the social and economic progress and well-being of other developing countries continues and is greatly appreciated.

In conclusion, Kenya reiterates its unwavering support for the right of the Cuban people to determine their social and economic development, in the manner deemed most beneficial to them. The embargo must end.

Mr. Santa Rosa (Angola): Angola voted in favour of resolution 69/5, thereby reiterating its appeal for an end to the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, since the embargo also violates international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of free trade. The embargo stands as a clear violation of human rights, as it affects the material, psychological and spiritual well-being of the Cuban people, and imposes severe obstacles to their economic, cultural and social development, with a significant negative impact on sensitive sectors such as health care, education and food.

Angola notes with concern the continuation and resurgence of the extraterritorial nature of the embargo, since it amounts to interference by the United States in the affairs of the sovereign State of Cuba and the right of the Cuban people to freely determine their own political and economic system. It is unfortunate that the United States has maintained its position despite the visible progress that Cuba has achieved in various areas, particularly education and health, areas in which, in the context of international cooperation, Cuba has helped several countries in need around the world. Angola is grateful for and continues to benefit from that valuable assistance, especially in the areas of education and health. A very recent example of Cuba's assistance in health care is its valuable contribution to the global effort to combat the Ebola epidemic affecting the region of West Africa, by sending a number of health professionals who have been doing a remarkable job with positive results.

The Republic of Angola recognizes and once again encourages the Secretary-General's efforts to put an end to the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed by the United States on Cuba for more than 50 years. In that connection, we call on the international community to continue its efforts to promote a results-oriented and transparent dialogue between the two countries, with a view to achieving a definitive solution to the problem and normalization of the relations between them, which is long overdue. Cuba and its people and Government can no longer continue to be prevented from participating fully in the development growth that is taking place in the economy of the Latin American and Caribbean region, where the United States is the key player and should thus engage fully and freely with all the countries south of its border.

In calling for an end to this embargo we join the great majority of Member States, as well as many prestigious academic institutions and American citizens, who are opposed to the embargo and urge for a change in the current United States policy, in order to create an involvement that is conducive to peaceful coexistence, constructive bilateral talks and peace in the world.

Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the presence in the Assembly today of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

El Salvador associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Bolivia on behalf of the

Group of 77 and China, and Costa Rica on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/69/PV.30).

I would like to make the following statement in the wake of El Salvador's vote today in favour of resolution 69/5, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.

El Salvador has always respected the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, international law and multilateralism. We reaffirm our rejection of the unilateral application of economic and commercial sanctions against another State that affect the free development of international trade.

Today the members of the international community are both witnesses to and instigators of great change. We are living at a crucial time in the evolution of a new generation of global opportunities and challenges, which demands that we define a new paradigm for development, cooperation and solidarity among the peoples of the world that we hope will be embodied in the post-2015 development agenda. In that context, as President Sánchez Cerén of the Republic of El Salvador said in his address at the general debate in September,

“In our efforts in pursuit of peace and inclusive and equitable development, there is no place for contempt for fundamental principles and freedoms. I refer here to the economic, trade and financial blockade against our sister Republic of Cuba, which, in spite of that unilateral action against its people, has overcome the obstacles and adversity imposed on it”. (A/69/PV.12, p. 18)

The blockade ignores the principles framed in the Charter of the United Nations and in international treaties and the standards and customs of international law. It contravenes international trade and navigation regulations and the basic rules of peaceful coexistence and cooperation among nations. The embargo on Cuba is not only a unilateral act that lacks the support of the international community, it has also continued in the face of repeated condemnation on the part of the vast majority of the international community, as this morning's vote affirmed. In that regard, El Salvador would like to emphasize the importance of compliance with the provisions of resolution 47/19, adopted on 24 November 1992, and of every resolution that the General Assembly has adopted year after year between

then and now emphasizing the urgency of ending the United States embargo on Cuba.

The blockade of Cuba has had a concrete humanitarian impact by limiting access to medicines and modern medical equipment and treatments, as well as restricting the free exchange of science and knowledge between our countries and the right of Americans to travel freely to Cuba. We also consider it especially harmful and unjust that the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Treasury Department of the United States monitors any international financial transaction involving Cuba, including with multilateral cooperative agencies, and thereby generating fines on banks and other countries attempting to establish economic, commercial, financial or scientific and technical relations with Cuba.

As a country committed to working for peaceful coexistence among nations, El Salvador fully supports and has voted in favor of today's resolution. In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the justice of the Cuban cause in demanding an end to the embargo imposed by the United States and to reiterate the deep sympathy and solidarity of the people and Government of El Salvador with the people and Government of Cuba's cause.

I would therefore like to end by expressing three hopes of our people and Government. The first is that the Government of the United States will unilaterally lift the blockade, making a reality of the legal principle that an act should be reversed in the same way that it was originally carried out, and also respecting the universal call that it should do so. Secondly, we hope that any differences between Cuba and the United States can be resolved through dialogue and, thirdly, that after so many years the people of the four Americas – North, South, Caribbean and Central – can sit around the same table while excluding no one.

Mr. Lasso Mendoza (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Republic of Ecuador, I am honoured to welcome the presence here of Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of our sister Republic of Cuba, and laud the overwhelming outcome achieved today in favour of resolution 69/5, which condemns the blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. The blockade not only contravenes the fundamental norms and principles of international law; it is also unjust, immoral and a form of aggression, a blatant example of the fact that

“democracy”, this “democracy”, is an empty word whose very meaning is distorted, a virtual game that breaks its own rules.

It is perverse to continue to allow anyone to play with human lives and for the well-being of an entire people to be subject to the whim of a country that does not want to accept the reality of a world in which no State has a privileged voice and where no country can take unilateral action that runs counter to international norms and principles. For that reason, Ecuador has always voted and always will vote in favour of this resolution.

We would like also to note that the Cuban consulate in Washington, D.C., has been deprived of all financial services. Such blindness can do unspeakable harm. In contrast, Cuba gives everything it has, not whatever it has left over. I, as an Ecuadorian, have seen this. My country's successful programme for people with disabilities is due partly to Cuba. As a citizen of this planet, I have also witnessed Cuba's quick, humane and outstanding response to the Ebola crisis.

For the twenty-third time, the vast majority of Member States have requested that an end be put to this unjust and hostile unilateral embargo, which has no other solution than the United States abandoning its imperial intolerance. How much longer will we have to wait for this request to be granted, which will benefit international peace and security? It is high time that we confronted the shameful double standard evidenced here year after year when we speak of the rule of law, with some countries invoking their principles when it suits them and denying them when it runs counter to their own interests.

Mr. Suan (Myanmar): I am taking the floor to explain my delegation's position on resolution 69/5, which was adopted earlier today by an overwhelming majority of Member States.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the representative

of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/69/PV.30).

Since the resolution was first introduced, at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, in 1992, my delegation has taken the principled position of joining the international community every year in calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which causes huge economic losses and hardship to the Cuban people.

As a country having experienced similar unilateral sanctions for decades, Myanmar fully understands from its own experience the degree of suffering caused by the sanctions, which directly affect the innocent people of the country.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Myanmar has steadfastly adhered to the principled position of the Movement in opposing the use of unilateral trade and economic sanctions. Therefore, Myanmar strongly supports the final document adopted at the seventeenth Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Algeria earlier this year, which calls for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. The embargo is also contrary to the United Nations Charter as well as to international law and the principle of good-neighbourliness.

In line with previous United Nations resolutions on this item, we firmly believe that constructive dialogue is necessary to promote confidence and understanding. We also believe that the embargo and coercive measures should be replaced by dialogue and cooperation. For those reasons, Myanmar has once again voted in favour of the resolution on the matter.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 40?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.