

## **India opposes unilateral embargoes, joins call to lift Cuba sanctions**

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**United Nations:** India reiterated its unambiguous opposition to unilateral embargoes imposed by countries through their domestic laws as New Delhi voted on Tuesday for a resolution calling for an end to the United States embargo against Cuba.

The vote on the General Assembly resolution completely isolated the US with all its allies, except Israel, abandoning it. Of the 193 members of the UN, the other 191 voted for the resolution. Even though Washington resumed diplomatic relations with Cuba this year it left embargo in place and this was the 24th time the General Assembly passed such a resolution.

India "has consistently rejected the imposition of laws and regulations with extra-territorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures that hurt the progress and prosperity of the people the world over," India's Permanent Representative Asoke Kumar Mukerji told the General Assembly.

"The continued existence of this embargo, in contravention of world opinion," he added, "undermines multilateralism and the credibility of the United Nations itself."

Embargoes impacted the human rights of people as it affected their right to development, food and medical care, hitting women and children the hardest, he said.

Mukerji praised Cuba for its "notable socio-economic and developmental achievements of the Cuban people, in particular the high HDI (human development index) ranking of Cuba and its achievement of several MDGs (Millennium Development Goals)" before the deadlines despite the embargo.

The US Senior Area Advisor for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Ronald D Godard, pointed to the "historic measures" undertaken by the Obama administration to normalise relations with Cuba and said it was "unfortunate" that Havana had persisted in bringing the resolution again this year.

Obama has called on Congress to lift the embargo as soon as possible and has taken executive action to facilitate many transactions involving Cuba, he said.

"We do not expect Cuba or the United States to forget the past overnight," he added. "We realise that fully normalising our bilateral relationship will require years of persistence and dedication on both sides."

Although the Cuban embargo, first imposed in 1960 and further tightened by Congressional action in the 1990s, was the direct target of the resolution, the General Assembly used it to call for an end to all unilateral sanctions, a sentiment that India strongly associated itself with.

The resolution asked all nations not to impose such sanctions and to lift any that are in place. Such embargoes are seen as violations of the UN Charter and international law provisions for the freedom of trade and navigation.

Under the UN Charter only the Security Council can impose such sanctions as it has in the case of Iran.

- PTI