**Updated addendum to the Secretary General´s Report (A/75/81) on resolution 74/7 of the United Nations General Assembly entitled, “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba"**

This addendum contains an update on the impacts caused by the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America (USA) against Cuba, and basically covers the period from April to December 2020.

During this time frame, the blockade continued to be the centerpiece of the US government´s policy in relation to Cuba, which was tightened in an opportunistic manner, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the course of this year, this system of unilateral coercive measures has remained intact, with severe impacts on the national efforts to contain the pandemic and mitigate the economic and social effects stemming from it.

For 60 years, Cuba has lived under the siege of a virus as ferocious as the one whipping mankind today. In its six decades of application, the blockade has been reinforced in times of increased vulnerability for the Cuban people. To intensify it under the current circumstances, forces our country to fight against the most terrible pandemic in decades and against the lengthiest and all-embracing system of coercive measures ever. There is no justification for such gargantuan cruelty.

The U.S. government identified in the crisis triggered by the COVID-19 an ally for its hostile policy against Cuba. The malicious intention to toughen the blockade at this juncture reveals its particular inhumane aspect and the marked interest in taking advantage of the economic downturn that accompanies the pandemic to promote social unrest and bring the Cuban people to their knees through hunger, shortages and deprivations.

The blockade is real and is the main hindrance to move forward in the quest for the prosperity and well-being of the Cuban population. To ignore its existence would not only mean a denial of the truth, but also an insult to a people who have known no other paradigm of development than the one marked by the cruelest blockade ever imposed against any country.

At current prices, the accumulated damages in almost six decades of application of this policy amount to over **147.8 billion dollars**. Taking into account the depreciation of the dollar against the price of gold in the international market, the blockade has caused quantifiable damages of more than **1.3 trillion dollars**. Between April and December 2020 alone, such policy brought about more than **3.5 billion dollars in losses** for Cuba, which amounts to a total of more than **9.1 billion dollars**, if the previous period from April 2019 to December 2020, is examined.

The psychological impact inflicted by such impacts within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic far exceeds any figure. It is not possible to quantify the distress of a Cuban who cannot have access to a specific medication because a U.S. institution refused or was banned from sending the necessary supplies for its production. It is not possible to calculate the impotence caused by the impossibility of finalizing donations and purchases made abroad to face the pandemic because the companies involved in their transportation have a U.S. company as shareholder and fear being subject to punitive measures. There is no method to quantify the risk involved in making a food import transaction which could be frozen or rejected by a foreign entity that does not want to be subject to multi- million dollar fines for not abiding by the arbitrary U.S. laws. There is no way to justify the desperation of an engineer who cannot procure the necessary software for his professional activity.

During Donald Trump's administration, 243 unilateral coercive measures were imposed against Cuba; out of those, 55 in 2020 alone, which stood out for their systematicity and intentionality. The dissuasive and intimidating effects associated with the inclusion of Cuba on the List of State Sponsors of Terrorism in January 2021, add up to this coercive system. This unilateral and politically motivated step increases the country's challenges to integrate into the international trade with current and potential partners, conduct financial operations and purchase basic supplies. It constitutes a significant stumbling block to adequately address the economic and health repercussions of the pandemic and a reprehensible affront to a country that has been a victim of the terrorism financed, organized and perpetrated for the most part, from the United States.

From April to December 2020, the U.S. government deliberately blocked the import of supplies needed to tackle COVID-19. This was evidenced, for example, on November 18, when the Department of Transportation denied, following orders from the State Department, a request by IBC AIRWAYS, INC. and SKYWAY ENTERPRISES, INC. to operate flights to Cuba with humanitarian cargo.

The extraterritorial application of the blockade has continued to stymie Cuba's access to medical technologies containing more than 10 percent US-origin parts and components, as well as the procurement of more than 30 products and supplies which are urgently needed for the COVID-19 prevention and treatment protocols.

This policy prevents Cuba from accessing faster and more expeditious logistical transportation routes, which forces Cuba to move cargo containing medical supplies through several countries at an additional increased cost. In addition, there is the growing refusal of financial and banking institutions in various countries to conduct transactions with Cuba, which has hampered the timely conduct of financial transactions with the suppliers of the purchased materials, as well as the acquirement of donations offered by various organizations to fight the pandemic.

The case of the SARTORIOUS and Merck German companies stands out, as well as that of Cytiva and other regular providers of laboratory material, reagents and supplies, which, due to the tightening of the blockade stopped their shipments to Cuba in 2020. During the period, the country was unable to access a total of 32 equipment and supplies related to the production of vaccine candidates against the COVID-19 pandemic or to the implementation of stages that allow the completion of the vaccine´s clinical studies, including equipment for the purification of the vaccine candidates, accessories for production equipment, filtration tanks and capsules, potassium chloride solution, thimerosal, bags and reagents.

Cuba had to resort to other providers as intermediaries, which entailed a price increase that ranged from 50 to 65 percent of the historically established price, given the impossibility to directly enter into a contract with the manufacturer.

This impacted on the work of several institutions of Cuba's biopharmaceutical industry, including the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the Finlay Vaccine Institute, the AICA Laboratories Company, and the Farmacuba Import-Export Company, which are directly linked to the country's efforts to confront the pandemic.

As a result, the impact on the health sector amounted to US$ **198.3 million dollars** between April and December 2020. This figure, although comprising a shorter period of time (only 9 months), exceeds the figure reported between April 2019 and March 2020 by 38 million.

The continuation of the smear campaign against the medical cooperation Cuba offers was particularly perverse and immoral in this context. Limiting the possibility that third countries could benefit from pharmaceutical, biotechnological products and treatments developed in Cuba is inhumane and contrary to the calls of hundreds of U.S. institutions and personalities who advocated in 2020 for scientific exchanges with Cuba. Those who try to tarnish the work of over 400,000 health professionals who, in 56 years, have carried out missions in 164 nations, inescapably collide with the weight of truth and with the indelible footprint that the 57 Cuban medical brigades have left in 40 countries and territories in their fight against COVID-19.

Access to health is a human right. Despite its unquestionable and overwhelming impact, the U.S. blockade has not been able to crack the foundations of the national health system built in Cuba, which is of quality, universal and free of charge. The country has guaranteed the protocols to treat COVID-19 infected and suspected cases, the free PCR tests, and the start-up of molecular biology laboratories in all the provinces as well as the development of its own mechanical ventilator prototypes. Today, the nation carries in its five vaccine candidates the strength of a country that does not forget its history. There is no blockade capable of overshadowing these achievements. The truth is with us; these are facts, not words.

Between April and December 2020, the impacts on production and services in the agricultural and livestock sector, the hurdles in monetary-financial operations, the additional costs owing to the geographic relocation of trade and other obstacles to procure technologies and fuels, had a serious effect on the production and purchase of food in Cuba, resulting in damages to the tune of **330.4 million dollars**.

During this period, under artificial pretexts and in order to intensify the siege on the Cuban entrepreneurial system, the U.S. Department of State expanded the "Cuba List of Restricted Entities" on several occasions, with which individuals subject to U.S. jurisdiction are banned from carrying out operations. To date, the list includes 231 companies, mostly linked to the country's retail trade network, the supply system of the most important resources for the economy and the population, all the hotel facilities of the nation and several institutions in the financial sector.

The inclusion of FINCIMEX and American International Services (AIS) in June and September 2020, respectively, and the impossibility of processing remittances through them, eliminated the main formal channels to send remittances. The effects of this announcement, combined with the restrictions previously adopted, served as the finishing stroke to impose greater difficulties on the links between Cuban families in both countries, already severely battered by COVID-19.

Travel was also a repeated target of attacks during this period. In addition to the measures adopted in recent years, private charter flights were suspended throughout the country, except to Havana, whose frequencies were also limited. Similarly, the authorization for persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction to attend or organize professional meetings or conferences in Cuba was removed, as well as the carrying out of negotiations related to public performances, clinics, workshops, exhibitions, sports competitions and other types of events. Consequently, restrictions in these areas, which had been an example of respectful and productive relations between the two countries, were reinforced.

The ban on the arrival of U.S. cruise ships to Cuba since 2019, the restrictions on flights, the elimination of fast-track channels for sending remittances, the suspension of the family reunification program, as well as the suspension of consular services in the national territory and their processing in third countries, have primarily impacted the Cuban people.

In particular, the damage of these measures on the non-state sector has been noticeable. A large number of transport carriers, home renters, craftsmen, and food service workers, among others, have not only seen their incomes affected, but also their possibilities of accessing financing and material supplies to sustain their economic activity, which in 2020 comprised 13 percent of the working population (600 thousand people).

At present, 34 legal proceedings are still under way pursuant to Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, based on the questioning of the legitimate nationalization process carried out by the Cuban government in the 1960s. The activation of this Title seeks to attack from all possible fronts the country´s genuine economic relations, planting the seeds of distrust in the international business community regarding its relations with Cuba. This Law also embodies the genesis of the political subversion program financed by the U.S. government against our country.

In recent years, the financial persecution has turned into a ruthless hunt, damaging our transactions with third countries, our ability to pay and collect payments and the possibility of accessing credits. Only between April and December 2020, the monetary-financial impacts reached 404.2 million dollars, a figure that represents an increase by 42 percent with respect to the one reported in the period April 2019-March 2020.

In particular, the imposition of coercive measures by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Treasury Department on the U.S. and third country entities for alleged violations of the embargo has continued. Between 2017 and 2020, the total amount of these penalties amounted to over **3.7 billion dollars**.

Another significantly impacted sector has been the telecommunications sector. The modifications to the "Export Control Regulations" by virtue of the designation of Cuba as a "foreign adversary" by the Department of Commerce in 2020, brought about the tightening of the controls on the export of technologies associated with this sector. These obstacles, together with those imposed in the last four years, restrict the flow of information and the large-scale access to Internet in Cuba, make connectivity more difficult and expensive and make conditional the entry of Cuban users to various virtual platforms. The impact of the blockade in this area has stymied previously established agreements, such as the underwater cable capacity rental project between ETECSA and the company CABLE & WIRELESS NETWORKS. The latter applied for the required license from the U.S. Federal Communications Commission in September 2018, and in October 2020 withdrew that application, given that it had not yet been considered.

The cancellation of Cuban media accounts in various digital sites has also been recurring. In August 2020, when Cuba was about to announce its first vaccine candidate against the COVID-19, Google censored the YouTube profiles of Granma, Mesa Redonda and Cubavisión Internacional media, claiming alleged violations of U.S. export laws.

During the pandemic, offers for the development of distance learning courses and the participation in online events have been declined, due to the fact that several videoconference platforms are blocked for our country, such as Cisco, Webex and Zoom. The above has also thwarted Cuba's presence in virtual meetings convened by international organizations, including the United Nations system.

In the midst of this whirlwind of measures, Cuba has not been alone. The Cuban flag has flapped in the caravans that, in more than 50 cities around the world, some of them in the United States, have built bridges for the international call to put an end to the blockade and for the call to the current President Joe Biden to reverse the measures of his predecessor.

Like the virus that causes this pandemic, the blockade separates, strangles and harasses. Overcoming the difficulties deriving from it has not been an easy task. This has been an endeavor in which the leading role has been played by the resistance of the Cuban people and their unwavering determination to defend their free, sovereign and independent motherland. Every Cuban man and woman inside and outside the country has experienced in their own flesh the unjust and disproportionate viciousness of the government of a nation that does not conceive the idea of an alternative model under its own nose.

Our government has ratified its willingness to establish a respectful dialogue with the United States, without making concessions inherent to its sovereignty and independence and without ignoring the indubitable role of the blockade as the main obstacle to a lasting and sustained development of bilateral relations.

Cuba and the world will once again speak out against this policy on June 23 at the United Nations General Assembly. Its lifting would be consistent with the call of almost the entire international community which has voted in a consecutive manner at this forum for the elimination of the blockade, and would listen to the voices that, within the U.S., also urge upon the end of this failed and antiquated policy.