

THE PANHELLENIC UNION OF MERCHANT MARINE ENGINEERS

August 13, 2008

**To the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner For
Human Rights On the Republic of Cuba
Session of the regular examination of the state of democracy in
Cuba, February 2009**

The Government of the Republic of Cuba has undertaken a far-reaching and excellent democratization process across all sectors of the country's political, economical and social life. The genuinely democratic political system which boasts broad popular participation is based on human dignity, on equality and on the real and effective enjoyment of human rights. The survival of this system in these difficult times of war threats, total economic isolation and sabotage can only be explained on the grounds of its democratic basis.

Cuba has managed to withstand and is building socialism. Cuba's policies on health, social care, education, culture, the basic rights to subsistence and to intellectual development, have been internationally acclaimed for their success and are also based on solid social, participation and continuous popular action.

Despite the continuous and systematic persecution by its enemies, the country has created and keeps creating new forms of democratic participation, which are being constantly perfected, improved and renewed.

The election of the representatives of constituencies forms the basis of the Cuba political system. Candidates are proposed and elected in neighborhood assemblies. Voting is free, secret and direct. Votes are counted in public. Elected representatives give regular accounts to their voters and are subject to revocation.

The essence of the Cuban political system places an emphasis on the genuine integration of society as a whole into the decision-making procedure. Solutions are sought for at a collective level, responsibilities are distributed, social convergence and popular control are being actively promoted. Mass organizations, social and professional formations and other forms of collectivities offer possibilities and channel the interests and the preoccupations of the different parts of the civil society. In Cuba assemblies allow the effective participation of workers in democracy.

With the participation of the people, democracy becomes perfect so that the human being becomes intellectually stronger, the human

existence and work acquire gain in creativity and life acquires a higher quality, "Fundamental Rights, Obligations and Guarantees" of the current Constitution of the Republic of Cuba exalt, shield and protect the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and press, the freedom of gathering, the freedom of demonstration, the freedom of association, religious freedom, the inviolability of the freedom of Cuban citizens and of foreigners residing in Cuba territory, the inviolability of the corporal integrity of detainees and prisoners, the natural judge principle, the principle of application of ex post facto criminal laws, the citizen's right to petition.

Furthermore, basic constitutional arrangements exalt, shield and protect the fundamental rights to work, the right to free social insurance, the right to protection and hygiene at work, the right to free medical and hospital care, the right to free education and housing.

There are currently thousands volunteer Cuban citizens; doctors, nurses, engineers, technicians and academics offering their disinterested services in about 100 world countries, Cuban universities currently provide free education to over 30 thousand young people from 118 countries. During last year, the Republic of Cuba worked in a constructive manner and in a spirit of cooperation. Cuba reiterates its commitment towards this new instrument and to a mechanism of its Regular Revision.

With honor



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