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Macroeconomic policy questions: international trade and development

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2023

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/78/459/Add.1, para. 25)]

78/135. Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries

The General Assembly,

Recalling the relevant principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,¹ which states, inter alia, that no State may use or encourage the use of unilateral economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights,

Bearing in mind the general principles governing the international trading system and trade policies for development contained in relevant resolutions, rules and provisions of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization,

Recalling its resolutions [44/215](#) of 22 December 1989, [46/210](#) of 20 December 1991, [48/168](#) of 21 December 1993, [50/96](#) of 20 December 1995, [52/181](#) of 18 December 1997, [54/200](#) of 22 December 1999, [56/179](#) of 21 December 2001, [58/198](#) of 23 December 2003, [60/185](#) of 22 December 2005, [62/183](#) of 19 December 2007, [64/189](#) of 21 December 2009, [66/186](#) of 22 December 2011, [68/200](#) of 20 December 2013, [70/185](#) of 22 December 2015, [72/201](#) of 20 December 2017, [74/200](#) of 19 December 2019 and [76/191](#) of 17 December 2021,

Recalling also paragraph 30 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,² whereby States are strongly urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries,

¹ Resolution [2625 \(XXV\)](#), annex.

² Resolution [70/1](#).



Gravely concerned that the use of unilateral coercive economic measures that are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations adversely affects the economies and the development efforts of developing countries in particular and has a general negative impact on international economic cooperation and on worldwide efforts to move towards a non-discriminatory and open multilateral trading system,

Recognizing that such measures constitute a flagrant violation of the principles of international law as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the basic principles of the multilateral trading system,

Noting with great concern the severe negative impact on human health, safety and well-being caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, and that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by the pandemic, reaffirming the ambition to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by designing and implementing sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to help to reduce the risk of and build resilience to future shocks, crises and pandemics, including by strengthening health systems and achieving universal health coverage, and recognizing that equitable and timely access for all to safe, quality, effective and affordable COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics are an essential part of a global response based on unity, solidarity, renewed multilateral cooperation and the principle of leaving no one behind,

Taking note of the work of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights in documenting the impact of such measures on the economic and social development of developing countries targeted by these measures and on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Considering that the continued enactment and application of unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations have a negative impact on the capacity of targeted countries to recover from the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthen resilience to future shocks and pursue sustainable development,

Recognizing that unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations have a detrimental impact on all aspects of life in the targeted countries, including in access to food, clean water and sanitation, electricity, adequate medicine, medical equipment, prevention and control of diseases, training and up-to-date scientific knowledge, technologies and research, hampering the ability of the targeted countries to guarantee the well-being of their population,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;³
2. *Urges* the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are not authorized by relevant organs of the United Nations, that are inconsistent with the principles of international law or the Charter of the United Nations or that contravene the basic principles of the multilateral trading system and that affect, in particular, but not exclusively, developing countries;
3. *Takes note* of the Bridgetown Covenant, adopted at the fifteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held in Barbados from 3 to 7 October 2021, in which States are strongly urged to refrain from promulgating

³ [A/78/506](#).

and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, in the light of concerns over the constraining nature and development implications of such measures that negatively impact the well-being of the populations and can impede the full achievement of economic and social development in the concerned States, as well as impair their trade relations;

4. *Calls upon* the international community to condemn and reject the imposition of the use of such measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development;

5. *Recognizes* that unilateral coercive economic measures that are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations constitute a significant obstacle to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in developing countries targeted by these measures;

6. *Calls upon* the international community to condemn and reject the imposition of unilateral coercive economic measures that are inconsistent with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, which impede the capacity of targeted countries to promote post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to monitor the imposition of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion and to study, inter alia, with the support and cooperation of the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, the impact of such measures on the affected countries, including the impact on trade and development;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its eightieth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, with a particular focus on the impacts of unilateral economic measures on the achievement of sustainable development.

*49th plenary meeting
19 December 2023*