

For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Regarding the upcoming review of the human rights situation in Cuba, as President of the Danish-Cuban Association - and as a Master of International Development Studies specializing in Cuba - I humbly ask you to consider the following points:

In terms of economic infrastructure, Cuba is a developing country. However, in terms of health and education, Cuba offers its citizens world class access, and free of charge. Cuba also guarantees housing for everyone, and no Cuban must go to bed hungry. These basic human rights, guaranteed by the Cuban State not only in the words of the Constitution put in reality, are not guaranteed by any industrialized country in the world. This reflects the will and determination of the Cuban people to not just pay lip service, but to make these rights, part of the UN Charter, real. A right is not a right if you cannot exercise it.

Cuba not only makes sure that its own citizens have these basic rights. Hundreds of thousands of Africans and Latin Americans have benefitted from Cuban international solidarity in the fields of health and education. Cuban doctors and nurses have made sure that human beings on other continents have the right to basic health care; Cuban teachers have made sure that they can read and write and thereby participate in the development of their society. No industrialized country has ever freed another people from illiteracy, as has Cuba in Venezuela and Nicaragua.

Cuba is a frontrunner in gender equality, the fight against racial discrimination and the rights of sexual minorities. There is no State religion in Cuba, and more than 400 religions are exercised without any type of repression.

Cuba abolished the death penalty in 2009. Cuban trials are known to be conducted, and prisoners in Cuban jails are known to be treated - in accordance with international law.

Cuban democracy is not based on economic power and conflicts between different interest groups, but on the participation of Cuban mass organizations who represent almost every single adult Cuban. These mass organizations have their own media, accesible to every Cuban. The Cuban citizen is thus guaranteed her or his right to participate in democracy, including through mass media, as the US Charter demands.

The Cuban Constitution guarantees the right to work. While workers in the rest of the world are fired and at the same time blamed for losing their jobs, the Cuban State blames itself if there is not enough work for everyone fit to work and seeks to create these jobs while the low number of unemployed receive economic help that guarantees a dignified everyday life.