Statement by the Head of the Cuban Delegation at the High-Level Segment of the 38th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

Distinguished President,

Distinguished Executive Secretary, Ms. Megumi Seki,

Distinguished Heads of Delegations, delegates, and guests,

First, I would like to thank the authorities of the Republic of Rwanda for all the courtesies extended to facilitate the organization of this important 38th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol. I also wish to thank the Montreal Protocol Secretariat for all their efforts to ensure the success of this meeting.

Distinguished President,

As we have reiterated in our recent statements, the global economy is under strain, and its impact on national economies is deepening. Armed conflicts in regions of the world that produce significant quantities of goods, services, and food—and which are also sources of energy—further hinder the ability of developing countries to acquire essential new technologies and alternative gases, given their high and ever-increasing prices.

These are truly challenging times. The task of this honorable protocol is becoming increasingly difficult. There is a strong desire to adapt to the new era—to acquire more efficient technologies and alternative refrigerant gases that meet current requirements. However, these aspirations require concrete actions and a significant infusion of funding to be realized. The aforementioned global environmental crises compel developing nations to set priorities based on their specific economic conditions. Therefore, it is urgent that the necessary technological and financial resources be allocated to achieve the objectives set forth by this body.

It is no secret that the unilateral and extraterritorial economic sanctions imposed on some of our nations not only hinder normal economic development but also make it impossible to access the financial and technological resources required to undertake the environmental initiatives necessary to ensure healthy ecosystems and better human health.

Mr. President,

Our country is facing economic challenges unlike any seen before in its contemporary history. At the same time, it confronts policies of isolation and economic encirclement that hinder its normal access to financing channels and

technological resources. Nevertheless, its commitment to the Montreal Protocol—and to the task of eliminating or reducing substances that deplete the ozone layer or contribute to global warming—remains firmly in place.

Reducing HFC consumption by 10% is a priority for Cuba. We have a quota and licensing system in place, which serves as a major strength. The gradual training of all stakeholders in the refrigeration and air conditioning sector—complemented by the presence of trained personnel in every province to support awareness-raising efforts and project implementation—makes it possible to pursue the path initiated in Kigali in 2016. Collaboration with the entities responsible for energy efficiency, the refrigeration institute, and the various supporting ministries is of vital importance. It is worth noting that, since the 1980s, we have been pioneers in the use and implementation of hydrocarbons as refrigerants—a robust alternative that now serves as a substitute for HFCs.

Certain challenges remain, such as the conversion of pharmaceutical aerosol manufacturing facilities—which previously used HFC-134—a transition that was made possible in the year 2000 through the support of this successful Protocol. The reduction of HFCs presents new challenges; alternative refrigerants require careful attention due to their flammability, toxicity, and high-pressure characteristics. For this reason, continued support from this Protocol is essential, particularly for countries with low consumption levels that have been severely affected by the recent pandemic.

We are convinced that the solution to these issues lies in upholding the principles that have brought us this far, including those contained in the historic 1992 Rio Declaration. The principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" deserves special mention.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the Republic of Cuba's commitment to the agreements reached ten years ago in this same beautiful city of Kigali. At the same time, I recall the words of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro, who stated: ***"A better world is possible. But once a better world—which is indeed possible—has been achieved, we must continue to repeat: a better world is possible; and then repeat it once again: a better world is possible!"***

Thank you very much.