



**Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations**

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Statement

by

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Arria Formula Meeting: End Unilateral Coercive Measures Now

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Thank you Mr. Chair,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is pleased to co-sponsor this Arria Formula discussion. We welcome the participation of our esteemed panel of briefers who will share a range of experiences and perspectives on the political, economic, social and humanitarian effects of unilateral coercive measures (UCMs).

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has claimed many lives and destroyed even more livelihoods, our international community must band together, in a spirit of solidarity, if we are to successfully navigate our inordinate challenges and build back better from this pandemic.

All forms of unilateral coercion, no matter their stated aims and intentions, are contrary to the purposes of the UN Charter, inimical to multilateral cooperation, and gravely contravene the principles of international law. Whether these unilateral measures take the form of economic sanctions; the weaponisation of trade and finance; the misuse of so-called "blacklists" by developed countries against developing ones; or altering correspondent banking relations on the basis of hypothetical or fictitious grounds, these actions create strains in international relations and produce human suffering on a scale that can never be justified.

The inhumane embargo imposed on the people of the Republic of Cuba, and the externally driven crusade of aggression against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are but two egregious examples of how the norms and principles of an ostensible "rules-based international order" are defiled by the powerful for their narrow self-interests. Yet, those who employ these debilitating foreign policy tools, against countries near and far, from Nicaragua to Syria, **and** Zimbabwe, **and** Iran, willingly deprive millions of people of their right to dignity and development under the guise of a human rights mantra.

In the midst of a global pandemic, when multilateral cooperation is needed most, these contradictions, in purpose and in principle, undermine global unity. For small states like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, whose very existence depend on the robust body of international law, these breaches are immensely disquieting. We believe that we should never abandon our principles, particularly in a time of crisis. For the surest way to overcome today's complex challenges are through lasting and stable multilateral relations, and the principled engagements

they facilitate based on the ideals of sovereignty, non-interference and non-intervention. We therefore call on all powerful countries to withdraw their unilateral coercive measures and prejudicial constraints on weaker nations. Let us work together to build a better world.

I Thank You.