

# *Diaz-Canel: A revitalized and democratized UN should play a leading role in addressing the world's multiple crises*

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UN General Assembly Hall while pre-recorded message by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel is delivered.

September 23, 2021. UN Photo

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and president of the Republic, at the General Debate of the Seventy-Sixth Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly. September 23rd, 2021.**

Mr. Secretary General:

Mr. President:

We are living in uncertain times. Under the demolishing impact of a pandemic that has worsened structural inequities and the global crisis, the role of multilateralism and the United Nations becomes ever more important. And international cooperation has been insufficient.

The implementation of neo-liberal formulas for decades has been reducing States' capabilities to meet the needs of their populations.

The most vulnerable have been left unprotected, while rich nations, the elites and the pharmaceutical transnational corporations have continued to profit.

Not only it is urgent that we unite our wills and pool our efforts for the wellbeing of humanity. It is morally imperative.

More than 4.5 million people have died because of the pandemic, which has worsened the living conditions in this planet. Its sequels and impact on societies today are incalculable, but it is already known that they will not be ephemeral.

It has been so pointed out by the "2021 Sustainable Development Goals Report", while according to the International Labor Organization forecasts, there will be 205 million people unemployed in the world by 2022.

It is widely believed that the sustainable development goal of eradicating poverty by 2030, by which date the global poverty rate is projected to be 7 per cent, or around 600 million people, is already seriously compromised.

In the midst of this bleak prospect, Covid-19 vaccines have emerged as a hope. In August of 2021, more than 5 billion doses had been administered globally; however, more than 80 percent of them were applied in middle or high-income countries, even when they account for much less than one-half of the world's population.

Hundreds of millions of persons in low-income countries are still waiting to receive their first dose and cannot even estimate when or if they will ever receive it.

At the same time, it is hard to believe that the world's military budget in the year 2020 amounted to almost 2 trillion USD.

How many lives would have been saved should those resources had been invested in health or the manufacturing and distribution of vaccines?

The possible answers to this question involve changing the paradigm and transforming the unequal and antidemocratic international order that subordinates the legitimate aspirations of millions of persons to the selfish attitudes and narrow interests of a minority becomes an imperative.

We will never tire of repeating that the squandering of natural resources and the irrational capitalist patterns of production and consumption, which depredate the environment and cause the climate change that jeopardizes the existence of the human species should cease.

There must be a collective effort; but developed countries, the main responsible for the current situation, which own all the resources that are needed, have the moral obligation to take responsibility.

It is necessary to struggle so that solidarity, cooperation and mutual respect prevail if we are to provide an effective response to the needs and aspirations of all peoples and preserve what is most valuable: human life and dignity.

Our peoples have the right to live in peace and security; they have the right to development, wellbeing and social justice. A revitalized, democratized and strengthened United Nations is called to play a key role in this effort.

Mr. President;

A dangerous international schism, permanently headed and instigated by the United States, is being promoted.

Through the pernicious use and abuse of economic coercive measures, which have become the instrument defining the foreign policy of the United States, the government of that country threatens, extorts and pressure sovereign States so that they speak and act against those it has identified as adversaries.

It forces its allies to create coalitions to overthrow legitimate governments; break trade agreements; abandon and prohibit certain technologies and adopt unjustified judicial measures against citizens from the countries that refuse to submit.

It often uses the term "international community" to refer to the small group of governments that tend to irretrievably follow Washington's dictates. The rest of the countries, which account for the overwhelming majority of this Organization, seem to have no place in the "international community" definition advocated by the United States.

It is a kind of behavior associated to ideological and cultural intolerance, with a remarkable racist influence and hegemonic ambition purposes. It is neither possible nor acceptable to identify the right of a nation to economic and technological development as a threat; nor is it possible to question the right of every State to develop the political, economic, social and cultural system that has been sovereignly chosen by its people.

In short, today we are witnessing the implementation of unacceptable political practices in the international context that go against the universal commitment to upholding the Charter of the United Nations, including the sovereign right to self-determination. Independent and sovereign states are being driven under multiple pressures to force them to subordinate to the will of Washington and to an order based on its capricious rules.

Mr. President:

For more than 60 years, the US government has not ceased for a single minute in its attacks against Cuba. However, at this crucial and challenging moment for all nations, its aggressiveness exceeds all limits.

The most cruel and longest-lasting economic, commercial and financial blockade ever applied against any nation, has been opportunistically and criminally tightened during the pandemic; and the current democratic administration maintains unchanged the 243 coercive measures adopted by the Donald Trump administration, including Cuba's inclusion in the spurious and immoral list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism

It is in this context that an Unconventional War is launched against our country, to which the US Government has allocated, in a public and notorious manner, millions through manipulation campaigns and lies, with the use of the new information technologies and other digital platforms, in order to portray, internally and externally, an absolutely false image of the Cuban reality, sow confusion, destabilize and discredit the country and vindicate the 'change of regime' doctrine.

They have done everything to erase the Cuban Revolution from the political map to the world. They accept no alternatives to the model they conceive for their own backyard.

Their plan is perverse and incompatible (as) with the democracy and freedom they advocate.

But our enemies must be clear that we will not give away the Homeland and the Revolution that several generations of patriots bequeathed to us by standing their ground. Today I would like to reiterate before the respectable and real community of nations that every year votes almost unanimously against the blockade, what Army General Raúl Castro expressed some years ago: "...Cuba is not afraid of lies, nor does it give in to pressures, conditions or impositions, wherever these may come..."

Mr. President:

We are not daunted by the colossal challenges. We will continue to create for Cuba.

We offer selfless solidarity to those who need our support and we also gratefully receive it from friendly governments and peoples and the Cuban community abroad. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support at this juncture, which dignifies humanity values and unconditional international cooperation without any interference.

At the same time, in response to the requests received and guided by its profound fraternal and humanistic vocation, Cuba has sent more than 4 900 cooperation workers, organized into 57 medical brigades, to 40 countries and territories affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our dedicated health workers have not had a minute of rest in the struggle against the pandemic inside and outside Cuba.

They are the same who took to the streets to assist the brother people of Haiti after the devastating earthquake that shook that country hardly a few weeks ago. Those who travel from the most remote places to a Cuban province go, without dusting off the dust of the road, to deliver their expertise and knowledge to the mission of saving lives.

They are much more than everyday heroes; they are the pride of our nation and a symbol of its vocation for justice. Dozens of personalities and thousands of people have signed their candidacy for the Nobel Peace Prize.

We also take pride in the Cuban scientific community which, despite huge scarcities, created three vaccines and two candidate vaccines against the COVID-19 pandemic. They represent the realization of the idea expressed by Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution in 1960, who asserted that the future of our homeland must necessarily be a future of men and women of science.

Thanks to the support of our men and women of science and the health staff, during the first 10 days of this month, more than 15.8 million doses of the vaccines Abdala, Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus have been administered; and 37.8 per cent of the Cuban population is fully vaccinated.

We expect to achieve full immunization by the end of 2021, which will make it possible for us to advance in the struggle against the new outbreak of the pandemic.

Mr. President:

We ratify our aspiration to achieve the full independence of Our America and a socially and economically integrated Latin American and Caribbean region, capable of living up to the commitment established in the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, in the face of the attempts to re-impose the Monroe Doctrine and neo-colonial domination.

We are opposed to every attempt to destabilize and subvert the constitutional order and the civic and military unity and destroy the work that was initiated by Commander Hugo Chávez Frías and continued by President Nicolás Maduro Moros in favor of the Venezuelan people.

We reiterate that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela will always be able to count on Cuba's solidarity.

We ratify our firm support to the brother people of Nicaragua and its National Reconciliation and Unity Government, led by Commander Daniel Ortega, who are courageously and proudly defending the achievements attained against the threats and interventionist actions of the US government.

We support the Caribbean nations' claim for fair reparations for the horrors caused by slavery and slave trade. We likewise support their right to a just, special and differentiated treatment, which is indispensable to meet the challenges resulting from climate change, natural disasters, the unjust international financial system and the difficult conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We reaffirm that the brother people of Puerto Rico should be free and independent after more than a century of submission to colonial dominance.

We stand in solidarity with the Republic of Argentina in its just claim for its sovereign rights over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas.

We reiterate our commitment to peace in Colombia. We are convinced that a political solution and a dialogue between the parties is the appropriate way to achieve it.

We also call for an end to foreign interference in Syria and full respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, while we support the search for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the situation imposed on that sister nation.

We call for a just, comprehensive, all-encompassing and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict, which includes the end of the Israeli occupation of the usurped Palestinian territories and the exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to build its own State within the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

We condemn the unilateral coercive measures imposed against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We reaffirm our unswerving solidarity with the Saharan people.

We strongly condemn the unilateral and unjust sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We reiterate our unshakable support to the "One China" principle and oppose any attempt to harm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China, as well as any interference in its internal affairs.

We reject the attempts to expand NATO's presence up to the Russian borders; the interference in Russia's affairs with regard to its sovereignty and the imposition of unilateral and unjust sanctions against that country.

We call for an end to foreign interference in the internal affairs of the Republic of Belarus and reiterate our solidarity with President Alexander Lukashenko and the brother people of Belarus.

The United Nations cannot ignore the lessons learned in Afghanistan. It took two decades of occupation, a toll of thousands of deadly casualties, 10 million displaced and billions of dollars in costs – which turn into profits for the military-industrial complex – to reach the conclusion that terrorism cannot be prevented or fought with bombs; that occupation only leads to destruction and that no country has the right to impose its will on sovereign nations. Afghanistan is not an isolated case.

It became obvious that wherever the United States intervenes, instability, death and hardships increase, leaving behind long-lasting scars.

Mr. President:

We ratify Cuba's determination to continue speaking the truth in a transparent way, however much this might be upsetting to some; defending the principles and values we believe in; supporting just causes; confronting violations as much as we have confronted foreign aggressions, colonialism, racism and apartheid and struggling ceaselessly for the greatest possible justice, prosperity and development of our peoples, who deserve a better world.

Thank you very much.

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