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**Communication from the  
Government of Cuba**

The Executive Director presents his compliments and, for the information of Members, attaches a communication from the Government of Cuba which they have requested we circulate to you.

## Introduction

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This report covers the period from April 2019 to March 2020, marked by a serious setback in the bilateral relations between Cuba and the United States and a progressive tightening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade.

During this period, the numerous regulations and provisions issued by the U.S. government against Cuba reached unprecedented levels of hostility. The possibility of establishing lawsuits under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act; the increased persecution of Cuba's financial and commercial transactions; the ban on flights from the U.S. to all Cuban provinces, except Havana; the persecution and intimidation of companies that send fuel supplies to Cuba; and the campaign to discredit Cuban medical cooperation programs, are some of the most distinctive examples.

During this period, and contrary to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 74/7 and many previous ones, there were around 90 coercive economic actions and measures imposed by the United States Government against Cuba, with the intention of intervening in the country's internal affairs and in clear violation of the freedom of international trade and navigation. Of this total, about half were concrete actions of blockade, which included fines and other types of sanctions against U.S. or third country entities, insertion of Cuban companies in unilateral lists, extension of laws and proclamations on the blockade, announcements related to the implementation of Titles III and IV of the Helms-Burton Act and regulatory changes. Another group of measures evidenced the extraterritorial implementation of the blockade or corresponded to State Department decisions against our country.

Particularly alarming are the five packages of measures adopted in 2019 to monitor and impose punitive measures against companies, ships and shipping companies that transport fuel to Cuba. In this regard, illegitimate sanctions were imposed against 27 companies, 54 vessels and 3 individuals linked to the sector, none of them of U.S. origin, or subject to the jurisdiction of that country. These aggressive actions by the U.S. government are a qualitative leap in the intensification and implementation of non-conventional measures in times of peace. This is a new open and brutal violation of the rules and principles on which the system of international relations is based, including international trade rules. The United States Government has dedicated itself to threatening and blackmailing the companies that supply fuel to Cuba, and those that engage in its international transport, without having any legal or moral authority to do so.

All these measures have a strong impact on Cuba's economic activities, particularly those related to foreign trade operations and foreign investments. This situation has forced Cuba to adopt temporary emergency measures, which are only possible in an organized country with a united and supportive population, ready to defend itself from foreign aggression and to preserve the social justice achieved. The actions undertaken are aimed at boosting the Cuban economy and mitigating the effects of

the blockade. These include more than twenty provisions aimed at strengthening the socialist state enterprise.

No citizen or sector of the Cuban economy escapes the effects of the blockade, which hinders the development that any country has the right to build in a sovereign manner. That is why this unilateral policy is the main obstacle to the implementation of Cuba's National Economic and Social Development Plan until 2030 (PNDES, in its Spanish acronym), as well as to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

For Cubans living abroad, the blockade regulations are also daily obstacles. They are prevented from opening bank accounts, using certain credit cards or carrying out normal transactions, just because they have Cuban nationality.

As part of its aggressive escalation, the U.S. government also put strong pressure on a group of countries, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the aim of dismembering the support for the draft resolution against the blockade submitted by Cuba to the United Nations General Assembly on 6 and 7 November 2019. Despite these maneuvers and blackmail, the voting demonstrated, once again, the overwhelming support of the international community for the Cuban cause.

The blockade constitutes a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cubans. Because of its express purpose and the political, legal and administrative scaffolding on which it is based, it qualifies as an act of genocide under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

From April 2019 to March 2020, the blockade has caused losses to Cuba by an estimated **USD 5,570,300,000**. This accounts for an increase of about USD 1,226 billion over the previous period. For the first time, the total amount of damages caused by this policy in one year exceeds the barrier of five billion dollars, which illustrates the extent to which the blockade has intensified at this stage. The damage calculated does not take into account the actions of the U.S. government in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, because it exceeds the end of the period under review.

At current prices, the accumulated damage over almost six decades of implementation of this policy amounts to **USD 144,413,400,000**. Taking into account the depreciation of the dollar against the value of gold on the international market, the blockade has caused quantifiable damages of over **USD 1,098,008,000,000**. This value represents a growth of 19 percent over the previous period, as a result of the increase in the price of gold by 18.3 percent.

In this context, the scourge of a global pandemic such as the COVID-19 has posed significant challenges for Cuba, and the country's efforts to combat it have been significantly limited by the regulations of the U.S. blockade. The genocidal nature of

this policy has been reinforced in the midst of the confrontation with the new coronavirus, since the U.S. government has used it, and in particular its extraterritorial component, to deliberately deprive the Cuban people of mechanical ventilators, masks, diagnostic kits, protective glasses, suits, gloves, reagents and other inputs necessary for the management of this disease. The availability of these resources can make the difference between life and death for patients who are carriers of the virus, as well as for the health personnel who care for them.

This has not been enough for the U.S. government, which has also launched a crusade to try to discredit and hinder the international medical cooperation that Cuba offers, spreading slanders and going so far as to require other countries to refrain from requesting it, even in the midst of the health emergency created by COVID-19 in the world.

Despite its actions, the U.S. government has not been able to prevent that until July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, more than 3 thousand Cuban collaborators, organized in 38 medical brigades, contribute to the fight against this pandemic in 28 countries and 3 non-autonomous territories. These efforts have also been joined by the more than 28 thousand Cuban health professionals who were already providing their services in 59 nations before COVID-19.

In addition to the above actions, the terrorist attack perpetrated against the Cuban Embassy in the United States on April 30, 2020, is also a case in point. The complicit silence of the U.S. government and its inability to denounce or make a public statement about this terrorist act is evidence of its commitment to inciting violence and messages of hatred against Cuba and its nationals, a conduct that encourages the execution of acts of this nature. The political passivity of the U.S. government in the face of an assault rifle attack on a diplomatic mission in the country's capital calls into question the fulfillment of its obligations under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

On May 12, 2020, the U.S. Department of State notified Congress of its decision to list a group of countries, including Cuba, among those certified under Section 40A (a) of the Arms Export Control Act as "countries not fully cooperating" with U.S. anti-terrorism efforts during 2019. With this action, the U.S. government intends to hide its record of state terrorism against Cuba, which has been a permanent instrument of its aggressive policy towards the island.

In the current situation, in which humanity is facing an economic and social crisis accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic, whose dimensions nobody is able to predict with certainty, it is more necessary than ever that the international community demands the lifting of the blockade imposed by the government of the United States against Cuba, which constitutes the most complex and prolonged system of unilateral coercive measures ever imposed against any country.

# 1. Continuity and intensification of the blockade policy

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## 1.1 Blockade laws in force

The successive measures implemented against Cuba and the repeated amendments to the Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR) applied by the U.S. government during the period covered by this report, confirm the validity of the laws and regulations which support the blockade policy. U.S. state and government agencies, including the U.S. Departments of the Treasury and Commerce, strictly apply the legislation of Congress and administrative provisions that establish the blockade policy. The main ones are set out below:

- Section 5(b) of the *Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 (TWEA)* delegated the possibility of applying economic sanctions on the chief executive in times of war or in any other time of national emergency and it prohibited trade with the enemy or allies of the enemy during wartime. In 1977, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act restricted the powers of the President to impose new sanctions in times of national emergency situations. Nevertheless, the TWEA continued to be applied to Cuba and successive United States presidents have extended its implementation. Under this legislation, the oldest of its type, the U.S. adopted the Cuban Assets Control Regulations (CACR) in 1963. Cuba is the only country affected by this legislation. In 2017, 2018 and 2019, President Trump renewed the sanctions against Cuba under this law.
- The *Foreign Assistance Act (1961)* authorizes the President of the United States to establish and maintain a total “embargo” on trade with Cuba and prohibits the authorization of any aid to the Cuban government. It establishes that the U.S. government funds destined for international aid and sent to international organizations may not be used for programs related to Cuba. It prohibits granting any aid under this act or any other benefit covered by any other law to Cuba until the President should determine that Cuba has carried out actions directed towards returning to U.S. citizens and companies not less than 50% of the value or just compensation for the properties nationalized by the Cuban government after the triumph of the Revolution.
- *Presidential Proclamation 3447*, issued on February 3, 1962 by President John F. Kennedy, decreed a total “embargo” of trade between the U.S. and Cuba in compliance of with Section 620 (a) of the Foreign Assistance Act.
- *Cuban Assets Control Regulations of the Department of the Treasury (1963)* stipulated the freezing of all Cuban assets in the U.S., the prohibition of all

financial and commercial transactions unless they should be approved by a license, the prohibition of Cuban exports to the U.S., the prohibition of any natural person or legal entity in the U.S. or third countries from carrying out transactions in U.S. dollars with Cuba, etc.

- *Export Administration Act (1979)*, in its Section 2401 (b) (1) “National Security Controls”, “Policy Toward Individual Countries”, established the Trade Control List in which the U.S. President maintains a number of countries for which special export controls could be set up due to national security considerations. Cuba is included on this list.
- *Export Administration Regulations (EAR, 1979)* established the basis for the general control of export items and goods, in agreement with the sanctions imposed by the U.S. government.
- The *Cuban Democracy Act or Torricelli Act (1992)* prohibits subsidiaries of U.S. companies in third countries from trading in goods with Cuba or Cuban nationals. It prohibits third country ships landing in any Cuban port from entering U.S. territory for 180 days, other than those having license from the Secretary of the Treasury.
- The *Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act or Helms-Burton Act (1996)* codifies the provisions of the blockade and extends its extraterritorial scope, by imposing sanctions on directors of foreign companies who carry out transactions with U.S. properties nationalized in Cuba and the possibility of filing lawsuits in U.S. courts. It likewise limited the President’s prerogatives to suspend the blockade. For the first time in history, on May 2, 2019 the U.S. government announced that it would allow lawsuits to be filed in U.S. courts under this legislation.
- *Section 211 of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for the 1999 fiscal year* prohibited the acknowledgement by U.S. courts of the rights of Cuban companies to trademarks associated with nationalized properties.
- The *Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act (2000)* authorized the export of agricultural products to Cuba on the condition of cash payment, in advance and without U.S. financing. It prohibited travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens for tourism purposes, defining “tourism” as any activity related to travel to, from, or inside Cuba that would not be expressly authorized in section 515.560 of Title 31 of the Federal Regulations Code. It limits travel to the 12 categories authorized at the time this legislation was passed.

## **1.2 Principal blockade measures applied from April 2019 to March 2020**

From April 2019 to March 2020 the U.S. Departments of the Treasury and Commerce, in agreement with the policy of hostility proclaimed by Donald Trump government, introduced regulatory changes under the laws of the blockade against Cuba. In addition to the effects of these modifications, mainly in the travel and finance sectors, mechanisms were introduced to persecute Cuba's operations in third countries, which bring about a highly dissuasive and intimidating effect on foreign counterparts, with the consequent damage to the Cuban economy.

During the period covered by this report, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed 12 penalties on U.S. and third-country entities for violating the Cuban Assets Control Regulations. The amount of these penalties exceeded USD 2,403,985,125.

The main blockade actions recorded during the period under review are set out below:

**On April 5, 2019**, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Department of the Treasury included 34 vessels owned by the Venezuelan oil company PDVSA, as well as two other foreign companies, on its list of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) for sending crude oil to Cuba.

**On April 9, 2019**, the OFAC imposed a sanction to the Standard Chartered Bank, a British-based entity in the banking-financial sector. This bank had to pay USD 639,023,750 for apparent violations of the Cuban Assets Control Regulations and other sanctions programs.

**On April 11, 2019**, the OFAC imposed sanctions on the British-based oil sector companies, 2H OFFSHORE and ACTEON GROUP Ltd., for violations of the Cuban Assets Control Regulations. The amount to be paid by both entities was USD 227,500 and USD 213,866, respectively.

**On April 12, 2019**, the OFAC penalized 4 companies and 9 vessels operating in the Venezuelan oil sector, some of which would have transported oil to Cuba.

**On April 15, 2019**, the OFAC imposed penalties on the financial banking sector companies UniCredit Bank AG (Germany), UniCredit Bank Austria (Austria) and UniCredit Bank SpA (Italy), for a total of USD 1,300,000,000. These institutions allegedly made bank transfers in violation of the Cuban Assets Control Regulations.

**On April 17, 2019**, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the total activation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act as of May 2, 2019. This opened up the possibility of taking action in U.S. courts for any court cases filed against foreign investors and those who maintain commercial relations with Cuba under this law.

**On April 24, 2019**, the Department of State updated the List of Restricted Cuban Entities, by including 5 new entities, for a total of 216. In July, a new update of this list was announced, with the addition of 2 new entities, for a total of 218. The list was updated for the third time on November 15, 2019, with the addition of 5 new entities, for a total of 223.

**On June 4, 2019**, the OFAC and the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) of the Department of Commerce announced regulatory changes in the policy towards Cuba, mainly aimed at the travel sector. The measures included the elimination of “people to people” travel and the implementation of a policy of denying licenses for passenger transport (cruises), recreational vessels and private aircraft. It was also provided that U.S. travellers arriving in Cuba under any of the 12 authorized categories may not conduct direct financial transactions with companies included on the List of Restricted Cuban Entities.

**On June 13, 2019**, the OFAC imposed penalties on the U.S. companies EXPEDIA GROUP INC., HOTELBEDS U.S.A INC. and CUBASPHERE INC. for violations of the Cuban Assets Control Regulations. All three penalties corresponded to transactions related to travel or travel services to Cuba.

**On July 3, 2019**, the Department of the Treasury included the company CUBAMETALES on the List of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN), in view of the involvement of the Cuban entity in oil import activities from Venezuela.

**On September 6, 2019**, the OFAC updated the Regulations for the Control of Cuban Assets by imposing a limit of up to one thousand dollars per quarter on family remittances, eliminating donor remittances (non-family) and suspending transfers related to Cuba that originate and are destined outside the United States. (U-Turn transactions).

**On September 13, 2019**, President Donald Trump extended the validity of the Trading with the Enemy Act for another year in the case of Cuba.

**On September 17, 2019**, the OFAC included 3 individuals (2 Colombian and 1 Italian) and 17 companies (12 based in Colombia, 4 in Panama and 1 in Italy) on the List of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN), alleging that they were involved in the transport of oil to Cuba.

**On September 24, 2019**, the OFAC included 4 companies (3 Panamanian and 1 Cypriot) and 4 vessels related to the transport of Venezuelan oil to Cuba on the List of Specially Designated Nationals.

**On October 1, 2019**, the OFAC imposed a penalty of USD 2,718,581 on the company GENERAL ELECTRIC (GE), based in Boston, Massachusetts, for apparent violations of the Cuban Assets Control Regulations.

**On October 18, 2019**, the Bureau of Industry and Security of the Department of Commerce announced amendments to the Export Administration Regulations (EAR). The new measures included a general policy of denying licenses for the leasing of aircraft to Cuban state-owned airlines; preventing the re-export to Cuba of foreign items containing more than 10 percent U.S. components; revising the Licensing Exception “Support for the Cuban People” so that certain donations cannot be made to the government of Cuba and the Cuban Communist Party; eliminating the authorization for the export of promotional items that “generally benefit the government of Cuba”, as well as new restrictions on the export of telecommunications-related goods.

**On October 25, 2019**, the Department of Transportation announced the suspension of all U.S. airline flights from the U.S. to Cuba, with the exception of those to Havana's José Martí International Airport. With this measure, which came into effect on 10 December, all U.S. flights to nine Cuban airfields were suspended.

**In October 2019**, the most important leaders of the Spanish hotel chain MELIÁ HOTELS INTERNATIONAL S.A., including its Chief Executive Officer, received notifications from the State Department informing them of the ban on entry to the United States, as a result of the application of Title IV of the Helms-Burton Act.

**On November 26, 2019**, the OFAC announced the inclusion of the Cuban company Corporación Panamericana S.A. on the List of Specially Designated Nationals.

**On December 3, 2019**, the OFAC issued an official communication announcing the inclusion of 6 vessels (one with Panamanian flag and the other Venezuelan) in the List of Specially Designated Nationals for transporting crude oil to Cuba.

**On December 9, 2019**, the OFAC announced the application of coercive measures against the companies ALLIANZ GLOBAL RISKS U.S. INSURANCE COMPANY, based in the United States, and CHUBB LIMITED, based in Switzerland, for the amount of USD 170,535 and USD 66,212, respectively. The measures were due to apparent violations of the Regulations for the Control of Cuban Assets, for carrying out transactions and other operations related to travel insurance to Cuba.

**On January 10, 2020**, the Department of Transportation suspended all charter flights between the U.S. and Cuba, except those to Havana's José Martí International Airport. In addition, a limit was imposed on the number of charter flights to this airport.

**On February 25, 2020**, President Donald Trump issued a notice extending for one year the State of National Emergency relating to Cuba, declared by President William Clinton on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1996.

**On February 26, 2020**, the new regulations of the U.S. company WESTERN UNION came into force, which eliminates the possibility of sending remittances to Cuba from third countries.

### **1.3 Implementation of the Helms-Burton Act. Lawsuits filed**

Since its entry into force in 1996, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, also known as the Helms-Burton Act, codified the blockade against Cuba and strengthened its extraterritorial scope. In addition to seeking the imposition of a government in Cuba directly subordinate to Washington's interests, this legislation sought to internationalize the blockade by means of coercive measures against third countries, in order to interrupt their trade and investment relations with Cuba.

Its Title III allows former owners of properties that were nationalized in Cuba, including Cuban citizens who eventually became U.S. citizens, the possibility of suing in U.S. courts those who had any contact with such properties, which the law called "trafficking". This term includes, according to the law itself, anyone who "transfers, distributes, dispenses, brokers, or otherwise disposes of confiscated property, or purchases, receives, possesses, or otherwise obtains control of it, or makes improvements to, or invests in a confiscated property; or if after the date of enactment of this Act, assumes the management, lease, possession, or use of confiscated property or has an interest in confiscated property; enters into a business arrangement using or otherwise benefiting from confiscated property; causes or directs trafficking described in the paragraphs or by another person, or engages in or benefits from such trafficking; or otherwise conducts trafficking through another person, without the authorization of any United States national who holds a claim to the property."

The possibility to sue alleged beneficiaries of "trafficking" had been consistently suspended every six months since 1996 by all U.S. presidents, including President Donald Trump himself. With the purpose of suffocating the Cuban economy and increasing the needs of the population, the Helms-Burton Act has transcended as a mechanism of brutal and illegal pressures by the U.S. government, not only against Cuba, but also against third countries, their governments and companies. Its claims are illegitimate and contrary to International Law.

For the first time in 23 years, legal proceedings under the Helms-Burton Act were initiated on May 2, 2019. As of March 31, 2020, a total of 25 lawsuits had been filed, of which 3 were withdrawn and 22 are still ongoing. This policy has affected U.S. and third-country companies that have done or are doing business with Cuba. Some examples are listed below:

- **On August 27, 2019**, five new lawsuits were filed against cruise companies. HAVANA DOCKS filed lawsuits against MSC CRUISES SA (Swiss company) and its U.S. subsidiary, as well as against ROYAL CARIBBEAN CRUISES and NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE HOLDINGS (both U.S. companies). The latter two companies were also sued by Javier García Bengochea, who claims to own some quays in the port of Santiago de Cuba.

- **On September 26, 2019**, the technology and logistics company AMAZON and the company FOGO CHARCOAL were sued in a Miami court by Daniel Gonzalez, grandson of Manuel Gonzalez Rodriguez, alleged former owner of a portion of nationalized Cuban land where artisanal charcoal is produced, which is then exported to the world and sold through AMAZON on its digital platform.
- **On September 30, 2019**, Robert Glen filed a lawsuit against the U.S. companies TRIP ADVISOR, ORBITZ, TRIP NETWORK, CHEAPTICKETS and KAYAK, as well as against the Dutch company BOOKINGS.COM, in the Federal Court of Delaware. The plaintiff claims to be the heir of nationalized land in Varadero, related to hotels operated by the companies IBEROSTAR, MELIÁ, BLAU and STARFISH, which are in the database of the aforementioned online reservation companies. A few days later, on **October 4, 2019**, Robert Glen filed another lawsuit in the District Court of Delaware against the companies VISA and MASTERCARD, alleging that they facilitate payments or transactions through credit cards at the above-mentioned hotels.
- **On January 14, 2020**, Marlene Cueto Iglesias filed a lawsuit against PERNOD RICARD (a French company) in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida. The plaintiff claims to be the heir of the company COÑAC C.I.A., nationalized in 1963. The claim is based on the defendant's alleged property rights in the Havana Club brand.
- **On April 17, 2020**, the heirs of Roberto Gomez Cabrera filed a lawsuit in the Southern District Court of Florida. The defendant is the Canadian company TECK RESOURCES LIMITED. Plaintiffs allege that since 1996 the company has operated several mines at El Cobre and its locations, which were allegedly owned by Roberto Gomez Cabrera.

It is important to note that Cuba, as part of a legitimate process of economic and social transformation, which included the property regime, carried out a series of nationalizations in accordance with the current international law. In addition, the Cuban government compensated all those Cuban citizens whose expropriated property was not the result of criminal conduct in violation of the legal system, and those who did not incur in such conduct as a result of the nationalizations.

With respect to foreign citizens whose properties were nationalized, Cuba concluded global compensation agreements with all the States whose nationals were affected, with the exception of the United States.

*Law 80 on the Reaffirmation of Cuban Dignity and Sovereignty*, approved by the Cuban National Assembly of People's Power in December 1996, establishes that U.S. regulations are inapplicable and have no value or legal effect on the Cuban national territory. It reaffirms the willingness of the government of Cuba to seek adequate and fair compensation for the assets expropriated from natural and legal

persons who at that time held U.S. citizenship or nationality. It also offers full guarantees to foreign investors in Cuba, while Article 5 states that the government shall be empowered to adopt “such additional provisions, measures and facilities as necessary for the total protection of current and potential foreign investments in Cuba and the defense of their legitimate interests in the face of actions derived from the Helms-Burton Act.”

Similarly, the Constitution of the Republic provides that “the State promotes and provides guarantees for foreign investment as an important element for the economic development of the country, on the basis of the protection and rational use of human and natural resources, as well as respect for the national sovereignty and independence.”

## **2. The blockade violates the rights of the Cuban people**

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### **2.1 Adverse effects of the blockade on the most vulnerable social sectors**

As previously mentioned, the blockade constitutes the main obstacle to the implementation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES), the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Cuba. Even those sectors where our country has been internationally recognized, such as health and education, among others, are not exempt from the severe impact caused by the U.S. policy against the Island.

The **health sector** has invariably remained among the priorities of the Cuban government, which in 2019 allocated the 27.5 percent of the budgeted social spending to this area. Despite the efforts made to guarantee access to free and quality care, protection and recovery services to all citizens, the impact of the blockade on this sector is substantial. From April 2019 to March 2020, this policy has caused losses to this area estimated at **USD 160,260,880**. The accumulated damage during almost six decades of implementation of this policy reaches the figure of USD 3,074,033,738 in the health sector.

The blockade denies access to U.S. medical technologies or with more than 10 percent of components coming from that country, which has negative repercussions on the health care of Cubans. In many cases it is not possible to obtain the new technologies that allow for more accurate diagnosis, treatment and rapid recovery of patients with less invasive interventions. This policy also affects the implementation of important National Health Programs, such as the Maternal and Child Care Program, Seriously Ill Patient Care Program, Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, as well as other different programs aimed at the prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases, among others.

The negative impact of the blockade is aggravated and even crueler in the current context of combating the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy puts additional pressure on our public health system by making it difficult to purchase urgently needed materials, equipment and other inputs to save lives.

It is emphasized the case of a donation of mechanical pulmonary ventilators, diagnostic kits, masks and other medical supplies needed to confront COVID-19, sent by the Chinese company ALIBABA, which could not arrive in Cuban territory. The contracted transport company refused to send the cargo to Cuba, claiming that its main shareholder was a U.S. company, so it was subject to the blockade regulations.

Another regrettable example is that the Swiss companies IMT MEDICAL AG and ACUTRONIC MEDICAL SYSTEMS AG alleged the sanctions of the blockade to refuse to deliver to Cuba high-tech mechanical pulmonary ventilators, essential for the treatment of patients affected by the new coronavirus. These two companies, considered world leaders in the development and manufacture of this medical equipment, have done business with Cuba in the past. They were both purchased by the Illinois-based VYAIR MEDICAL INC. Company, U.S.A, and therefore have been forced to suspend all commercial relations with our country.

It became also known in April 2020 that the Swiss banks UBS, Banque Cler and the Cantonal Bank of Basel refused to transfer donations made by the Swiss solidarity organizations MediCuba-Suisse and Asociación Suiza-Cuba, simply because the name of the Island was mentioned in the transaction record. These donations were intended to support the emergency aid project #CubavsCovid19, which sought to raise funds for the shipment of reagents for diagnostic tests and protective equipment needed in the work to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the other hand, the U.S. government, with its decision to attack the Cuban medical cooperation, threatens the enjoyment of the right to health of millions of human beings, who have benefited from the work of Cuban doctors in the four corners of the world. During the period under review, the effects of the bilateral agreements signed by Cuba with several countries in the American region have seriously affected medical care for 67 million people. On many occasions, the international community has recognized the professionalism and altruism of more than 400,000 Cuban health workers who have carried out missions in 164 nations for 60 years.

This discredit campaign carried out by the U.S. government is immoral under any circumstances, but it is particularly offensive to Cuba and the world in the midst of a global pandemic like COVID-19. In this scenario, while the current U.S. administration is harshly criticizing and accusing the island, more than thirty Cuban medical brigades have been sent to various countries and territories affected by the coronavirus, with the purpose of contributing to the fight against this disease. Cuba is

convinced that this current scenario calls for cooperation and solidarity, so it also shares the results of scientific research with other countries, as is the case of the Recombinant Interferon Alpha-2B drug, which has proven to be effective in the treatment of COVID-19.

As stated in previous reports, Cuba is denied the right to acquire technologies, raw materials, reagents, diagnostic tools, medicines, devices, equipment and spare parts necessary for the better functioning of its public health system. Not having the right medicine or technology to provide due treatment to a disease at the time needed to save a life, causes suffering and despair to patients and their families. That pain can never be quantified.

During the analyzed period, the **Import and Export Company of Medical Products (MEDICUBA S.A.)** contacted the seven companies that are part of its Supplier Portfolio<sup>1</sup> and other 50 companies. In February of this year, when the Cuban company approached its suppliers asking to update the documentation to give continuity to the trade relations, five of these companies did not respond. Only ELI LILLY and BAYER responded, the former refusing to continue as a MEDICUBA supplier, while the latter reported that it had to apply for a new OFAC license for the new contracts. For this reason, MEDICUBA was forced to contract the Mesigyna contraceptive and the Loperamida drug (indicated for the symptomatic control of acute and chronic diarrhea) in other markets. This generated a considerable shortage of these drugs in our country and, consequently, important additional expenses.

Other examples of the damages caused by the blockade on the health sector in the period analyzed are as follows:

- **On July 16, 2019**, the airline EMIRATES rejected a shipment of the drug Carbidopa-levodopa contracted by MEDICUBA from the Indian manufacturer and supplier APEX DRUG HOUSE, arguing that they could not transport goods destined for Cuba. This situation considerably delayed the delivery of said drugs, having to urgently look for other commercial alternatives. Carbidopa-levodopa is a drug used to treat the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, such as muscle stiffness, tremors, spasms and poor muscle control.
- **On August 30, 2019**, Sanzyme Private Limited of India refused to accept shipping documents for a MEDICUBA business transaction involving the purchase of the drug Progesterone 50 mg, resulting in delays in shipping and delivery. Progesterone is used in the Assisted Reproduction Program to prevent premature birth or threatened abortion, and for the treatment of premenstrual syndrome and

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<sup>1</sup> This enterprises are Eli Lilly and Company, Varian Medical Systems, Radiology Oncology Systems Inc (ROS), General Electric International Inc (GE), Mercury Medical, Masimo, and Bayer.

hormonal imbalance in women, such as amenorrhea and dysfunctional uterine bleeding.

- **On December 3, 2019**, NUTRICIA Company refused to deliver to the supplier of MEDICUBA an order for nutritional supplements and foods for medical use, which are special in the dietary management of disorders and diseases, alleging the activation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act. NUTRICIA is a multinational company established in the Netherlands, which operates through well-known trademarks such as NUTRICIA, COW&GATE, MILUPA, SHS, GNC and ENRICH.
- During the period under review, MEDICUBA contacted 50 American companies to assess the possibilities of importing medicines, equipment and other inputs needed for our Public Health System. The vast majority did not respond and three of them (WATERS CORPORATION, DEXCOM and the U.S. subsidiary of ROYAL PHILIPS N.V.) answered arguing that they could not establish commercial links with Cuban entities due to the blockade.
- In the case of ROYAL PHILIPS N.V., they were asked for 80 units of the CVX-300 Excimer Laser System, used for coronary angioplasty, also called percutaneous coronary intervention, a minimally invasive procedure used to open obstructed arteries in the heart. The company responded that it is not in a position to do business with MEDICUBA because of regulatory and export control restrictions imposed by the U.S. government.
- Most of the companies contacted by MEDICUBA did not respond to this Cuban entity's requests. As a result, it was not possible to acquire medicines and equipment marketed by these companies, which would have been very beneficial to the Cuban health system, particularly in areas such as oncology and pediatrics. These include the following:
  - JANSSEN PHARMACEUTICA, a subsidiary of JOHNSON & JOHNSON: Abiraterone Acetate was requested for the treatment of castration-resistant prostate cancer. No response was obtained.
  - PFIZER PHARMACEUTICALS: was asked for Palbociclib, for the treatment of hormone-sensitive metastatic breast cancer, as well as Sunitinib, for the treatment of metastatic renal carcinoma, and Crizotinib, for the treatment of lung cancer. No response was obtained.
  - MERCK SHARP & DOHME CORP. (MSD) PHARMACEUTICALS was requested Pembrolizumab (PD-L1 Antibody) for the treatment of metastatic melanoma, lung cancer, bladder cancer, Hodgkin's lymphoma and others. This company was also

asked for the Golimumab drug, which is the most advanced biological drug for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis, conditions in which the immune system attacks the joints causing pain, stiffness and movement restrictions. No response was obtained.

- SEATTLE GENETICS was requested Brentuximab vedotin for the treatment of refractory Hodgkin lymphoma after transplantation. No response was obtained.
- BAXTER INTERNATIONAL INC. was requested the arterial and venous pediatric lines, hydrophobic filters, 6fr and 6.5fr transitory hemodialysis catheters of for young children, pediatric dialyzers, 500cc dialysis bags and 25 to 28cm Tenckhoff catheters used for newborns and infants with acute renal failure. No response was obtained.
- NANOSTRING TECHNOLOGIES U.S. Company was contacted for the acquisition of equipment with Illumina technology, which allows sequencing the whole genome of a malignant tumor and defining molecular alterations related to specific treatments. It is also used for the molecular diagnosis of other diseases. No response was obtained.

The blockade affects in a heart-rending way the people with disabilities, as they are a vulnerable population group within the population, which particularly suffers from the restrictions imposed by this U.S. policy.

- Cuba is denied the acquisition of hearing aids with state-of-the-art technology, including batteries and spare parts, since these have some U.S. components. It is almost impossible to have access to different alarm equipment created for deaf people, such as baby alarms, alarm clocks, wristwatches, light bells, among others, since the most affordable equipment has in its composition more than 10 percent of U.S. components.
- The donation made by the U.S. organization Joni & Friends could not be delivered to more than 400 members of the Cuban Association of People with Physical and Mobility Disabilities (ACLIFIM), based in the provinces of Holguín and Ciego de Ávila, due to U.S. travel restrictions to Cuba.

The **food and agriculture sector** is the basis for achieving food security and sovereignty, two goals that are among the priorities of the Cuban government and are directly linked to the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Although the Cuban State allocates considerable resources and efforts to this sector, being the production of food a priority to meet the demands of the population, the effects of the blockade in this area are significant. From April 2019 to March 2020, damages amounting to approximately **USD 428,894,637** have been recorded.

Many of these impacts would have been avoided if Cuban companies were able to access the U.S. market. This would be very advantageous given their prices and proximity. In addition, it should be taken into account that U.S. industries are capable of supplying Cuban entities with many of the raw materials, materials and equipment needed to modernize their production lines.

Some examples of the impacts caused in this area are mentioned below:

- The Bravo Cuban Company was affected for not being able to acquire 2,700 tons of meat on the U.S. market, at a price of USD 2,213 per ton. The company was forced to resort to other suppliers with higher prices, incurring additional costs of around USD 1,296,000.
- The food importing company, ALIMPORT, registered significant damage due to the high prices of frozen chicken in geographically distant markets, compared to the U.S. market, which was inaccessible during the period analyzed. The prices of this product in the markets to which the Cuban entity had access fluctuate between 350 and 600 dollars above the price per metric ton in the U.S. market.

Difficulties in fuel supply to Cuba, as a result of the persecution unleashed by the U.S. government in the period under review, caused interruptions in the production cycles of several entities in the agro-food sector, as well as in crops, as evidenced in the following examples:

- In the Los Portales factory, located in the province of Pinar del Río, production was paralyzed for 77 days, since its warehouses were full of finished products, but did not have the necessary fuel for their transportation. This resulted in at least 2 million boxes of soft drinks and water being left unproduced and unmarked, equivalent to a loss of USD 10,900,000.
- Between November and December 2019 it was not possible to plant 12,399 hectares of rice due to the unavailability of fuel. Because of this, 30,130 tons of rice were not produced for consumption. Similarly, more than 195,000 tons of food were not produced. In addition, more than 2 million liters of milk and 481 tons of meat were not collected, which had a negative impact on the diet of the Cuban population.

**Education, sports and culture** are among the sectors of great social impact which have traditionally been affected by the restrictions of the blockade. During the period under review, as in previous years, the main impacts reported in these areas are related to additional payments for freight to transport products acquired in distant markets, to the obstacles to receive the payments for professional services offered abroad, and to the difficulties in accessing external financing. Added to this are the

limitations associated with the lack of fuel, resulting from the measures applied by the U.S. government.

The services of free and inclusive **education**, to which the Cuban State allocated 23.7 percent of the social spending budgeted for 2020, are affected as a result of the blockade by various deficiencies and inadequacies that limit the teaching and learning process at the different educational levels. Between April 2019 and March 2020, the impact on this sector is estimated at **USD 21,226,000**.

Among the main impacts on the education sector in the period analyzed are the following:

- All educational levels were affected during the 2019-2020 school year with difficulties in the transportation of workers and students due to the fuel deficit. This led to a readjustment of curricula and teaching hours. A total of 52 educational institutions were affected by this. Due to the fuel-related effects in more than 100 residential educational centers, students' departure to their homes was extended to 45 days.
- In higher education, the main problems recorded are related mainly to difficulties in accessing technology and equipment for teaching and scientific research and the loss of income from services provided, among other factors that affect the development of academic and scientific activity in Cuban universities and research centers. In this sense, the case of Las Tunas University is remarkable, where the financing of 444 thousand dollars foreseen for the second stage of the RENERT international Project, which is developed between the university and the CUOMO Foundation, has not been received. The amount was deposited in the bank of the counterpart for its transfer to Cuba. This operation was blocked by a banking entity and the funds remain withheld. The project consists of the use and exploitation of renewable energy sources in Las Tunas province, for the benefit of local development of rural and coastal communities.

The **sphere of sport**, which constitutes one of the greatest conquests of the Cuban Revolution, has not been spared from the onslaught of the blockade policy. CUBADEPORTES Company has experienced a decrease in its capacity to import sports equipment of American brands, many of them of obligatory use, according to the stipulations of the official regulations of the International Federations. From April 2019 to March 2020, the impact on the sphere of sport is estimated at approximately **USD 9,995,000**.

Some of the most significant impacts of the period are mentioned below:

- By the end of 2019, CUBADEPORTES Company reported an amount of accounts receivable of more than half a million dollars. This is due to serious difficulties in the collection of services rendered, derived from the financial persecution by the

U.S. government against third country banking entities that carry out operations with Cuban entities.

- **On April 8, 2019**, the U.S. government announced its decision to cancel the agreement signed in December 2018 between the Major League of Baseball (MLB) and the Cuban Baseball Federation (FCB, in its Spanish acronym), on the grounds that current U.S. law prohibits trade with entities associated with the Cuban government. The announcement came less than two weeks after the start of the 2019 baseball season, and only a few days after the FCB released the names of 34 Cuban baseball players considered eligible to sign with the MLB.
- In previous editions of the Caribbean Series, Cuba had had to participate in the “guest” category due to opposition by the U.S. to accept it as a full member of the Caribbean Baseball Confederation. Although an agreement between the U.S. government and that entity was expected to be reached by 2019, the hostile escalation against Cuba prevented the Cuban team from participating in the Caribbean Series held in February 2020 in Puerto Rico. It was also announced that Cuba would not be able to participate in the next edition of that event, which will take place in Mexico.

The **culture sector** continues to be affected by the implementation of the U.S. blockade policy against Cuba. From April 2019 to March 2020, damages amounted to **USD 22,150,000**.

For almost sixty years, the policy of the U.S. government has blocked the circulation of Cuban art around the world, persecuting and censoring its action, as well as extending its strategy of isolation to large international information corporations and art distribution circuits. At the same time, it tries to make visible and legitimize anti-Cuban products, and promotes apparent artists who are totally unknown, in order to discredit the work of the true exponents of the Cuban culture, the vast majority of whom live and work in Cuba.

The following facts highlight among the effects on the cultural sector during the period under review:

- The commercialization of films is notably affected due to the impossibility of exhibiting Cuban films in the United States. If the Cuban film industry had attended the American Film Market in Los Angeles, which is a way to access the film market and potential buyers for home video windows and institutions in the non-commercial circuit, it is estimated that it would have been able to obtain at least 260 thousand dollars in revenues.
- The Cuban Agency for Music Copyright (ACDAM, in its Spanish acronym) has stopped receiving some USD 19,428 in royalties, since some companies with accounts in banks with U.S. interest or participation have retained the funds and are refusing to make transfers to Cuban banks.

- Some clients included in the portfolio of the Recordings and Musical Editions Company (EGREM, in its Spanish acronym), such as Cubamusic S.R.L., from Italy; World Circuit and Plaza Mayor, both from the United Kingdom; and Ultra Record, from the United States, had difficulties when trying to make direct payments to this Cuban entity, which prevented it from receiving all the revenues invoiced during the period.

## 2.2 Adverse effects on the economic development

As previously stated, the blockade is the main obstacle to Cuba's economic development, to the implementation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) and, therefore, to compliance with the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

From April 2019 to March 2020, there was an impressive increase in the impact of the blockade on the **production and service sectors**, which amounted to **USD 610,200,000**. This figure is more than 7.7 times the one recorded in the previous stage. This increase was mainly due to the unprecedented and aggressive measures of the U.S. government aimed at suffocating the Cuban economy, particularly its efforts to hinder the arrival of fuel to the island.

Transforming the costs of the blockade into the country's capacity to pay would provide an additional source of substantial and sustained financing, which would give greater dynamism to the investment programs linked to the strategic sectors defined in the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES). In this way, the necessary conditions would be created to gradually achieve sustained growth in annual gross domestic product.

As part of its policy of harassment to prevent the economic development of our country, at the beginning of this year and in an unprecedented way, the U.S. government took action within the framework of the evaluation of Cuba's cooperation program proposals with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The objective of this maneuver was to hinder the adoption of Cuba's Country Programs with the aforementioned United Nations entities for the period 2020-2024, which would directly affect the Island's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals in the coming years.

Once again, Cuba had the support of an important group of countries that rejected the U.S. attempts to politicize the work of these bodies and allowed Cuba's Cooperation Programs to be approved by consensus and without modifications.

The blockade directly affects Cuba's right to development. No branch of the Cuban economy escapes the effects of this policy.

The **biopharmaceutical industry**, a strategic sector of the Cuban economy, is not exempt from the repercussions of the blockade, and is affected every year in terms of research, development, production and marketing of its products, which leads to considerable economic losses. From April 2019 to March 2020, this industry suffered damages by an estimated **USD 161,000,000**.

The intensification of the blockade policy during this period not only limits academic and scientific exchange, but also deprives the American people of the benefits of internationally recognized biotechnological and pharmaceutical products developed in Cuba.

This last aspect is evident in the following examples:

- The Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB, in its Spanish acronym), reports income lost due to the non-exportation to the United States of the drug Heberprot-P, the only one of its kind in the world for the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers (DFU). Under the hypothesis that only 8 percent of U.S. patients who develop a complex DFU each year use this drug, Cuba would have received approximately USD 114,912,000 under this item in 2019.
- The Proctokinase, a drug for the treatment of acute hemorrhoids, has also been the object of interest for its commercialization in the United States. It is estimated that some 5 million Americans would benefit from this Cuban product. Considering a 5 percent penetration in this market, it is estimated that potentially 10 million dollars have not been received under this item.
- Another Cuban biotechnology product that could be of great interest to U.S. companies, especially those dedicated to the production and trade of cattle and their products, is the GAVAC vaccine, which fights the cattle tick. It is estimated that losses due to the non-exportation of this product to the United States amount to USD 1,125,000.

This sector has also been significantly affected by the additional costs derived from the geographical relocation of trade and the need to resort to intermediaries to purchase products of U.S. origin, as evidenced in the following examples:

- The Finlay Vaccine Institute reported a total of 15 operations carried out in the period under review, where it was necessary to import merchandise of U.S. origin through suppliers from third countries. The total sum of the operations amounted to USD 894,693. If these operations had been carried out through a U.S. company, the Cuban entity would have saved approximately USD 178,938.
- The Cuban Neuroscience Center (CNEURO) has incurred high costs due to the need to use an intermediary to acquire products of U.S. origin in other markets. Because of the nature of the purchase, the use of an intermediary makes the expenses for these operations 20 percent higher. During the period analyzed, the

additional expenses recorded by CNEURO amounted USD 213,942 only in this respect.

From April 2019 to March 2020, the U.S. blockade against Cuba has continued to affect **Cuban tourism** in areas related to travel, services, operations and logistics, which have been reflected in losses of around **USD 1,888,386,675**.

The imposition of new measures by the Department of State, particularly to regulate the travel of U.S. citizens to Cuba, such as the prohibition of regular and charter flights to the island's international airports, with the exception of Havana's José Martí International Airport, is equivalent to a reduction in the flow of visitors from the United States of approximately 420,000 passengers, which brings about adverse effects on revenue collection.

If the blockade were not in place, it is estimated that the annual number of U.S. visitors to Cuba would be able to reach at least 2 million, which would make the United States the main market for travelers coming to the island. If we subtract from this figure those who did travel to Cuba during the period (251,621), it is estimated that approximately 1,748,379 people did not travel from the United States to the island due to the blockade. If these people had been able to visit Cuba, it is estimated that the Cuban tourist industry would have received some **USD 1,798,000,000** from the U.S. market.

Some examples of the impact on this sector are as follows:

- Until June 4, 2019, there was a 35 percent increase in the number of visitors to Cuba on board cruise ships. From the following day onwards, the measure adopted by the U.S. government to prohibit the entry of U.S. cruise ships to Cuban ports came into force and it is estimated that the real impact at the end of that year was that about 727,819 cruise passengers stopped arriving in the country by that route. The International Cruise Association (CLIA) estimated that the reserves affected amounted a total of 800,000 which had a negative impact on the income obtained under this item. This measure caused a considerable impact on the Cuban economy, since in only six months (from July to December 2019), USD 12,356,941 were not received.
- The elimination of licenses for "people-to-people" travel, together with other measures restricting travel to Cuba, contributed to the decrease in the number of passengers with ground services, both in groups and individuals, which caused a decrease in income to the country in this regard. In the HAVANATUR Celimar travel agency alone, 9 million dollars less were received than in 2018 due to this reduction in U.S. visitors.

- The CUBATUR travel agency suffered monetary and financial effects amounting to USD 616,742, as a result of expenditures on banking services and exchange rate variations, as well as the closing of bank accounts in third countries, the retention of funds and the cancellation of credit card processing services.
- The International Group of Tour Operators and Travel Agencies HAVANATUR S.A., which also faced all the monetary-financial impacts mentioned above, also reported the damages to which its agencies based in Canada are subject due to the processing of credit cards. The fees that the card processing agencies imposed on these entities were 3.79 percent, which is 1.6 percent higher than the average charged to other tour operators based in that country. HAVANATUR was affected by a total of USD 21,426,557.

The economic damages caused by the blockade to the **communications and information technology sector**, including telecommunications in Cuba for the period from April 2019 to March 2020, are estimated at **USD 64,274,042**. As in previous years, the Telecommunications Company of Cuba S.A. (ETECSA) continues to be the entity with the greatest impact, accounting for approximately 97 percent of the total amount.

The blockade is the main impediment to a better information flow and wider access by Cubans to the Internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs). By turning connectivity in the country more difficult and expensive, conditioning access to platforms and technologies, and using cyberspace to try to subvert the Cuban political and legal system, this policy is negatively affecting the development of communications in Cuba.

Some of the impacts recorded in this area are mentioned below:

- ETECSA cannot interconnect with international operators directly in the United States, where the main interconnection nodes are located, and is therefore obliged to extend the international network with nodes in the United Kingdom, Jamaica and Venezuela. This leads to additional costs of about USD 10,637,200.
- As a result of the activation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, the company AMERICAN AIRLINES decided to suspend direct postal service between the United States and Cuba. Consequently, the Grupo Empresarial Correos de Cuba (GECC) had to look for an alternative to guarantee the Universal Postal Service in the national territory and decided to direct it through Panama, as an intermediary country. This action increased the price of tariffs, which represented losses for the Cuban postal operator amounting to USD 6,736.
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- **On September 11, 2019**, while the President of the Republic of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, was reporting on the causes of the difficult energy situation

that the country was going through, the social network Twitter blocked the official accounts of some of the main news media on the Island: Mesa Redonda, Cubadebate, Granma, as well as the Ministry of Communications and other Cuban press media and journalists. The main objective of this action was to avoid the dissemination of the President's message on this digital platform and to prevent users to pronounce and debate on the subject.

- In addition to the impacts caused by the blockade on the communications sector, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cuban representatives have faced numerous difficulties in participating in meetings and other virtual events convened by agencies of the United Nations System, given that Cuba has restricted access to several of the digital platforms used for these purposes, such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

In the period between April 2019 and March 2020, the effects of the blockade on the **Cuban industry** reached **USD 95,529,125**. Some of the most significant effects on this sector are related to the income lost from exports of goods and services, as the following examples show:

- The main exportable item of the Cuban company ACINOX COMERCIAL is steel billets. The impossibility of accessing the U.S. market has caused damage to this company, since the price of this product in the United States is generally higher than in other markets. In the period under review, a total of 52,643.72 tons were exported. If these had been destined for the United States market, the income of this company would have increased by USD 526,437.
- The Empresa Comercializadora, Importadora-Exportadora de la Industria Ligera, (ENCOMIL, in its Spanish acronym) was affected by an estimated USD 297,700, due to the refusal of foreign banks to transfer to Cuba the funds received from the export of goods during the period, because of fear of possible reprisals by the U.S. government for violating the restrictions of the blockade.

The following is a list of other adverse effects recorded in the industry sector during the period analyzed:

- Due to the lack of fuel that affected the country during the second semester of 2019, after the decision of the U.S. government to prevent the arrival of crude oil supplies to Cuba, the damage caused to the production in the chemical industry companies amounted to **USD 50,960,000**. The Business Group of Chemical Industry (GEIQ, in its Spanish acronym), in particular, reported interruptions in the production lines of toilet paper and napkins, and warehouses saturated with products that could not be transported for the same reason. This led to the cessation of production of about 19.8 million rolls of toilet paper, and consequently lost revenues of approximately USD 4,800,000.

- For this same concept, there were prolonged interruptions in paper production in the country. As a result, about 1,200 tons of ecological paper were not produced, and thus, **USD 2,100,000** were lost.
- In the steelworking industry, production was affected by difficulties in accessing energy carriers, which amounted to about **USD 6,454,559**. This is why the amount of goods that were not produced not only affected the companies, but also had a negative impact on the fulfillment of priority social programs of our country, such as the National Program for Housing Construction.
- The Unidades Empresariales de Base (UEB, in its Spanish acronym referring to base business units) “Empaques Flexibles” (flexible packaging), located in San José de Las Lajas, Mayabeque province, belonging to the Ediciones Caribe company of the Light Industry Business Group, produces flexible packaging for products in the food sector, such as powdered milk, yogurt and pasta, among others. The industrial equipment available at this center is obsolete and insufficient to meet the demand for these products in the domestic market. Although several foreign entities have expressed their interest in investing in this factory, the negotiations have not been able to move forward due to the fear of potential investors of being subject to the implementation of the blockade regulations, particularly Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, since the UEB is located in a facility that belonged to the U.S. company REYNOLDS WRAP, which was nationalized by the Cuban revolutionary government.

As a result of the blockade, **the construction sector** continues to face serious difficulties in accessing more efficient and lighter construction technologies, with lower consumption of basic materials and energy components. From April 2019 to March 2020, the effects are estimated at **USD 238,180,000**.

The main cause of the economic impact on this sector was recorded in the production interrupted due to the fuel deficit in the country from the second half of 2019. The damage caused for this reason is particularly focused on the Construction Business Group (GECONS) and the Industrial Construction Business Group (GEICON), as illustrated in the following examples:

- GECONS recorded a loss of **USD 165,500,000** resulting from the reduction of its fuel allocation as a consequence of the measures adopted by the U.S. government to prevent the arrival of fuel in Cuba. This caused numerous problems to this entity, due to the low availability of energy carriers, which limited the production of goods and services and forced the adjustment of activity levels in several of the construction programs it develops. In addition, some of the services came to a standstill, mainly the Roads Program and the production of prefabricated concrete and ready-mixed concrete.
- GEICON reported an allocation of **USD 43,200,000**, a figure that responds exclusively to the fuel deficit faced by the entity. This had a negative impact on

basic productions such as cement, aggregates, blocks, asphalt blankets, fiber cement tiles, wood and metal carpentry, as well as on the transportation of inputs and finished products, among others.

During the period analyzed, the **transportation sector** has suffered damages by an estimated **USD 312,027,430**. The blockade regulations, particularly the measures adopted in 2019 by the U.S. government to prevent fuel supplies to Cuba, had a devastating impact in this area.

Some of the main effects on this sector are the following:

- The company Consultores Marítimos S.A. (COMAR S.A.) reports an impact of 160 thousand dollars, due to the cancellation of the authorizations for cruise ship companies to operate in Cuban ports. Because of this situation, most of the companies had to opt for the total cancellation of their links with Cuban companies and the closing of the established contracts.
- Due to the intensification of the blockade in the period under review, it was not possible to purchase the B-100 aviation fuel planned for August, September and October 2019. As a result, 2,503 productive flight hours were not executed. This represented an impact by an estimated USD 855,229.
- The company Omnibus Nacionales reported damage to production and services above 51 million dollars. This was due to the measure implemented by the U.S. government to prohibit the arrival of fuel supplies to Cuba.
- From September to December 2019, damage to urban public transport per bus was recorded due to the impacts on fuel supply. It is estimated that 75.8 million passengers were not transported in 2019, compared to 2018. As a result, revenues of USD 21,000,000 were lost.

The impact suffered by the **energy and mining sector** is estimated at **USD 125,282,022**. The blockade regulations affect the development of this area in Cuba, due to the limited access to state-of-the-art technologies for energy generation, equipment and spare parts, suitable means for staff protection and financial facilities for acquiring all these resources.

In the Electricity Union business group the impact exceeded 16 million dollars. Production and services of this entity have been mostly affected by the fact that the main manufacturers of equipment and spare parts for the production process have had to suspend their relations with Cuba due to the blockade. This has caused an increase in maintenance costs, loss of time to find substitute suppliers, and higher import costs. Some of the manufacturers and suppliers that have interrupted their links with Cuban companies are listed below:

- CLYDE BERGEMANN company, manufacturer of the boiler torches installed in the “Lidio Ramón Pérez”, “Diez de Octubre” and “Antonio Guiteras” Thermoelectric Power Stations, communicated its refusal to continue working with Cuba since part of its shares were acquired by U.S. capital. The fact that the supplier had to be chanced caused difficulties in acquiring spare parts, with the corresponding additional costs.
- In May 2019, the company FLENDER, which manufactures the circulation reducers for the pumps of the “Diez de Octubre” Thermoelectric Plant, refused to sell Cuba new reducers after the activation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.

Other examples of the effects on this sector are as follows:

- The joint venture MOA NICKEL S.A. recorded damages to its exports of approximately USD 7,580,000 because in 2019 some 700 tons of mixed nickel-cobalt sulfides could not be produced as a result of the impact on the fuel supply.
- On August 21, 2019, The Association Agreement and the Bylaws for the creation of the joint venture between BULGARGEOMIN OVERSEAS Ltd. and GEOMINERA S.A. were signed, with the purpose of developing the Hierro Mantua copper deposit. So far, BULGARGEOMIN has not been able to transfer the first part of the financing, amounting to USD 1,200,000, as planned, due to the difficulties it faces with its bank as a result of the blockade regulations.
- The Cuba-Petroleum Union (CUPET), a Cuban state organization in charge of supplying fuel and lubricant to the domestic market, faced serious obstacles to import fuel and other oil services due to the tightening of the blockade policy. Given the persecution and intimidation unleashed by the U.S. government against the usual fuel suppliers, the Cuban company was forced to look for new suppliers in more distant markets and with higher tariffs, which meant an impact of approximately **USD 20,200,000**. For the same reason, the Moa Nickel S.A. Joint Venture reported an impact of **USD 2,925,000**.
- The schedule for drilling oil wells has been affected by delays and limitations in the arrival of fuel, while the equipment used in these operations could not provide services at the time planned. This implied an estimated impact of **USD 730,000**.

The economic blockade measures not only damage the State sector of the economy, as the U.S. government tries to make it seem. It also has a strong impact on the non-State sector, which is usually relatively small and less able to respond and adapt to the loss of customers as a result of the contraction in tourism, limitations on the availability of working capital, difficulties in securing supplies, or access to technology.

### 3. Adverse effects on the foreign sector of the Cuban economy

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#### 3.1 Adverse effects on foreign trade

The total amount of damages caused by the blockade to the external sector of the Cuban economy from April 2019 to March 2020 amounts to **USD 3,013,951,129**.

Beyond the quantified effects, the dissuasive and intimidating effect of the blockade policy on businessmen and entities from the United States and third countries, accentuated by the activation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, has led to the cancellation of commercial operations, cooperation actions and foreign investment projects that were at different levels of development. It has also had a negative impact on banking and financial institutions, which refuse to work with Cuban entities for fear of being subject to sanctions.

The measure adopted on October 18, 2019, to prevent the re-export, from any country to Cuba, of articles produced in any country containing more than 10 percent of U.S. components, poses a significant challenge to the import needs of the Cuban economy. By components we mean parts, pieces, commodities and technologies, including software. Consequently, in an increasingly globalized world economy, it is becoming more and more difficult for Cuba to acquire the inputs required for industry, services and consumption by the population, regardless of the political or commercial relationship with the market of origin of these imports.

As in previous years, the greatest impact is seen in the income lost from exports of goods and services, with a value of USD 2,475,700,000. Tourism continues to be the most affected sector in this regard, accumulating 72.6 percent of the total damages. This is equivalent to USD 1,798,000,000, which represents an increase of USD 260,000,000 over the previous stage.

Given the impossibility of exporting to the United States as a result of the restrictions of the blockade, the Cuban agricultural sector is reported to have been affected by an estimate of 184 million dollars. Of this figure, 84.3 percent is attributed to possible exports from the company HABANOS S.A., while the rest, some USD 26,500,000, corresponds to potential exports of marabou charcoal, pineapple, honey, coffee and fresh products destined mainly for cruise ships.

In the case of industrial honey in bulk, the United States is the world's largest importer. U.S. firms interested in acquiring Cuban honey are denied the corresponding OFAC license, so they cannot carry out commercial operations with the island. The U.S. market could assimilate some 3,000 metric tons annually of this

type of honey, which is very difficult to place in the European market. If this volume could be exported to the U.S. market, Cuba would obtain an economic advantage of approximately USD 500,000, 10 percent more than the European market, due to better prices, lower freight costs and more favorable delivery conditions.

With respect to ground and roasted coffee beans, the U.S. market is among the five most important in the world. Due to its quality, Cuban coffee could cover an important part of the demand in the U.S. market, but like honey, U.S. companies interested in importing it are denied an OFAC license.

In addition, despite recognition by U.S. importers of the high quality of Cuban charcoal, sales of this product in the U.S. market during the period indicated reached only 80 metric tons, even though the export potential is much greater. This was influenced by the decision of the U.S. government of activating the Title III of the Helms-Burton Act as of May 2019. This made it possible, as explained above, to file lawsuits against the companies AMAZON, INC. and SU.S.SHI INTERNATIONAL, INC. which are retail distributors of Cuban charcoal in the U.S. market. This action had an intimidating effect on these and other potential clients, significantly reducing the possibilities of selling the product. Taking into account that the United States is one of the ten largest importers of charcoal in the world, it is estimated that the intensification of the blockade has prevented the sale of some 2,000 tons of this product, which represents a loss of around USD 70,000 due to price differences with respect to other markets.

In the case of sugar, the value of potential exports of this product to the United States during this period is estimated at about USD 93,000,000, taking into account the 354,078 tons that Cuba managed to position in the world market.

On the other hand, there are still limitations on imports of agricultural food products from the U.S. The Cuban food importing company, ALIMPORT, is forced to assume additional expenses in order to participate in this irregular trade, which works in one direction only, since Cuba does not have access to financing from U.S. banks or the international credit system for this type of operation, due to the so-called "country risk". This exposes the Cuban entity to depend on other creditors, which apply financial costs of approximately 5 percent above the normal. ALIMPORT cannot make payments in U.S. dollars to third parties, so it must buy refund currencies to carry out its transactions, with the losses derived from the exchange risk. As a consequence, each commercial operation involves several international banks, which apply commissions for their services, further increasing the financial costs that the Cuban company must cover.

From April 2019 to March 2020, the ban on the use of the U.S. dollar has affected Cuban foreign trade by an estimate of USD 92,883,153, while the increase in the cost of financing/country risk is estimated at USD 25,841,716. These indicators are determined by the difficulties faced by Cuban entities in accessing bank or soft loans,

as a result of the restrictions of the blockade, particularly its dissuasive effect on international banking. This forces our companies to resort to commercial credits granted by the suppliers themselves, with disadvantageous financial terms.

The negative consequences of the use of commercial intermediaries and the resulting increase in the price of goods reach USD 186,171,670.

The cost overruns for freight and insurance that must be paid for the geographic relocation of trade to more distant regions continues to cause significant damage to our economy. For this concept, losses are calculated by an estimated USD 85,108,797, which represents an increase of 17.9 percent over the previous period.

The following table shows the impact of the blockade on Cuba's foreign trade from April 2019 to March 2020:

<b>Adverse effects:</b>	<b>U.S.D</b>
Impossibility of accessing the U.S. market	131.612.890,48
Use of intermediaries/higher costs of goods	186.171.670,73
Higher costs of freights and insurances	85.108.797,39
Income not received for importations	2.475.700.000,00
Country risk/higher cost of financing	25.841.716,75
Ban of using U.S. dollar	92.883.153,80
Other adverse effects*	16.632.900,00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.013.951.129,15</b>

\* Additional costs for operations through third country banks/banking commissions/modalities of payment instruments, retained earnings, breach of contract, litigation, among others.

### **3.2 Adverse effects on the financial and banking sectors.**

From April 2019 to March 2020, the banking and financial system continued to be one of the main targets of the aggressive measures taken by the U.S. administration, aimed at strengthening the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba. The monetary and financial impact on the Cuban economy during this period exceeded **USD 284,300,000**.

As in previous years, this stage was characterized by the growing refusal of foreign banking and financial institutions to process operations of Cuban banks and companies, which is illustrated in the closing of accounts and contracts already established, the constant return of banking transactions, and the cancellation of keys for the exchange of financial information which are carried out through the Society for Worldwide Inter-bank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT).

As a consequence of the policy of pressure, intimidation and dissuasion that the U.S. government exercises against international financial institutions, new methods are applied to obstruct Cuba's banking operations, such as the request for additional documents to carry out operations, which generates delays and hinders the execution of payments to suppliers or the receipt of income from abroad.

During the period analyzed, the number of foreign banks that, for different reasons, refused to carry out operations with Cuban banks amounted to 137, with 315 operations involved, for a total damage estimated at USD 236,500,000.

Some examples of the extraterritorial implementation of the blockade in the banking-financial sector during the period under review are listed below:

**Refusal to provide banking services:**

- Refusal to open or close accounts: 7 foreign banks, of which 4 are in Europe, 2 in Asia and one in Latin America.
- Refusal to transfer funds to or from Cuba and to provide other banking services: 14 entities, of which 7 are in Europe, 3 in Asia, 3 in Latin America, and one in North America.
  - One Cuban bank was unable to make a membership payment to an international organization that groups savings banks and retail banks because it was not accepted by a European banking institution. Although multiple arrangements were made with other financial institutions with which the Cuban bank maintains correspondent relations, the funds were not accepted by the foreign banks.
  - The branch of a European bank based in Latin America received guidance from its parent company to paralyze all financial operations with Cuba and avoid any transactions with countries sanctioned by the U.S. government.
  - A Cuban Embassy based in a European country, as well as the Consulates General and the Consul-General himself, had their use of ATMs and their credit cards cancelled. Talks were initiated with a banking institution to request the provision of these services. The entity's Regulatory Compliance Department did not authorize these operations.
  - A European banking institution denied a request to transfer funds to Cuba from a social security institution in a country located in that geographical area, which was intended for payment to European citizens living in Cuba.
  - A Latin American banking institution informed a Cuban bank that its only correspondents are the five largest banks in the United States, so that their Compliance Directorate has strictly forbidden them to carry out operations with Cuba.
- Withholding of funds from Cuban entities in foreign banks: 3 foreign banking institutions, of which 2 banks are in Europe and one in Asia.
  - One Asian and two European banks retained funds from Cuban entities to the value of USD 4,200,000.

- Cancellation of SWIFT<sup>2</sup> messaging keys by foreign banks: 18 entities, of which 11 are in Europe, 3 in Latin America, 2 in Asia and 2 in Oceania. These cancellations of RMA keys cause difficulties and delays in the processing of banking operations. Banks use the SWIFT network to carry out electronic transfers (money transactions) and messages between themselves. As for international bank transfers, SWIFT codes are required for fast and secure transactions.
- Refusal of foreign banks to notify and/or process letters of credit: 10 institutions, of which 7 are in Asia, 2 in Europe and 1 in Latin America. These refusals affect Cuban companies because of the unnecessary delays this generates, since they are forced to look for an alternative bank that wants to process the documents.
- Return of banking operations: 77 entities, of which 43 are in Europe, 15 in Latin America, 14 in Asia, 3 in North America and 2 in Oceania. The greatest incidents in operations processed, both for transfers and documentary credits, respond to returns received due to supposed internal policies of the beneficiary banks or correspondent banks, which prevent the funds from reaching their destination. The European, Latin American and Asian banks were the ones that made the largest returns of banking operations, arguing the existence of sanctions against Cuba, compliance with internal policies of the banks, among other causes.
- Cancellation of banking operations and correspondent agreements: 5 banks, 4 of them European and one Asian.
  - One of these Banks, based in Europe, officially requested the cancellation of an Individual Loan Agreement signed with its Cuban counterpart, aimed at financing a productive activity in the Mariel Special Development Zone.
- Request to Cuban banks for additional documents and other requirements to carry out banking operations: 3 banking institutions, one of them in Asia, one in Europe and one in North America.
  - One of these banks asked its Cuban counterpart for the OFAC license and authorization required by its Compliance Department to process an operation, stating that if the requirements were not met, the funds would be blocked, in accordance with blockade regulations.

### **Difficulties with sending and receiving bank documents through courier agencies:**

During the period analyzed, Cuban banks faced various obstacles to the use of traditional banking communication channels, through DHL and SWIFT. The refusal of courier agencies to receive or process banking documents generates the following difficulties:

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<sup>2</sup> Authorizations exchanged with the agent banks, which allow filtering and limiting messages received and the type of message sent (known as RMA).

- The same guarantee and security is not available when bank documents travel via other means than DHL and SWIFT.
- Documentary remittances are sent by email copies, including shipping documents, and not the originals, which should be received directly by DHL.
- Cuban importers have to look for alternative ways to receive the documents in order to carry out the customs procedures for the extraction of the goods from the port. This generates delays in this process and in the incorporation of the products into the domestic economy.
- The acquisition of high-tech equipment to use alternative routes requires the disbursement by the country of additional foreign currency.

As part of the intensification of the blockade, remittances to Cuba have been particularly affected by the interest of the United States government in preventing the entry of foreign currency into the island. As a result of this policy, remittance agencies impose higher transaction costs on operations of this kind to Cuba.

#### **4. The blockade violates the International Law. Extraterritorial implementation**

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As stated above, the extraterritorial implementation of the blockade continues to be a distinguishing characteristic of the U.S. government's policy towards Cuba. This system of sanctions represents a threat both to the interests and sovereign rights of Cuba and to those of third countries, whose citizens are not exempt from suffering the consequences of this cruel and illegal policy, which contravenes International Law and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, as well as international trade rules.

From March 2019 to April 2020, there has been a sustained tightening of the extraterritorial implementation of the blockade, in particular since the entry into force of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, which was specially designed to interfere in Cuba's economic and trade relations with the international community.

##### **4.1 Adverse effects on the Cuban entities.**

During the period under review, Cuban entities continued to be affected in their trade relations with third countries, particularly through the closure of bank accounts, the impossibility of carrying out transactions for the payment or collection of services and the cancellation of trade contracts.

Some examples are described below:

**In April 25, 2019**, the Air France-KLM group informed its decision to terminate the agreement with Cubana de Aviación, in force since June 18, 2018, which would allowed the Cuban airline to make reservations and issue air tickets from Air France-KLM. The justification for the suspension of said agreement was that Cubana de Aviación is included in the OFAC's restricted list. This decision was made effective on June 9, 2019.

**In May 2019**, it became known that Petrobras Uruguay refused to respond to a request from Cubana de Aviación, alleging that it was not allowed to carry out operations with companies sanctioned by the OFAC.

**In May 2019**, it was known that Viajes Falabella, a partner of HAVANATUR in Argentina, Chile and other markets, was restricted from directly or indirectly marketing the Cuban hotels which are included in the Cuban Restricted List.

**In June 2019**, it became known that the International Air Transport Association (IATA) suspended the BSP service for three HAVANATUR and Cubana de Aviación offices in Mexico, Italy and France, due to the stance of the French bank BNP Paribas, which manages all the banking and correspondent services associated with this service. The BSP is a system of collections and payments related to the reservation of air tickets between travel agencies and airlines worldwide.

**On June 26, 2019**, the French airline Air Caraïbes informed Cubana de Aviación of its decision to cancel the codeshare agreement between the two airlines. The argument used was the current U.S. policy against Cuba that affects the flights made by Air Caraïbes to the U.S. with Airbus aircraft which use U.S. parts and components.

**On October 23, 2019**, the Cubana de Aviación airline was notified of the closure of aircraft leasing contracts by third country companies, as a result of the measures to tighten the blockade announced by the Department of Commerce on 18 October of that year. As a result, the Cuban airline was forced to cancel flights to several international and national destinations. This caused a drop in 40,000 passengers by the end of December 31, 2019.

**On October 23, 2019**, the COSCO shipping company, based in an Asian country, suspended all shipments to Cuba, arguing that the blockade's restrictions were the cause. This had a serious economic impact on the MEDICUBA company, which had contracted a large number of containers with this shipping company, and was therefore forced to look for other shipping alternatives, with the corresponding additional costs.

**On November 13, 2019**, the technology company TRIVAGO specialized in hotel and lodging products and services, based in Dusseldorf, Germany, eliminated all Cuban

hotel facilities from its Internet search platforms, due to the regulations imposed by the blockade imposed to Cuba. TRIVAGO was the object of a collective lawsuit (together with EXPEDIA, BOOKING and MELIÁ) under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.

**On December 10, 2019**, it became known that the Spanish company Aceros Inoxidables OLARRA S.A. decided to stop buying Cuban nickel products. The reasons for this are related to the increase in exports of this company to the U.S. market and the restrictions in place for the import into the United States of products with Cuban components.

#### **4.2. Other extraterritorial adverse effects**

**At the beginning of 2019**, the online payment platform WePay, through the GoFundMe website, froze the money of a Canadian citizen who intended to repatriate the body of his father, who had died suddenly in Cuba, citing the regulations imposed by the blockade.

**On April 1, 2019**, the Panamanian entity Multibank closed an undetermined number of bank accounts belonging to companies from that Isthmus nation and other foreigners who trade or have relations with Cuba, including the correspondent's office of the Prensa Latina agency. Multibank authorities alleged that this was in response to "an update of its business internal policy and lines".

**On April 16, 2019**, it became known that the National Bank of Canada (NABACAN) informed Cuban banks that it was unable to make new payments in euros, alleging that its correspondent, the Spanish Bank BBVA, was returning payments for operations related to Cuba due to the risk of being sanctioned by the United States.

**On May 7, 2019**, it was known that the Nova Scotia Bank (Scotiabank) sent a written communication to the Jamaican company FREEFORM FACTORY LTD informing that, within one month, it should close the account it used to receive payments (in Canadian dollars) from Cuban companies for exports. The Nova Scotia Bank invoked the system of economic measures applied by the United States against our country as justification.

**On June 16, 2019**, it became known that the Peace Cruise was prevented from docking at Cuban ports. The restrictions against cruise ships imposed by the U.S. government prevented the entry of the ship into the country for being a U.S. property. The ship was carrying aid for the victims of the tornado that hit Havana on January 27 of the same year.

**In June 2019**, the majority of the shares of the company Kiwi.com (an internet search engine and air ticket seller) were bought by the U.S. company GENERAL ATLANTIC. From that moment on, Cuba disappeared from their offers.

**From August to November 2019**, there were several cases of banks in Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Slovakia, Spain, France, Italy and Sweden announcing the immediate cancellation of the services of magnetic card payments to the Cuban embassies and consulates in those countries. Overall, the reason given to justify that decision was the instructions received from MASTERCARD and VISA to cancel the contracts with Cuban entities. Due to this restriction, Cuban embassies and consulates in the aforementioned countries cannot receive funds through VISA and MASTERCARD transactions, which hinders the provision and collection of services.

**In August 2019**, the company SQUARE CANADA informed the owners of the Toronto Little Havana coffee shop that they could no longer use their payment platform, due to concerns of the bank JPMorgan Chase that processes the company's payments, because they were selling drinks made with Cuban coffee.

**On August 22, 2019**, the Ecuadorian bank Produbanco refused to process transfers to Cuba corresponding to the payment of the Universidad Metropolitana to Servicios Médicos Cubanos (CSMC, S.A.). The reason given for this was the U.S. sanctions against Cuba.

**Since the end of August 2019**, the Swiss bank PostFinance ceased financial operations to Cuba, without any official announcement or prior communication to its clients, who were aware of this decision at the time they went to use its services for any operation with our country. Subsequently, PostFinance announced the closure of the payment channel to Cuba **as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019**, due to the tightening of the U.S. sanctions against the island and the potential risk of being excluded from the international payment traffic, in case of maintaining commercial relations with our country. In a written communication released by the Swiss press, PostFinance stated that, although being a Swiss bank for which it is not being directly subject to U.S. legislation, it did participate in global payment operations and depended on a network of correspondent banks, as well as on access to payment operations in U.S. dollars, thus recognizing that U.S. law had "in some way" an extraterritorial effect.

**On September 5, 2019**, the Dutch bank Rabobank informed the Cuban Embassy in the Netherlands of the termination of the PIN terminal contract for the payment of consular services. In addition, it notified the decision of the company MASTERCARD, not to offer any kind of PIN transaction to the Embassy in the future. The justification for these measures was the need to act in accordance with the international sanctions imposed by the OFAC.

**On September 30, 2019**, it became known that the removal company ALLIED PICKFORDS in Wellington, New Zealand, refused to offer its services to two Cuban diplomatic officials who were at the end of their mission. The entity in New Zealand, whose headquarters are in Illinois, alleged that due to U.S. regulations it could be exposed to sanctions.

**On October 25, 2019**, the company WESTERN UNION CANADA made public the decision to limit the amounts of remittances that can be sent from that country to Cuba, by virtue of the restrictive measures announced by the U.S. government.

**On December 25, 2019**, the international London-based company HYVE Group refused to hire the Cuban stand for the International Tourism Fair in Istanbul, in which our country has traditionally participated for years. The company, in charge of all hiring and stands at the fair, said it could not provide its services due to the escalation of global sanctions and the ban on doing business with Cuba, since the island is included in the list of sanctioned country.

**In December 2019**, it became known that the Sao Paulo-based branch of the Travelex Bank decided to end all financial operations with Cuba, due to the fact that its parent company in London advised it to cease ties with all countries subject to U.S. sanctions.

**On January 16, 2020**, the Eurasian Bank sent two letters to the Cuban embassy in Kazakhstan, informing them of the refusal to open a bank account for the Cuban mission in the Kazakh national currency. The bank argued that, given Cuba's inclusion on the OFAC Sanctions List, there were risks of suspension of payments or blocked funds, and of suspension of relations between the Eurasian Bank and its U.S. correspondents.

**On February 13, 2020**, it became known that Cuban citizens residing in Canada face limitations and difficulties in sending remittances to their families in Cuba through the financial and communication services company WESTERN UNION Canada. Some of their offices reported that they would not make any more money transfers to Cuba, while others accepted to send remittances only to relatives and limited to USD 300 per month. These restrictions are in line with the measures taken by the U.S. government in October 2019.

## **5. World opposition to the blockade**

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### **5.1 Opposition in the United States**

The policy of economic, commercial and financial blockade generates rejection from various sectors of American society and from numerous personalities and

organizations within that country. Representatives from the agricultural, cultural, academic and business sectors have not only demanded the lifting of sanctions against Cuba, but have also taken part in important actions to influence the executive and legislative branches to end this policy.

Despite the jigsaw of measures designed by the U.S. government to damage the economic and social development of the Cuban people, many U.S. citizens have made significant efforts to contribute to the improvement of bilateral relations.

Numerous requests have been made to the President of the United States to use his executive powers to lift the blockade in the context of the confrontation with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some examples of the opposition to the blockade within the United States in the period under review are set out below:

- **On April 17, 2019**, Collin Lavery and James Williams, presidents of the organizations Cuba Educational Travel and Engage Cuba, respectively, published statements against the blockade on the same day that the new measures against Cuba were announced by the Department of States.
- **On April 23, 2019**, the Office of Government Relations of the U.S. Episcopal Church expressed its concern about the measures taken by the Trump administration regarding the Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, the limitation of the amount of remittances and the imposition of new restrictions on travel.
- **On April 22, 2019**, the organization Cuban Americans for Engagement (CAFE) published, through its social network accounts, an open letter addressed to the Secretary of State, Michael R. Pompeo, and other officials of the U.S. Department of State.
- **On April 22, 2019**, the organization Cuba Study Group issued an official statement rejecting the measures against Cuba announced by the then National Security Advisor, John Bolton.
- **On April 23, 2019**, Cuban emigration organizations in the city of Miami sent a letter to Pope Francis asking the U.S. government to stop its aggressive policies against Cuba.
- **On April 26, 2019**, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America and the Cuban Council of Churches reaffirmed, through a joint communiqué, their willingness to work together to end the blockade imposed by Washington. They expressed their opposition to the decision of the U.S.

government to lift the suspension of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act and condemned the limitations and restrictions on the sending of remittances.

- **On April 30, 2019**, the Democratic Congressman from Illinois, Bobby L. Rush, reintroduced in the House of Representatives the bill entitled “United States-Cuba Relations Normalization Act”, which would lift trade restrictions and eliminate obstacles to trade and travel.
- **On April 30, 2019**, in an interview for the podcast Pod Save the World, the Director for Cuba of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), Marguerite Rose Jimenez, referred to the damage caused by the escalation of aggressive policies against Cuba and warned that they would cause greater suffering for Cubans.
- **On May 14, 2019**, Colorado Democratic Senator Michael Bennet reintroduced into the Senate the bill on the expansion of exports to Cuba, entitled the “2019 Agricultural Export Expansion Act”. The text would allow a person subject to U.S. jurisdiction to provide payments or financing for the sale of agricultural products to Cuba.
- **On May 14, 2019**, Randy Veach, President of the Arkansas Farm Bureau; Andrew Grobmyer, Executive Vice President of the Agriculture Council of Arkansas; and Jeff Rutledge, President of the Arkansas Rice Federation; expressed their support for the bill on the expansion of agricultural exports to Cuba.
- **On May 21, 2019**, the event “U.S.-Cuba Business Summit: Opportunities and Challenges for Trade Engagement”, organized by the U.S.-Cuba Business Council of the Chamber of Commerce, was held in a hall of the U.S. Congress.
- **On May 23, 2019**, the travel agency Cuba Educational Travel (CET) published a survey on the impact of the U.S. measures on the private sector, according to which it shows the existing concern about the reduction of U.S. visitors and the intensification of sanctions against Cuba.
- **On June 5, 2019**, the current President of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), Geoff Thale, issued a statement in reaction to the announcement of new restrictions on travel to Cuba. He said the decision is a vengeful move, which damages the freedoms on U.S. citizens and the travel industry itself, seeks to damage the Cuban economy and punishes the Cuban people. Thale called on the Congress to intervene to defend the rights of the American people and support a policy of engagement with Cuba.

- **On June 6, 2019**, Democratic Congresswoman from Florida Debbie Mucarsel-Powell called the regulatory changes on Cuba a flawed policy that “pushes in the wrong direction, separates families and harms the Cuban people”.
- **In June 2019**, the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) spoke out against the Trump government’s measure to suspend cruise ship travel to Cuba. In a statement, the organization said: “Rather than shutting the door to this market 90 miles off our shores, we call on policymakers to enact legislation to do away with the statutory Cuba travel ban once and for all (...) we will continue to advocate toward Cuba travel freedom and look forward to the day it becomes reality”.
- **Between 4 and 5 June 2019**, several cruise companies and lobbying groups issued communiqués rejecting the regulatory changes announced by the Treasury and Commerce departments towards Cuba. Statements were recorded from the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), Norwegian Cruise, Carnival Cruise Lines, Royal Caribbean, Engage Cuba, Cuba Educational Travel, Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA), and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). The Cuban American for Engagement (CAFE), CubaOne Foundation, Cuba Study Group and the director of the latter, Ricardo Herrero, also spoke on the social networks.
- **On July 25, 2019**, the Democratic Congressman from Massachusetts, James McGovern, introduced in the House of Representatives the Bill for Free Travel to Cuba, which would eliminate all travel restrictions imposed by the blockade. On July 27, 2019, the Democratic Senator from Vermont, Patrick Leahy, introduced a similar resolution in the United States Senate. To date, the texts have 48 and 47 co-sponsors, respectively.
- **Between 2 and 4 August 2019**, the organization Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) approved a resolution in support of Cuba in the framework of its National Convention held in Atlanta, U.S.A. As part of this text, the DSA condemned the blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States, the U.S. presence in Guantanamo Bay, and all kinds of sanctions that undermine the self-determination of the Cuban people.
- **On September 17, 2019**, the Meridian’s municipal council, Michigan, passed a resolution supporting the lifting of the U.S. blockade against Cuba. The resolution details that the end of the blockade would be favorable to the economies of both countries, while eliminating barriers between Cubans and U.S. people, through the expansion of diplomatic relations, travel, agreements, providing the opportunity for all citizens to discover and reconnect mutual interests. The text points out this Council’s support for congressional bills related to free trade and travel to Cuba.

- **On October 23, 2019**, Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont issued a press release criticizing President Donald Trump's policy toward Cuba and advocating the lifting of travel restrictions, saying they were negative to the Cuban people and to the rights of the U.S. people.
- **On October 25, 2019**, the Democratic Congressman from Massachusetts, James P. McGovern, criticized in a press release the restriction on regular flights to Cuba. He stated that "It is absurd that this administration is taking away the freedom of American travelers to fly wherever they want. Our disagreements with the Cuban government should be handled through diplomacy and dialogue (...) This administration should spend less time on reversing the legacy of President Obama and more time reading up on why the travel ban and other travel restrictions have been a colossal failure that should be ended as quickly as possible".
- **On October 25, 2019**, the organizations Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA), Cuba Study Group, Engage Cuba, Latin America Working Group (LAWG), OXFAM and Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), issued a joint statement rejecting the flight restrictions announced by the Department of Transportation on that same day. The statement also urges the Congress to pass the Cuba Travel Freedom Act.
- **On October 26, 2019**, the Foundation for the Normalization of U.S.-Cuba Relations (ForNorm) issued a statement condemning the ban on flights to nine airports in Cuba, stating that this measure seeks to make life more difficult for Cubans.
- **On October 26, 2019**, Democratic Congresswoman from California, Barbara Lee, criticized on Twitter the restrictions on flights to Cuba. She stated that "Trump cancelling flights to Cuba is yet another effort to destroy any relationship between our countries. These isolationist and backwards policies will hurt Cuban and American people alike".
- **On October 26, 2019**, the Democratic Congressman from Vermont, Eliot Engel, criticized on Twitter the restrictions on flights to Cuba. Engel declared that this was a "short-sighted decision by the Trump Administration that will hurt the Cuban people and their relatives in the U.S."
- **On October 28, 2019**, the U.S. organization Medical Education Cooperation with Cuba (MEDICC) criticized in a press release the measures restricting travel to Cuba. William Keck, executive director of this organization, stated that the measure will make medical cooperation between Cuba and the United States more difficult.

- **On 1 November 2019**, eleven U.S. senators sent a letter to Mike Pompeo and Elaine Chao, Secretaries of State and Transport, respectively, in which they opposed the decision to suspend U.S. airline flights from the U.S. to nine Cuban airports. In the letter, this measure is catalogued as “another step backwards for the people of Cuba and the United States” and the approach adopted by President Trump towards Cuba is criticized, insofar as it “has severely disadvantaged American and Cuban businesses, farmers, and citizens while failing to achieve any U.S. foreign policy or national security objectives”.

The text was signed by Senators Amy Klobuchar (Democrat, Minnesota); Elizabeth Warren (Democrat, Massachusetts); Patrick Leahy (Democrat, Vermont); Chris Van Hollen (Democrat, Maryland); Tom Udall (Democrat, New Mexico); Tammy Duckworth (Democrat, Illinois); Sheldon Whitehouse (Democrat, Rhode Island); Jack Reed (Democrat, Rhode Island); Ron Wyden (Democrat, Oregon); Jeanne Shaheen (Democrat, New Hampshire); and Chris Murphy (Democrat, Connecticut).

- **On November 9, 2019**, the U.S. Hands Off Venezuela South Florida coalition hosted an event in Miami entitled “No to the blockade against Cuba”, devoted to condemning this U.S. policy. The organizations Alianza Martiana, Foundation for the Normalization of U.S.-Cuba Relations (ForNorm), participated in the event, among other community and local entities.
- **On November 20, 2019**, the Democratic Senator from Vermont, Patrick Leahy, delivered a statement in which he highlighted the importance of the rapprochement between Cuba and the United States. He expressed his opposition to the travel restrictions imposed by the government of Donald Trump by saying that Cuba is the only country in the world to which Americans cannot travel freely “because President Trump apparently believes it is his sole prerogative to tell Americans where they can travel and spend their own money”. He also referred to the need to restore the normal functioning of the consular offices for the benefit of the citizens of both countries.
- **On November 28, 2019**, several U.S. religious leaders sent a letter to President Donald Trump in which they condemned the decline in bilateral relations and expressed that the sanctions imposed on Cuba since 1960 have not brought any benefits. Specifically, they called for the lifting of restrictions on travel and remittances, the suspension of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act and the resumption of consular services at the U.S. embassy.
- **On December 10, 2019**, the organization Engage Cuba expressed on Twitter its opposition to the entry into force of the suspension of direct flights between the U.S. and Cuba, with the exception of Havana’s José Martí airport. It expressed

that this measure is negative for Americans and Cubans, and that it is only positive for hard-line politicians who are against rapprochement with Cuba.

- **On December 16, 2019**, the executive director of the Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA), Emily Mendrala said that the Trump government's return to isolationist policies towards Cuba is causing "a great pain". She said that Cubans and Americans alike deserve an approach that is protected from the vagaries of U.S. domestic policy. She also urged Congress to take action to pass bills that would guarantee Americans' freedom to travel to Cuba.
- **On December 17, 2019**, Democratic Congresswoman from California, Barbara Lee, said on her Twitter account that the Trump administration has reversed the progress that had been reached between Cuba and the U.S., which has hurt both the Cuban and American people.
- **On January 10, 2020**, several U.S. organizations issued a joint statement condemning the restrictions on charter flights to Cuba and calling for the passage of a free travel law. These groups include the Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA), Engage Cuba, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), the Latin America Working Group (LAWG), and Oxfam America.
- **On January 10, 2020**, Democratic Congresswoman from Florida, Kathy Castor, opposed restrictions on charter flights to Cuba through her official Twitter account. She said that families in the Cuban community would be the most affected by the measure.
- **On January 11, 2020**, the D.C. Metro Coalition held in Washington the event "U.S.A Hands Off Cuba", aimed at showing solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and condemning the U.S. blockade against the island.
- **On January 11, 2020**, the Cuban emigrants' organization Alianza Martiana, condemned in an official statement the suspension of charter flights to several destinations in Cuba, with the exception of Havana.
- **On February 8, 2020**, the organization Alianza Martiana organized a caravan of more than a hundred vehicles in Miami, with the aim of defending freedom of travel to Cuba and condemning the restrictions imposed by the government of Donald Trump in this sector. The organizations Cuban American Defense League, Cuban Americans for Engagement (CAFE), Puentes Cubanos, Foundation for the Normalization of U.S.-Cuba Relations (ForNorm) and U.S. Hands Off Venezuela South Florida also participated in the initiative.

- **On March 6, 2020**, the President of the U.S. Episcopal Church, Bishop Michael Curry, declared that this religious institution will maintain its opposition to the blockade policy.
- **On March 19, 2020**, Carlos Lazo, a professor and U.S. citizen born in Cuba, wrote an online petition on the Change.org platform, addressed to President Donald Trump, demanding the lifting of restrictions on Cuba for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **On March 26, 2020**, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America and the Cuban Council of Churches issued a joint statement demanding an immediate end to the U.S. blockade.
- **On 26 March 2020**, the organizations Caribbean Educational and Baseball Foundation (CEBF), Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA), Cuba Educational Travel (CET), Cuba Study Group, Engage Cuba, Latin America Working Group, National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) and Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) signed a joint official statement calling for the suspension of sanctions on Cuba to provide humanitarian and medical supplies in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **On March 27, 2020**, the Democratic representative from Massachusetts, Jim McGovern, wrote a message on Twitter in which he expressed his agreement with all those who asked the U.S. to suspend the sanctions on Cuba to facilitate humanitarian aid in the context of COVID-19.
- **On March 29, 2020**, the executive director of the Fund for Reconciliation and Development, John McAuliff, wrote a letter to the Chargé d’Affaires in Havana, Mara Tekach, in which he advocated cooperation between Cuba and the U.S. in the face of the pandemic and the suspension of unilateral sanctions against Cuba and other countries.
- **On March 31, 2020**, the U.S. academic Peter Kornbluh published an opinion article in The Nation magazine, in which he expressed his support for the lifting of the blockade on Cuba and advocated for international cooperation within the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **On April 2, 2020**, Brian Armas Lauzán, a U.S. citizen of Cuban descent, launched a petition on the Change.org platform, addressed to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, demanding the end of the blockade on Cuba and highlighting the island’s internationalist work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **On April 5, 2020**, the U.S. film director Oliver Stone and the professor of international human rights at the University of Pittsburgh Law School, Daniel Kovalik, demanded in an article published in the New York Daily News the end of the “terribly cruel sanctions” of the Donald Trump administration against Cuba and other countries in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **On April 9, 2020**, New York lawmaker José Rivera introduced a resolution in the state Congress calling for an end to the blockade against Cuba.
- **On April 14, 2020**, the Foundation for the Normalization of U.S.-Cuba Relations (ForNorm) published on the Change.org platform a petition addressed to the U.S. Department of the Treasury requesting the immediate suspension of the economic sanctions against Cuba in the context of COVID-19.
- **On April 28, 2020**, the José Martí Cultural Association, belonging to the organization of Cuban immigrants in the United States, Alianza Martiana, published a message calling for the immediate elimination of the blockade policy and ratifying its support for the Cuban people.
- **On May 5, 2020**, Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont and Democratic Congressman James McGovern of Massachusetts, along with 25 other legislators, sent a letter to Mike Pompeo and Steven Mnuchin, Secretaries of State and Treasury, respectively. The letter urges both officials to confirm that there are no impediments to send medical equipment, food, humanitarian items and public health information to Cuba, despite the blockade.
- **On May 5, 2020**, the Richmond City Council, California, unanimously approved a resolution calling for the lifting of restrictions on medical and scientific collaboration between Cuba and the United States, in the context of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **On May 7, 2020**, the DC Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution, organized a demonstration in front of the Cuban Embassy in the U.S. capital to condemn the terrorist attack against that diplomatic headquarters and to ask for the lifting of U.S. government sanctions.

## **5.2 Opposition by the international community.**

During the period under review, the rejection by various actors in the international system of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the U.S. government against Cuba has increased, as a result of the marked intensification of this policy and, in particular, of its extraterritorial component, expressed, among other measures, in the decision to activate Title III of the Helms-Burton Act from May 2019.

In the current context of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, many voices around the world have condemned this policy, since its impact is much more painful in this situation of international health crisis.

Some examples of the international community's rejection of the blockade are mentioned below:

- **On April 29, 2019**, the ALBA-TCP France staff expressed its solidarity with Cuba in the face of the intensification of the blockade imposed by the United States on the island for almost 60 years. In a communiqué issued by that organization, it vehemently rejects the intention to implement Title III of the Helms-Burton Act as from May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, while condemning “the new interference” and the implementation by the U.S. government of extraterritorial laws, with the aim of hindering Cuba's development.
- **On May 15, 2019**, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), who met in Grenada, agreed in the final communiqué of the XXII Meeting of the Council of Foreign Affairs and the Community: “to reiterate the Community's firm support for the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the U.S. against Cuba”.
- **On May 16, 2019**, the Network of Intellectuals, Artists and Social Movements in Defense of Humanity (REDH) joined the international community's rejection of the U.S. government's decision to tighten the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba. Through a statement published on its website, the Network made an urgent call to all progressive forces and the world public opinion to mobilize against the Helms-Burton Act, calling it an affront to Cuba, Latin America and the whole world, by ignoring the elementary principle of sovereignty of countries.
- **On May 22, 2019**, the Council of Ministers of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP) adopted, during its 109<sup>th</sup> session, a declaration against the U.S. blockade imposed on Cuba. The approved text expresses the full support and solidarity of the members of the ACP with the Cuban people and government, while expressing its deep concern and rejecting the activation of Title III of the Helms Burton Act and its extraterritorial effects. Likewise, it urges the U.S. government to lift the blockade and recognizes that it constitutes the main obstacle to Cuba's implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- **On June 14, 2019**, during the VI Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CARICOM and Cuba, held in Georgetown, Guyana, a final declaration was adopted rejecting the imposition of unilateral coercive measures and urging the U.S. Government to immediately and unconditionally end the blockade. The document recognizes the intensification of the extraterritorial nature of this policy

and the persecution of Cuban financial transactions. Furthermore, it denounces the implementation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act and other unilateral measures imposed by the U.S. government against Cuba, which reinforce the blockade and flagrantly violate International Law, while undermining the sovereignty and interests of third parties.

- **On July 15, 2019**, the then Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Mr. Idriss Jazairy, submitted a report to the United Nations General Assembly on this subject, in which he stated that unilateral coercive measures having an extraterritorial scope are almost universally rejected as contrary to international law, as evidenced by General Assembly resolution 73/8 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba.
- In the general debate of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly, held from **24 to 30 September 2019**, dignitaries from 43 countries, including 19 Heads of State and Government, denounced the blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba and called for its immediate lifting. In three of these speeches, thanks were given to the Cuban medical collaboration.
- The final declaration of the XVIII Summit of NAM Heads of State and Government, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on **25 and 26 October 2019**, included a strong condemnation of the blockade, the Helms-Burton Act and other measures and aggressions imposed by the U.S. government against Cuba.
- **On November 7, 2019**, the United Nations General Assembly approved, for the twenty-eighth consecutive time, the resolution “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States of America against Cuba”, with the favorable vote of 187 Member States.
- During the debate and the adoption of the Cuban resolution, 46 speakers spoke in favor of the need for the United States to end its blockade against Cuba. In particular, the interventions of the representatives of six political groups and regional and subregional organizations were highlighted, namely, the Group of 77 plus China, the African Group, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Community of Caribbean States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Islamic Cooperation Organization.
- **On February 10, 2020**, the thirty-third Ordinary Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), held in Ethiopia, adopted a Resolution on the Impact of Unilateral Sanctions and Coercive Measures. The text approved by the AU, in its section B, includes its concern about the continuity and illegality of

the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed on Cuba. The document also recognizes the blockade as the main obstacle for Cuba to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while reaffirming the support to the UN General Assembly Resolution on the issue, which every year receives the favorable vote of African States. The AU member countries denounce the new sanctions adopted by the United States which extend the extraterritorial component of the blockade, particularly after the full implementation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.

- The Heads of Government attending the 31<sup>st</sup> CARICOM Intersessional Meeting, held in Barbados on **18 and 19 February 2020**, reiterated their concern about the intensification of the sanctions announced by the U.S. government under Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, aimed at strengthening the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by that country against Cuba. They also denounced the implementation of extraterritorial laws and measures, which they recognized as contrary to the International Law, and expressed their appreciation for the medical assistance provided by Cuba to CARICOM member states over the years. They rejected campaigns aimed at discrediting the medical collaboration provided by the Cubans.
- **On March 13, 2020**, the Information Office of the State Council of China published a document denouncing that the U.S. government violates the human rights by blocking Cuba and Venezuela.

After the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic on **March 11, 2020**, numerous actors in the international system have spoken out against the blockade and/or unilateral coercive measures in a general way. This is evident from the examples listed below:

- **On March 19, 2020**, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Syria issued a statement expressing its solidarity with Cuba in the face of the blockade and the sanctions imposed by the United States, as they hinder the efforts to stop the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **On March 19, 2020**, the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (Parlatino) issued a statement calling for the immediate suspension of “trade, economic and financial sanctions, embargoes and blockades such as those suffered by countries like Cuba and Venezuela” in the context of the global fight against COVID-19. Later, in the Declaration of the Latin American Parliament on the suspension of the foreign debt payment and the suspension of economic blockades, adopted on **March 25**, it reiterated this call and insisted that international solidarity and humanitarian law demand the immediate suspension of any type of limitation imposed on countries and communities, and the transformation of these limitations

into actions of mutual support. This call was reiterated on **April 7, 2020**, in a statement issued on the occasion of World Health Day.

- **On March 23, 2020**, several associations of Cubans living in Europe published an open letter addressed to the Presidents and Prime Ministers of the European Union countries, requesting them to intercede with the U.S. government to lift the blockade imposed on Cuba. They also denounced the intensification of this policy since the arrival of Donald Trump at the White House and pointed out that, given the needs imposed by COVID-19, it was doubly genocidal to maintain the blockade against the island.
- **On March 24, 2020**, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), Michelle Bachelet, called for the urgent suspension or easing of sanctions against countries such as Iran, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Zimbabwe. Subsequently, at a virtual briefing of the Human Rights Council on **April 9**, the OHCHR stressed that sanctions that have negative impacts on the health and human rights of vulnerable people should be lifted or "adapted" as a matter of urgency.
- **On March 25, 2020**, UN Secretary General António Guterres sent a letter to G20 member countries urging the removal of sanctions that limit countries' efforts to address the COVID-19. Two days later, he issued a statement addressed to states and the main bodies of the United Nations system on the response to COVID-19, in which he reiterated the importance of lifting economic sanctions that affect the capacity of countries to respond to the pandemic.
- **On March 26, 2020**, Argentine President Alberto Fernández delivered a speech during an extraordinary meeting of the G20, in which he called on the assembled leaders not to remain passive in the face of sanctions that imply economic blockades that only suffocate the people in the midst of the humanitarian crisis unleashed by the COVID-19.
- **On March 28, 2020**, the British solidarity organization Cuba Solidarity Campaign published on its website ([cuba-solidarity.org.uk](http://cuba-solidarity.org.uk)) an open letter to request the lifting of the U.S. blockade against the island, in return for the support of the Caribbean island to the global struggle against COVID-19. As of April 7, 2020, some 12,667 signatures had been registered in support of this petition, including those of 24 members of the British Parliament.
- **On March 29, 2020**, the Puebla Group, an alliance made up of several international progressive leaders, urged the countries of the world to ask the U.S. government to end the blockades imposed unilaterally against Cuba and Venezuela.

- **On 30 March 2020**, the co-presidents of the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat) issued a statement on COVID-19, in which they called on the international community to temporarily suspend restrictive or punitive measures, such as economic, trade or diplomatic blockades, in order to concentrate efforts on fighting the pandemic.
- **On March 31, 2020**, the then UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Hilal Ever, stated in a statement that “the continued imposition of crippling economic sanctions on Syria, Venezuela, Iran, Cuba, and, to a lesser degree, Zimbabwe, to name the most prominent instances, severely undermines the ordinary citizens’ fundamental right to sufficient and adequate food”. He added that the immediate lifting of such unilateral sanctions is a matter of humanitarian urgency.
- **On April 2, 2020**, the National Secretary of the French Communist Party (PCF), Fabien Roussel, made a statement demanding the U.S. government to immediately lift its blockade against Cuba, at a time when the international community was facing the scourge of COVID-19.
- **On April 3, 2020**, the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on Unilateral Coercive Measures, Alena Douhan, made a statement on the impact of these measures in the context of COVID-19. In it, she called on governments to withdraw or suspend all sanctions.
- **On April 3, 2020**, at a virtual press conference, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain, Arancha González, expressed the European Union’s support for the application of the “humanitarian exception” to suspend the economic sanctions imposed on countries such as Cuba, Iran and Venezuela, so that they may have access to the medical equipment necessary to combat the coronavirus.
- **On April 3, 2020**, the Group of Friendship and Solidarity with the People of Cuba in the European Parliament sent a message of thanks to the Cuban government for sending medical brigades to Europe to help contain COVID-19. In addition, the solidarity tradition of Cuban health professionals was recognized and the lifting of the blockade against the largest of the Antilles was demanded, so that it can face the extraordinary contingencies generated by the battle against the coronavirus.
- **On April 3, 2020**, the non-governmental organization Oxfam published a press release entitled “*El bloqueo de Estados Unidos contra Cuba agrava la crisis por COVID-19 en la Isla*”.

- **On April 5, 2020**, in a statement issued by the Secretary General of the African National Congress (ANC), Ace Magashule, the administration of Donald Trump is requested to “forthwith lift all sanctions against Cuba, Iran, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Palestine in order to enable the governments of these nations to have the necessary support and resources to protect their people”. Likewise, the African National Congress expressed its appreciation to Cuba for the “incredible example of humanity and international solidarity” by deploying medical brigades in several countries to help combat COVID-19.
- **On April 6, 2020**, nearly 60 social groups and associations in Spain sent a statement to the OHCHR, demanding the suspension of sanctions and blockades against Venezuela, Cuba, Iran and Palestine so that these countries can face the health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Since April 6, 2020**, the Sao Paulo Forum, a grouping of progressive parties and movements in Latin America and the Caribbean, called for a two-week mobilization against the blockades and economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. government on Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, to advocate for their lifting in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The main objective of the event was to collect as many signatures as possible in support of the online document “Petition against the illegal blockade of countries and for solidarity among peoples”, published on the platform [www.change.org](http://www.change.org), in addition to the dissemination of information on the humanitarian and economic consequences of the U.S. sanctions on those countries.
- **On April 6, 2020**, the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Policy, Josep Borrell, issued statements stressing that any international sanction affecting countries such as Cuba or Venezuela cannot harm the sending of humanitarian aid, especially during the coronavirus pandemic.
- **On April 11, 2020**, the Spanish party Izquierda Unida (IU), which forms part of the coalition in government, published a declaration of support for the international campaign “Blockade no, solidarity yes”, promoted in support of Cuba in the face of the hostile actions of the U.S. in the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **On April 12, 2020**, during the Easter Mass, Pope Francis asked the world to “relax” the sanctions imposed on countries affected by the coronavirus, which prevented them from offering adequate help to their citizens.

- **On April 30, 2020**, a group of human rights mandate holders<sup>3</sup> from the United Nations system spoke out against the blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba and called for its lifting, as this policy obstructs humanitarian responses aimed at helping the island's health system fight the VID-19 pandemic, particularly funding for the purchase of medicines, medical equipment, food and other essential goods. The experts also pointed out that the U.S. government has ignored repeated calls to lift the sanctions that harm the ability of Cuba and other countries to respond effectively to the pandemic and save lives. They also expressed particular concern about the risks to the right to life, health and other fundamental rights of the most vulnerable sectors of the Cuban population, including people with disabilities and the elderly, who are at much greater risk of contracting the virus.

During the period covered by this report, calls to end this unjust policy have multiplied. There were 256 actions by Cuba solidarity organizations in 87 countries. Statements were issued, as well as denunciations from parliaments, opinion leaders, Ministers, among other personalities, who requested an end to the prohibitions that hinder Cuba's access to vital resources to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, at least during the health emergency.

## Conclusions

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The topic addressed in this report is of vital importance to the Cuban people, as it is directly related to the right to life, to the very existence of a nation. The blockade violates the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, hinders the normal development of international relations and seriously harms the legitimate interests of many States, institutions and individuals throughout the world.

From April 2019 to March 2020, the U.S. government reinforced the blockade against Cuba until it reached unprecedented levels of aggressiveness. In particular, the extraterritorial dimension of this policy has been brutally intensified with the full implementation of the Helms-Burton Act since May 2019. This legislation is an affront

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<sup>3</sup> The communiqué was signed by the following experts: Alena Douhan, Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights; Saad Alfaragi, Special Rapporteur on the right to development; Catalina Devandas Aguilar, Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities; Agnès Callamard, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Livingstone Sewanyana, Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order;. Obiora Okafor, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity; Nils Melzer, Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

to the principles of international law and international trade rules, while it provides for economic pressure actions that are harmful to the sovereignty of Cuba and third countries. Other measures harmful to the Cuban economy and people applied during this period are: the increased persecution of Cuba's financial and commercial transactions, the siege to deprive the country of fuel supplies, the ban on flights from the U.S. to Cuban provinces outside Havana and the campaign to discredit Cuban medical cooperation programs.

The U.S. government has worked hard to sabotage the international cooperation that Cuba provides in solidarity in the health area, which is much more necessary in times of health emergencies. With a smear campaign, U.S. politicians and officials are directly attacking a program based on the most genuine UN conceptions of South-South cooperation, which is also recognized by the international community and enjoys the praise of the highest officials of the UN and several of its agencies.

During the period under review, the blockade has caused losses to Cuba by an estimated **USD 5,570,300,000**. This represents an increase of around USD 1,226,000,000 with respect to the previous period. For the first time, the total amount of damages caused by this policy exceeds the barrier of five billion dollars, which illustrates the extent to which the blockade has intensified at this stage. The impact calculated does not take into account the actions of the U.S. government in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, because it goes beyond the end of the period analyzed. This information will be included in the report to be presented next year.

At current prices, the accumulated damage over almost six decades of implementation of this policy reaches the figure of **USD 144,413,400,000**. Taking into account the depreciation of the dollar against the value of gold in the international market, the blockade has caused quantifiable damages of over **USD 1,098,008,000,000**.

As demonstrated, the blockade constitutes the main obstacle to Cuba's economic and social development and to the well-being of Cuban women and men, as well as to the implementation of the National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES, in its Spanish acronym) and the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The United States has ignored, with arrogance and contempt, the 28 resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly condemning the blockade, as well as the numerous voices inside and outside U.S. territory that advocate the end of this policy.

In this particularly complex context, Cuba and its people are confident that they will continue to have the support of the international community in their legitimate demand to unilaterally and unconditionally end this unjust policy.