INFORMATION NOTE ON SIDE EVENT TO BE HELD ON THE SIDELINES OF THE WORKS OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Theme: “The negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the full enjoyment of human rights in face of the multifaceted global crisis, including its food, health, energy, finance, climate, development and digital divide dimensions”

Date: Wednesday, 12 October 2022

Time: 15:00-18:00 Hrs.

Venue: ECOSOC Chamber (UNHQ)

Language: English

Format: In person

Level: PR/DPR/CdA

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Samuel Moncada, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations

Panelists (7 minutes presentations):

1. Professor Alena Douhan, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights

2. Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Economist, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development at Columbia University [TBC]

3. Professor Alfred de Zayas, Lawyer, Former UN Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic & Equitable International Order

4. Dr. Xiaomei Li, Special Representative for Human Rights of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China

Statements: 3 Minutes.
CONCEPT NOTE

Background:

The trend of growing recourse towards the promulgation and application of unilateral coercive measures (UCMs), coupled with the implementation of secondary sanctions, continues to be not only of great concern, but also to constitute a serious violation of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as of the basic norms of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law.

In several resolutions and declarations adopted by United Nations entities and human rights bodies, including the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, the members of the international community have unequivocally expressed both their condemnation and increasing concerns over the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the full enjoyment of human rights, including the right to development, of peoples from targeted States, including those in vulnerable conditions. Despite this reality, unilateral coercive measures continue to be promulgated, implemented and even expanded, including within the context of the current COVID-19 global pandemic, in clear disregard for their negative impact on the economic, social and humanitarian fields, while totally ignoring their extraterritorial implications.

In face of a multifaceted global crisis that has, among others, a food, health, energy, finance, climate, development and digital divide dimension, unilateral coercive measures constitute serious, and, in some cases, deliberate constraints for the provision of basic goods and services necessary for ensuring the wellbeing of entire peoples, while also hindering the ability of effectively delivering humanitarian aid to those in need, including food, medicine, vaccines, medical equipment and their spare parts. As a result, peoples subjected to these illegal measures are unable to fully realize their inalienable economic and social human rights, including, among others, to life, food, health, development or a decent job. It is worth noting, in this context, the ineffectiveness and rather non-existence of the alleged “humanitarian exemptions” in place, which is a reality that has been largely reported and proven with concrete data by UN independent experts.

Moreover, the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures goes beyond the acquisition of hardware, given that ensuring proper access to software is also problematic. As a result, targeted nations are unable to purchase, among others, software for X-ray computed tomography scanners or ventilators used in treating COVID-19, as well as for the maintenance and update of other vital services, such as monitoring
earthquakes. Similarly, videoconference services, like Zoom and some other platforms alike, are unavailable to residents and citizens of several countries subjected to unilateral coercive measures, including for teaching purposes or even for communication among physicians to discuss symptoms, diagnostics and means of treatment, including in relation to COVID-19.

In addition, today, the world is seeing an unprecedented resort to unilateral coercive measures and the application of a new generation of such illegal measures that are now much more destructive than ever before. As a matter of fact, given their wide scope, extraterritorial implications and systemic nature, these so-called “sanctions” are deliberately exacerbating the multifaceted crisis humanity is facing nowadays and will continue to, on the one side, negatively impact global economy as a whole, while also causing and prolonging human suffering around the world, unless a complete and immediate end is put to them, in order to allow all nations to fully pursue their productive potentials and contribute to the stabilization and overcoming of current challenges.

Undoubtedly, developing countries subjected to unilateral coercive measures have a critical responsibility to raise global awareness of the detrimental impact of these measures and take the necessary concrete actions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their population, which amount to over one-third of humanity, more than two billion people, according to independent UN experts. The international community as a whole has also a key role to play in the global campaign in favor of the complete, immediate and unconditional lifting of unilateral coercive measures, especially bearing in mind that such illegal measures go against the pledge of leaving no one behind, as they constitute an attack on development and prevent the realization of, among others, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in the current post-pandemic era.

Objectives:

- To provide an opportunity for holding an open dialogue with and exchange of views amongst Member States, officials from Agencies of the United Nations, experts from the academia and civil society, as well as from human rights mechanisms, for reflecting on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the full enjoyment of human rights, particularly in the face of the current global multifaceted crisis, including on its food, health, energy, finance, climate, development and digital divide dimensions.

- To provide an opportunity for, on the one hand, raising awareness on the negative impacts of unilateral coercive measures on human rights,
while, on the other, stressing the importance of increasing international cooperation and solidarity with targeted nations and their most vulnerable populations, while insisting on the global call for the immediate, complete and unconditional lifting of such illegal measures.

- To provide an opportunity for elaborating and identifying means and ways for ensuring the implementation of relevant resolutions and declarations adopted by United Nations entities and human rights bodies, including the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures, as a concrete demonstration of the commitment to leaving no one behind and ensuring the protection and realization of the human rights of all peoples, including those from targeted countries, particularly in face of the current global crisis.