

30 October 2007



General Assembly

GA/10649

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Sixty-second General Assembly
Plenary
38th & 39th Meetings (AM & PM)

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OVERWHELMINGLY CALLS FOR END TO UNITED STATES EMBARGO OF CUBA;

FOREIGN MINISTER CALLS BLOCKADE 'RUTHLESS, HALF-CENTURY ECONOMIC WAR'

Vote on Resolution 184 in favour to 4 Against, with 1 Abstention; Also Takes Up ECOSOC Report, Major Conference Follow-Up, Culture of Peace

The General Assembly today voted overwhelmingly in favour of ending the 45-year-old United States trade embargo against Cuba, marking the sixteenth year in a row that the 192-Member body has urged the lifting of the stiff sanctions imposed on the Caribbean island in 1962.

By a recorded vote of 184 in favour to 4 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau, United States), with 1 abstention (Federated States of Micronesia), the Assembly adopted a resolution expressing its concern that further measures aimed at strengthening and extending the embargo continued to be applied, with "adverse effects [...] on the Cuban people and on Cuban nationals living in other countries". (For details of the vote, see annex.)

That action kicked off a wide-ranging day-long meeting that included the Assembly's annual review of the report of the Economic and Social Council, as well as brief debates on the culture of peace, and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields.

A burst of applause greeted the Assembly's adoption of the text urging an end to the trade embargo on Cuba, which, among other things, called on all States to refrain from promulgating laws in breach of freedom of trade and navigation, and urged Governments that had such laws and measures to repeal, or invalidate them. It also requested the Secretary-General to report on the text's implementation at the Assembly's next session.

Accusing Washington of imposing a "ruthless, half-century economic war" against his country, Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque said then-United States President Dwight Eisenhower had been the architect of the embargo in 1961 and that documents released since the 1990s revealed that the tough measures had sought to sow disenchantment and disaffection among the Cuban people. The plan had been to alienate internal support for the Cuban Government, cause hunger, despair and, ultimately, overthrow.

Some 47 years later, seven in 10 Cubans knew only such aggression against their country, he said, and the blockade had caused losses of some \$222 billion at the current rate. As such, anyone could understand that the embargo was the main obstacle to the well-being of Cuban people, and constituted a systematic, blatant and massive violation of rights. Moreover, President George Bush had urged the United States Congress to "maintain the embargo", and new measures were adopted that "bordered on madness and fanaticism" to deepen the blockade, which had never been enforced with such viciousness as in the past year.

Children had been particularly impacted, as they could not receive high quality medical treatments. "The United States delegation should explain why Cuban children suffering from cardiac arrhythmia are the enemies of its Government", he said. He reiterated his Government's solidarity with United States filmmakers Oliver Stone and Michael Moore, who had shot documentaries in Cuba. The fact that Mr. Moore was now being investigated for a trip to Cuba was akin to "21st century McCarthyism".

He said that, while the United States had ignored “with arrogance and political blindness” the 15 resolutions calling for the lifting of the blockade, the Cuban people were closely following today’s action in the Assembly and would fight at home with the conviction that defending their rights today was tantamount to fighting for the rights of all peoples. He had the legitimate right to say “long live Cuba”.

Speaking just before the vote, the United States representative said “it is long past time that the Cuban people enjoy the blessings of economic and political freedom”. He pointed out that the decision to trade with other countries was a bilateral issue, not appropriate for discussion by the Assembly and that, from time to time, Member States had undertaken similar measures with regard to other countries. The embargo was caused by Cuba by its denial of freedoms to its people. The purpose of the embargo was to end the grip of the Cuban Government on the Cuban people.

He said that instead of voting in favour of the resolution condemning the United States for declining to engage in unrestricted financial transactions with “a regime that deprives its own people of the fundamental human rights that this body is charged with protecting, we urge Member States to oppose and condemn the Cuban Government’s internal embargo on freedom, which is the real cause of the suffering of the Cuban people”.

When the Assembly took up the report of the Economic and Social Council, the body’s President, Dalius Čekuolis (Lithuania), said this year’s substantive session — held this past July in Geneva — had been an important landmark and had laid out the foundation for a “renewed ECOSOC”. That session had opened new avenues for the future of the Council, in particular the holding of its first Annual Ministerial Review and the launch of the biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

Highlighting some of the key messages that emerged from the session, he said that, among other things, national development strategies were working, but not at the pace required; global partnership should be made more effective overall; and the global economic environment should be made pro-development and pro-poor. He also noted the Council had held its first-ever Innovation Fair, and briefly reviewed the work accomplished during the Council’s coordination segment, humanitarian affairs segment, and operational activities for development.

Looking to the future, he said the Council would need to mobilize efforts to achieve the goals of the Assembly’s 2005 World Summit outcome, which emphasized the relationships between peace, development and human rights and the need for multidimensional strategies. Further, the Council should continue to promote stronger, coordinated responses from the United Nations system and other partners to humanitarian crises. Adopting a regular practice for turning to the Economic and Social Council whenever major humanitarian emergencies occurred would help to strengthen that part of the Council’s mandate, he added.

Finally, he said that a more substantive and interactive relationship was developing between the Assembly and the Council. That relationship should help in providing practical orientation to the international community in the follow-up to the World Summit outcome. Currently, new forms of international cooperation were emerging and new institutional arrangements were being put in place to deal with the challenges of today’s world. Expectations were high, and it was time to “get development right” for the world’s people.

On the culture of peace, Japan’s representative was among those speakers who noted that the Assembly’s recent High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Cooperation for Peace had made it clear that people of different races, religions and cultures could coexist peacefully, within and beyond national borders. Differences between cultures often led to conflict and hostility which, combined with politics, could lead people to take up arms and, sometimes, embrace terrorism. However, it was wrong for any individual to think they had unique access to the truth, and no one should impose their beliefs on others without giving due consideration to the beliefs of the other.

Since the end of the Second World War, Japan had tried to eliminate the development of a political basis for conflict, he said. To that end, his Government had hosted the World Civilization Forum and the Seminar for Inter-Civilizational Dialogue with the Islamic World. Education had an important role to play in preventing the generation of hostility and hatred, as did the cooperation of mass media. Engaging in interreligious and intercultural dialogue at all levels was crucial and should include the cooperation of the private sector as well.

Indonesia’s representative agreed that economic, social and cultural issues contributed to

peace and security, which was why efforts to promote a culture of peace were an important response to the increased interaction among all cultures and civilizations. Indonesia, a heterogeneous country, was a firm believer in the merit of dialogue, and supported non-governmental organizations' efforts in promoting interreligious harmony, he said.

Fully recognizing the role of education in promoting harmony, his Government sought to sensitize younger generations to the similarities among all religions and cultures. He supported recommendations for States to develop curricula that taught cultural and religious tolerance.

Moreover, his country attached great importance to the role of the media in nurturing social harmony, and agreed that media should be encouraged to support the global campaign to promote a culture of peace. He applauded practical actions, such as translating the shared values of peace, compassion and tolerance through education, culture and media.

Speaking on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba were the representatives of Pakistan (on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China), Egypt (on behalf of the non-aligned countries), Bahamas (on behalf of the Caribbean Community), Venezuela, Mexico, Viet Nam, South Africa, China, Russian Federation, India, Uganda, Bolivia, Libya, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe.

Speaking in explanation of the vote were the representatives of Portugal (on behalf of the European Union), Uruguay (on behalf of the Southern Common Market), Belarus, Sudan, Myanmar, Australia, Indonesia, Iran, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Syria.

Speaking in exercise of the right of reply were the representatives of Cuba and the United States.

The representatives of Pakistan (on behalf of the Group of 77 and China), Portugal (on behalf of the European Union), Peru, Russian Federation, Jamaica, Iceland, Belarus and Indonesia addressed the Assembly on the Economic and Social Council.

The representative of India spoke on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

Finally, on the issue of the culture of peace, the representatives of Portugal (on behalf of the European Union), Kuwait, Philippines, Egypt, Kazakhstan, and Indonesia made statements, as did the Observer for the Holy See.

The representative of Bangladesh introduced a draft resolution on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 (document A/62/L.6).

The General Assembly will reconvene at 10 a.m. Wednesday, 31 October, for its joint debate on sport for peace and development. It will also consider the issue of peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula.

Background

For the sixteenth consecutive year, the General Assembly met today to debate a draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

Member States had before them the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of last year's resolution, 61/11, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" (document A/62/92), which includes information offered by 118 Governments as well as 20 organs and agencies of the United Nations system.

In its submission, Cuba quotes a declassified United States Government document from 1960 by then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Lester Dewitt Mallory, saying that the purpose of the embargo was to "weaken the economic life of Cuba ... denying money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government." The submission notes that, 47 years later, in disregard of the will of the

international community, that policy was being pursued and strengthened through new economic sanctions. It calls United States action against Cuba “an act of genocide as defined by article II (c) of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and an act of economic warfare under the conclusions reached at the 1909 London Naval Conference.”

The 27-page response, reproduced in the report, addresses other areas of concern to Cuba as follows: the Bush administration plan to recolonize Cuba; intensification of the embargo; impact on Cuba’s economy and society; impact on food, public health, education, culture and transport; impact on external economic development; acts of aggression by the United States with respect to trademarks; impact on the peoples of the United States and other countries; opposition to the embargo within the United States; and the impact on international agencies and organizations.

Statements

FARUKH AMIL (Pakistan), on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China, said those Governments had condemned the use of economic sanctions at the Second South Summit held in Qatar in June 2005. Further, they had recognized that the embargo had caused a high degree of economic and financial damage that had impacted the well-being of the Cuban people, and called on the United States to end its embargo. At the annual Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 held in New York in September, the ministers once again firmly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact, emphasizing that such actions undermined the principles of the United Nations Charter and threatened trade. They had, therefore, called on the global community neither to recognize nor apply those measures.

The Group was committed to working towards a better world in which all nations — large and small — could coexist peacefully, he continued. The achievement of such coexistence required an adherence to the rule of law, including international law. In conformity with the fundamental norms of international law, the United Nations Charter and the principles governing peaceful relations among States, he supported the need to eliminate coercive economic measures. Further, the continued imposition of the embargo against Cuba violated the principles of sovereign equality of States and non-interference in each other’s domestic affairs. Replacing the embargo with greater dialogue and cooperation would contribute greatly to removing tensions. The Group would again support the draft resolution to end the embargo.

MAGED A. ABDELAZIZ (Egypt), on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that he opposed the adoption and implementation of extraterritorial or unilateral coercive measures or legislation, including unilateral economic sanctions, other intimidating measures and arbitrary travel restrictions, that sought to exert pressure on non-aligned countries, threatening their sovereignty and independence, their freedom of trade and investment, and preventing them from exercising their right to decide their own political and economic systems. Those actions were flagrant violations of the United Nations Charter, international law, the multilateral trading system and the norms and principles governing friendly relations among States.

He called upon the United States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, expressed concern over its widening extraterritorial nature and rejected measures by the United States Government to reinforce the embargo and other measures against the people of Cuba. He urged strict compliance with all resolutions calling for the end to the embargo.

PAULETTE A. BETHEL (Bahamas), on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), aligned herself with Pakistan’s statement on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China. She said CARICOM had always recognized the importance of mutually beneficial relations among Caribbean countries, as they faced globalization challenges from a unified perspective. Recalling the communiqué from the Second Meeting of the CARICOM/Cuba Ministers of Foreign Affairs last May, she said those principles had embodied the conduct of CARICOM international relations. CARICOM reiterated its complete opposition to the punitive embargo, which had gone on for far too long. Further, her delegation maintained its opposition to the imposition of extraterritorial laws on third States, which was contrary to the Charter.

The significant impact of the embargo on the Cuban economy was of great concern to her delegation, as was the humanitarian impact on the Cuban people, particularly in the area of health care and food. Cuba was an integral part of the Pan-Caribbean process, and CARICOM’s links with Cuba remained strong. Noting that Bahamian Prime Minister Denzil Douglas had expressed CARICOM’s deep appreciation for the technical and other assistance that Cuba had provided to the Caribbean, she said it was no small feat that Cuban assistance in the field of health was considerable, even as the impact of the embargo was systematically stiffened.

Through its actions, Cuba had shown it was an integral part of the Caribbean, she said. The country had not threatened any Member State, but rather, had sought to assist its neighbours in the quest for human development. The embargo against Cuba was an anachronism, and served no useful purpose in the twenty-first century, which was also facing the climate change challenge. As CARICOM enjoyed friendly relations with Cuba and the United States, she called for a “new beginning” between those countries, akin to initiatives undertaken for negotiations of far more difficult international issues. Within that context, CARICOM States supported the draft resolution.

JORGE VALERO, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, said the embargo against Cuba was genocidal and unilateral, and had flagrantly violated both the Charter and the norms of international law. His country categorically rejected the application of laws with extraterritorial effects, which intervened in States’ internal affairs. The embargo was an “anachronism of failed imperial policies”, which had been rejected by the peoples and Governments of the world. The United Nations had repeatedly rejected the embargo.

He recalled that, a few days ago, United States President George W. Bush had threatened to intensify the embargo against Cuba and urged the deepening isolation of the country. In those actions, the President had hoped to undermine Cuban institutions. It was a new attempt to reacquire Cuba. Venezuela was against such “irrational purposes” and urged all States to reject them. The inhuman measures imposed by the United States for more than 45 years had had a terrible impact. Yet, despite the embargo, Cuba had maintained its solidarity with peoples in the South, and Venezuela appreciated that solidarity.

Venezuela firmly demanded the end of the cruel and punitive embargo, he said, adding that human rights were repeatedly violated by such genocidal actions. Indeed, the embargo had impeded the necessary dialogue and cooperation that must prevail among States. He said the Assembly had rejected the United States’ unilateral act and it was time to repeat that determination. His delegation subscribed to Egypt’s statement, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Uruguay’s statement on behalf of Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). Venezuela would vote in favour of the resolution to end the embargo.

CLAUDE HELLER (Mexico) once again expressed his Government’s disapproval of the economic, commercial and financial embargo of the United States against Cuba and said the use of such coercive actions was not supported by the United Nations Charter. Such unilateral mechanisms could result in severe humanitarian consequences and signified a refusal to use diplomacy and dialogue as the ideal path to solving controversies between States. Some of the consequences of the embargo included, among others: alterations of foreign bank transactions with Cuba; greater difficulty in attracting foreign investment to Cuba; greater difficulty integrating the country into the world trade system; limitations to Cuban access to credits; and greater difficulty in obtaining necessary procurement and supplies for Cuba.

He said his Government was continuing bilateral and multilateral relations with Cuba, based on the general principles of international law. Mexico remained fully opposed to the exercise of national norms on other countries that went against international law. For 16 years Mexico had supported an end to the embargo, and in order to favour economic and commercial exchange, as well as regional cooperation and development, his country had assisted Cuba in its incorporation into all regional integration mechanisms. The observance of international law and principles was necessary to overcome the differences among States and to guarantee an environment of international peace. Societies evolved according to their own circumstances and not as a result of externally imposed mechanisms. As such, his Government reaffirmed its support for the resolution.

HOANG CHI TRUNG (Viet Nam) said the economic, commercial and financial embargo, imposed for nearly 50 years against Cuba by the United States, had caused huge economic damages and untold suffering to the Cuban people. It had severely hindered Cuba’s economic and social development and undermined its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Direct economic damages exceeded \$89 billion over the last half-century, while last year’s damages to Cuba’s foreign trade alone were worth over \$1.4 billion. The embargo had been not just sustained over the years, but rather tightened, through the enforcement of laws and provisions of a distinctly extraterritorial character.

That embargo ran counter to the fundamental principles of international law, the United Nations Charter and the regulations of the World Trade Organization, he said. Continuing such coercive economic measures would only cause further tension in bilateral relations between the United States and Cuba and further damage vulnerable groups within Cuba. It was no surprise that

the embargo had been repeatedly rejected by a growing number of Member States, to a point where opposition to it was almost unanimous. Every nation had the inalienable right to determine its own political system and path of development and differences between the United States and Cuba should be settled through dialogue and negotiations, based on mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. Normalization and development of friendly relations between the two neighbours would serve the interests of both countries, as well as those of regional and international peace and security. He reaffirmed his Government's friendship and solidarity with the Cuban people and called upon the United States to put an immediate end to its policy.

FELIPE PÉREZ ROQUE, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, recalled that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed against Cuba had lasted nearly half a century, causing losses of over \$89 billion. At the current dollar value, those losses accounted for no less than \$222 billion. As such, anyone could understand that the blockade was the main obstacle to the well-being of the Cuban people, and constituted a systematic, blatant and massive violation of rights.

He said the document outlining the purpose of the embargo, initiated by United States President Dwight Eisenhower in 1960, had sought to estrange internal support for the political opposition in Cuba. It worked on the basis that money must be denied, with a view to causing hunger, despair and the overthrow of the Government.

Today, President George W. Bush had urged Congress to maintain the embargo, he continued. Indeed, 7 in 10 Cubans had lived their lives only knowing such aggression against the country. The United States had ignored "with arrogance and political blindness" the 15 resolutions calling for the lifting of the blockade. It had adopted new measures that "bordered on madness and fanaticism" to deepen the blockade, which had never been enforced with such viciousness as in the past year. For example, the United States had penalized the alliance of Baptist churches that had claimed to have been tourists with religious purposes. In 2006, the United States had forbidden American companies from providing Internet services to Cuba, and thus today, if one tried to access Google Earth in Cuba, a screen would appear: "This service is not available in your country."

Children, in particular, had been impacted by the embargo, as they could not receive high-quality anaesthesia. The United States delegation should explain why Cuban children suffering from cardiac arrhythmia were enemies of its Government. He reiterated his solidarity with American filmmakers Oliver Stone and Michael Moore who had shot documentaries in Cuba. The fact that Mr. Moore was being investigated for a trip to Cuba constituted "twenty-first century McCarthyism".

He said the Assembly had heard United States representatives say that the issue was a bilateral matter. However, the ruthless economic war imposed on Cuba was an affront to international law and the United Nations Charter. The extraterritorial enforcement of American law, scorning the legitimate interests of third countries to develop normal trade relations with Cuba, concerned all States. From May 2006 to May 2007, 30 countries had been impacted by the extraterritorial provisions of the blockade. PSL Energy Services, for example, had been fined in 2007 for exporting equipment and services to Cuba for the oil industry. BASF AG also had been prevented from selling an herbicide-related product from Germany or its Latin American subsidiaries, while the Hilton Group had announced it would ban bookings of Cubans in all its hotels around the world, as it would be subject to fines.

The United States President had said Cuba's regime used the embargo as a "scapegoat" for its miseries, he continued. However, the Secretary-General's report clearly proved that United States actions over the last year to reinforce the blockade had had serious consequences in Cuba. Today, the Cuban people were following with hope the Assembly's decision. "Never had a nation such profound convictions to fight," he said. Cuba would fight with the conviction that defending its rights today was tantamount to fighting for the rights of all peoples. He requested voting in favour of the resolution to end the embargo against Cuba. He had the legitimate right to say "long live Cuba".

DUMISANI S. KUMALO (South Africa) said that for 47 years the people of Cuba had lived under a unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States, which meant that the majority of Cuban citizens had known no other life. Even so, the Cuban people had survived. Cuba offered assistance to many developing countries in the areas of health, education and biotechnology. "The embargo that was designed to stifle the everyday lives of the Cuban people has instead produced a contribution by Cuba to the betterment of the lives of other people around the world." He particularly noted Cuba's contributions to his own country's freedom and democracy in the fight against apartheid.

He opposed the United States embargo against Cuba 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. Guided by the norms of international law and conduct, South Africa believed that constructive dialogue would foster mutual trust and understanding and was committed to working towards a better world for all, including the Cuban people, and one in which all nations could coexist peacefully. He also expressed opposition to the use of coercive measures to pressure developing countries as contrary to international law, international humanitarian law, the United Nations Charter and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States. He believed the overwhelming majority of Member States present today would join South Africa in its support for the Cuban people.

LIU ZHENMIN ([China](#)) said that, for 15 years, the General Assembly had adopted a resolution urging all countries to comply with the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law by repealing all laws and measures that compromised the sovereignty of other States. Despite those resolutions, the long-term economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba imposed by the United States continued. Normal economic, commercial and financial ties among countries were in the global interest and, as such, the international community had the right to raise serious concerns over the embargo and sanctions suffered by Cuba over the years. Not only did those sanctions harm the interests of Cuba and many other countries, they also went against the principles of democracy, freedom, rule of law and human rights.

Forcing another country, through embargo and sanctions, to give up its right to independently choose its path of development constituted a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, he continued. Such practices had nothing to do with promoting democracy or freedom since they were extraterritorial in nature and thus in violation of international law. The sanctions against Cuba were opposed by all countries and ran counter to the principle of trade liberalization. They also seriously obstructed the efforts of the Cuban people to eradicate poverty, improve their living standard, pursue economic and social development, and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Countries should develop State-to-State relations based on equality and in compliance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, and they should be allowed to choose their own political, economic, and social systems and their mode of development. As such, he requested the ending of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba and expressed hope that a spirit of dialogue and exchange would take its place.

A.A. PANKIN ([Russian Federation](#)) said that Russia shared the position of the majority of Member States in opposing the United States embargo against Cuba and calling for its end. Normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States would help to integrate Cuba into the region and internationally. The State Duma of the Russian Federation issued an appeal to Member States and international parliamentary organizations in which it noted the suffering to the Cuban people caused by the United States embargo, called that blockade a holdover from the cold war period and called for its end.

He said that the continued commercial, economic and financial embargo against Cuba by the United States was counterproductive and unresponsive to the spirit of the times. Further, it was an impediment to building a just world order in keeping with the United Nations Charter and international law. It also ignored the universal opinion of Member States with regard to the principles of replacing confrontation with cooperation and the right of people to choose their political, economic and social systems.

MOHAMMAD SALIM ([India](#)) said the international community had categorically opposed the extraterritorial aspect of the embargo imposed against Cuba by the United States. His Government joined that opposition and the General Assembly's repeated rejection of the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures. Through its resolutions, the Assembly had called upon Member States to respect their obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law by repealing and invalidating laws and measures that went against the Charter's principles. The continuation of the embargo on Cuba had hampered that country's ability to pursue development initiatives and had caused severe humanitarian damage, particularly in terms of medical care and access to medical equipment, medicines and diagnostic aids. Other areas affected included nutrition, education, international trade and investment, and transportation.

Cuba's efforts to provide assistance under South-South cooperation in the field of medicine were also hindered due to the embargo, he continued. As well, there had been an adverse impact on gross domestic product (GDP) growth, export revenues, industrial and agricultural production and trade. Embargoes and economic blockades were against the spirit of unhindered trade and commerce without barriers. The embargo had done nothing but delay Cuba's progress towards development and the continuation of such a policy was nothing "but a desire to continue an age old

unjust arrangement". In an age of globalization, that was especially unacceptable.

He said the United States and Cuba should be natural partners in trade, commerce and investment, and a considerable part of the business sector in the United States could benefit from greater contact with Cuba. Limited United States exports of agricultural and medical products to Cuba were testimony to the interest and potential of trade, and various legislative attempts in the United States to relax the embargo also supported that view. In conclusion, he reiterated his Government's opposition to unilateral measures that impinged upon the sovereignty of another country and his support for the resolution under consideration.

FRANCIS K. BUTAGIRA (Uganda) supported the lifting of the embargo against Cuba and, quoting the World Summit Outcome 2005, said democracy was "a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives." The people of Cuba had the right to determine how they were to be governed, who would govern them, and for how long. The attempt to impose sanctions on Cuba was an attempt to impose regime change. The embargo hurt the Cuban people and crippled their economic development. The international community had consistently called for the lifting of the embargo and that "universal voice" should be heeded.

Isolationism did not do any country any good, he said. Even in the United States there were elements of support for lifting the embargo, including one of the presidential candidates for the 2008 elections. It was high time the concerned authorities in the United States heeded the call of those overwhelming voices to lift the embargo, which was against the principles of international law and free trade, and contrary to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

E. Hugo Siles-Alvarado (Bolivia) said, after 47 years of a relentless blockade against Cuba and after 15 resolutions of the General Assembly requesting the lifting of the unilateral embargo by the United States, the international community could see the "clear failure of this commercial, economic and financial embargo as a mechanism to impose foreign ideologies on a sovereign nation". The Viet Nam War had demonstrated that no brute force was capable of oppressing the "fearless will of sovereign nations" in their struggle for the right to self-determination. On the contrary, such actions only served to unite a people against their oppressors.

The embargo policy of the United States against Cuba was a clear violation of the human rights of the Cuban people, he said. Such actions warranted corresponding sanctions by the General Assembly. However, the Assembly could not impose such sanctions, since it had established and continued to follow the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The Assembly resolutions adopted year after year did not have any implications for the countries involved, because the Assembly did not have the power to apply them. It was imperative, therefore, to give the General Assembly the power to make binding decisions -- for instances, such as in the current instance, where there was a violation of human rights. He called on the international community to build a genuine peace based on mutual respect and non-interference in other countries' sovereign affairs. It was now time to impose reason and lift the "inhuman embargo" on Cuba.

HINDI ABDELLATIF (Libya), supporting Pakistan's statement on behalf of the Group of 77, said that for over 40 years, the economic, commercial and financial embargo had impeded the economic and social development of Cuba. That situation had arisen despite the fact that the Assembly had called for ending the embargo, which had been tightened by extraterritorial laws and provisions. Indeed, the embargo ran counter to international law and the United Nations Charter, and promulgation would only lead to further tension in bilateral relations, and have a particularly serious impact women and children.

His delegation was strongly opposed to unilateral measures imposed for political reasons, he explained. Libya was extremely concerned at the imposition of the coercive economic embargo, particularly as it was against the principles of equal rights of States and non-interference in internal affairs of other countries. It impinged on Cuba's right to development, food and medical care. The imposition of the embargo had never been the appropriate means for solving problems among States. Negotiation, reconciliation, arbitration and transparent settlements were the necessary methods. States had repeated that fact through the General Assembly resolutions, which embodied logic and justice. Furthermore, those resolutions had sent the clear message that a comprehensive peace could not be achieved without international cooperation based on respect for State sovereignty.

AUGUSTINE P. MAHIGA (United Republic of Tanzania) expressed sympathy for the people and Government of Cuba and joined the call for ending the embargo against that country and its people. Over the years, it had become evident that the wide-ranging embargo was specifically

targeted to inflict the maximum amount of suffering on the people of Cuba and, in that way, undermine the Government. The victims came from every social group, but the young, old, and people with disabilities were particularly affected. Those actions were “morally reprehensible” and were outside the values espoused by the General Assembly, in particular the protection of civilians irrespective of race, colour or citizenship. The heroic resilience of the Cuban people had made the embargo futile and now, at a time when international peace and security was a common and major goal of the international community, it was time to review that strategy.

The Cuban people had stood firm against the embargo and subsequent tightening through the Torricelli and Helms-Burton Acts, he said. Embargoes and blockades were an antiquated means of warfare and there was currently a multitude of options for peacefully resolving differences in the international community in a humane way. The Assembly had overwhelmingly called for the lifting of the embargo and it was necessary for countries to heed that call to avoid adopting a double standard where some resolutions of the Assembly were heeded but others weren't. Wisdom should prevail in reviewing and progressively easing an embargo against a people whose only crime was to live on their sovereign soil. The people of Cuba were currently bracing for the onslaught of yet another tropical storm. Such natural calamities should “prick the conscience” of Governments and help them recognize, value and respect human life and the suffering of innocent people. He expressed hope that the Assembly's appeals would not go in vain and would be heeded by all peace-loving people and their Governments in the future.

LAZAROUS KAPAMBWE (Zambia) said the Helms-Burton legislation violated the sovereignty of Cuba and constituted a breach of international law not in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly “the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade and navigation.”

He continued, saying the report of the Secretary-General, once again, vindicated the position consistently held by the Assembly over the years -- that the embargo against Cuba hurt the innocent people of Cuba, particularly women and children, the most vulnerable. Additionally, despite the hardship caused for four decades by the embargo, the Cuban people had become more determined and united in defence of their country's sovereignty. Zambia would, once again, vote in favour of the draft resolution.

MARIA RUBIALES DE CHAMORRO (Nicaragua) said Cuba had heroically resisted for almost 50 years the most aggressive imperialist policy of the United States. Under the inhuman and illegal blockade, the United States had undertaken every effort to thwart the dreams of the Cuban people. Nicaragua had also been the victim of such a blockade, and experienced the effects of such inhuman measures. It was a source of pride for her country to join with Latin America and the Caribbean in favour of the draft resolution.

International trade relations had been affected by the illegal blockade imposed against Cuba, and the complementary Helms-Burton Act, she continued. Such plans were interventionist violations of international law and should be condemned. She extended solidarity to the five Cuban heroes who remained in United States prisons. The cold war had ended and had given rise to new forms of relations among nations. Why had the global community's will been ignored, she asked. Cuba was sparing no effort to fight against the blockade. Recalling that Cuban doctors provided help to countries around the world, she said Cuba was ready to share what it had achieved with other developing countries.

Nicaragua welcomed Cuba's initiatives to achieve an unconditional dialogue to find a political solution, and regretted the imposition of new measures, which sought to deepen the blockade. She was, however, encouraged by the business, religious, scientific and academic communities that had joined States in calling for an end to the blockade. The United States Government must end its blockade, and problems between the two countries must be settled through dialogue, on the basis of mutual respect. Nicaragua reiterated its unconditional support to the Cuban people in its titanic struggle against the empire.

BONIFACE G. CHIDYAUSIKU (Zimbabwe) reiterated his country's firm commitment to the fundamental principles of sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of international trade. For over four decades, all debates at the United Nations had protested against unilateral economic measures applied in order to achieve certain political objectives. However, numerous resolutions had failed to convince successive United States administrations to end unilateral measures. The United States' extension of territorial jurisdiction to all countries was contrary to the principle of national sovereignty and non-interference in States' internal affairs recognized under international law. United States policy undermined the Cuban people's right to

development and contradicted freedom of trade.

He said Cubans, like their Zimbabwean counterparts, had been bombarded by propaganda broadcasts by radio, the aim of which had been to incite the population to effect regime change. The doctrine of regime change contradicted the principle of sovereignty, and there was no justification for continuing such cruel and immoral United States policies. As a current victim of domestic laws that had extraterritorial impact, Zimbabwe fully understood the need to end the unilateral embargo on Cuba. His country stood firm with Cuba in the fight to end the embargo.

In explanation of the vote before the vote, RONALD GODDARD (United States) pointed out that the decision to trade with other countries was a bilateral issue not appropriate for discussion by the General Assembly and that, from time to time Member States had undertaken similar measures with regard to other countries. He asked Member States if they wanted to set a precedent and whether they would like such a resolution in another context. He said that the embargo was caused by Cuba in its denial of freedoms to its people. The purpose of the embargo was to end the grip of the Cuban Government on the Cuban people.

He noted that the United States was one of Cuba's largest trading partners, accounting for more than \$2 billion in medical and agricultural commerce, he said, noting that the United States was the largest provider of humanitarian aid to the Cuban people. He urged Member States and non-governmental organizations to support Internet access and full access to libraries for all young people in Cuba and called for the release of all political prisoners and the restoration of basic human rights. Rather than voting for the resolution against the United States, he urged Member States to oppose the resolution and oppose the Cuban Government's embargo on freedom, which was the real cause of the embargo.

The Assembly then adopted the draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba by a recorded vote of 184 in favour to 4 against (Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau, United States), with 1 abstention (Micronesia) (see Annex).

In explanation of the vote after the vote, JORGE DE LEMOS GODINHO Portugal, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that his delegation believed that the United States' trade policy towards Cuba was fundamentally a bilateral issue. Still, the European Union had clearly expressed its opposition to the extraterritorial extension of the United States embargo, such as that contained in the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act and the 1996 Helms-Burton Act.

The European Union could not accept that unilateral measures imposed by the United States on specific countries limit the Union's economic and commercial relations with third parties, such as Cuba. To that end, in 1996, the European Union Council of Ministers adopted a Regulation and Joint Action to protect the interests of natural or legal persons resident in the European Union against the extraterritorial effects of the Helms-Burton Act. Moreover, in 1998, at the United States/European Union Summit, a package was agreed covering waivers to certain sections of Helms-Burton, a commitment by the United States administration to resist similar legislation in the future, and an understanding with respect to disciplines for the strengthening of investment protection. The European Union continued to urge the United States to implement its side of that understanding.

He said that the European Union's policy toward Cuba was clear and had been set out in a Common Position in 1996. The objective of those relations was to encourage a peaceful process to development, led by the Cuban people, to a pluralist democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as a sustainable economic recovery and an improvement in the living standards of the Cuban people. He underlined the European Union's willingness to pursue a comprehensive and open dialogue with the Cuban Government and civil society on all topics of mutual interest, including in political, human rights, economic, scientific and cultural fields.

At the same time, the European Union deplored that the human rights situation had not fundamentally changed, despite a decrease in the number of political prisoners and acts of harassment. The Cuban Government continued to deny its citizens internationally recognized civil, political and economic rights and freedoms. The European Union would once again urge the Cuban Government to unconditionally release all political prisoners — a key priority in its policy towards Cuba — and express, in particular, utmost concern with the deteriorating health of several political prisoners, members of the "Group of 75" political prisoners detained since March 2003. It called for the immediate release of those prisoners and called on the Cuban Government to grant freedom of expression and free access to information.

He said that the Cuban Government's achievements in health care were being undermined by its restrictions on civil, political, and economic rights. Domestic Cuban economic policy, as well as the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States, seriously hampered the economic development of Cuba, negatively affecting the standards of living for the Cuban people. As for the United States, the European Union would express its rejection of all unilateral measures against Cuba, which were contrary to commonly accepted rules on international trade, and repeat its view that lifting the embargo would open up Cuba's economy to the benefit of Cuba's people. At the same time, he urged Cuban authorities to bring about real improvements in the area of fundamental human rights and freedoms. For all those reasons, and in spite of serious criticism of Cuba's human rights record, the European Union voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Following the vote, ELBIO ROSSELLI (Uruguay) speaking on behalf of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and in explanation of the vote, said the vote in favour of the resolution was consistent with the MERCOSUR position in favour of multilateralism and against the application of coercive and unilateral measures imposed by countries. The embargo was contrary to the freedom and transparency of international commerce and, as such, contrary to the well-being of the Cuban people and an obstruction to that country's regional integration. The embargo also ran counter to the principles of international law, in particular the international laws that regulated trade and that were binding on the World Trade Organization.

He said the continued embargo had serious implications for the General Assembly and other international forums, such as the Organization of American States, the Latin-American System, the Ibero-American Summit and the Summit meetings of the Rio Group. He rejected the application of the coercive, unilateral and extraterritorial actions of the United States. In conclusion, he reiterated his call for multilateralism as the most just, efficient and peaceful way to resolve conflicts between States and to promote understanding, security, human rights and cooperation.

ANDREI DAPKIUNAS (Belarus), in explanation of vote, said the world had been witness to violations of the principle of the sovereign equality of States for almost half a century, in the United States economic and financial blockade of Cuba. The vast majority of Member States viewed the blockade against Cuba as an uncivilized and unconstructive means of settling international disputes. The negative consequences of the blockade were the principle impediments to Cuba's economic and social development. Despite world opinion, the United States continued to reinforce economic and financial sanctions against Cuba.

Cuba's losses from the embargo numbered in the billions of dollars, he said. Behind those numbers was the fate of human beings, their health and lives. The blockade continued to harm children, adolescents, women and families. For example, it prevented children from receiving vaccines and the manufacture of those vaccines. He expressed admiration for the courage of the Cuban nation, which continued to set an example of State and national dignity and sovereignty, and was proud to add the voice of Belarus to demand an end to the blockade.

AKEC K.A. KHOC (Sudan) reiterated Member States condemnation of the United States policy of unilateral boycott against Cuba. Indeed, the international community condemned such hostile policies. The blockade was unjust and Cuban children and women, in particular, had suffered.

He went on to say that the United States had always preached about human rights, but here was violating Cuba's very human rights. The embargo was a crime against humanity, and flagrantly violated both the United Nations Charter and international law. Every State had the right to its own economic and social choices, and interference should be condemned.

Sudan had suffered from Washington's policies and had voted in support of the resolution today, he said. His country's vote was a "vote against hegemony" and the imposition of domestic policy on other countries. He supported Pakistan's and Egypt's statements, and reiterated solidarity with the people and Government of Cuba. He called for the immediate raising of the unjust embargo.

AUNG LYNN (Myanmar) welcomed the Secretary-General's report on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. The international community had been calling for an end to the embargo for 15 years. The heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement also had called for its end.

The embargo violated both the United Nations Charter and international law, he said. Principles of the sovereign equality of States, and non-interference in domestic affairs must be respected. Further, he said that the embargo adversely affected the lives of the Cuban people and of third parties. He reaffirmed Myanmar's opposition to laws having an extraterritorial effect, and

supported the resolution to end the embargo.

ROBERT HILL (Australia), in explanation of vote, expressed his opposition to the promulgation of extraterritorial laws of States that affected the freedom and transparency of international trade. Such laws and measures were not justified by the principles of international law. In particular, his Government was concerned about the extraterritorial aspects of the Helms-Burton Act and, for that reason, it had voted for the lifting of the embargo.

He said, however, that the vote in favour of the resolution should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the internal policies of the Cuban Government. That Government's treatment of its political prisoners was unacceptable and the international community should take every opportunity to remind Cuba of its international responsibilities and the need to respect the rights of its entire population. The Cuban Minister had earlier described the United States blockage as the main obstacle to the fulfilment of the rights of the Cuban people. Such a statement would carry more weight, he said, if the Cuban Government had shown that, internally, the rights of Cubans were respected.

TRI THARYAT (Indonesia) aligned himself with Pakistan's statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as Egypt's statement. His delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution, as those actions had severely threatened the human rights of Cuban people and impacted trade and investment in Cuba. In the past, countries had firmly rejected the imposition of laws with extraterritorial impact.

The application of the economic and trade embargo would only adversely impact the well-being of the Cuban people, particularly women and children, he continued. It was a major impediment to a State's right to development and ran counter to the spirit of global partnership set out in various forums, including the Monterrey Consensus. In that context, he called for an end to the embargo, and urged all States to adhere to principles that respected human rights and good neighbourliness.

M. REZVANIAN (Iran) said his country had voted in favour of the resolution to end the embargo, and had aligned itself with the statements of Egypt and Pakistan. The embargo against Cuba ran counter to the principles of international law and contradicted both the letter and spirit of the Charter, which had called for friendly relations among nations. Indeed, the embargo not only had adverse impacts on the human rights of Cuban people, but hampered the country's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in the area of education.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation had called on States to refrain from measures that impeded international law, he said. It also had stated that unilateral measures hindered the well-being of people, and created obstacles to their enjoyment of human rights, including those to health, medical care, and food. Paragraph 101 of the Plan had stated that nations should promote a supportive international economic system that would lead to sustainable development in all countries.

He said the adoption of the resolution today had demonstrated the global community's strong objection to coercive economic measures in general, and the embargo against Cuba in particular. Iran shared fully the concern at the imposition of unilateral measures, and sympathized with the Cuban Government and people. He called for the full implementation of the resolution that the Assembly adopted today.

PHOMMA KHAMMANICHANH (Lao People's Democratic Republic), in explanation of vote, said the Cuban people had endured the negative consequences of the embargo imposed by the United States against their Government for more than four decades. In an age where international cooperation was marked by the common goal of international peace and security, it was regrettable to see the lingering imposition of the embargo and other extraterritorial and coercive measures currently in place. Member States should neither promulgate nor enforce any law or measure that jeopardized the sovereignty of any other State since every State had the right to participate freely in international trade and commerce.

No nation had the right to interfere in the internal affairs of another, despite differing political systems, he continued. Cuba had the right to choose its own political system and its own path to development. For that reason, his delegation joined the majority of Member States in the Assembly in reaffirming the need to lift the embargo against Cuba. That long-standing blockade had already caused immeasurable damage to the Cuban people. The United Nations should do what it could to help Cuba reintegrate into the global economy through resolutions such as the one that had been before the Assembly today.

BASHAR JA'AFARI (Syria), in explanation of the vote, said the principles and goals of the United Nations Charter affirmed every country's right to sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. The United States had played a leading role in wording the United Nations Charter, after having suffered from interference in its own affairs. It was, thus, particularly surprising to see it support a policy that was completely inconsistent with the Charter and international laws. The embargo impeded free trade and international relations between States. Syria rejected that policy specifically, and would reject any other extraterritorial laws or measures imposed by any other State.

The embargo had a pernicious effect on the efforts of Cuban people to achieve prosperity, with particular effect on vulnerable groups, he said. Despite the actions of the United States, Cuba had attempted to begin a productive dialogue with the United States based on sovereignty, non-interference, good neighbourliness and the principles of the United Nations Charter. The two countries should have normal relations, while maintaining their respective rights to choose their own political and cultural systems in line with international standards. The overwhelming support shown by Member States for lifting the embargo reaffirmed respect for the right of all people to self-determination. The Helms-Burton laws went beyond the borders of the United States and affected third party States wishing to develop relations with Cuba. As such, it violated the sovereignty of Member States. He expressed condemnation for the most recent measures imposed by the United States against Cuba as an attempt to destroy the economic, political, and social system chosen by Cuban people.

It was regrettable, he added, that the Government of the United States had not yet taken any measures to heed the repeated requests of the international community to lift the embargo and instead continued its pursuit of a "wrongful approach" that undermined the legitimate demands of the international community. All embargoes undertaken by the United States, including the one against Cuba, should be lifted immediately. He expressed the hope that the United States would finally hear the call of the international community and would respect the resolution. In closing, he added that it was "surprising and significant" to see that Israel had voted against the resolution, since it showed that Israel had joined the "isolated minority" that did not view international law as anything of value.

In right of reply, LUIS A. AMORÓS NÚÑEZ (Cuba) said that the representative of the United States had repeated the usual lies in order to justify its illegal embargo. He said that the escalation in illegal actions against Cuba by the United States was a reflection of the personal frustration, despair and hatred for the Cuban people of the illegally-elected President Bush. When announcing the escalation of illegal actions against Cuba, Mr. Bush had made clear, as never before, that the purpose of the embargo was to cause hunger and disease among the people of Cuba. The hawks in Washington were wrong, if they thought they could frighten Cuba.

Cuba's freedom, dignity, social justice and sovereignty would remain inviolable, he said, and launching military aggression would be a grave error. Cubans were convinced of the truth and justice of the Cuban revolution. He thanked the world for its support. Further, he said that President Bush and his regime misinterpreted human rights -- only a regime like President Bush's could bomb innocent people in the defence of freedom.

The United States stood alone, he said. It must recognize Cuba's sovereignty, cease its illegal threats and actions, and lift the genocidal blockade immediately. He also called for the United States to stop promoting illegal emigration from Cuba. If the United States were really interested in human rights, it would not have established torture centres and the base at Guantanamo, and would not bomb innocent people in Iraq. Further, a Government such as Australia had no right to criticize Cuba. He added that the European Union had analysed the situation incorrectly; it could not be interested in human rights when it tolerated racism and facilitated the illegal transfer of presumed terrorists.

Mr. GODDARD (United States), exercising his right of reply, said the resolution had inaccurately blamed the United States for Cuba's hardships, while exonerating Cuba's own policies, which had denied the Cuban people the exercise of their rights in the marketplace. Furthermore, it had inaccurately claimed that United States policy was an obstacle to the freedom of navigation. On the contrary, United States policies did not prevent trade with Cuba or deny its people food or medicine. Moreover, today's resolution did not refer to the embargo on freedom that Cuba had imposed on its own people, which prevented the United Nations and others from travelling to Cuba and meeting freely with the Cuban people.

Mr. AMORÓS NÚÑEZ (Cuba), exercising his right of reply, said, though he appreciated the basis of the arguments of the United States delegate, his comments did not take into account the

recent vote of the Assembly and its rejection of the blockade imposed by the United States. The international community had rejected the blockade, because it ran counter to the United Nations Charter and international law. The blockade was a great violation of the human rights of the Cuban people and it prevented the economic and social development of the country. What the United States delegate had previously said was not supported by the international community and was entirely untrue. As such, his delegation refused to accept what had been stated by the representative of the United States. The recent vote was a clear vote against the policy of the United States, which violated the human rights of Cubans. He reiterated, in closing, that no Member State, particularly Cuba, could accept the comments of the representative of the United States.

Statements on Economic and Social Council Report

DALIUS ČEKUOLIS, President of the Economic and Social Council, introducing the report (A/62/3), said the current year's substantive session was an important landmark in the work of the Council and laid out the foundation for a renewed Economic and Social Council. It opened new avenues for the future of the Council, in particular the Annual Ministerial Review and the launch of the biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

He said, among the key outcomes of the session were the special high-level meeting of the Council with Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for a follow-up on financing for development and the first Annual Ministerial Review, which focused discussions on the policies and means needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. He said one of the high points of the Review was the national voluntary presentations by the ministers of six developing countries. Five key messages emerged from those sessions, among them that national development strategies were working, but not at the pace required; that global partnership should be made more effective overall; and that the global economic environment should be made pro-development and pro-poor. He also noted the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration, the first-ever Innovation Fair, and work accomplished during the Council's coordination segment, humanitarian affairs segment, and in its work on operational activities for development.

Looking to the future, he said the Council would need to mobilize efforts to achieve the goals of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which highlighted the relationships between peace, development and human rights and the need for multi-dimensional strategies. The Annual Ministerial Review should hopefully strengthen the Council's capacity to contribute in the area of peacebuilding. The agreement to extend Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Groups in Guinea-Bissau and Haiti was a clear recognition of the useful contribution the Council could make to the long-term development of such countries. The Council should continue to promote stronger, coordinated responses from the United Nations system and other partners to humanitarian crises. It should also help ensure equal focus on investing in mitigation and development processes, which would reduce the vulnerability of those most at risk. Adopting a regular practice for turning to the Council whenever major humanitarian emergencies occurred would help to strengthen that part of the Council's mandate.

In conclusion, he said a more substantive and interactive relation was developing between the Assembly and the Council. That relationship should help in providing practical orientation to the international community in the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Currently, new forms of international cooperation were emerging and new institutional arrangements were being put in place to deal with the challenges of today's world. Expectations were high and it was time to "get development right" for the world's people.

KHALID MAHMOOD (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China, said the 2007 Economic and Social Council substantive session was historic in that the Council had operationalized the new responsibilities assigned to it at the 2005 World Leaders Summit. That was an important step towards strengthening the Council. Although he was satisfied with the convening of the first Annual Ministerial Review, his delegation still believed that it had been a one-sided event, with only developing countries making presentations. He reiterated the call for substantive and equal participation of developed partners in future sessions. He hoped the Review would look honestly at the status of implementation by developed and developing countries and come to conclusions that invigorated the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, among other agreed goals. He was pleased that States had decided on the Review's themes for 2007 and 2008.

He said the Group was of the strong view that one purpose of the Review should be to identify the gaps, shortcomings and successes of development partners. He hoped that future

Ministerial Declarations issued after the Review would contain both an assessment and recommendations for action. His delegation looked forward to the substantive launch of the 2008 Development Cooperation Forum. The event should help ensure that: development cooperation was responsive to developing country needs; the quantity and quality of development financing was adequate; development cooperation achieved its desired results and that it also was pursued in a coherent manner at all levels.

The Group of 77 and China had consistently called for effective monitoring of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, he said, adding that specific targets should be developed to measure implementation of Goal Eight. He called on the United Nations, The World Bank, the World Trade Organization and other institutions, to contribute in that regard. The Organization must strengthen existing mechanisms to monitor, review and follow up the implementation of the outcomes of all major conferences and summits. He looked forward to the convening of a specific General Assembly meeting focused on development, covering an assessment of progress made in the previous year. In closing, he reiterated the importance of the United Nations playing a central role in promoting cooperation for development. He called for a periodic review of the Organization's economic and development policies, and those of the Bretton Woods institutions.

JORGE LOBO DE MESQUITA ([Portugal](#)), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that this year had been an historic one for the Council, because the body had held its first-ever Annual Ministerial Review and its inaugural Development Cooperation Forum, putting into practice the reforms that had been called for in the outcome of the 2005 World Summit. Those new modalities ensured that the Council would remain the central mechanism for follow-up of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including stepping up implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

He said that the Council's decision to focus the Ministerial Review on "strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development", had focused that body's attention on the first Millennium Goal and provided a high-level forum for systematic review of progress made in the implementation of key aspects of the United Nations development agenda. In addition, the Review had already begun looking more deeply at relevant strategic issues and development-related policies. Praising the Council's organization of a series of round tables on climate change in this context, he said that the European Union believed that the United Nations should be at the centre of international efforts to tackle climate change.

He went on to say that this delegation had been pleased that the Economic and Social Council had adopted a "solid" two-year work programme for the Review, which would help raise the Council's overall profile and provide the predictability necessary for its subsidiary bodies and other relevant actors to best contribute to its work in a timely manner. He added that the Council should not act alone, but build on the work of its subsidiary bodies, as well as benefit from outside contributions from the wider international community and civil society. The European Union expected that the Development Cooperation Forum would become an important part of the international discussion on development. He hoped that the Forum would come to address such issues as the Paris Declaration, and the role of new and emerging donors.

Turning to the wider work of the Council, he said, among other things, that in the body's resumed session, it had adopted a "Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests," as well as a multi-year work plan for the United Nations Forum on Forests for 2007 to 2015, considering their particular importance in the context of international forest policy and cooperation on the shared global objectives on forests. The European Union believed that organizing a special public event, coinciding with the adoption of the Instrument in the Assembly would not only increase public awareness about the landmark accord, but also contribute further to strengthening political commitment and action, at all levels, around the shared global objectives on forests.

JORGE VOTO-BERNALES ([Peru](#)) said it had been one year since the approval of a resolution which strengthened the Economic and Social Council and established two elements that were fundamental to improving the work of the Council, namely the Annual Ministerial Reviews and the Forum on Cooperation for Development. The first Annual Ministerial Review strengthened international efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger and ensured its placement at the top of the international community's list of priorities. It also highlighted the need for international support for sustained economic growth in developing countries. Poverty continued to be a great problem in middle-income countries and it was necessary for the international community to support relevant initiatives. On a national level, his Government had refocused its national and foreign policies to be more inclusive, with the dignity and well-being of the individual at their heart.

In compliance with the Millennium Development Goals, he said his Government planned to reduce national poverty rates from 50 per cent to 30 per cent by 2011. It would also reduce chronic malnutrition, improve access to drinking water and electricity, eradicate illiteracy, reduce unemployment, and reduce external debt. He welcomed the creation of the Forum on Cooperation for Development, which constituted a fundamental stage in the application of globalization for development. The Forum should be strengthened and the relevant concepts and prospects mentioned in the Assembly should be guidelines for its work. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his Government's commitment to the Forum and the overall work of the Council. In doing so, he said his country would present its candidacy as a member of the Council during the 2009 to 2011 period and asked for Member States' support in that bid.

DMITRY I. MAKSIMYCHEV (Russian Federation) said that he supported strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council as the principle coordinating body of the United Nations system in identifying varied approaches to current economic and social development problems. He gave the Council high marks for the conduct of its 2007 regular session, the first in its new format, as it took on the new functions assigned it by the 2005 World Summit. He also expressed approval for the conduct of the first Annual Ministerial Review and called for more national presentations at that Review, in future, detailing progress on development issues. However, he said that the formation of any monitoring mechanisms under the Economic and Social Council would be counterproductive.

The Forum on Cooperation for Development would become key for dialogue among stakeholders on the effectiveness of collective actions for development, he said. He stressed the importance of the coordination segment of the session in organizing the Council's traditional work in economic, social and humanitarian areas and for environmental protection, and said that the operational and humanitarian segments also demonstrated the Council's leading role in those areas. He said that the most significant outcome of the session was the confirmation of the Economic and Social Council's role in the implementation of internationally agreed development goals and the development of practical recommendations for international cooperation in the social, economic, humanitarian and environmental spheres. He closed by saying that the reform of the Economic and Social Council could be considered a success.

DIEDRE MILLS (Jamaica) said that during the past year, the Council had undertaken several key initiatives, and its discussions during its annual high-level segment and special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions had been especially noteworthy. Jamaica also welcomed the coordination segment's focus on promoting full and productive employment, and the discussions in the humanitarian affairs segment on providing assistance to affected populations. She said that those discussions added value to the wider debate on the United Nations development agenda, and were integral to forging consensus on how best to advance the implementation of commitments made towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

Jamaica also believed that the Economic and Social Council's discussions in those and other areas went a long way towards restoring the imbalance that currently persisted regarding the effective participation of developing countries in global economic decision-making. She said that her delegation remained concerned that calls for good governance at the national level "were not equally reinforced when it came to the requirements for good governance, transparency and accountability at the global level". She added that the Economic and Social Council's deliberations were also essential to ensuring the full implementation of the United Nations development agenda and, to that end, her delegation had "very high expectations" for the work of the newly launched Development Cooperation Forum. That new mechanism could promote genuine dialogue among Member States to identify concrete proposals, which could give much-needed impetus to advancing the global partnership for development.

She went on to say that the Council's annual spring meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions could be strengthened to boost cooperation between the United Nations and those bodies, including the World Trade Organization, without prejudice to their respective governance structures. In addition, the Council might need to reconsider the duration and outcome of that meeting, which were now confined to a single day's discussion and presidential summaries. Finally, she said that the Council's role in following up the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences remained indispensable. Jamaica believed that the Council should be equipped to effectively discharge that responsibility and hoped that the Assembly would give that matter special attention, as well as ensure that the Council had greater flexibility to take action as development issues arose.

HJÁLMAR W. HANNESSON (Iceland), discussing the Council's substantive session, said the themes for the Annual Ministerial Review and thematic discussion of the high-level segment this year were well chosen, as they both focused on poverty eradication. He was particularly pleased that

both themes had successfully linked sustained economic growth with poverty eradication. Drawing the Assembly's attention to the importance of promoting gender equality in poverty eradication efforts, he said that, by empowering women and ensuring their equal opportunity, countries could achieve great gains. However, more work was needed, as women were still more likely than men to be poor, malnourished and illiterate. Women's empowerment should be at the centre of any development strategy.

Regarding decisions dealing with the Ad hoc Advisory Groups on countries emerging from conflict, he said continuation of the Groups on Haiti and Guinea-Bissau was a sign of the Council's primary importance in the area of sustainable development in post-conflict situations. States could be fairly satisfied with the overall outcome of this year's substantive session. On the future role of the Council, he said next year's Development Cooperation Forum would be an ideal forum for providing global oversight of aid commitments and aid quality, adding that its recommendations should be a reference point for discussions at next year's Monterrey follow-up conference in Doha, and the Accra High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. The outcome of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence would strengthen the Council's work in that area. Finally, he said the Council's reform was far from over. A successful Economic and Social Council meeting in New York next year would be critical for ensuring the body's strength in the future.

ANDREI DAPKIUNAS ([Belarus](#)) noted the positive changes that had occurred in the Economic and Social Council's work. This year's innovations on the Council would bring about better results in examining the issues on its agenda. High-level discussions on key issues of international social and economic development, analysis of global development trends, efforts in fighting poverty and fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals had become more focused. In particular, he welcomed the Ministerial Declaration on the development of a unified mechanism for providing assistance to countries in need and hoped that that Declaration would serve as a practical guide for Member States, especially in providing access to world markets for developing countries and countries whose economies were in transition.

Belarus continued its support of high-level meetings under the Economic and Social Council to which representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization were invited, he said. That was the most effective way to unite the specialized agencies, operational funds and programmes to prevent and overcome crises in countries with developing markets. The global economic situation was favourable to meeting the Millennium Development Goals, but many indices showed that they were far from being met. The Economic and Social Council's work should be strengthened in meeting the needs of countries with transitional economies, as those were the countries that could be a reserve in broadening the global donor pool for development. In particular, he called for technical assistance to help those countries independently develop economic policy and development strategies.

ADE PETRANTO ([Indonesia](#)) said the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields had been instrumental in shaping a broad development vision and defining common objectives. It was vital to ensure a synergistic follow-up on the various outcomes from those meetings at the institutional level. The strengthening of the Council would help towards that end. The Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum would better equip the Council to perform its core functions envisaged in the United Nations Charter. No effort should be spared in making full use of the Annual Ministerial Review as a powerful new tool to advance implementation of the internationally agreed-upon development goals in the economic and social fields.

Representatives of many developing countries had expressed their hope that the biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum next year would accelerate the commitments laid out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The Council, through its meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, and UNCTAD, had created an interactive and constructive multilateral dialogue to enhance the voices of developing countries in international financial institutions. While acknowledging the positive developments at the global level, he called for integrated and coordinated follow-up at the country level. National development and poverty reduction strategies should be supported by the United Nations and other international organizations. The halfway point towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals had been reached this year and it was necessary to make full use of the current developments in the Council to accelerate progress.

Statements on Follow-up to United Nations Conferences

Mr. SHERVANI ([India](#)) agreed with the Secretary-General that, over the last 15 years, the United Nations major conferences had resulted in the emergence of a shared vision of development.

He welcomed the recognition in the report of the Economic and Social Council's critical role in fostering a comprehensive development agenda at the United Nations. He welcomed the strengthening of the Council, and the incorporation of new elements in the body.

He said the Annual Ministerial Review must have a special focus on evaluating the global partnership of development, as it could not be limited only to assessing national efforts in that area. Further, the Development Cooperation Forum must ensure that cooperation could help developing countries implement strategies. He was pleased that the Council had finalised its 2008 to 2009 programme of work, however, it was also important to discuss emerging issues, unconstrained by the previous programme.

A key element of the development agenda related to the Council's role in policy review and in making recommendations on economic and social development. In that context, he underscored the importance of the Council's new mandate in assessing the impacts of development policies on country development. International economic and trade policies were crucial to developing countries, however, current structures did not reflect their concerns. He highlighted several issues that demonstrated the urgent need for reform of the economic and financial architecture: conditionality-based lending — and a history of inappropriate advice from the Bretton Woods institutions; fragilities of the financial system; and continuing problems of external debt and debt sustainability. The United Nations, through the Economic and Social Council, must oversee that reform process.

Stressing that the Council's strengthened mandate would remain on paper unless it was backed by technical and other resources, he urged the provision of adequate resources. He awaited a committee of experts to assist in accelerating the development mandate on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), as that was critical to several issues, particularly public health and development of environmentally-friendly technologies to address climate change. In closing, he reiterated the importance of keeping the development agenda at the heart of United Nations activities.

Statements on Culture of Peace

ISMAT JAHAN ([Bangladesh](#)) introduced the draft resolution on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 (document A/62/L.6), saying that the theme of "culture of peace" epitomized the essence of efforts to save humanity from the scourges of war and conflict. Indeed, a culture of peace was a set of principles designed to renounce violence. Such a culture could facilitate the emergence of universally shared values, and had enormous power to create a world order where amity could supplant atrocity.

Bangladesh had enjoyed a significant track record of religious freedom and tolerance, she explained. As Bangladesh had been born out of a bloody conflict, her country saw great value in the principles of tolerance and respect for diversity. Her country's experience had shown that gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women were categorical imperatives for development, social stability and peace. As 2007 marked the seventh year of the Decade, she said that to attain set goals, States must focus on implementation. She called for an overall assessment of the degree to which countries had achieved a culture of peace.

Against that backdrop, she said the draft resolution contained updates vis-à-vis the previous year. Additional elements welcomed the designation of 2 October as International Day of Non-violence, as well as the appointment of the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations by the Secretary-General. The draft also appreciated States' participation in the High-level dialogue on interreligious and intercultural cooperation, held on 4 and 5 October 2007, in accordance with resolution 61/221 (2006). At the sixty-first session, she said the resolution had received a record 114 co-sponsors. Several countries had since joined the list of co-sponsors and she hoped others would accord similar support to the initiative in a demonstration of global solidarity.

JORGE DE LEMOS GODINHO ([Portugal](#)), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the Union was convinced of the primary importance of education in promoting a culture of peace. Education offered the best opportunity to teach respect and tolerance towards cultural diversity, combat discrimination on any grounds and change mindsets, as well as behavioural patterns. Human rights education certainly played a role in the context of peace and the Union called for the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and other initiatives to achieve those goals.

Additionally, he said, gender mainstreaming and establishing equality between men and women constituted a very important aspect in promoting a culture of peace. The Union welcomed the

instigation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security as well as the increasing emphasis on the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women, in particular the girl child. Finally, the Union urged the Organization to move forward with the recommendations on the United Nations Study on Violence Against Children, which had served as a strong catalyst for change, and hoped this Assembly would seize the present session to agree on establishing a mechanism to promote them.

KHALED BADR AL KHALIFA ([Kuwait](#)) affirmed his support for the work of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which had contributed to creating an environment for the “culture of peace” to thrive. He said it was political strife and conflicts of interest that bred cultures of violence. It was important to take into consideration the vital and central role of the media and educational institutions in creating a generation free of violent and hateful thoughts, and their contribution to spreading a culture of peace. He stressed the importance of interfaith and intercultural dialogues in enhancing the reciprocal respect and acceptance of various cultures, and the importance of considering the diversity of cultures as a source of enrichment for human civilization. In that respect, he commended the recent High-level Dialogue on Interreligious, Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace.

He stressed that instigating hatred and fanaticism only bred more of the same and was a setback for peace and constructive interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Hence, he condemned the campaign against the Islamic faith in which some United States universities were currently taking part. He warned of the consequences of such behaviour and called for unity against the manipulation of universities for racial purposes. Provocations through offences to religions and cultures would only generate hatred, rancour and the desire for revenge. He affirmed Assembly resolution 61/221, particularly as it related to combating fanaticism and discrimination on the grounds of religion or beliefs and the importance of respecting religious and cultural diversity. He said Kuwait aimed to convey the true meaning of Islam and to reveal the culture of peace that Islam called for, while maintaining religious tolerance.

He said development was the real way to peace and he supported the goals of sustainable development to avoid conflict. He noted that half of the States emerging from conflicts risked regression. In that connection, he commended the efforts exerted by the Peacebuilding Commission, noting that Kuwait had committed \$500,000 to the Peacebuilding Fund. Respecting human rights, applying equality, granting equal opportunities and freedom of expression were the basic pillars for the culture of peace. He called upon all countries to adhere to those principles.

TAKAHIRO SHINYO ([Japan](#)) said the High-level Dialogue held at the beginning of October made it clear that people of different races, religions and cultures could coexist peacefully, within and beyond national borders. Differences between cultures often led to conflict and hostility which, combined with politics, could lead people to take up arms and, sometimes, embrace terrorism. However, it was wrong for any individual to think they had unique access to the truth, and no one should impose their beliefs on others without giving due consideration to the beliefs of the other.

Since the conclusion of the Second World War, Japan had tried to eliminate the development of a political basis for conflict, he said. To that end, his Government had hosted the World Civilization Forum and the Seminar for Inter-Civilizational Dialogue with the Islamic World. Education had an important role to play in preventing the generation of hostility and hatred, as did the cooperation of mass media. Engaging in interreligious and intercultural dialogue at all levels was crucial and should include the cooperation of the private sector as well.

Advocating and creating a culture of peace were two different things, he explained. Adequate social capital, created by fostering democracy and human rights, and adequate human capital, created by fostering personal independence, should complement each other to create that culture of peace. Human security could be achieved by empowering the individual and ensuring they were free from fear and want. Human security improved human capital and was, therefore, necessary for building a culture of peace. For its part, his Government was providing various types of support to developing countries, particularly in the field of peacebuilding. Since 1993, it had devoted considerable energy to the development of Africa, and at the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in 2008 it intended to examine the establishment of peace through human security.

Finally, in reference to the Middle East, he promoted a “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity” framework which would create an agro-industrial park in the West Bank and facilitate the transport of goods to and from a distribution centre. The aim was to bring the parties together, there and in all the places of the world where there was conflict, by creating economic prosperity and a culture of peace.

HILARIO G. DAVIDE (Philippines) said that the diversity of ideas and approaches in the international community's continuing quest for peace was encouraging and should be harnessed for the full flowering of a durable peace throughout the world. Recalling the statement of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon marking the International Day of Peace earlier this month, he said that divergent approaches converging towards a common goal "enable us to do more, wherever we are and in whatever way we can", in the name of peace.

He went on to highlight the importance in that regard of the Assembly's recently concluded High-Level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, as well as two related regional gatherings: the third Asia-Pacific Interfaith Dialogue Forum, held in Waitangi, New Zealand, last May; and the third Asia-Europe Meeting and Interfaith Dialogue Forum, held in Nanjing, China, last June. He said that other regions, countries and communities were holding dialogues on interfaith cooperation at both Government and civil society levels.

He said that it was sad that what was discussed at those national-level gatherings often got "lost in translation" here in New York when some of the same issues were discussed. "The politics of identity should give way to the common good of the international community", he said, stressing that it was, therefore, incumbent upon the United Nations to provide a multilateral framework for cooperation at the regional and national levels "lest we end up in an endless circle of debate or rhetorical discourse".

He went on to recount the success interfaith dialogue had had in easing tensions and addressing some of the most challenging events in history over the past two decades — including the refusal of Rwanda's Muslim community to participate in the 1994 genocide and, instead, offering to protect the displaced, and Buddhist monk Maha Chosnanda's initiation of Cambodia's peace and reconciliation movement after the Khmer Rouge's reign of terror.

In his own country, the late Archbishop Cardinal Sin had led "Peaceful People Power" in 1986, which toppled the dictatorship without bloodshed. The rich national experience of the Philippines had led the country to promote interfaith dialogue and cooperation not only for peace, but for economic development and the promotion of human dignity. He added that remedial measures to alleviate or end conflict were equally as important as peacemaking initiatives. Interfaith dialogue and cooperation could also help with conflict prevention by enhancing partnerships between Governments and civil society. Such cooperation should set aside theological or doctrinal differences and concerns and focus instead on shared concerns like health, education, employment humanitarian assistance and other development-oriented issues.

MAGED ABDEL AZIZ (Egypt) noted that the High-level Dialogue earlier this month among religions and cultures asserted that respect for the diversity of cultural identities was the point of departure for establishing a constructive international dialogue. As globalization saw people migrate between societies, interest was growing in the West to understand Islamic culture. However, despite the many contributions of that culture to the advanced state in which the West now lived, the focus was on the negative, with ridicule and attempts to link the culture to terrorism foremost. The media also sometimes ignited hatred, impeding a culture of peace.

The greatest challenge to peace was the proliferation of violence, he said. The international community failed to settle chronic political and economic problems, leading to feelings of injustice. Some tried to impose their values, cultures and legal justice systems, as if they were superior. Peace was a way of life, he said. A common purpose must be advanced in the cause of peace, not imposition of cultural hegemony. Unified action must be taken against attempts to depict cultural differences between societies as catalysts for conflict. Migrants should be treated as the equals of citizens in their host countries. Concurrently, efforts must be redoubled to settle conflicts, assist developing countries to realize their development goals, and consolidate efforts in all areas of disarmament.

The Organization's ability to address the roots of conflict must be strengthened through improved cooperation within the United Nations system and better coordination with regional and subregional organizations. The gap between North and South must be closed, without imposition of social or cultural concepts as conditions. The balance between the main United Nations organs must be restored. He called for strengthening the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, and combating the roots of terrorism. It was "only through deepening dialogue, mutual understanding and enlightened education, and within the framework of partnership and cooperation with ... non-governmental organizations, the private sector and all spectrums of civil society, that we can contribute to the construction of the defences of peace in the minds of people", he said.

BYRGANYM AITIMOVA (Kazakhstan), referring to the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, said all countries had a responsibility to promote the culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations at the local, national, regional and international levels. The United Nations had achieved significant success in creating policies, structures and programmes towards that end. Tolerance and the culture of peace were created through education and timely, concrete actions at all levels. UNESCO had played a leading role in fostering the use of information and communication technologies to promote peace education. Access to those technologies, as well as access to textbooks that taught cultural and religious tolerance, was the most important precondition for fostering tolerance. The media also played an important role.

Nationally, the principle of tolerance was not only the norm, but was also one of the key principles of the State, she said. Her Government had created its own model to preserve and strengthen inter-ethnic and interreligious harmony and contributed to international efforts to foster a culture of peace. Interfaith dialogue was an integral part of efforts to strengthen peace and security. People of all faiths could bridge the chasms of ignorance, fear and misunderstanding and could set an example of interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Recently, the Second Congress of World and Traditional Religions took place in Astana and was her country's contribution to global dialogue among religions. Her Government had also proposed the naming of an upcoming year as an International Year of Dialogue among Religions and Cultures. In closing, she expressed her appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations in creating a culture of peace and reaffirmed her Government's commitment to implement the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

ADAM MULAWARMAN TUGIO (Indonesia) said that economic, social and cultural issues had contributed to peace and security, which was why efforts to promote a culture of peace represented an important response to the increased interaction among all cultures and civilizations. Indonesia attached great importance to United Nations initiatives that strengthened freedom, tolerance and respect for diversity, and had noted with satisfaction the growing interest in interreligious and intercultural dialogue, notably through events that had taken place this year. Initiatives such as the Second Forum on Interfaith Dialogue for Peace, Development and Human Dignity, held in New Zealand in May, served as instruments for promoting peace among peoples of different backgrounds

Indonesia, a heterogeneous country, was a firm believer in the merit of dialogue, and supported non-governmental organizations' efforts in promoting interreligious harmony, he said. Fully recognizing the role of education in promoting harmony, his Government sought to sensitize younger generations to the similarities among all religions and cultures. He supported recommendations for States to develop curricula that taught cultural and religious tolerance. Moreover, his country attached great importance to the role of media in nurturing social harmony, and agreed that media should be encouraged to support the global campaign to promote a culture of peace. He applauded practical actions, such as translating the shared values of peace, compassion and tolerance through education, culture and media. In that context, he supported the draft resolution and looked forward to its adoption by consensus.

CELESTINO MIGLIORE, Observer of the Holy See, said the United Nations was born out of the ashes of a world war during which untold outrages were committed against the dignity of the human person. As such, it was fitting that the opening lines of the United Nations Charter enshrined the immediate link between peace and a respect for fundamental human rights. The inseparability of that link was now accepted as self-evident, universal and inalienable. Human dignity required all persons to treat others as equals and the golden rule of "doing unto others what you want others to do unto you" carried the same principle of fundamental equality. At an international level, that common dignity determined the just measure of national interests which were interrelational and never absolute. The promotion and defence of national interests should never harm the legitimate interests of other States and should help promote the common good of all people. Respect for human dignity was the deepest ethical foundation in the search for peace and in the construction of international relations.

Laws contrary to human dignity should never be passed and overall progress should be measured by its compatibility with human dignity, he continued. The right to life at every stage, from conception to death, must be protected. It was within that context that issues such as the death penalty and the treatment of people during wars should be viewed. Even in the midst of war, the essential principles of humanity must be safeguarded and norms of conduct must be established to limit the damage and alleviate the suffering of victims of conflict. The right to religious freedom should also be protected and no person should be prevented from publicly exercising that right. When States imposed a single religion on everyone, or when secular systems denigrated religious beliefs, they

threatened that right and thus threatened peaceful coexistence.

He called on religions to work for peace and to foster reconciliation among people. "Faced with a world lacerated by conflict, religions must never become a vehicle of hatred, and never can they justify evil and violence invoking the name of God," he said. The United Nations should exercise leadership in the promotion of human rights, which flowed from the inalienable dignity of every human person.

The Assembly then postponed action on draft resolution A/62/L.6 to a later date.

(annex follows)

ANNEX

Vote on Ending Embargo against Cuba

The draft resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba (document A/62/L.1) was adopted by a recorded vote of 184 in favour to 4 against, with 1 abstention, as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau, United States.

Abstain: Federated States of Micronesia.

Absent: Albania, El Salvador, Iraq.

* * * * *

For information media • not an official record