Statement by
Mr. Amit Narang, Counsellor,
Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

on Agenda Item 40:
"Necessity Of Ending The Economic, Commercial And Financial Blockade Against Cuba"

69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York October 28, 2014
Mr. President,

India associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Bolivia on behalf of G-77 and also the statement made by the distinguished representative of Iran on behalf of NAM.

The five decade old economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba is the subject of discussion now for the 23rd time in succession in this Assembly.

In all these years, this Assembly has repeatedly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extra-territorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of the people the world over.

The General Assembly has also called upon all States, in conformity with their obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law, to refrain from promulgating and applying, as well as repeal and invalidate, laws and measures that have extra-territorial effects affecting the sovereignty of other States.

The continued existence of this embargo, in contravention of world opinion as expressed by this august House, undermines multilateralism and the credibility of the United Nations itself.

This embargo is a violation of the right of a sovereign state to development and to enjoy the freedom of trade, economy and navigation.

India strongly supports the unambiguous rejection by the international community of domestic laws having extra-territorial impact.

Mr. President,

Embargoes impede the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected country, in particular children and women.

They also hinder the full enjoyment of human rights, including the right to development, food, medical care and social services, among other things.

Mr. President,

The embargo, particularly through its extraterritorial effects, is adversely affecting the Cuban people and the development efforts of the country.
Although the US market represents the closest, most convenient and diversified trade area and, in a normal situation, Cuba and the United States would be natural economic partners, obtaining mutual benefits from trade, the experience has been exactly the opposite.

At a time of slow global recovery from the global financial crisis and overall deceleration of growth, the embargo has had a deleterious impact on the Cuban economy.

The denial to Cuba of access to US market, investment, technology, financial services and scientific, educational, cultural and sporting institutions has led to enormous consequences.

The Cuban economy has been forced to bear considerable extra cost for sourcing products, technology and services from third countries located thousands of kilometers away.

Moreover, the extra-territorial application of the US embargo has discouraged investment and technology transfer and suppressed other forms of business collaborations between Cuba and third countries.

The report of the Secretary General on the agenda item is illustrative of the detrimental impact the embargo has had on international efforts to undertake socio-economic advancement in Cuba.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean notes how the embargo seriously impairs the economic development of the island and inflicts grave harm on the Cuban population, including by curtailing the positive effects of measures recently implemented in Cuba in connection with its economic and social policy guidelines and the updating of its economic model.

The Commission has pointed out that the embargo forces Cuba to pay extra insurance and freight charges and more for foreign exchange transactions which also drives up credit risk premiums in trade with Cuba.

The Food and Agriculture Organization’s assessment that the embargo has very negative implications for Cuba’s supply of food and agriculture products and that it has a direct effect on the food security of the vulnerable segments of the population is a serious one.

In fact, as FAO attests in their submission, the embargo even affects the operation of entities and international organizations like FAO in Cuba, raising operation costs and costs of procurement of essential supplies and processing of financial transactions.

On the human side, the ILO has brought out how the restrictions imposed on the transfer of remittances from Cuban workers living in the United States limit available family income of their Cuban relatives at home.
The Office of the Resident Coordinator of the UN System for operational activities for development has documented what it calls the pervasive impact of the embargo on the social, economic and environmental dimensions of human development in Cuba, affecting the most vulnerable socioeconomic groups of the Cuban population in particular.

In today’s age of the internet, when the United Nations repeatedly emphasizes the catalytic role of Information and Communications Technologies, it is paradoxical that the embargo has contributed to significantly low level of internet penetration in Cuba, as the submission of UNCTAD notes.

In this context, and in spite of the difficult conditions imposed upon it, the human development achievements of Cuba, in particular its high HDI ranking and its achievement of several MDGs before time, is even more remarkable and commendable.

Mr. President,

The continued existence of this embargo and its devastating effects on a developing country is particularly incongruous in a year when the international community is getting together to chart a new collective vision for sustainable development under the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

India believes in the need to create and strengthen an enabling economic environment capable of providing equal opportunities to all countries.

Even more importantly, the international community also needs to re-double its efforts to promote an environment free from sanctions and embargoes.

Mr. President,

India joins other nations in calling for an immediate end to the US embargo against Cuba.

India supports the resolution moved by Cuba.

I thank you.

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