



## **REPUBLIC OF CUBA**

### **STATEMENT BY H.E. MIGUEL DÍAZ-CANEL BERMÚDEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA. FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT. SEPTEMBER 23, 2021, NEW YORK.**

Mr. Secretary-General,

Mr. President,

I come to speak on behalf of a people who have been starved into surrender for more than six decades. In April 1960, in an infamous and long-secret memorandum, Lester Mallory, a dark US State Department official, wrote the foundations of the blockade policy against Cuba, aimed at causing hunger, desperation and the overthrow of the government.

Sixty-one years have passed and the blockade imposed to provoke hunger and desperation is not only maintained, but has been tightened in an opportunistic manner in times of pandemic.

The losses caused to the country, from April 2019 to December 2020 alone, amount to a total of over 9.1 billion dollars, reflecting the genocidal nature of a declared policy of surrender by hunger.

Despite these obstacles, the Cuban government, with extraordinary efforts and in spite of shortages and difficulties, guarantees the universal right to food through a regulated family food basket that all Cubans receive, which includes 19 staple foods at affordable prices.

In addition, progress is being made in the implementation of the National Plan for Food Sovereignty and Nutritional Education, focused on reducing dependence on imports, enhancing productive capacity, the use of science, technology and innovation, and developing efficient and sustainable food systems at the local level.

Cuba is grateful for the contribution it has received in this process from specialized agencies of the United Nations, but is aware that the prevailing conditions in today's world significantly affect the nutrition of millions of human beings. The cause is structural. The persistence of an unjust international order, decades of imperialist domination, the application of savage neoliberalism, protectionism and economic dependence resulting from centuries of colonialism and neocolonialism

are the root causes of underdevelopment, which favor extreme poverty and with it the hunger and exclusion suffered by the great majority.

This scenario becomes more complex for developing countries, which bear the brunt of an external debt that has already been paid a thousand times over. Some, like Cuba, also suffer the application of unilateral coercive measures, in violation of international law, which hinder their legitimate right to development.

Excellencies,

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in 2020, between 720 and 811 million people suffered from hunger; more than 2.3 billion, 30 percent of the world's population, lacked access to adequate food and malnutrition persisted in all its forms, threatening the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger by 2030.

The only solution to this painful human plight is to urgently, radically and sustainably transform the irrational and unsustainable production and consumption patterns of capitalism, which are destroying the environment and biodiversity, solve the external debt problem and grant special and differentiated trade treatment to developing countries.

Industrialized nations must and can assume their historical responsibility and urgently address the harmful effects of climate change, which are also having an impact on the availability, access, quality and stability of food. To begin with, it would be enough for them to meet their commitments to financing for development and international cooperation.

It is not possible to forget the warning given 25 years ago by the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, at the Food Summit in Rome, and I quote: "The bells tolling today for those who die of hunger every day, will toll tomorrow for the whole of humanity if it does not wish, or know how or is not wise enough to save itself".

On behalf of my people vilely punished by a foreign government that has not been able to subdue it, I reiterate that warning with the seriousness and urgency imposed by the 25 years that have passed.

Thank you.