

LABOUR UNION OF IOANNINA, GREECE

To the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Republic of Cuba

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### A. Political System

The Cuban government has undertaken a far-reaching and excellent democratization process across all sectors of the country's political, economical and social life. The genuinely democratic political system which boasts broad popular participation is based on human dignity, on equality and on the real and effective exercise of human rights. The survival of this system in these difficult times of war threats, total economic isolation and sabotage can only be explained on the grounds of its democratic bases. The Cuban political system thus is a consequent succession of liberating efforts and plights which started in 1858 and 1895 and culminated on January 1 1959. Since that time, the Cuban people, for the first time in their history, have been holding real power in their hands and have waged a victorious battle against the barbarous aggressiveness of their external enemies. The historical victory of the people against analphabetism, the continuous learning courses, the education of workers and peasants and the diffusion of scientific education have demanded the coordinated effort of society as a whole so that Jose Marti's vision could be fulfilled: " Education is one of the ways towards freedom".

Workers conscientiously took on their role in the generation of national wealth. They were the undisputable heroes of the economical transformation of the country, offering innumerable solutions to production and services.

Cuba's policies on health, social care, education, culture, the basic rights to subsistence and to intellectual development, have been internationally acclaimed for their success and are also based on solid social participation and continuous popular action.

The authenticity and the originality of Cuba's political system and institutions is striking. The basic trait of Cuban democracy is that it corrects distortions, erases mistakes, overcomes obstacles, opens up and conceives new democratic ways through the intervention of the people. Despite its continuous and systematic persecution by its enemies, the country has created and keeps creating new forms of democratic participation which are being constantly perfected, improved and renewed. The establishment and the development of Cuban democratic institutions is best described by the Cuban people's will to resist and transform. The continuous

development of popular consciousness has advanced hand in hand with the increase of the people's cultural standard, of education, social and material progress.

### B. The Free Voting System

The election of the representatives of constituencies forms the basis of the Cuban political system. Candidates are proposed and elected in neighbourhood assemblies. Voting is free, secret and direct. Votes are counted in public. One can be elected if he or she receives more than 50% of votes. Elected representatives give regular accounts to their voters and are subject to revocation, based on the mandate relation which is established by the political system. Elected representatives at all levels do not receive any kind of compensation. The voting system is unfamiliar with petty politics, electoral fraud, vote buying and mental manipulation of public opinion. This global democracy has supported the Rule of Law.

The essence of the Cuban political system places an emphasis on the genuine integration of society as a whole into the decision-making procedure. Discussing public issues, from those of national importance to local ones, contributes to social unity and leads to the adaptation and implementation of measures of high practical value. Solutions are sought for at a collective level, responsibilities are distributed, social convergence and popular control are being actively promoted.

Mass organizations, social and professional formations and other forms of collectivities offer possibilities and channel the interests and the preoccupations of the different parts of the civil society. In Cuba, assemblies allow the effective participation of workers in democracy. With the participation of the people, democracy becomes perfect so that the human being becomes intellectually stronger, the human existence and work acquire gain in creativity and life acquires a higher quality.

Democracy in Cuba produces citizens who assume their responsibilities, their rights and obligations in a free and conscientious way. Democratic rules demand frugality, modesty, devotion to serving the people, transparency of public offices and an exemplary life of citizens. Leaders come from the people, account to the people for their deeds and are revoked by the people. In 1996 a Code of Ethics of Cuban State Officials was adopted, which ratified the basis of their political and moral engagement to Society.

### C. Human Rights

The provisions of articles 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61 and 63 of Chapter VII, "Fundamental Rights, Obligations and Guarantees" of the current Constitution of the Republic of Cuba exalt, shield and protect the fundamental rights of freedom of

speech and press, the freedom of gathering, the freedom of demonstration, the freedom of association, religious freedom, the inviolability of domicile, the secrecy of correspondence, the inviolability of the freedom of Cuban citizens and of foreigners residing in Cuban territory, the inviolability of the corporal integrity of detainees and prisoners, the natural judge principle, the principle of application of ex post facto laws in case these are favourable to the defendant, the prohibition of ex post facto criminal laws, the citizens' right to petition.

The massive and social collectivities are facilitated and their members enjoy the widest possible freedom of speech and thought, based on the unrestricted rights to original thought and criticism. Differences based on the gender, colour, religious convictions of Cuban citizens and foreigners alike as well as all kinds of racism have been eliminated in the Republic of Cuba, as is well known and acknowledged worldwide.

#### D. Social Rights

Provisions 45, 46, 47, 48,49, 50, 51 and 52 of Chapter VII of the Constitution exalt, shield and protect the fundamental rights to work, the right to rest and leisure, the right to free social insurance, the right to protection and hygiene at work, the right to free medical and hospital care, the right to education and housing. These provisions establish the equal value and full interdependence of both what the United Nations calls Civil Rights as well as the so-called financial, social and cultural rights, which are respected and fully protected in Cuba, at the same time when leading powers like the USA and a part of the non-governmental organizations directed by them, support the doctrine that the above mentioned rights are not binding and should remain a mere aspiration of the people. The reason is obvious and manifest: The principal concept behind these rights goes back to the rights to subsistence and intellectual development, the base and source of which is the nature and very existence of human beings. Contemporary citizens demand that their biological need for subsistence and education be satisfied. Food, housing, health, work and education support humans and keep them alive. The Republic of Cuba and its ever evolving social system establish and provide all those essential conditions for the broadening, the promotion and development of human rights of all kinds.

Today it has been acknowledged worldwide that the education and health systems of the Republic of Cuba are among the best in the world, constituting a source of pride for Cubans. There are currently 42 thousand volunteer Cuban citizens; doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians and academics offering their disinterested services in about 10 third world countries. Cuban universities currently provide free education to over 30 thousand young people from 118 countries. The Republic of Cuba voted in support of resolution 60251, which established the Human Rights Council. This is why Cuba presented its candidacy to the Council and set out its commitments. It was elected with 135 votes, that is more than two thirds of General Assembly members, despite pressure exerted by the government of the USA and by

the European Union, which actively opposed the Cuban candidacy. During last year, the Republic of Cuba worked in a constructive manner and in a spirit of cooperation. Cuba reiterates its commitment towards this new instrument and to the mechanism of its Regular Revision.

With honor,

Nastos Dimitrios