

## Questionnaire:

### The impact of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries

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#### **Background**

The General Assembly resolution A/RES/78/135 of 21 December 2023 on *Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries*:

*In Paragraph 2: “Urges the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are not authorized by relevant organs of the United Nations, that are inconsistent with the principles of international law or the Charter of the United Nations or that contravene the basic principles of the multilateral trading system and that affect, in particular, but not exclusively, developing countries”.*

*In Paragraph 7: “Requests the Secretary-General to monitor the imposition of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion and to study, inter alia, with the support and cooperation of the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, the impact of such measures on the affected countries, including the impact on trade and development;”*

*In Paragraph 8: “Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its eightieth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, with a particular focus on the impacts of unilateral economic measures on the achievement of sustainable development.”*

The present questionnaire aims at collecting relevant information for the preparations of that report.

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### Contact information:

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*Please provide the contact information of the person responsible for answering this questionnaire.*

1. Country (or Organization): **Belarus**
2. Department/Division/Unit: **MFA, Department for Sustainable Development**
3. Name of contact person:
4. Title:
5. Email:

### Questions:

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6. Does your country (or does your organization) agree with the imposition of unilateral economic measures as instruments of political and economic coercion against developing countries?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. Please provide a brief explanation for your answer to question 6: (max 300 words)

The question is structured in an ambivalent way. It is not clear what exactly its proponents want to find out: whether a country in question agrees with the imposition of UCMs or whether it agrees that UCMs constitute instruments of political and economic coercion against developing countries.

Belarus does not agree with the imposition of UCMs against any country. Yet, Belarus agrees with the claim that UCMs serve as a tool of political and economic coercion against developing countries.

What is of great concern is that UCMs have become “trendy” worldwide. Indeed, some 20 years ago, on ordinary individual on the street would have been hard pressed to explain the concept of UCMs or sanctions. Nowadays, however, most people in the world have a basic understanding of how sanctions work and how they inflict economic, financial, and social pain on a country in order to force it to change its “behavior” as well as on individuals.

Three particular observations on UCMs stand out.

First, countries imposing UCMs violate international law since, according to the UN Charter, only the UN Security Council can impose sanctions against sovereign countries. So, UCMs are illegal.

Second, as evidence demonstrates, UCMs negatively affect not just targeted countries, but also increasingly populations in the sponsoring countries (look for instance at *“Backfire: How Sanctions Reshape the World against US Interests”* by Agathe Demarais). So, UCMs are irrational.

Third, under the Geneva Humanitarian Convention, weapons must discriminate between civilians and combatants. But If sanctions lead to the closure of factories and death of civilians in the targeted countries who are unable to access medical supplies and food, UCMs are not that different from deadly weapons. The lack of access to lifesaving medicines and food may kill as many people as a sustained military assault. So, UCMs are deadly.

8. Has your country been affected by (or, has your organization observed countries been affected by) unilateral economic measures during the period 2023-2025?

☒ Yes

☐ No

9. If yes (question 8), please explain target countries, the nature of the measures, country imposing the measures, dates when the measures were imposed, and whether the measures are still binding. (max 300 words)

Belarus has been on the receiving end of UCMs from a number of countries for many years. Yet, the bulk of these UCMs has been introduced in 2021-2023. The UCMs against Belarus have been imposed by the countries of the European Union and some other European countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine), as well as by the USA, the UK, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, New Zealand.

All these UCMs are still effective and they target specific economic sectors, banking and financial operations as well as individuals. Belarus has provided a detailed breakdown of UCMs imposed on it by other countries in the previous questionnaire for 2021-2023.

Given space constraints, just a few examples of EU UCMs introduced during 2023-2025: the EU introduced bans on the provision of loans and credits, insurance and reinsurance services to legal entities and individuals acting on behalf of the authorities, as well as provision of accounting, auditing, architectural, engineering services, tax and IT consulting, advertising, market research and opinion polling, product testing and technical control, business and management consulting, public relations, etc.

As of today, a total of 374 individuals and 59 Belarusian legal entities are currently under EU sanctions with 19 entities partially restricted. The US are targeting more than 400 Belarusian officials and more than 30 legal entities. The United Kingdom targets 179 individuals and 38 organizations in Belarus. Japan has introduced UCMs against 21 individuals and 35 companies from Belarus. As for Canada it targets 181 individuals and 62 Belarusian legal entities. The Republic of Korea introduced export controls on 1402 commodity items from Belarus. Australia imposed restrictive measures against 39 Belarusian individuals and 18 companies. New Zealand's UCMs list against Belarus includes 121 individuals and 26 entities.

10. If yes (question 8), please briefly describe the impact of the unilateral economic measure(s) on the country, including on its achievement of sustainable development and trade. (max 300 words)

As various studies demonstrate, the world as a whole has achieved the SDGs at only about 20 percent of their benchmarks. We believe that UCMs constitute a key cause for this situation. However, the precise impact of UCMs on the SDGs is hard to estimate. Therefore, Belarus has long been advocating the need for studies to be carried out by UN entities (UNCTAD), on how UCMs specifically affect international trade, commodity prices, and the SDGs.

Like other countries under UCMs, Belarus has also been affected. In particular, the UCMs inhibit our trade and financial operations with other countries and restrict free movement of people, which weighs down on sustainable development. Nevertheless, the level of Belarus' SDGs achievement stands currently at 80 percent. This indicates that we manage to offset to some extent the effect of UCMs by increasing cooperation with partners in Eurasia and with developing countries elsewhere.

Belarus is much concerned about the negative effect that the ban on its potash fertilizers produces on food security in developing countries. Specifically, some years ago Belarus' share in the global potash market was 20%, whereas in the wake of UCMs it dropped to 9%. The contraction was particularly painful for Africa, as Belarus' potash share there declined from 42% to just 3%.

There is increasing evidence that UCMs have an adverse effect on its sponsors, too. For example, the increase in tariffs on fertilizer imports into the EU from Belarus and Russia has increased the costs for farmers and consequently raised the relevant prices. Noteworthy in this regard is also the comment by Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, made at the 20<sup>th</sup> EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting in Ashgabat in March 2025, that "sanctions against Russia are hurting the economies of Central Asian countries".

11. Please include any additional comments and suggestions. (max 200 words)

1. Belarus would like to take this opportunity to express its firm conviction that all the UCMs imposed against the Republic of Belarus have been politically motivated as they seek to achieve changes in the country's internal and external policies since Belarus' independent standing in the world and its close relationship with the Russian Federation has not been to the liking of its neighbors from the European Union and some other countries in the so-called collective West.

2. Belarus would like to suggest for the purpose of better clarity in this questionnaire in the future to break question No.6 down into two questions:

- Does your country support the imposition of UCMs against any country?
- Does your country agree that UCMs serve as instruments of political and economic coercion against targeted countries?

3. The space limit of 300 words does not allow to provide a meaningful response to question No.9. So, Belarus would like to suggest to enlarge the limit of this question to at least 1000 words for the next questionnaire.