



PERMANENT MISSION OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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**STATEMENT BY
H.E. Mr. BRUNO RODRÍGUEZ PARRILLA,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CUBA, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY.**

NEW YORK, 22 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE 2016.

Mr. President;

Mr. Secretary-General;

Heads of State and Government;

Distinguished delegates;

Statistics could not be more eloquent. Eighty per cent of the world's population owns only 6 per cent of all the richness, while the 1 per cent richest enjoys half of the planet's patrimony.

No less than 795 million persons in the world suffer from chronic hunger and every day 18 000 children die of poverty. More than 660 million persons consume unsafe water and 780 million adults and 103 million youths are illiterate.

It is quite likely that they have never heard about the Millennium Development Goals; but if they had, they would hardly believe in the new Sustainable Development Goals.

The gap between our deliberations and peoples' realities persists. The lack of political will of industrialized States becomes evident. The irrational patterns of consumption and production of capitalism which lead to the destruction of the living conditions in the planet are replicated.

The huge nuclear and conventional stockpiles and the annual military budget of 1.7 trillion dollars give the lie to those who affirm that there are no resources to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment.

However, there are many arguments that justify the urgency of building a new international financial architecture.

Developed countries "welfare societies" are extinguishing; political systems are going through a crisis; pockets of poverty are expanding; brutal neoliberal adjustment programs are applied against workers, youths and migrants and dark neo-fascist forces are dangerously developing.

The philosophy of pillage supports the military interventions and non-conventional wars launched by NATO member countries against sovereign States with the purpose of changing governments and taking over their natural resources. The imposition of unilateral coercive measures; the use of financial, judicial, cultural and propaganda tools to destabilize governments; the militarization and aggressive use of cyberspace and the violation of the human rights of hundreds of millions of persons have become a regular feature.

The waves of refugees heading for Europe driven by underdevelopment as well as NATO interventions are an evidence of the cruelty, oppressive nature, inefficiency and unsustainability of the current international order. A solution based on the respect for the human rights and the dignity of persons, aimed at eradicating the root causes of the problem, is still not in sight.

The year 2015 was also the worst when it comes to climate change, for the world has witnessed the rise of global temperatures, the melting of the ice caskets, and the increase of sea levels and greenhouse gases emissions.

Under the present circumstances, we reiterate our solidarity with the Small Island Developing States, particularly in the Caribbean, which are the most affected by climate change, for which we demand a fair, special and differentiated treatment.

While we all expect to see some progress in the fulfillment by industrialized countries of the obligations entered into under the ambiguous Paris Agreement, only tangible data in the area of financing and the transfer of technology to developing countries could rekindle any hope for the survival of the human species.

Capitalism, however, will never be historically or environmentally sustainable.
Mr. President:

Peace and development are the *raison d'être* of the United Nations Organization. The creation of a culture of peace and justice as the basis of a new international order is an urgent and imperative need for the human species.

Any attempt to prolong the existence of a unipolar world through war, domination or hegemony would be suicidal.

The observance of the UN Charter and International Law, which are infringed upon time and time again by NATO, is indispensable for the peaceful coexistence among States.

The UN must be defended from unilateralism, and at the same time it needs to be reformed into a more democratic organization that is closer to the problems, needs and aspirations of peoples; capable of leading the international system towards peace, sustainable development and the respect of all human rights for all.

The reform of the Security Council, both in terms of its composition and working methods, is a task that should not be put off any longer. The strengthening of the General Assembly and the restoration of the functions that were usurped by the Security Council should guide our search for a more democratic and efficient organization.

It is imperative to find a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict that is inexorably based on the exercise, by the Palestinian people, of its right to build its own State within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Western Sahara situation requires an effort, in conformity with the United Nations resolutions, to guarantee the Saharan people's self-determination and its legitimate right to live in peace in its own territory.

Once again, we reiterate our confidence that the people of the Syrian Arab Republic will be able to settle its differences on its own, when the foreign intervention aimed at promoting a regime change ceases.

NATO's attempts to expand its presence closer to the Russian borders as well as the deployment of anti-missile systems are an incentive to the arms race and a threat to international peace and security. Likewise, we would like to express our opposition to the unjust and unilateral sanctions imposed against the Russian people, which are also harmful to Europe.

Cuba, which has been a victim of State terrorism, reiterates its strong condemnation to all forms and manifestations of terrorism.

Mr. President:

The "Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace" signed in Havana by the Heads of State and Government of our region in January, 2014, on the occasion of the Third Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), establishes principles and regulations for the coexistence, cooperation and respect among States which are indispensable for the materialization of the right to peace and are applicable to relations inside Our America and between this and the hemisphere and the world.

We welcome the historic "Agreement between the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP for the Termination of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace" which was reached in Havana on August 24 last. We will do our best, always at the request of the Parties, to support its implementation.

We will continue to support the people and the government of Venezuela, the civic and military unity and the constitutional President Nicolás Maduro in the defense of its sovereignty and self-determination, against the imperialist and oligarchic interference which attempts to destroy the Bolivarian and Chavista Revolution to take over Venezuela's oil reserves and reverse the enormous social achievements that have been attained.

We strongly condemn the parliamentary and judicial coup d'état perpetrated in Brazil against President Dilma Roussef and express our solidarity with her, the

Brazilian people, the Workers' Party and former President Luis Inazio Lula Da Silva.

We reiterate our conviction that the Puerto Rican people deserve to be free and independent, after being submitted to colonial domination for more than a century.

Despite our economic limitations and difficulties, we will not renounce any of our revolutionary and anti-imperialist principles; the defense of independence, social justice and people's rights nor our commitment to cooperate with those in greatest needs.

Cuban cooperation workers, who work in all continents, will continue to make their contribution, including the 46 000 who are currently working in 61 countries, struggling for the life and health of human beings.

The "Medical Parole Program for Cuban Health Professionals", which the US applies to pursue the political objective of hindering Cuba's medical cooperation and deprive the recipient countries from valuable and highly qualified human resources, is an unjust obstacle.

Mr. President:

A little more than a year has elapsed since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States and the re-opening of embassies in both countries.

Some progress has been achieved in our bilateral relations, particularly in diplomatic relations, dialogue and cooperation in areas of mutual interest, as has been evidenced by the high-level visits that have taken place and the dozen of agreements signed on subjects that could render benefits to both countries and also to the entire hemisphere.

However, the blockade is still in force; it continues to cause serious damages and hardships to the Cuban people; and continues to hinder the functioning of our economy and its relations with other countries.

The executive measures adopted by the US Government, although positive, are still insufficient.

The recent examples of the economic and financial damages caused by the blockade to Cuba and third countries are numerous. As long as this continues to happen, we will continue to present to this Assembly the draft Resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

We reiterate the Cuban Government's willingness to continue developing a respectful dialogue with the US Government, knowing that there is still a long way ahead in order to move towards the normalization of relations, which means to build a new model of bilateral relations in our common history, which could never be forgotten.

For this to be possible some day, it will be indispensable that the blockade is lifted. The territory illegally occupied by the US naval base in Guantánamo against Cuba's will, must be returned to our country.

Mr. President:

The Cuban people, even amidst the adverse conditions imposed by the current international situation and the persistence of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States, continues to be involved in the updating of the economic and social model it has decided to implement in a sovereign way in order to build a sovereign, independent, socialist, prosperous and sustainable nation.

Thank you, very much.