

MEMBER STATE COMMENTS ON THE UNFPA DRAFT COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT FOR CUBA

First regular session 2020

Comments by USA	UNFPA regional/country office response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page 2: The intensification of the six-decade long economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States continues to restrict access to international financial resources, acquisition of medicines, medical supplies and equipment, affecting the country's efforts to preserve the social indicators attained. <p>Comment: The claim that the U.S. embargo restricts Cuba's access to resources, medicine, and medical supplies is false. Cuba's economic and financial situation is the result of economic mismanagement on the part of the Cuban regime. Rather than focus on blaming the United States for its economic failures, the Cuban regime would do better to focus its efforts on much-needed reforms. While Cuba blames the United States for food and medicine shortages, under the regime's cumbersome and inept central planning system, annual outputs of basic crops such as sugar have fallen to rates not seen in decades. Since January 2018, the U.S. Department of Commerce has authorized over \$16 billion worth of exports to Cuba. Of this, Cuba only imported 3 percent of what was authorized; the decision whether to purchase the products is up to the Cuban government. Since 2001, the United States has exported \$6 billion worth of food and agricultural products to Cuba. Other goods authorized included medicines, medical devices, telecommunications equipment, consumer goods, and other items to support the Cuban people.</p>	Noted and transmitted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Page 6: Programme results may be affected by the intensification of the economic, commercial and financial blockade, aggravated by the limited opportunities to mobilize other resources. <p>Comment: Instead of blaming the U.S. embargo for any failure to achieve program results, the Cuban government would do better to focus its efforts on much-needed reforms. Actual exports from the United States to Cuba in 2018 exceeded US\$275 million (\$275,878,000) and have only increased in 2019. This year, U.S. exports to Cuba through September 2019 already exceed \$271 million (\$271,100,000).</p>	
<p align="center">Cuba's Response to the comments of the U.S. Delegation on the Country Programme Document for Cuba (2020-2024)</p>	UNFPA regional/country office response
<p>The comments of the Government of the United States on the Country Programme Document for Cuba 2020-2024 constitute a new manoeuvre to thwart international cooperation with Cuba. The United States persists in its objective to bring the Cuban people to their knees by causing hunger and despair and to destroy their political system, chosen in a sovereign manner.</p>	Noted.

Cuba does not hide the economic problems the country faces as a result, *inter alia*, of the deformations associated with development and centuries of deformations associated with underdevelopment and centuries of colonialism, neo-colonialism and unjust international economic relations.

Yet, the multimillion dollar economic damage accrued for nearly 60 years indicate that the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by Government of the United States against Cuba, without a shadow of a doubt, is the main obstacle to Cuba's economic and social development, as well as to the implementation of the National Economic Development Plan and, therefore, to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As a result of the blockade, Cuba must carry out its commercial operations under extremely disadvantageous conditions. Its financial transactions are persecuted with rage and those banks that conduct any type of transaction of funds related to our country are fined.

If Cuba has resisted, if our economy has overcome all these obstacles, it has been due to the heroic resistance of the Cuban people.

In order to achieve the development goals that we have set ourselves, the lifting of the blockade would represent a relief that would allow the Cuban economy and people to fully develop their capacities under normal conditions.

With the foregone income from exports of goods and services and the costs associated with the geographical relocation of the trade, which forces us to have very high inventories in place, GDP would have soared up, at current prices in the last decade, at an average annual rate of about 10%.

On the impacts of the blockade on Cuba's access to international financial sources and markets:

- It is cynical and ironical that the Government of the United States asserts that the blockade does not affect Cuba's access to international sources of financing.
- The U.S. economic siege is the main hindrance for Cuba to obtain international credits, due to the impossibility of using the U.S. dollar in its transactions, the deterrent effect of the numberless sanctions and threats of retaliation against financial institutions, and the resulting increase in the country risk factor.
- The deceitful and false arguments of the United States Government are based on the strategy of making the Blockade be viewed as a strictly bilateral issue. However, during Donald Trump's administration alone, more than a hundred events have been recorded that constitute flagrant extraterritorial applications of the blockade and that have added extraordinary difficulties to our international financial and commercial activity.

• Cuba's commercial and financial operations are subject to constant and thorough persecution, by legislative mandate, specifically the 1996 Helms-Burton Act. The refusal of banks to conduct transactions with Cuba, the closing of our accounts in third countries and the termination of contracts reflect the extraterritoriality and the deterrence that the policy of the blockade generates.

• Recently, the United States has launched an extensive persecution and imposed sanctions against more than 60 vessels and companies involved in the shipment of fuel to Cuba. Based on unfounded pretexts, the U.S. Government has tightened these economic sanctions with the open purpose of damaging our economy. It is evident that the blockade remains the main hindrance to Cuba's economic development, which has an impact on all spheres of society.

On the alleged exports of authorized goods from the United States to Cuba:

• U.S. regulations and laws (such as the 1963 Department of the Treasury Cuban Assets Control Regulations, the 1979 Export Administration Act, and the 2000 Trade Sanctions Reform and Exports Enhancement Act, among others), determine that the import into Cuba of authorized products from the United States is subject to discriminatory conditions that are not applied to any other country in the world.

• According to the complex regulatory framework of the blockade, Cuba is forced to pay in advance, i.e. the amount must be received by the supplier even before the goods are shipped. Additionally, payment must be made in cash and there is no possibility of accessing credits. All these are conditions, which are impossible to meet as a whole for a small developing country like ours.

• These obstacles hinder and sometimes prevent the realization of projects that have the noble purpose of contributing to the objectives of UN agencies and programs, such as UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.