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**Country: Colombia**

**Committee: United Nations General Assembly**

**Institution: Indian School Al Ghubra**

**Topic: Assessing the Effectiveness of Sanctions**

**"Peace is the only battle worth waging." – Albert Camus**

Colombia is a country that has experienced internal conflict, drug trafficking and organized crime for decades - Colombia has witnessed how such activities along with unilaterally imposed sanctions can devastate the innocent population of the country. Sanctions - they have so many benefits - they are relatively easy to impose, they do not involve the use of armed force, and the costs to designators is much lower than measures such as a military intervention. However, these “benefits” cause us to overlook the dark side of sanctions – Sanctions aren’t effective, and sanctions cause more harm than good. They reduce standard of living and only 4% - 30% of sanctions have ever completed their objective. While sanctions *may* compel some change in behaviour, they often cause unnecessary harm to the civilian population. The United States has imposed targeted sanctions on Colombian drug cartels since 1995, which have no doubt disrupted more than $1 billion worth of assets and economically isolated the individuals who own such enterprises, but in the 29 years they have been imposed, they have financially and commercially disrupted the activities of local, legitimate Colombian businesses, creating operational disruptions, reputational risks, and an atmosphere of caution that has caused these local businesses to suffer greatly.

Over 29% of the world’s GDP is under sanctions. The United States alone has imposed over 66% of *all* sanctions in the world and over 25 countries including Iran, Syria, DPRK, etc. are still under US sanctions. Due to these unilateral sanctions, 12.4 million Syrians – nearly 60% of their population – are food insecure and over 90% of Syrian children need humanitarian aid to survive. Banks justify rejections or delays based on the simple fact that transfers are going to Syria or such sanction-imposed countries. During the COVID-19 pandemic, financial transfers for the purchase of COVID vaccines on behalf of the Iranian government were blocked by banks just because Iran was the recipient country. Estimates indicate that, had sanctions on Iran been eased early on in 2020, the effects of the second wave of COVID infections could have been reduced and over 13,000 lives could have been saved. 13,000 lives gone, because of such unilateral sanctions, which are not only criticized, but also further reduce the effectiveness of sanctions.

Taking all of this into measure, Colombia believes that sanctions should be a last resort measure, and disputes should be resolved through negotiation and peaceful means before imposing any sanction. If at all sanctions are to be implemented, the decision-making process should be transparent to all and should have a voice for developing countries. Columbia proposes that:

1. Sanctions should be targeted such that there are no unintended consequences on civilian population.
2. Sanctions should be time-bound and regularly reviewed to assess their effectiveness and impact, with clear rules for lifting or adjusting them as necessary.
3. Humanitarian exemptions should be in place to ensure the delivery of essential goods such as food and medical equipment to civilian populations.

Colombia also emphasizes the need for assistance to developing countries to help them comply with sanctions’ regimes. Colombia believes that sanctions should be based on coordinated efforts, international consensus and adhere to the principles of the UN Charter.

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