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from the Swedish Peace Council, SPC

The Swedish Peace Council is a NGO founded in 1946 with the aim to gather peace organizations and individual peace activists in Sweden to work together for peace, disarmament and prevention of armed conflicts. Many Swedish peace organisations are members of the SPC which also collaborates with a broad spectrum of peace organisations in the Nordic area. The SPC is represented on the board of the International Peace Bureau.

(1) In view of the second UPR concerning the Republic of Cuba several members of the SPC have visited Cuba before and after the first UPR of Cuba in 2009. We noted the great and positive interest that the many speakers expressed for Cuba's Human Rights record in the UPR 2009. The recommendations also constituted a clear expression of the continuous progress in respect for the Human Rights that Cuba has shown since 1959.

(2) In our following up of the performance since the first UPR in 2009 we can establish that Cuba has continued its efforts to improve its good practices following the recommendations given, in spite of the severe limitations imposed by the US over 50 years long economic blockade of the country.

(3) Cuba has for example continued and developed its

- participatory democracy and reached the millennium goals despite the US economic, trade and financial blockade
- promotion of the human rights, focusing on children and the old, the education and health care, reaching even higher goals than 3 years ago, although the economic difficulties created mainly by the US blockade, but also internal obstacles, have made it difficult to solve the housing problems
- moratorium on the death penalty
- priority given to agriculture and food security, where Cuba's efforts so often has been highlighted by the FAO, although there is still a lot to do etc.

(4) Some recommendations from 2009 are proof in themselves of Cuba's already consolidated achievements, for example the recommendations to share with other countries their good practices in

- gender equality, becoming in 2012 one of the world's most advanced countries when it comes to women's representation in parliaments on all levels, and in higher state positions
- eliminating household violence where Cuba - where the physical violence is nowhere near other countries in America - has advanced to the forefront in bringing attention to the often forgotten psychological violence
- guaranteeing access for all to culture, but also participation with a strong movement of amateurs
- supporting vulnerable groups, youth, disabled persons, where the list of examples would be extensive and where Cuba also shows its recent advancement like in the experience of movie shows also for blind persons and persons with impaired sight
- the sustained effort to make information technology and access to internet available to all, in spite of the difficulties presented by the US blockade, that sharply limits their access to both hardware and software and to underwater cable connection
- protection against nature's disasters, also widely and repeatedly appreciated by international organisation, including the UN's special organs
- international collaboration, perhaps the most outstanding human development aid any country has provided, with proofs all over the world, of alphabetization programs, basic health care, higher education of specialists like medical doctors and others. The high moral and ethics shown among other places in Haiti after the 2008 disaster bears more than sufficient proofs of Cuba's outstanding example.

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- fighting and preventing HIV and AIDS, where Cuba maintains its place as one of the most successful countries in the world and – which was not mentioned in the 2009 UPR – the dedicated struggle against homophobia, also in the forefront worldwide and so on, including the adaptation of laws to comply with UN conventions and guarantees against violations against international prison standards, etc.

(5) As Peace Council, considering peace and freedom from foreign aggression - including covert actions – as one of the most basic human rights, we especially want to put emphasis on Cuba's proven dedication to maintaining peace and promoting peaceful conflict solutions in all international arenas and circumstances, as recently also proven in promotion peace talks in the half a century long social and economic conflict in Colombia.

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Kemal Görgü
President