

Finnish-Cuban Friendship Association
(Suomi-Kuuba-Seura r.y. / Asociación de Amistad Finlandia-Cuba)

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NGO *without* consultative status in ECOSOC

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**Written submission to the UN Human Rights Council
for the Review of Cuba under Universal Periodic Review**

FINNISH-CUBAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

1. Finnish-Cuban Friendship Association was founded in 1963 to promote friendship and cooperation between the people of Cuba and Finland. For almost 50 years the Association has co-operated with Cuban institutions and organizations in various development projects promoting human rights of all Cubans, and especially of the most vulnerable groups of the population, including children, disabled people and women.
2. The Association's interest and involvement in Cuba is continuous. The Association collaborates with other development NGOs, Cuban migrants, members of parliament, universities, researchers and journalists to create awareness of the Cuban society and to promote further collaboration between the peoples of Finland and Cuba.

CUBA AND HUMAN RIGHTS

3. Finnish-Cuban Friendship Association wants to point out that Cuba has always maintained a high level of cooperation with United Nations human rights procedures and mechanisms and has accepted a high number of recommendations in the first UPR cycle.
4. The policy of hostility and the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States administration against Cuba has been a serious obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights and the basic freedoms of all Cubans.
5. The so-called common position of the European Union is the main obstacle that prevents a successful human rights dialogue from taking place between Cuba and the European Union.
6. Cuba has stated and shown a clear willingness to have a profound dialogue on human rights with individual countries as well as with the international community. This dialogue must be based on respecting the sovereignty and self-determination of all parties, including Cuba.
7. The US blockade of Cuba, the common position of the European Union and the continuing hostility against Cuba must end in order to Cuba have a real possibility to guarantee the full enjoyment of human rights for all its' citizens.
8. Human rights are universal and belong to all. The same requirements should be made to all countries without discrimination and the use of international human rights mechanisms as a tool of political purposes.