

WORKSHOP ON THE IMPACT OF THE APPLICATION OF UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES ON THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE AFFECTED POPULATIONS IN PARTICULAR THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE STATES TARGETED: 23 MAY 2014, PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA

Chairman,

Allow me to thank the conveners for successfully holding this second workshop on the topical issue before us. Let me also take this opportunity to appreciate the quality presentations from the panel. Last but not least Mr Chairman, allow me to congratulate you for the able manner in which you are conducting our proceedings.

My delegation wishes to state from the outset that Zimbabwe is a firm believer in multilateral approaches to solving disputes between nations. To this end, we deplore the imposition of unilateral sanctions to coerce smaller and weaker nations to bow to the wishes of the militarily stronger states. In addition, it should be stated that the unilateral coercive measures that we have witnessed in recent years are completely at cross purposes with the principles that guide international cooperation as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Chairman,

You might recall that in the previous workshop we highlighted that the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States, Britain and her Western allies were not selective and consequently, had devastating effects especially on women and children. In this regard, my delegation wishes to continue to demonstrate how the devastation caused by the indiscriminate nature of these illegal sanctions is clearly evident for all to see.

The United States sanctions law, ZIDERA, which was enacted in 2001, has completely blocked Zimbabwe's access to international credit markets such as the IMF and the World Bank. As a result, the country's once-celebrated social services sector collapsed.

This deteriorating situation created a humanitarian crisis of gigantic proportions, evidenced by plummeting life expectancy rates which at some point stood at an all time low of 37 years. Further, there was a rise in infant mortality rate from 70/1000 to 132/1000 by 2005. There was also a marked rise in the maternal and under 5 maternal mortality rates.

Chairman,

This health crisis was worsened by severe underfunding of the health sector and a debilitating brain drain which resulted in drug and staff shortages respectively. Thus, no meaningful health care could be provided in most hospitals, let alone in the country's many clinics built in the 1980s. What made the human crisis even more tragic was the fact that the health services were declining at the very moment when they were needed the most given the growing threat of rising HIV/AIDS infections. Further, the collapse of basic sanitation services and the health care system as a result of the illegal sanctions have led to unnecessary loss of life to diseases of poverty such as cholera, measles, malaria and typhoid in recent years.

Chairman,

The education sector was not spared either. More than 3.2 million children are enrolled in primary and secondary schools in Zimbabwe, yet due to skills flight, there are only about 102,000 qualified teachers. As a result of lack of funding, there is no adequate provision of text books, special education needs, capacity building and promotion of gender equity in education in the rural areas.

The net effect on Zimbabwean children of this parlous state of the social sectors has been no schooling, lack of health care, no safe drinking water, reduced number of meals and increased morbidity and mortality.

This notwithstanding, as a result of the government's ingenuity in the face of this attack by its people by the west, there has been a marked improvement in the health and education sectors. The infant mortality rate for example is now down to 57/1000. In terms of education, Zimbabwe boasts of the highest literacy rate in Africa. However, this is not to belittle the impact of these heinous crimes on our people.

Meanwhile, in response to the deteriorating situation caused by sanctions, many Zimbabweans left the country and joined the growing Zimbabwean diaspora. Unlike earlier migrations which were dominated by men the current migration includes both women and unaccompanied minors, and this has created serious problems of human trafficking and other abuses.

True to their callous nature, the United States is now targeting Zimbabweans in the diaspora who had been playing a very significant role in mitigating this crisis for their families through remittances. The US authorities have recently given orders to banks not to process money

transfers to Cuba, North Korea, Iran and Zimbabwe. This order will obviously have a domino effect and the question that begs an answer from the United States is, how does this benefit the people that ZIDERA purports to protect?

Chairman,

As we have argued before, the motive behind the illegal sanctions is to effect regime change in Zimbabwe. In the process of carrying out this mission, collateral damage can now be counted in terms of both a ruined economy, as well as human life. In short, the tragic story line and fallout from the application of unilateral coercive measures against my country, is that, beyond the depressing economic performance, these measures have had a heavy human toll within our society. We call on Britain, the EU, the USA and their allies to immediately and unconditionally lift the sanctions.

I thank you!!!