



**PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY E. COURTENAY RATTRAY
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**



***AGENDA ITEM 39: NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC,
COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO IMPOSED BY
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST CUBA***

**SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

26TH OCTOBER 2016

Mr. President,

It is a great privilege for me to address the General Assembly on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM aligns itself with the statements made by the Kingdom of Thailand on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the Dominican Republic on behalf of CELAC.

Mr. President,

For far too many years the United States has maintained an embargo on Cuba through various laws, regulations, and presidential proclamations. This pernicious embargo has restricted the ability of a proud, honourable, independent, talented and self-reliant people to conduct legitimate trade, travel, and to undertake international financial transactions.

The stated purpose of this all-encompassing economic, commercial and financial blockade was to bring about political change. However, all these years later we see that this desired outcome has failed, its sole result being the undue hardship that has been caused to the population of Cuba. We fully agree with President Obama's characterization of the embargo as "an outdated burden on the Cuban people", and appreciate his acknowledgement that "what the United States was doing was not working". Regrettably, however, his call upon his own Congress to lift the embargo has fallen on deaf ears.

Mr. President,

CARICOM and virtually the entire international community have consistently highlighted the fact that this unilateral, coercive and anachronistic measure is inconsistent with international law, transgresses fundamental humanitarian principles and contravenes the United Nations Charter and the norms governing peaceful relations between states. Last year during its landmark 70th session, this General Assembly voted for the 24th consecutive year, on the necessity of ending the embargo against Cuba. The near-unanimous vote of 191 countries in favour of the resolution reflected an overwhelming attestation of the international community's solidarity with the people of Cuba.

It is for this reason that CARICOM welcomes the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba, which was symbolized by President Obama's historic visit to Havana in March of this year and by the tangible action taken to reopen embassies in the respective countries. We applaud his recognition that the age-old blockade has been harmful to the Cuban people and salute President Obama's stated desire to "bury the last remnant of the Cold War in the Americas".

Mr. President,

CARICOM and Cuba have had a long and fruitful relationship that predates the embargo. Cuba is an important development partner for the Caribbean and our bonds of mutual respect, cooperation and cooperation are deeply valued and treasured.

We also enjoy friendly relations with the United States and cooperate by way of several bilateral and regional initiatives. For this reason, we believe that improved relations between Cuba and the US can only bode well for our nations. We therefore encourage both countries to continue to explore ways to increase the type of cooperation that was in evidence during the Ebola crisis in West Africa.

The renewal of relations between these two neighbours signals a new era of engagement for both countries. The Caribbean Community sees these developments as important first steps in our hemisphere's journey towards a destination that is enveloped in an environment of lasting peace and security and where development can flourish.

Mr. President,

CARICOM will once again unreservedly support the draft resolution on the *Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba*. It is our hope that this will be the final time that this Assembly will consider this agenda item. Indeed, we look forward to this becoming a reality in the very near future.

I thank you.