

DOMINICA CUBA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION (DCFA)

THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (2nd CYCLE)

Cuba

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The Dominica Cuba Friendship Association is a non-political organization established with its main objectives being:

- 1.* The promotion and fostering of deeper friendship and understanding between the people of the Sovereign Republic of Cuba (Cuba) and the Commonwealth of Dominica (Dominica)
- 2.* Promotion of social and cultural exchange between Dominica and Cuba

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Introduction

This document seek to express clear support for Cuba and its accomplishment in terms of its human rights achievement as it comes under the scrutiny of the **United Nations Universal Periodic Cycle Review (2nd Cycle)**

1. The Legal and Institutional Framework for the promotion of Human Rights

The constitution of Cuba recognizes basic human right and freedoms. Mechanism and processes are in place so that some form of recourse is available when an individual feels that his or her rights are being contravened.

2. Equality and Non-discrimination

Cuba has come a long way from the pre 1960 era when discrimination on the basis of colour was practically institutionalized. Today people of different colour and race live harmoniously side by side without fair of racial attacks or favouritism based on the colour of their skin or race.

3. Rights to life, Liberty and Personal Security

Cuba remains one of the safest countries in the world to live in today. The government invests a lot in the security of its people and of the state. It is well know that crimes considered of a serious nature by the government were resolved within 48 hours of the occurrence and re-enacted on television.

4. The Freedom of Religion and Beliefs, of Expression of Association and Peaceful Assembly and the Right to participate in Political Life

Cuba over the years has become one of the countries with a diversity of religion which is uncompered. Religion of Africa origin is widely and openly practiced, so too are the other traditional forms of religion such as the Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, and Seventh Day Adventist. The pope in recent times has visited Cuba twice in the last fifteen years celebrating mass with thousands in the open all over the country.

5. The Right to Health, Education, Food and Culture

It is well known that the Cuban education system is in par with that of the developed countries in terms of quality and standard with the exception that education in Cuba is free from kinder garden to university. This has translated to the health sector in which Cuba can boast as having one of the best health care systems in the world which in addition is free to all its citizens.

6. International Cooperation in Health, Education and Dealing with Natural Disasters

Cuba has shown over the years the true meaning of brotherhood. Thousand of professionals have been made out of students from the African continent, Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States. Most of these students would have found it almost impossible to pursue such level of education due to financial constraints; no other country in the world can parallel Cuba's education contribution to humanity. In my country Dominica for example, more than two hundred professionals have been formed over the years and presently approximate ninety percent (90%) of our primary health care professionals were trained in Cuba. Dominica recently obtained for the first time in its history an intensive care unit and nursing school thanks to the direct contribution to the project by the Cuban Government.

7. Obstacles and Problems Preventing the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Cuba.

While Cuba is a signatory to the human rights convention and work feverishly to making such rights a norm of every day life, it is not difficult to see the sort of obstacle that a fifty (50) year old economic embargo would have in terms of accomplishing the goals of such conventions. Difficulties in obtaining critical materials for production, medicine and food etc., has not only served as a criminal obstacles but has meant that the U.S. is indirectly denying the people of Cuba their basic human rights; businesses and individuals from the U.S. or doing business with the U.S. are penalised sometimes in the harshest as provided by law.

Conclusion

Cuba has made tremendous strides at complying with international human rights treaties and conventions against the backdrop of an almost crippling, immoral and unilaterally imposed economic embargo by the United States of America. Despite this, Cuba remains committed to the respect and promotion of the basic human right of it people and has fulfilled the requests arising from the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2009.