



In solidarity with Cuba In solidarity with Cuba



*Australia-Cuba Friendship Society Inc, Canberra,
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The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations
uprsubmissions@ohchr.org

Dear OHCHR,

8 October 2012

Australia Cuba Friendship Society – UPR submission on Cuba - October 2012
The Canberra branch of the Australia Cuba Friendship Society (ACFS), a non-profit organization, was formed 30 years ago with 27 members of diverse socio-political backgrounds. The members have continued to study and work on issues related to Cuba. ACFS Canberra has been an Incorporate Association since 1993.

At the beginning, the objective of the ACFS was to create a forum to debate the importance and significance of strengthening mutual ties between Australia and Cuba. Before formal diplomatic relations between Australia and Cuba, such as during the time of *The Bay of Pigs*, we continued to promote and encourage friendship through cultural and commercial exchanges.

There are many issues which have been, and are, the core and essence of the ACFS-Canberra as an association and we as members are responsibly committed. Throughout our existence, the main obstacle to a mature relationship between the governments of Australia and Cuba has been the overwhelming non-human rights activities of the United States.

The United States, since that country's interference in the Cuban war of liberation against Spain, has lusted for ownership and control of Cuba. The US has continued to abuse Cuba's sovereign rights as an independent nation, with violence in the form of bombings, hit-squad murders, hi-jacking of Cuban aircraft, constant radio interference, the mid-air destruction of one Cuban plane full of young Cuban athletes and has admitted to eleven assassination attempts on the life of the former Cuban President, Dr Fidel Castro.

One of the ongoing issues in Cuba solidarity is pressing for the release of the so-called Cuban Five. We strongly believe that the United States Government seriously violated the Constitution and international Law to guarantee the unfair sentences of The Five in a trial described by US Judge Lenard as: "a perfect storm of prejudice and hostility." How somebody protecting Cuba against terrorism be fairly tried in Miami?

We strongly opposed the US blockade against Cuba in force since the early 1960's and in spite of universal rejection of the UN General Assembly year after year. ("Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by US of America against Cuba).

We are aware of and, support the efforts of the Cuban government in areas of medical and scientific research at the same level as Western Societies, such as infant mortality.

The last report of UNICEF entitled "Progress for Children: a Report Card on Nutrition" points out that there are 146 million children (outside Cuba) under 5 years of age with serious malnutrition. Cuba tops the list of countries on the Continent with less than 5% infant mortality. Cuba is the only country in Latin America and Caribbean that has eliminated child malnutrition thanks to government efforts to improve the diet of the most vulnerable groups with a Health care system accessible and free for all Cubans.

We also support the involvement of Cuba in goodwill projects promoting human rights, as intended in the new Millennium including in Australia and the region. These projects are based on eradicating poverty and hunger, sexual discrimination and free access to health and education. Cuba was invited by the new government of East Timor to assist with medical doctors. Cuba sent some 300 physicians, surgeons and nurses to train and operate clinics throughout the republic. Cuba also took 700 young East Timorese students to Havana to be trained as doctors. The result has been that East Timor, on a per capita basis, now has more doctors than any other country in Asia. There have been several cases of Cuban doctors in East Timor being hassled with offers of huge bribes to defect to the US.

ACFS Canberra lauds the Cuban pilot programme to adult education implemented around the world for 50 years, known as "Yes, I can" (Si puedo). It has been recently trialled in Australia with Aboriginal communities in Wilcannia this year (2012). This project has been hugely successful. Throughout it has been overseen by the University of New England, Armidale, NSW.

Little Cuba must not be bullied by the huge United States and her tied allies from their passion for international Human Rights, and must be allowed to live and prosper within their own form of a self-determined, cooperative-socialist society, free of all outside pressures.

Yours sincerely,

Luisa Espino Granado
President, ACFS Canberra