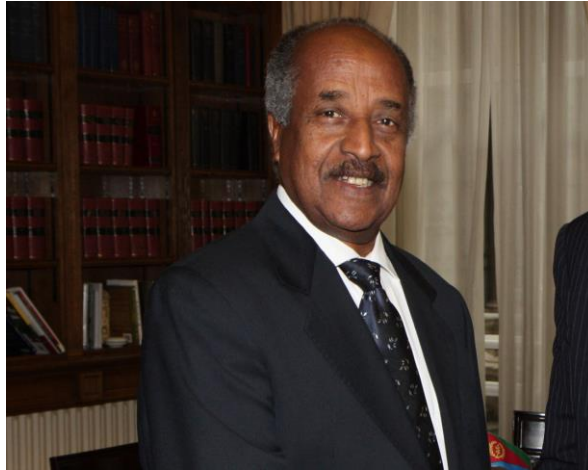


**Remarks by Minister Osman Saleh
at Unilateral Coercive Measures Conference**

21st November, 2024

Geneva, Switzerland



Special Rapporteur, Professor Alena Douhan,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to Professor Alena Douhan for her dedication and hard work in organizing this important conference and for her unwavering commitment to the mandate. I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chair of the Group of Friends of the UN Charter—of which Eritrea is a proud member—for their gracious leadership in our collective efforts.

This conference presents a critical platform for addressing and analyzing the profound impact of both primary and secondary sanctions on many nations. We trust it will create an avenue for dialogue—not only among sanctioned countries but also between those imposing sanctions and those affected—thereby fostering mutual understanding and paving the way for constructive solutions.

Excellencies,

Allow me to briefly, touch upon my country's experience with sanctions. In 2009 the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions on Eritrea, sanctions that were later, in 2011 expanded. These measures were both prejudiced and unwarranted. They were not based on fact and law and lacked any foundations and genuine concern for international peace and security. No substantive evidence was presented to substantiate the allegation that Eritrea had perpetrated serious acts that endanger regional and global peace, as defined by the Charter of the United Nations.

These unwarranted and unjustifiable sanctions severely impeded Eritrea's capacity to defend itself against the military occupation of its sovereign territories, and emboldened intermittent acts of aggression, by the previous Ethiopian regime. As such, they constituted a flagrant violation of Eritrea's inherent right to self-defense, as guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations.

In stark contrast to certain claims, these sanctions had a profoundly detrimental impact on the Eritrean people. They severely curtailed opportunities for international cooperation and beneficial partnerships, drastically increased the cost of capital for commercial loans, deterred foreign investment, impeded job creation and economic growth, and restricted the import of essential equipment crucial for development and social infrastructure.



Excellencies,

Although these sanctions were lifted almost a decade later, in 2018, following the rapprochement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, today, another form of sanctions, heinous in their form and more destructive in their impact, are imposed on Eritrea.

These unilateral sanctions and coercive measures imposed on Eritrea (as well as on other countries) lack any sort of legal foundation and rationale. Instead, it is quite clear that they violate the fundamental principles of human rights and various international or regional instruments.

UCMs, these 21st-century sieges, ruthlessly attack the very foundations of Eritrea's progress and that of other nations, blatantly disregarding their right to development. These measures are not only punitive but also deeply unjust, as they undermine the sovereignty and self-determination of targeted nations.

Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) lack due process and are applied without the explicit authorization or consensus of the international community. As such, they constitute a flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law, and the United Nations Charter. Moreover, UCMs violate and gravely impede the realization of all human rights, hindering the ability of affected nations to ensure the well-being and development of their people. The arbitrary application of these measures disrupts the social and economic fabric of the targeted countries, leading to widespread suffering and deprivation.

Excellencies,

From the perspective of the State of Eritrea and other countries facing unilateral sanctions, the expanding use of these measures—including secondary sanctions and extraterritorial enforcement mechanisms—represents an increasingly pervasive form of economic coercion. This coercion disproportionately affects the most vulnerable populations, exacerbating existing inequalities and creating new hardships.

Furthermore, the lack of transparency and accountability in the implementation of UCMs raises serious ethical and legal concerns. The absence of due process and the failure to seek international consensus undermine the legitimacy of these measures and erode trust in the international system. It is imperative that the global community recognize the detrimental impact of UCMs and work towards more just and equitable solutions that respect the sovereignty and rights of all nations.

It is imperative to recognize the importance of open dialogue and mutual understanding when addressing the complex effects of these measures. A significant narrative gap exists, and there is a troubling intentional lack of acknowledgment from sanctioning states regarding the profound consequences of unilateral coercive measures. This oversight perpetuates a one-sided view, where the far-reaching impacts on targeted nations—ranging from humanitarian crises to economic destabilization—are often ignored.

Excellencies,

As we will discuss during these two days, for many countries in the Global South, the effects of sanctions extend beyond the targeted nations themselves. Our neighbouring countries, which often rely on cross-border trade and regional cooperation, are also affected by the spill-over effects of primary and secondary sanctions. These sanctions, often imposed without regard for the broader regional context, disrupt entire supply chains, increase the cost of goods and services, and strain international partnerships. In this environment, efforts to promote peace, stability, and human rights are often hindered, as the sanctions environment limits the ability of affected countries to fully participate in the global economy.

Professor Alena Douhan, the State of Eritrea, along with its allies, calls for an end to all unilateral coercive measures. In the same vein, we are resolute in maintaining an open dialogue with all interested parties to forge constructive paths forward that address the profound injustices and hardships endured by all impacted nations and peoples, reaffirming our unyielding commitment to a fair, respectful, and cooperative international order where sovereignty and justice are upheld for all.

I thank, you.