Sri Lanka National Committee for Solidarity with Cuba

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The Sri Lanka National Committee for Solidarity with Cuba is a voluntary civil society organization formed in February 2006. It is engaged in the study of developments in Cuba and promoting solidarity and friendship between the peoples of Sri Lanka and Cuba through various public actions such as lectures, publications, seminars and acts of solidarity.

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Human Rights

01. In Cuba right to life of all citizens is respected and guaranteed through the provision and enjoyment of a wide range of political, economic, cultural and social rights.

02. Citizens are provided with food security through a guaranteed way of living through employment and the supply of essential services such as education, health at no cost to the citizens.

03. In addition Cuba provides scholarships for foreign students to study in Cuba. This facility is mostly used by low-income families of a large number of countries including the United States.

04. Cuba has attained a very high degree in providing complete and free healthcare for its citizens.

05. Freedom of conscience is guaranteed in the Constitution. There is complete freedom for all religions and beliefs. There are some 400 religions and religious institutions in Cuba.

06. State and church are separated. All religions are treated equally.

07. Parents are free to give religious education to their children according to their choice.

08. Cuba does not implement the death penalty. Those sentenced to death penalty have their conviction changed to 3 years life imprisonment. In addition no death penalty is imposed on those who are below 18 years in age or mentally ill. Women are also not sentenced to death.

09. There are no extra-judicial trials in Cuba. All court proceedings are open and according to the law. In the prisons Cuba attaches more importance to

corrective measures. Prisoners are provided with adequate nutritious food, medicine and recreation facilities.

10. There is no torture practiced in Cuba and there is not a single instance of involuntary disappearances there

11. One main obstacle to the development of human rights in is the criminal blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba. It prevents the country from trading with other countries according to their necessities, since the United States using extra-territorial unjust laws violates international norms of trade and imposes fines on commercial and other enterprises and firms having economic exchanges with Cuba. This has prevented Cuba from importing various medicines, food products and other essentials needed for its population. The effect of the blockade is actually genocidal in character. Though certain positive steps were taken by the Obama Administration in its Second term President Trump has tightened the blockade and reversed some of the positive steps taken towards normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States.

    In spite of the UN General Assembly's near unanimous call for ending the blockade year after year the United State refuses to accept world opinion and still clings adamantly to it. The UN itself has been unable to make any realistic contribution to change the status quo.

12. One of the dangers facing Cuba as a nation is the open hostile propaganda and plans aimed at overthrowing the legitimate Government of Cuba by aggression and subversion that originate in the United States. These external threats also undermine more speedy improvement of the human rights situation in the country.

<u>Democracy</u>

13. In Cuba there is participatory democracy of a high degree. Elections are held regularly. Very high participation of voters at elections, often exceeding 90 % shows the democratic nature of the election process.

14. Mass organizations are involved in nominating candidates for elections and are also represented in national and provincial representative bodies.

15. There is provision to recall elected representatives by voters.

16. National State Assembly reflects broadly the diversity of the population and all nationalities, religions and professional groups are represented.

17. People are consulted through nationwide discussions about important legislation before they are adopted. For example, recently, the proposals of the Conceptualization of the Cuban economic and social model and the Bases of the National Development Plan until 2030 were discussed by 1.6 million Cubans (over 47,000 meetings), from which over 200,000 proposals emerged, aimed at ensuring a more just, free, independent, equitable, democratic, collaborative and participatory society.

<u>Economy</u>

18. Following the introduction of the new economic model the legal system and institutional framework have been updated appropriately.

19. This legislative update has been reflected in new or renewed rules regarding the leasing of land, social security, employment, housing and self-employment, and the migration policy, among other areas.

20. New opportunities were given to people to start microbusiness ventures.