

GUYANA / CUBA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

4th October 2012

For the Attention of the ONU High Commission

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the Guyana Cuba Friendship Association, the umbrella organization for the Organization of Parents of Students Studying in Cuba, the Committee for the Freedom of the Five Cuban Heroes, Friends of Cuba, Graduated Students of Cuba, we would like to make our contribution our Solidarity and Support for the People of Guyana and expressing sentiments about Cuba's UPR in the Second Cycle. They are as follows:

- a. That we hail the triumph of the Revolution which allowed the Cuban People to attain their true independence and full, universal enjoyment of civil, political,, cultural, economic and social rights for free self-determination, development, peace and for a fair, democratic and equitable international order.
- b. That from 2009 until presently in 2012, Cuba has continued to move through a process of permanent and profound transformations to improve the socialist system, endorsed and built by its people with the aim of advancing towards a society that fairer day to day, freer and more independent, acting in solidarity, equitableness and productive actions.
- c. That the policy of hostility, blockade and aggressions by successive United States Administrations against Cuba has been a serious obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights and the basic freedoms of all Cubans, including their rights to life, peace, free self-determination and development. The most serious aspect of that policy is that it violates the most elementary rights of the Cuban People.
- d. That Cuba has always maintained a high level of cooperation with the United Nations Human Rights Procedures and mechanisms of non-discriminatory nature and of universal application.
- e. That Cuba has fulfilled the recommendations arising from the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) 2009. Cuba has always been ready to participate in frank and genuine dialogue about human rights on a basis of respect for its full dignity and sovereignty. Cuba accepted a high number of recommendations in the first Universal Periodic Review (UPR) cycle.
- f. That the unfair and malicious political-media campaigns against Cuba promoted by the United States are ignorant about the achievements of the country in Human Rights and have a negative impact on the United Nations Human Rights Instruments. The US Government funds and guides individuals to commit illegal acts in Cuba and, for this purpose, it urges them to abuse official UN Human Rights mechanisms and procedures.



**"BONDS OF
FRIENDSHIP -
STRONGER
TOGETHER"**

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In addition to the foregoing, we would like to highlight some salient issues for Cuba's Universal Periodic Review (2nd Cycle). They are as follows:

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

- ✓ That the Cuban Constitution recognizes basic Human Rights and Freedoms.
- ✓ That the right to Life, liberty and inviolability of persons and their personal integrity are recognized, along with the right to work, time off and social security, the inviolability of the home and correspondence, the right not to be prosecuted and convicted without having access to a competent court by virtue of laws prior to the crime and with the formalities and guarantees established therein, the right to legal defense, the right of persons not to be forced to testify by the use of violence or coercion of any kind, the application of retroactivity of criminal law when favorable to the prosecuted, the obligation to observe legalities, the obligation to comply with verdicts and other final court resolutions and control and preservation of legalities by the Attorney General's Office.
- ✓ That the principal occurrence related to the legal and institutional framework of Human Rights in the last few years has been the adopting of the Economic and Social Policy Guidelines in 2011, seeking to update the Cuban economic model, elevate the quality of life of Cubans and move towards a society that is ever fairer, freer, more independent and acting in solidarity, as well as the defense of the country's independence and sovereignty.
- ✓ That Cuba is a State Party to numerous international instruments dealing with the matters such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination of Women; Discrimination on the Rights of the Child; Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Participation of Children in Armed Conflict; International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid; UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education; Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, amongst others.
- ✓ That norms regarding the transfer of land to peasants and other citizens have been adopted, as well as those referring to social security, employment, housing, etc. At the same time, Cuba is working on

amendments that will be incorporated into the Criminal Code, the Family Code and the Labor Code.

2 Cooperation with Treaty Bodies and Other Non-Discriminatory United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms.

- ✓ That Cuba maintains a high level of cooperation and interaction with the United Nations regarding Human Rights procedures and mechanisms of non-discriminatory nature and of universal application. It has always shown its unequivocal willingness to dialogue on all subjects and with all States, supported by reciprocal respect, sovereign equality and acknowledgement of every people having the right to choose their own political, economic and social system.
- ✓ That Cuba presented three (3) reports to Human Rights Treaty Bodies, namely: The Second Periodic Report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011), the combined reports of the 14th to 18th to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2011) and the combined second, third and fourth reports to the Committee Against Torture (2012).
- ✓ That Cuba also sent another three (3) reports for the corresponding consideration, namely: the seventh and eight combined periodic reports by virtue of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2010), the initial report by virtue of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the participation of Children in armed conflict (2011), and the initial report by virtue of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2012).

3. Equality and Non-discrimination

- ✓ That Cuba has promoted numerous measures and initiatives in the last four years with a view to continue moving forward in its effort to attain broader enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all on an equal basis and without discrimination for any reason whatsoever.
- ✓ That those measures include boys and girls, youth, senior citizens, the disabled, prison inmates, etc. The Cuban Government has also adopted measures to fight against forms of discrimination for any reason whatsoever.

4. The Right to Life, Liberty and Personal Security

- ✓ That in Cuba no death sentence has been passed by the Courts since the last Universal Periodic Review report.

- ✓ That 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. The decision was adopted as a sovereign act, in accordance with the humanitarian conduct and ethics of the Cuban Revolution from its beginnings. Today in Cuba there is no longer anyone sentenced to the death penalty.

5. The Administration of Justice, Including the Fight against Impunity, and the Rule of Law.

- ✓ That 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.
- ✓ That the Cuban judicial system is based on the principle of absolute independence of Judges individually and of the entire system of the Courts in the function of dealing justice; the popular nature of justice; the elective nature of Judges (both professional and lay Judges); the absolute equality of all persons before the law; the presumption of innocence; all trials are public, except in cases excepted by law; all rulings of the courts may be appealed according to stipulations established by law in each case; every accused party has the right to legal defense.

6. The Freedom of Religion and Beliefs, of Expression, of Association and Peaceful Assembly and the Right to Participate in Public and Political Life.

- ✓ That 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. It must be noted that 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 alien to legitimate concerns over Human Rights.
- ✓ That 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.
- ✓ That 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 judicial organization of Cuba (national laws) within whose framework all

activities must be undertaken according to stipulations in Article 3 of the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 9, 1998. None of these qualify under the concept of Human Rights Defenders as established in that Declaration.

- ✓ That in Cuba, Human Rights Defenders are protected, in equal conditions, according to the postulates of the Declaration of Human Rights Defenders. Nobody in Cuba has been persecuted or penalized for peacefully exercising their rights, including those of expression, opinion or 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.
- ✓ That 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 takes place without any impediments.

7. The Right to Work and Fair Satisfactory Working Conditions and the Right to Social Security and an Adequate Standard of Living.

- ✓ That Cuba has ratified 88 ILO Conventions. Workers fundamental rights and those of the unions in Cuba are not only in the Constitution but in the Labor Code in force and complementary legislation ensures full exercise of those rights.

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

- ✓ That Cuba continues 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 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.
- ✓ That 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.

- ✓ That Culture is promoted in the country as a grass roots phenomenon, promoting equality, opportunities for the development of the potential of every citizen, with no distinctions.

9. International Cooperation in Health, Education and Dealing with National Disasters.

- ✓ That 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 0f 2012, 2,261,987 surgeries have been performed.
- ✓ That 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 has 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.
- ✓ That Cuba broadened its cooperation in the processes of literacy and post literacy campaigns using the Cuban method called “Yes, I can” (*Yo, si puedo* in Spanish) (UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize), “I can Read and Write Now” (*Yo puedo leer y escribir*, in Spanish). At the end of May 2012, the number of graduates of the *Yo, si puedo* program totals 6,775,332 and of the *Yo, si puedo seguir* program, the number is 853,088.
- ✓ That 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 sytem on projects interested in reducing disaster risks.

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

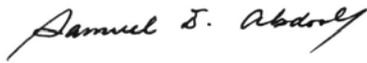
- ✓ That among those obstacles are: The ongoing policy of hostility, blockade and aggressions by successive US Administrations, the illegal occupation of a portion of national territory on which, at an US Naval base, an international center for torture and other lese-humanite crimes is in operation; recruitment, financing and use of mercenaries and terrorists at the service of the anti-Cuban US policy which acts against the Cuban

people, and the increase of US Government funds and means destined to finance the so-called ‘human rights defenders’ in Cuba, among others.

- ✓ That for the 2010 and 2011 fiscal years, the administration of President Obama earmarked 40 million dollars (20 million per fiscal year) through USAID and the State Department, for public operations directed to impose a “change of regime” in Cuba. Much more money has been channeled for its intelligence service undercover actions.

The Guyana Cuba Friendship Association remains steadfast in its support and Solidarity of the Cuban People until the blockade is removed, all sanctions lifted, the Cuban Five Heroes are freed and cordial, friendly relations and legitimate trade are restored with Cuba.

Sincerely,
Guyana/Cuba Friendship Association

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samuel D. Abdool".

Samuel D. Abdool
President