



POGO WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

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Written submission on Cuba's Universal Periodic Review by POGO

1. The Progressive Women's Movement of POGO (Pancyprian Federation of Women's Organisations), a non- governmental organization, was founded in 1959 to replace the Pancyprian Organisation of Democratic Women established in 1950. POGO is recognized as one of the main organisations in Cyprus the activities of which focus on gender equality and social justice. It is also one of the most active pro-solutionist organisations and a protagonist in the common struggle of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot women for peace in Cyprus.
2. Simultaneously, POGO is an active member of the WIDF (Women's International Democratic Federation) and for a third consecutive term it holds the position of the Vice- President. Through its positive contribution to WIDF and participation in numerous bilateral and regional initiatives it maintains an active role in the international progressive women's movement. In fact, through its international work and activities, POGO acknowledges the significance of international solidarity towards all suffering women irrespective of their country of origin. More specific, it recognises the significance of solidarity against social injustice, repression and war throughout the world.
3. As POGO, we would like to contribute on the issue of Cuba's Universal Periodic Review. We feel strongly the need to add on this issue our own position; based both on our relation with the UN and our sincere interest and concern for the safeguarding of human rights, in particular gender equality, world-wide.
4. Our written submission is based on our own first hand experiences from the several times that we have visited Cuba for various reasons and purposes. Additionally, it is founded on the continuous study of the Cuban post-revolution experience with regards to the empowerment of women and gender equality.



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5. We acknowledge that the progress of Cuba in the aforementioned areas is of particular significance, considering the difficult political environment within which it has been achieved. Cuba is a state which has encountered for many decades deplorable embargoes and severe diplomatic countermeasures for its political orientation. Nonetheless, despite the economic regression imposed upon Cuba, it has achieved an admirable record on the advancement of gender equality. Cuba is within the limited group of countries that have met the Millennium Development Goals and is advancing in the implementation of Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.

In recent years infantile mortality in Cuba is among the lowest in the world; it has been confirmed that in the first semester of the current year this rate is at 4.1 for every 1000 live births. In the same way, Cuba was the first country to prove the elimination of HIV/AIDS and congenital syphilis transmission from mother to infant.

6. Contrary to the misinformation provided through media, in Cuba there are periodic elections in which people are highly involved. In Cuba's election process, all citizens- men and women- have equal access to the highest public positions, based on their capabilities and merits and not dependent on their economic, financial capacity or gender.
7. As the numbers reveal, Cuba has outpaced the majority of developed states in the political empowerment of women. The percentage of women parliamentarians (48,9%) brings Cuba to the third place among the UN member states, whereas countries like Germany (23rd place) and the USA (104th place) are far below. Similarly, Cuba appears among the states where women hold numerous high-level ministerial



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positions. In fact, Cuba consistently ranks high in international surveys regarding the status of women, standing at 18 among 142 nations in women's political empowerment.

8. Cuba's internal policies, legally founded on article 40 of the Constitution, which endorses in a rather specific manner the equality of men and women at all aspects of social activity, have targeted the education of women. Before the 1959 revolution Cuba, women made up only 5 percent of university graduates and 12 percent of the work force. Today, despite the economic regression caused mainly due to the policies of the USA, Cuba has provided its people with substantial and equal educational opportunities. This is reflected in the numbers of women participating in the island's work force, including more than half of university faculties. Additionally, women make up the majority of high school and college graduates, the majority in technical and administrative jobs, 33.6% of directors and executives, added to the percentage of women parliamentarians and ministers and the remarkable 65% of the island's mayors and provincial governors.
9. It is underlined, that the advancement of women participation in the political and economic activities of the country, is not the result of electoral or hiring quotas, contrary to the example of other countries. Notwithstanding that there is always space for advancement, the progress of Cuba on gender equality reflects the progressive state of the social culture of its people as a whole.
10. Cuban women receive equal pay for equal work with men and have the right to a pension for total or partial invalidity,



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widow's pension, the right to land, to receive bank credits as well as paid leave and subsequent allowances, which women employees benefit before giving birth and until the child is one year old, at the same time offering fathers the possibility to use the same benefits following agreement between the couple and once breast-feeding period is over. This right, with the new modifications which have been approved, is extended to grandmothers and grandfathers. Moreover, the child care and semi-boarding system constitutes a support for the introduction of women to the economic life.

11. In addition to the respective provisions of the Cuban Constitution, there has been an ample and ongoing legislative activity in safeguarding and furthering the rights of women. Some examples are Law No. 1289 of 14 February 1975, Law No. 49 of 28 December 1984, Labour Code, Right to Protection, Security and Hygiene of Work Law No.13 of 27 February 1977 and its Regulation, Law No.1263 of 16 January 1974, Maternity Law for the working woman, and following resolutions of 1991 and 2001, Bill 234 "of the maternity of the working woman of 13 August 2003, The Right-Law No.339 broadens and establishes new rights for the mother and father, for a the family and general, for the protection of maternity and the care of underage children, promotes larger integration of the family in the caring of the children and stimulates the permanence and reincorporation of the woman to her job. The larger benefit for the working mother: guarantee the care of her children by Ministerial Resolution 5/2017, directed to the service of boarding and semi-boarding in Primary Education, gives broader autonomy to the Councils of school Directions in order to carry out verification of applications, of granting and making public the granted capacities. One more important law approved to favour women's social participation is the Family Code, in force since 1975, which among other supports equality of labour



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opportunities without discrimination between sexes. Article 44 of the Republic's Constitution states that "the State guarantees that women are offered the same opportunities and possibilities offered to men, in order to achieve their full participation in the development of the country.

12. Moreover, we would like to note that Cuba is a state party to numerous international instruments which, inter alia, have to do with the rights of women and girls. Some examples are the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; Convention on the Rights of the Child; Optional Protocol to the Convention on 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 and Training of Mercenaries. Furthermore, in February of 2009, it ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. More recently it has adhered to: the International Convention for the Protection of Persons from Enforced Disappearance (February 2, 2009); ILO Recommendation 200 concerning HIV and AIDS and the world of work (February 13, 2012); the UN Convention against Corruption (July 28, 2008).

13. The participation of Cuba in all the above-mentioned international instruments and Conventions is another indication of its sought level of cooperation and interaction with the United Nations and the international community in the field of human rights, including gender equality.



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14. In concluding, we would like to emphasise that despite the difficulties encountered by Cuba for more than five decades, it constantly provides human and material help to countries in need of support. The Cuban aid in the fields of education and health, which is also felt by women and girls constitutes a tangible contribution towards the safeguarding of their rights and in proliferating their empowerment.

15. Overall, we believe that the example of Cuba on the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality should be looked into by many developed countries of the world; instead of adopting measures that disturb the national stability of the country and endanger the aforementioned progressive achievements.