

STATEMENT BY ZIMBABWE ON THE OCCASION OF THE PANEL DISCUSSION ON UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES AND HUMAN RIGHTS DURING THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL'S 30TH SESSION: 17 SEPTEMBER 2015

Mr President, NAM & AG

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

The unilateral coercive measures imposed on Zimbabwe by the United States, Britain and her Western allies at the turn of this millennium were not selective and consequently, had devastating effects on the economic, social and cultural rights of the people, especially the most vulnerable such as women and children. The US sanctions law, the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) which was enacted in 2001, completely blocked Zimbabwe's access to international credit markets such as the IMF and the World Bank. This dampened economic performance.

As a consequence there was a sharp fall in Government revenue, resulting in a severe underfunding of the health and education sectors, resulting in a deterioration of standards. For instance, the health sector suffered from acute drug and equipment shortages, while an inadequate provision of text books, special educational needs and teaching aids afflicted the education sector. Both sectors also suffered from the effects of a debilitating brain drain caused by deteriorating teachers' salaries and conditions of service.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the application of unilateral coercive measures against my country has had a counterproductive effect, decimating economic performance and thus exacerbating the human suffering that ZIDERA, for instance, sought to contain. Therefore, the question that begs an answer from enforcing States is, how do these measures benefit the people that they purport to protect?

I thank you Mr President