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## **DOCUMENT DELIVERED DEMONSTRATING SOLIDARITY WITH THE CUBAN ADMINISTRATION**

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### **1. INTRODUCTION TO PACO**

- 1.1 PACO is an NGO established and located in Barbados in May 2012 as a result of the need to bring under one umbrella those organisations whose mandate is for the promotion of respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms for Africa and people of African Descent. Together, collective resources can be used efficiently and effectively for the sustainability of People of African Descent and the stability of the country as a whole.

### **2. PACO'S MISSION**

- 2.1 PACO'S mission is organisational, inspirational and operational. Its activities on the ground are closely aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015 with specific focus on Quality Education, Good Health and Wellbeing, Economic Growth and other social, cultural and spiritual aspects of human development. This focus has been intensified for the decade that has been designated for People of African Descent who are often marginalised in the global arenas and systems. Peace as a holistic model for development is central to our philosophy for sustainability.
- 2.2 PACO forms partnerships to meet our goals with the Government of Barbados through the offices of the Commission for Pan African Affairs, the University of the West Indies and other kindred NGOs within the Caribbean, UK and North America. These partnerships strengthen the means of implementation of our projects and activities and help the organisation to attain its goals for sustainability.

### **3. ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMMES**

- 3.1 PACO has led in the development of educational programmes in schools and communities that promote the integrity of the human spirit, self-reliance, self-sovereignty and worth.



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- 3.2 Relief for Caribbean islands that have been affected by natural disasters such earthquakes and hurricanes forms an important part of our humanitarian outreach.
- 3.3 Recognition for important dates in the history such as Emancipation Day, African Liberation Day and International Women's Day and the implementation of related activities are organised under the umbrella of PACO. Several activities promoting cultural expressions are held throughout the year, while health has become an ongoing focus because of the growing number of people with Non Communicable Diseases within the nation. This is a matter of national concern, especially among People of African Descent. Members of the Pan African community address this health concern through different educational programmes such as lectures, workshops and media offerings.
- 3.4 PACO is committed to a "sustainable PEACE for a sustainable future."

#### **4. CUBA IN PARTNERSHIP**

- 4.1 In view of the immense task being completed by Cuba of presenting its national report to the UN Periodic Review on Human Rights, PACO would like to highlight that Cuba has become a beacon in what often seems to be an uncaring and dark world. The excellent performance in the diverse areas of human rights by the Cuban Revolution in the last six decades in favour of the Cuban people has been an enduring inspiration in helping to revitalise the goals of PACO. Barbados has had a relationship with Cuba since 1972 when four small countries in the Caribbean, including Barbados, broke the isolation policy resulting in the unilateral implementation of the US Embargo that had been imposed in 1961 and constitutes a serious and systemic violation to their human rights. "Justice to history, to regional solidarity" was the appeal to the world at the UN as a response to this discriminatory policy. This partnership extends and reaches many of our partnering Caribbean islands.
- 4.2 On 6<sup>th</sup> October 1976, Cubana De Aviacion Flight 455 from Barbados to Jamaica was brought down in Barbados. A monument stands as a memory of the victims of state terrorism on that tragic day. Barbados continues to be in solidarity with Cuba on humanitarian and economic levels and PACO,



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which has benefitted from this relationship, continues to be inspired by the generosity and humanity of our Caribbean neighbour.

- 4.3 The commitment to PEACE as a model for human development and the availability of the basic and essential human facilities of superior education and healthcare services to its citizens have been an inspiration for others who seek to make the SDGs an operational reality. The provision of these services continues to be an important example of its caring humanity at home and abroad, showing a system of social services that exhibit figures only comparable to the high standards of developed countries. More than 1,200 Cuban collaborators are working along with the Caribbean in critical areas such as education, healthcare, sports, construction and agriculture among others. In this regard, it has also been recognised that this sister nation has maintained an extensive cooperation with human rights mechanisms applied on a universal and non-discriminatory basis.

## 5. EDUCATION

- 5.1 Cuba defeated the illiteracy of its population only two years after the triumph of the Revolution and has developed a powerful scientific system, which has become a global model. Inspired by the motto “Homeland is Humanity”, dozens of third world countries have received this input as a humanitarian Cuban Project to defeat illiteracy like “Yes I can.” This has been implemented worldwide, teaching more than ten (10) million people. Since 1980, Cuba has offered full scholarships for Barbadians to pursue studies at Cuban Universities. Two hundred (200) Barbadians have been the recipients of these scholarships in the areas of medicine, sports, economics, engineering, veterinary medicine, special education and psychology. These graduates who ordinarily would not have been able to afford a college education return to the country qualified in their field of study and make a tremendous contribution by providing their services to persons at affordable rates. Cuba has also offered to the Caribbean special centres for the development of Special Education in Guyana and the Arts in Jamaica.

## 6. HEALTHCARE

- 6.1 The work strategies of the Cuban Ministry of Public Health aim to increase the quality and satisfaction with health services, as well as raising the health status indicators of the population,



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based on making the system more efficient and sustainable, with a model of care centred on people and based on the Primary Health Care strategy as a way to guarantee its development. This is why Cuba exhibits impressive statistics on its health indicators as a life expectancy of 79 years of age, infant mortality of 4.3% per thousand live births and is the first country certified to have eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. This reality becomes more relevant as Cuba shares the advantages of its system with sister nations. Around 135 million health collaborators have worked in more than 122 nations. At present, about 43 thousand of them provide services in 63 countries. The project "ELAM" (Latin American School of Medicine) for the training of physicians for the Comprehensive Health Program, has a registration of 2,766 students for the 2016-2017 course of more than 90 nationalities, including nationals from Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean. Almost 4 million people around the world have recovered their sight with the implementation of the humanitarian program "Miracle Mission" in cooperation with Venezuela. It is also relevant that the United Nations Country Team (UNEP) in Cuba, made up of FAO, PAHO / WHO, WFP, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNICEF, works in concert with the national authorities, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment (ECLAC, ILO, IAEA, UNIDO, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNIFEM and UN-HABITAT).

## **7. HUMANITARIAN AID**

- 7.1 Cuba has been at the forefront of responding to natural disasters in the Caribbean. It has been the first responder on several occasions dispatching foodstuff, medical teams and supplies, which is a result of a very strong and large civil defense system articulated nationwide. Cuba has made available to the Caribbean its National Disaster Management Centre, which provides training to hundreds of Caribbean specialists in compliance with a commitment contracted with CARICOM. Recently, the Caribbean, including Cuba, experienced devastation from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. Although impacted by these weather patterns, Cuba was among the first responders to countries like Barbuda and Dominica who experienced greater destruction, sending immediately to the six Caribbean islands affected hundreds of doctors including field hospital assurances, rescue teams, construction and electrical specialists and electrical specialists. This extension of aid was also given to Haiti during the earthquake and subsequent flooding as well as to four African countries during the Ebola epidemic.





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## 8. INTERNATIONALISM AND CONCLUSION

- 8.1 We the people of African descent noticed that when the world was only paying lip service to Apartheid, Cuba made an indelible contribution making a significant mark for human dignity; more than 2200 Cuban nationals gave their lives contributing to the liberation of Africa. That was only possible because a united people who staged a victorious social revolution was able to consolidate its identity as a nation, to defend the dignity as a fundamental principle of the human being, while raising with altruism that "to be internationalist is to pay off its own debt with the humanity".
- 8.2 PACO supports and shares these values with Cuba through engagement and solidarity and rejects the outdated approaches which attempt to isolate this Caribbean nation from the rest of its counterparts. Such approaches divide and fragment our region and prevent the cohesiveness that will help us as a region to make the necessary progress in creating the future that we as People of African Descent envision and deserve. The year 2030 should find Peace and Justice as the hallmark of civilised progress for all of humanity, including jurisdictions such as Cuba that continue to face the longest economic, trade and financial blockade in history aimed at political marginalisation and trying to reverse socio-economic conquests. However, these atrocities have not been able to defeat the humanist essence of this noble and generous people, which remains intact.

Sincerely

Rev. Onkphra Wells  
Chairman, PACO