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**GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**  
48<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council  
13 September-8 October 2021  
*Item 4: General debate*

**Oral statement of CETIM**  
***Check against delivery***

## **Impact of unilateral coercive measures**

Madame President,

The negative humanitarian effects of unilateral sanctions have worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. They represent a clear obstacle to the ability to fight COVID-19 as they affect (in some cases even contribute to dismantle) the economic apparatus of the targeted countries and their capacity to procure certain goods and technologies, hitting mainly the non-targeted civilian population and violating all categories of human rights, in particular ECSR and the right to development. This is particularly true today for countries like Cuba, Venezuela, Iran and Syria.

It is now well known that these measures are imposed by powerful countries to overthrow governments that do not acquiesce and to influence policies in their favor. What is more, they violate the current framework of international law, they deny the right of people to self-determination and they violate the equal sovereignty of States.

We hereby would like to propose some action tracks that could foster the fight against these illegal and harmful measures:

- 1) The former and late Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures called for the drafting of a UN Declaration on this matter. This instrument, among many other measures, would call for the early removal of all existing UCMs, reserving to the Security Council the exclusive right to impose such measures, in accordance with articles 24 and 25 and Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. We hereby call upon UN member States and the current Special Rapporteur to follow this recommendation and to advocate in this sense.
- 2) The UN General Assembly could refer specific cases to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion on this matter. States victims of unilateral coercive measures and third States concerned could also refer the matter to this Court, as Iran did 2 years ago.

3) These measures entail civil and criminal responsibility, and as such, the International Criminal Court would be competent to condemn them as crimes against humanity under article 7 of the Rome Statute.

4) States could, individually and collectively, take action at the national and regional levels by adopting national laws, such as “blocking statutes” and common positions in regional forums to prohibit unilateral coercive measures.

We urge UN member states to consider the steps mentioned above to strengthen respect for legality and to promote the respect of human rights at the international level, advancing towards the integral lifting of these illegal measures.

Thank you for your attention.

*Geneva, 24 September 2021*