



DECLARATION "ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL BLOCKADE IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES AGAINST CUBA"

The Latin American Council of SELA, gathered in its Ministerial Session, in Caracas on 27 November 2015.

RECALLING,

The mandate given by the Member States of SELA to the Permanent Secretariat (Article 4, Decision No. 377) to submit an annual report on the application of the Helms-Burton Law and the economic sanctions of the United States of America against Cuba;

That the adverse effects of such sanctions of the United States not only affect one Member State of SELA, but also impose certain rules to the international community as regards economic relations with Cuba;

Decision No. 112 of the Latin American Council, "Imposition of Economic Measures of a Coercive Nature", as well as Decisions Nos. 356 and 360, which reject the implementation of unilateral measures that may affect the free development of international trade, in violation of international law and the most basic principles of regional coexistence;

Decisions Nos. 377, 390, 401, 421, 432, 438, 444, 453, 463, 477 and 482 of the Latin American Council, on the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba;"

The Declaration "Ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba," adopted by consensus by the Member States of SELA at the XXXV, XXXVI, XXXVII, XXXVIII, XXXIX and XL Regular Meetings of the Latin American Council (Caracas, 29 October 2009, 28 October 2010, 21 October 2011, 18 October 2012, 28 November 2013 and 28 November 2014, respectively);

The corresponding resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly over the past 24 years urging to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States of America against Cuba.

BEARING IN MIND,

The need to reaffirm, among other principles, the sovereign equality of the States, non-interference in the countries' internal affairs, and the freedom of trade and navigation, as established in numerous international legal instruments;

The declarations issued by Latin American and Caribbean Heads of State or Government at the Summits of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States concerning the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba;

The concern that laws and regulations, such as the "Helms-Burton Law," enacted on 12 March 1996, continue to be implemented by the Member States, and that their extraterritorial effects have an impact on the sovereignty of other States, the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction and the freedom of trade and navigation;

The declarations and resolutions arising from different intergovernmental forums, bodies and Governments that reflect the rejection by the international community and public opinion to the enactment and implementation of such measures;

The restoration of diplomatic relations between the Governments of Cuba and the United States of America;

The will expressed by the President of the United States of America to strive for the elimination of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba;

That during this year, harassment of international financial transactions in Cuba has been one the most significant features of the blockade. In addition to being the main obstacle to economic and social development of the country, the blockade is the most important obstacle to further expansion of Cuba's trade links with the world and seriously curbs international cooperation to and from the country;

That the economic damage caused to the Cuban people by the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba until April 2015, considering the U.S. dollar depreciation against the international price of gold, which is estimated at US\$ 833,755,000,000;

That the decision adopted by the current U.S. Government on 11 September 2015 to extend once again the Trading with the Enemy Act shows the U.S. government's determination to uphold one of the key elements of the legal framework on which the policy of blockade against Cuba is based;

That the analysis contained in the document drafted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA "Follow-up report on the application of the Helms Burton Law, 2014-2015" presents a detailed description of the impacts of the blockade on various economic sectors of the Republic of Cuba, as well as the extra-territorial nature of some of the measures and provisions adopted in this connection by the United States of America.

DECLARES:

1. The economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States of America against Cuba violates the International Law and is contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the rules of the international trade system and the freedom of navigation;
2. The Latin American Council strongly condemns the application of any law or measure contrary to the International Law, such as the Helms-Burton Law, and in this connection, it calls upon the Government of the United States to put an end to their implementation;
3. The Permanent Secretariat must continue to examine this issue of special relevance for the external relations of the region, in accordance with Decision N° 482, and keep the Latin American Council informed about its evolution, with a view to making a decision during the XLII Regular Meeting of 2016,
4. The Latin American Council makes a call to the Government of the United States so that it complies with the provisions of a number of consecutive Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade that it keeps in force against Cuba.