



Jamaica Cuba Friendship Association

Montego Bay Chapter

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Jamaica W. I

Jamaican based group in solidarity with Cuba

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Cuba in the context of Global Human Rights 2012

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Introduction

The Jamaica Cuba Friendship Association represents local Jamaicans in solidarity with the nation of Cuba. It is a non-governmental and non-partisan organization. This branch was re-established in January of 2012. We promote and advocate maintaining strong ties between both sister nations. The group comprises of persons from varying areas of civil society who have seen the need to engage in this effort. We take time out to contribute to this global process in promoting positive happening in Cuba.

Since the triumph of the Cuban revolution in January 1959, Cuba has been doggedly engaged on a mission of achieving true sovereignty, equality for all its citizens, self determination and promotion of international goodwill and corporation in critical areas of human development on a global scale. Cuba's pursuit in achieving these goals has garnered it a global reputation as a champion in its effort to attain greater enjoyment of all human rights and freedom for all on an equal basis, without discrimination, in spite of a crippling five decade old economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed and maintained by successive United States administrations.

The people of Cuba and its government have been able to achieve significant advancements in promoting and maintaining these goals within the context of US hostile policies and actions and in deteriorating global economic conditions.

Presently Cuba is undergoing a series economic reforms geared towards updating and improving the socialist system.

Cuba, since the last Universal periodic review in 2009 has made achievement in the previous recommendation, we choose to report in these following areas :
Right to Health, Right to Education, International Cooperation in Health and Education and Disaster Relief.

Cuba commitment towards developing cooperation in Health and Education

Education

Cuba has constantly placed emphasis in developing, improving and maintaining educational opportunities for its local citizens and foreigners. Citizens enjoy right to education, where education is free of cost to all age groups. Education has maintained a key development point of the government's agenda.

There have been emphasis in incorporating and developing new teaching methods catering to need of all its recipients for e.g. there are two educational channel broadcasting to all areas of the Cuban territory, transmitting programs for younger generations of Cubans and those older generation wishing to further their educational horizons. As well as, there have been strong efforts in promoting educational opportunities for handicap and disabled individuals within the island.

One of the key points that must be mention is that as of up to this date, Cuba has managed to maintain an exemplar record literacy rate among its population- 99.7 per cent. Cuba has shared its technical knowledge in the form of the 'Yes We Can', '*Yo Si Puedo*', literacy program across developing nations e.g Bolivia, Haiti. At the end of May, 2012 more than six million { 6 000 000} persons from various geographical regions have attained functional literacy through this method.

Health

Cuba's health indicators rival those of first world countries. One of This area is the infant mortality rate for children under 1, which is 5.3 per thousand live births, with a life expectancy of 77.97 years.

On 19 September 2005 the Henry Reeve international contingent was conceived to provide the solution to emergency medical assistance to nations impacted by natural disasters. More than 4,000 cuban personnel have been involved in its mission since then, 687 in Guatemala, 2,564 in Pakistan, 602 in Bolivia, 135 in Indonesia, 54 in Mexico, 79 in Peru and 35 in China. They have provided medical assistance to more than 3 million victims, carried out more than 19,000 surgical operations and saved 468,000 human lives.

In the area of international cooperation in health, Cuba's exploits have managed to breach disinformation and media silence. Cuban health efforts across the world can be noted in its effort to train underprivileged but bright and aspiring individuals from poorest regions of the world.

Just recently, July 24, 2012 more than 4000 foreign medical students graduated from medical schools in Cuba in areas of general medicine, nursing, psychology and medical technology. All these students have returned to their countries to actively develop and improve the local health sector and also to insure the medical attention can be reached to the most vulnerable of society.

Cuba's role in promoting health in Jamaica

Cuba helps towards Jamaica can be noted in areas of technical cooperation in health. Since 1970s when formal diplomatic relations was established more than 700 students have graduated or are still studying in Cuban schools. Sixty eight medical students are expected to graduate in 2013, providing necessary human resources to the health sector that is facing shortage of personnel.

In an article posted on the Jamaican solidarity website, Yescuba, Jamaica's Health Minister Dr. Fenton Ferguson, praised Cuba for the "exceptional kindness displayed in its relationship with Jamaica in the field of medicine." The Minister made the statement after a tour of the Screening Centre and Ophthalmology ward for the Jamaica/Cuba Ophthalmology Centre. The minister highlighted that Cuba "had provided training for many Jamaican professionals in various areas of medicine and supplied a host of professionals for service here in the public-health sector".

He also spoke of the immense benefits that the Centre brought not only to Jamaican eye patients but to the wider Caribbean region. Since 2005, more than 66,000 Jamaicans have been screened under the programme while some 7,900 patients received free eye surgeries.

Cuban help globally

Cuba continues to train more local doctors who participate in missions across the globe. They have been to the most remote parts of the world eg. In mountaineous regions of Bolivia, Nicaragua Venezuela and Haiti.

Cuba has medical brigades dedicated bringing disaster relief to ravaged areas. The 2010 earthquake that seriously debilitated Haiti saw a quick response of Cuban medical aid. The most noted of these brigades is Henry Reeve Brigade comprising more than 5000 Cuban collaborators who have and continue to provide medical attention to more than 3 million victims. The action of the brigade could be witness in the aftermath of the earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010.

Cuba has an admirable position in promoting preventative medicine in Global health. It has developed a Comprehensive Health Program that presently is being practiced in 40 countries that seek to ensure primary healthcare and not costly secondary healthcare is given greater emphasis thereby reducing the cost of healthcare within countries.

Also Cuba's feat in creating new drugs in treatment of cancer have not gone un-noticed. Just recently, September 24, 2012 in the island of Jamaica an agreement between the Cuban pharmacological firm Labiofam and a local drugs distributor Medimpex have seen the introduction of the anti-cancer drug Vidatox.

According to the article from the Jamaica Observer- Jamaica's Ministry of Health approved the introduction of Vidatox to the shelves of local pharmacies, following its registration on June 18, when a team of technocrats from the socialist country visited.

Vidatox is already being used in Asia, Europe, North, South and Central America.

The drug has been used to treat cancer-related ailments among the Cuban population for over 200 years. This followed 15 years of clinical research spearheaded by Cuban biologist Misael Bordier and tests involving more than 10,000 people — 3,500 of them foreigners — which yielded positive results in improving quality of life, retarding tumour growth and boosting the immune system in cancer patients.

Challenges faced by Cuba in enjoying and defending full Human Rights

Cuba is beset by one of the most inhumane and unfair barriers in its quest of self determination and sovereignty.

The economic, financial and commercial embargo enforce by successive US governments have hindered Cuba's developments in all most all areas of national life. Significant resources have had to be redirected in countering the effects of these hostile measures.

The condition meted out against the nation of Cuba presently, include-

Media disinformation campaigns dedicated towards giving the world a skewed image of conditions in Cuba.

Financial supports of local and foreign individuals within Cuban territory who engage in questionable activities seeking to undermine the achievements of the Cuban people e.g. 1. providing false reports of deteriorating health, social and educational condition, and of violation of human rights. These groups also promoting the breaking of national laws threatening national security.

The present US administration of President Obama continues in promoting the change of regime mantra by allocating millions of US dollars in the fiscal year 2011-2012 directed towards financing activities that seek to achieve political and social instability { Regime Change}.

Conclusion

Despite the financial difficulties and resource constraints facing Cuba as a result of its situation as a developing country subjected to a tight blockade by the United States and an unjust international economic order, it has made a modest contribution in support of the cause of the human rights of other peoples. The Cuban nation remains steadfast in promoting its example of sharing what little they have so that individuals both locally and global can enjoy certain measure of substantial human rights.

Recommendations

In order for the Human Rights conditions to be further improved in Cuba, it is of paramount importance that

- The genocidal and inhumane practicing of blockading this peace loving and international goodwill champion be lifted.
- The hostile policy of aggression meted out against Cuban interests by the United States has to stop
- The Helms Burt and Torriceli Act has to be repealed
- An end to the financing of groups both within and outside of the Island with goals of carrying out subversive activities and violation of national laws
- An end to the media campaign whose prime objective is the disinformation of life on the island

Sources of information

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