



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the United Nations

135 East 36th Street, New York, NY 10016

Tel: (212) 685-2003 . Fax: (212) 685- 1561 . E-mail: namibia@un.int

STATEMENT

BY

H.E. MR. NEVILLE GERTZE

AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

**72ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**AGENDA ITEM 42:
“THE NECESSITY OF ENDING THE ECONOMIC,
COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL EMBARGO
IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AGAINST CUBA”**

**NEW YORK
1 NOVEMBER 2017**

Mr. President,

1. My delegation aligns itself with the Statement delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Statement by the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the African Union, and the Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador on behalf of the G77 and China.
2. Namibia thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the present resolution.

Mr. President,

3. This year marks 55 years since the United States first implemented the blockade against Cuba. For 55 years, Cuba and the Cuban people have been victim of this unfair and unnecessary action. The economic, commercial and financial blockade is contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It violates the right to health and food; the right to education, sports and culture; and the right to development of the Cuban people. It also severely impacts the Cuban economy. It affects both foreign trade and investments, as well as the finances of the country. In the past year, as in previous years, the amount of income denied to the Cuban people and government from the export of goods and services remained the most impacted by the embargo.
4. As hurricane Irma tore through the Caribbean in early September, Cuba faced its first category 5 hurricane since 1937. Many homes were destroyed, the electrical grid severely damaged and the agricultural sector heavily impacted. Water services were also damaged. The economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba will severely impact the recovery of the island in the aftermath of this massive natural disaster. Surely, the natural humanitarian reaction should be to lift the embargo to allow the Cubans to rebuild their island.

Mr. President,

5. This time last year marked a historic day in the adoption of this resolution, with both the United States and Israel abstaining in their vote for the first time. Indeed, we were all encouraged by this forward movement, as well as the improved relations earlier in the year. Former President Obama recognized that the blockade was a failed and obsolete policy that should end, and prior to his departure he urged the U.S. Congress to end it.
6. We have been disheartened by the announcement on 17 June 2017 by President Trump of his new policy towards Cuba with the signing of the Directive entitled "National Security Presidential Memorandum on Strengthening the Policy of the United States toward Cuba". This Directive puts forward new measures to tighten the blockade against Cuba. It reverses the positive steps taken by the previous administration and marks a setback in the bilateral relations between the two nations.
7. We express our disappointment at these new and tightened measures taken by the Government of the United States. We urge the United States to reconsider these new measures.
8. We remain hopeful that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba will be fully lifted, that relations will improve and that the two countries will restore full economic activities to their mutual benefit

I thank you.

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