

**Submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Cuba, 2nd circle
16th Session, April/May 2013**

Submitted by the Federation of Greek Women (ΟΓΕ)

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Federation of Greek Women (ΟΓΕ)



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I. Introduction

- 1.** This submission contains the main points that the Federation of Greek Women would like to pinpoint in relation to the Universal Periodic Review of Cuba regarding human rights and in particular women's and children's rights
- 2.** The Federation of Greek Women has a long-standing work around key issues presented in this submission
- 3.** Since 2009 we had been able, through visits and exchanges, to collect further evidence and first hand information on the related issues

II. The status of women's and children's rights

- 1.** Since the victory of the Cuban revolution, the rights of the women and children have been at the core of the social policies of the state. The role of the women in the struggle against the Batista dictatorship has been an important one, and in the consequent years they occupy a central role in the political and social life, in the defence and expansion of the achievements of the Cuban revolution.
- 2.** Women participate actively in the political life. More than 1/3 of the members of the National Assembly are women, ranking Cuba very highly on world level on terms of female participation.
- 3.** The Cuban constitution consecrates fundamental and advanced social and political rights of women and children, Article 44 explicitly provides for the equal opportunities among men and women. For example, among the university students women count more than the half. Racial discriminations do not exist.
- 4.** Cuba has ratified a series of international conventions on the women and children rights as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children , Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

III. Main developments since 2009

- 1.** The first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review concerning Cuba took place on 2009. Following the discussion at the Human Rights Council a number of suggestions and recommendations had been endorsed by Cuba.

2. Certain developments and steps had been undertaken to enhance and highlight the protection of the children's rights, with positive results acknowledged by various international bodies.

3. UNESCO in its 2011 Report on Lifelong Learning underlines the high educational development of Cuba, rated 14th in the world. UNICEF representative in Cuba also highlighted the attention to children's rights in Cuba in November 2011.

4. On the same year Cuba tabled the periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child as well as the initial report by virtue of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the participation of children in armed conflict.

5. As a result of the Cuban public healthcare system, which guarantees to all people free of charge access, the infant mortality rate in 2011 was 4.9 per 1.000, and the maternal mortality rate 40.6 per 100,000, that is a very low rate internationally, comparable with developed countries.

IV. Obstacles and problems

1. The ongoing illegal US blockade on Cuba, denounced in successive UN GS resolutions, and its policy of aggressions that has resorted in numerous interventions, including military interventions, financing of mercenaries, terrorist activities, to topple the legitimate government has been a serious obstacle to the social development of Cuba.

2. The consequences of the blockade are cruel especially in sensitive social sectors, very relevant to the women and children rights like the healthcare system. From May 2010 to April 2011, negative impacts on the health sector were around 15 million dollars. Many problems, indicated in a series of publications,

3. Negative impact have also the stance of other powers, namely the EU with the unexampled "common position" on Cuba which seeks to condition Cuban people's sovereign choices and impose unequal relations .

4. The lifting of these obstacles and the respect for the Cuban sovereignty are indispensable for the further development of the rights of Cuban women and children