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Contribution of the Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation to the Universal Periodic Review on Cuba.

The **Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation** (**CPPC** – in the Portuguese acronym) is a Non Governmental Organization (NGO), established in 1976 in Portugal, that through mobilizing public opinion for the defense of Peace, pursues international security and cooperation, friendship and solidarity amongst peoples, in accordance to the spirit of the United Nations Charter, its goals and purposes.

CPPC has been awarded with the title of "Peace Messenger" by the the United Nations in 1986.

Cuba
A Sovereign Country defender of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

Political system in Cuba

Cuba is a independent, sovereign State, with assured political freedoms, social justice and citizens wellbeing.

The political system in Cuba is based on the principle of "a government of the people, by the people and for the people" with the direct participation of the people in the exercise and the control of political power.

Social mass organizations are recognized and stimulated by the Cuban State.

Free elections are held in a regular basis and have a very high, voluntary popular participation.

Human Rights

Cuba ensures the broadest enjoyment of Human Rights by all its citizens.

Cuba respects freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of the press and religious freedom.

All citizens have equal access to health, education and social security.

International Cooperation for Health, Education and in facing Natural Disasters

Cuba as promoted several programs and cooperation projects in the areas of health. There are 40 countries where the Integral Health Program is implemented.

Also Operation “Milagre” (Miracle) restores sight to thousand of people throughout the world, since the launch of the Milagre program in July 2004.

A large number of Cuban specialized doctors on international missions, assisting in disaster and epidemic situations continue their brilliant work. We emphasize the work of Henry Reeve Emergency Response Medical Brigade, that on May of this year in the 70th World Health Assembly of the WHO, received the Dr. LEE Jong-Wook Memorial Prize for Public Health. This Brigade has brought medical assistance to Millions of people throughout the world. Since 2005, over 7,000 of these health professionals have volunteered in 19 countries worldwide – including Bolivia, Chile, China, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, and Pakistan. We emphasize, in particular, the Brigade’s work during the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa, when over 250 health professionals risked their lives to provide care in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia.

In the Latin American School of Medicine thousands of Medical Doctors from more than 50 countries have graduated, along with the training of health professionals in 11 countries.

In education Cuba has continued its cooperation in the programs for alphabetization and post-alphabetization, through the Cuban methods “Yo, si puedo” (Yes, I Can), that received the Rey Sejong UNESCO award, the “Ya puedo leer y escribir” (I am already able to read and write), and the “Yo, si puedo seguir” (Yes, I can continue).

Cuba also developed its international cooperation in the Disaster Risk Reduction in several Latin American and Caribbean countries, namely through the participation in projects and in bodies and organisms of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Obstacles and Issues that Hamper Human Right Promotion and Protection in Cuba

Among the obstacles we emphasize the continuity of the hostility, blockade and aggression policy led by United States of America successive governments; the illegal occupation of Cuban territory in which exists a naval base used by United States as a torture center, and other international crimes against humanity; the Anti-Cuban policy through the recruitment, financing and use of mercenaries and terrorists, acting against the Cuban people; and finally the increase in United States government funds, and means to finance their action against Cuba, referred to as "human rights defenders", among others.

Cuba has been the victim of a ferocious campaign to discredit its policies for the defense and guarantee of human rights and fundamental freedoms. This campaign aims at promoting a generalized worldwide ignorance of the unequivocal respect of the Rule of Law in the country. The widespread of groundless accusations only aim at tarnishing the reality of Cuba promoting and defending all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and is part of a well organized political campaign bountifully funded by outside agents. A campaign not at all concerned with a truthful and legitimate defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Moves from the previous United States Administration to advance in the normalization of relations with Cuba have already been set back or annulled by the current Administration.