

Ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MACHARIA KAMAU AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON Agenda Item 41: “Necessity of ending the economic, Commercial and financial embargo imposed by The United States of America against Cuba”
25th OCTOBER 2011, NEW YORK

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group.

I wish to acknowledge the presence of H.E. Mr. Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

At the outset I would like to thank the Secretary General for his report on the agenda item “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.”

Over the years, the General Assembly, while deliberating this agenda item, has categorically and overwhelmingly rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extra-territorial impact. Africa shares the views expressed by the international community in its continued opposition to the sanctions and embargo against Cuba.

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 legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation.

Repeated calls by the international community to this effect remain unheeded. The sad and tragic decades old United States embargo on Cuba, including its extra-territorial aspects, continues to remain in force.

Mr. President,

In the report of the Secretary General of 16 August, 2011, the majority of UN member states including from the African continent and various UN entities categorically rejected the imposition of the embargo on Cuba and called for its lifting.

Given their proximity, Cuba and the United States of America should be natural partners in trade, commerce and investment. Given the large number of Americans of Cuban extraction, Cuba and the United States should also enjoy warm and fraternal relations in social and cultural

affairs among their populations. The potential for these economic, commercial and cultural ties between the two nations has, however, sadly remained unrealized.

Whatever the historical roots of this intergenerational embargo imposed on Cuba, surely the time has come that, in a globalized, interdependent world, nations ought to find the courage and the foresight and sense of global citizenry and leadership that would help drive the resolve to overcome differences and nurture co-existence in a manner that speaks to the high global ideas of the international community in the twenty first century.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to reiterate Africa's opposition to unilateral measures that impinge on the sovereignty of another country, including attempts to extend the application of a country's laws extra-territorially to other sovereign nations. The Heads of State and Government of the African Union meeting in July 2011, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, reiterated the AU summit's earlier call made to the Government of the United States of America to lift the long standing and unjustifiable economic and trade embargo imposed on Cuba, so as to allow it to enjoy all the legitimate prospects for its sustained development.

Africa once again calls for the complete and unequivocal lifting of sanctions and embargo against Cuba.

Thank you.