NETWORK CUBA in Germany represents more than 40 Cuba Groups, some of which have dozens of member groups themselves, and some of them were founded almost 40 years ago (i.e. in the year 1974). The Network itself was established in 1993 and has grown since. Our members represent an enormous and broad spectrum of people living in Germany.

All groups visit Cuba several times a year, members of our board also travel to Cuba on several occasions per year. We always have uncountable meetings with various groups, project teams, academics, journalists, NGOs, foreign experts and activists, as well as official representatives of the Cuban people from various levels and sectors. In addition, the 44 groups have different and manifold fields of special expertise and knowledge, and the geographical foci are also very different – altogether the groups in our Network cover the whole Cuban land.

We have therefore a long and thorough experience and expertise with Cuban society, politics and developments. Over the last three years many of us have been several times in Cuba.

In our latest national meeting (Cologne, September 29, 2012) we have discussed the issues concerned in the UPR.

On that basis we submit the following report to the OHCHR.

October 2, 2012
**(1) Context in Cuba for the Promotion of Human Rights**

During the last period (2009-2012) Cuba has started major socio-economic changes and innovations. For instance, additional and innovative forms for the transfer of land to peasants and other citizens have been established, as well as new provisions with regards to social security, employment, housing, etc.

Here it has to be underlined, that those innovative measures and new programs have been created in major parts by an expert commission and published for public debate. In 2010 a broad discussion process started in all institutions, offices, factories, NGOs etc. in Cuba where the citizens discussed in a vivid and clear manner about the pros and cons of those “LINEAMENTOS”, about their own experiences, their own expectations and scepticism etc. The commission received hundreds of thousands of opinions and suggestions from these discussions and incorporated most of them into the final draft of those lineamentos. They have then been refined in the National Assembly after lively debates and adopted.

Several representatives of our 44 groups have visited such debates by citizens in different neighbourhoods and institutions. They generally conform the scientific research conducted by the Canadian political scientist Arnold August.

There are numerous international treaties and instruments of which the state of Cuba is a party – such conventions against “All Forms of Racial Discrimination”, “All Forms of Discrimination Against Women”, “Discrimination in Education”, “Torture” and “Mercenaries”. In addition Cuba ratified in 2009 the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; in 2008 the UN Convention against Corruption; and in 2012 the ILO Recommendation 200 concerning HIV and AIDS and the world of work.

**(2) Non-discrimination and Justice**

Latest international comparative studies show that Cuba is very advanced with regards to representation of women in important professions – in the academic field, in the political arena, in social and health sectors. This meets our own observations. The same holds for the equalizing measures for young people, senior citizens, the disabled, prison inmates, etc. We are extremely amazed by the high degree of integration of disabled people as well as HIV-infected people. Due to hard work by the Cuban institute SENESEX the Cuban government has now adopted additional measures to fight against forms of discrimination based on prejudices due to sexual orientation and gender identity.

Contrary to most of its neighbouring countries Cuban courts have not issued any death sentences since the last UPR report, nor have there been any executions for several years.

In April of 2009, the Council of State decided to commute the death penalty and replace it with a 30-year sentence or life imprisonment for any inmates having received the death sentence.
Cuba has institutionalized a system of independent bodies, headed by the Supreme Court, acting collegially, composed according to their competency and with broad popular participation in the dealing of justice.

(3) Freedom and Participation

Cuba has been victim of a ferocious campaign to discredit its performance in human rights matters and of ignorance of the existence of the rule of law in the country. Spreading unfounded accusations only results in obscuring Cuba’s reality and performance in matters dealing with the promotion and protection of all human rights for all, and it is part of a well organized and funded political campaign that is alien to legitimate concerns over human rights.

As part of the hostile policy of the government of the United States, projects are implemented that are directed to promote campaigns discrediting Cuban authorities, with the aim of disrupting order, inciting violence and creating the image of a supposed climate of destabilization and unruliness in the country. These activities are financed by ultra-rightwing organizations in the city of Miami, backed by the US government, whose declared aim is the destruction of the established political and social system in Cuba.

The so-called human rights defenders acting in Cuba are mercenaries in the service of the American government; their actions and purposes undermine and seek to destroy the internal juridical organization of Cuba (national laws) within whose framework all activities must be undertaken according to stipulations in Article 3 of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1998. None of these qualify under the concept of human rights defenders as established in that Declaration.

In Cuba, human rights defenders are protected, in equal conditions, according to the postulates of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Nobody in Cuba has been persecuted or penalized for peacefully exercising their rights, including those of expression, opinion and association, within the framework of the broad liberties guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic and its laws, completely compatible with international human rights instruments. Ethics has been an important protective shield for the Cuban Revolution in the face of a policy of aggression and hostility by the greatest power in the world.

Discrimination for religious reasons does not exist. There are around 400 religions and religious institutions based on the credo of their membership; they carry out their activities with no interference whatsoever by the State. All religions have their churches and places of worship for their activities which regularly take place without any impediments.
Despite severe economic problems Cuba continues – in contrast to many other countries, even rich OECD-countries – to ensure universal access, free of charge, to public health. In 2011 the infant mortality rate reached 4.9, the lowest rate in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2011, the maternal mortality rate was at 40.6 per 100,000, a very low rate on an international scale.

The UNESCO Report on Lifelong Learning for All (2011) acknowledges Cuba to have high educational development and is placed at number 14 in the world in their Education for All Rating (IDE). Notwithstanding the recognized achievements in this area, Cuba is working to attain greater quality at all levels of teaching.

For Cuba, having all people enjoying the right to food and food security constitutes a matter of national security. The government’s political will has been steadfast in order to attain advances in the subject of the right to food, in spite of the economic blockade against Cuba by the United States and its specific impact on availabilities of funding for the importing of foods and investment of capital and technology in that field. New measures have been promoted to implement the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur after their visit in 2007.

Cuba has promoted various cooperation programs and projects in health matters. The Comprehensive Health Program is being developed in 40 countries. Furthermore, Operation “Miracle” is being promoted to return sight to thousands of citizens in the world. From its inception on July 8, 2004 until January of 2012, 2,261,987 surgeries have been performed.

On the other hand, the international contingent of doctors specialized in disaster situations and serious epidemics, continues with its work (the Henry Reeve Brigade made up of 5,490 Cuban collaborators who have provided medical assistance to more than 3 million victims). It is highlighted the cooperation in Haiti. Since 1998, 3,774 Cuban collaborators have been at work in Haiti. The Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM in its Spanish acronym) has graduated 9,960 medical doctors from 58 countries between 2005 and 2011. Also, health professionals in 11 countries are being trained.

Cuba broadened its cooperation in the processes of literacy and post-literacy campaigns using the Cuban methods called “Yes, I can” (Yo, sí puedo, in Spanish) (UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize), “I Can Read and Write Now” (Yo puedo leer y escribir, in Spanish) and “Yes, I Can Continue” (Yo, sí puedo seguir, in Spanish). At the end of May 2012, the number of graduates of the Yo, sí puedo program totals 6,775,332 and of the Yo, sí puedo seguir program, the total number is 853,088.

Cuba has provided its international cooperation to various Latin American and Caribbean countries in the reduction of disaster risks. It also participates with
agencies and bodies in the United Nations System on projects interested in reducing
disaster risks.

(6) Special Problems for Cuba

Despite the worldwide annual support for the UN-resolutions to end the blockade
(“embargo”) against Cuba, the U.S. continues this violation of the U.N. Charta and
other provisions of international laws and principles.

In addition, the current U.S. administration prolongs the long-ongoing policies of
hostility and aggressions, subversions and financial manipulations, and even the
illegal occupation of Guantanamo Bay (a portion of national territory).

Furthermore, the U.S. and groups based mostly in Florida are recruiting, financing
and using mercenaries and terrorists for the anti-Cuban US policy. The explicit goal is
a “regime change” and the U.S. government has even established a “Coordinator for
the Transition in Cuba” under U.S. President Bush Jr.

The current government has earmarked 20 million US$ per fiscal year for USAID and
the State Department, for public operations directed to create a “regime change” in
Cuba. Much more financial resources have been mobilized for U.S. intelligence
service undercover activities (in the U.S. Interest Section in Havanna more than 400
persons are working!). One of the publicised cases is the U.S. citizen Alan Gross who
delivered in clandestine manner manifold high-tech equipment into Cuba, some of
which is only used be CIA etc.

Based on such U.S.-provoked and -constructed cases the U.S. dominated mass
media conglomerates inside and outside the U.S. conduct many media campaigns
against Cuba in order to produce a negative image and in order to hinder foreign
investment, tourism and further development – in the final consequence to destroy
the socialist Cuba. In Germany we have also detected such examples of media
manipulations by fundamentalist groups like IGfM (Internationale Gesellschaft für
Menschenrechte, Frankfurt/M.).