

**SUBMISSION FOR THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW OF CUBA
44TH SESSION**

by

ONCE COCUKLAR VE KADINLAR DERNEGI (ONCE)

**THE CHILDREN AND WOMEN FIRST ASSOCIATION
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1. This submission aims to reflect our institutional opinion on the position of Cuba with respect to human rights before Cuba's Universal Periodic Review on 44th Session.
2. Cuba advances in its efforts to achieve the fullest enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all its citizens.
3. Cuba has maintained extensive cooperation with the human rights mechanisms that are applied on universal and non-discriminatory bases. It has ratified 44 international instruments on human rights out of the 61 that are internationally recognized.
4. The improvement of the country's legal and institutional framework for updating the economic and social model has been deepened, on the basis of preserving and strengthening social justice and solidarity.
5. Since 2019, with the approval of the new Constitution of the Republic, a broad legislative update has taken place in the country, which has reinforced the treatment and protection of human rights.
6. Among the aspects that reinforce the protection and promotion of human rights is the reconfiguration of the equality clause and the principle of non-discrimination by incorporating new figures or categories that are vulnerable or susceptible to discrimination such as age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, ethnic origin, territorial origin.
7. The protection of women is reinforced, equal rights in all areas in relation to men, ensures the exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights and protects them from gender violence in any of its manifestations and spaces.
8. Constitutional rank is conferred on the prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, and forced disappearance of persons.
9. New rights are introduced, such as: the right to access public information and to receive truthful, objective and timely information, the right to water, healthy and adequate food, adequate housing and a safe and healthy habitat, the right to a healthy and balanced environment.
10. The blockade against Cuba implies a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of the Cuban people.
11. Cuba conceives public health as a fundamental human right and a responsibility of the State.
12. The Cuban National Health System provides care without discrimination of any kind, based on Primary Health Care and with community and intersectoral participation.
13. Cuba is recognized for the high quality of its public health system, with universal coverage and free assistance. There are 486,900 workers in the national health system, of which 101,876 are doctors, and there are 9.2 doctors for every 100 inhabitants, the most favorable indicator of its kind at the international level.
14. The Cuban immunization scheme protects children against 13 diseases through the application of 11 vaccines, 8 of them nationally produced, which has a profound impact on the quality of life of children. 14 communicable diseases have been eliminated and another 9 do not constitute health problems.
15. In Cuba there are 450 polyclinics, 1,229 dental services, 11,263 doctor's offices, 150 hospitals, 152 maternity homes, 300 grandparents' houses, 30 psycho-pedagogical centers, 158 nursing homes, 12 research institutes and 44 sciences, technology and innovation centers. This demonstrates the wide coverage of our National Health



System.

16. Cuba has practiced its international solidarity in terms of medical collaboration for more than 59 years, in which it has worked in 165 countries with more than 605,000 collaborators. In this way, more than 2000 million people in the world have benefited.
17. Currently, Cuban doctors offer their collaboration in 56 nations with more than 23 thousand collaborators.
18. Cuba was the first country in the world to vaccinate children under two years of age.
19. In the midst of the complex international situation due to the COVID 19 pandemic, Cuba sent 4,700 specialists to 42 countries to support the fight against the COVID 19 pandemic.
20. Cuba offers special protection to the elderly, through norms, procedures and mechanisms of social security, employment, pensions, health care, social work, educational improvement and protection against the risk of natural disasters, among others.
21. With the approval of the new Family Code, the rights and guarantees of the elderly in the country are strengthened.
22. The new Code establishes as one of the principles that govern family relationships, respect for the wills, desires and preferences of older adults and people with disabilities.
23. Cultural rights receive broad protection in Cuba. Art and culture are encouraged and promoted for all people, without discrimination.
24. The cultural policy of the Cuban State has shown strict adherence to the promotion of artistic and cultural rights.
25. In Cuba, the recognition of this area of human freedom is complemented by free and universal access to education.
26. The Cuban State offers the real possibility for people to increase their capacity to appreciate the arts and opportunities to express themselves.
27. People have access to specialized education and other cultural options that allow them to enrich their spirituality and develop their talent.
28. Combating all forms of discrimination against women in all spheres of society has been a priority of the Cuban State and Government.
29. The new Constitution specifically enshrines the equal rights and responsibilities of women and men in all spheres of society.
30. Women's rights to health, including sexual and reproductive health and family planning, are recognized, protected and guaranteed.
31. Women's rights to education, art and culture are recognized, as well as to dignified employment and equal pay for equal work.
32. Women in Cuba have the right to technical, professional and cultural advancement, job training and apprenticeship, as well as to social security and assistance.
33. Social protection may be shared between the father and the mother, which favors co-responsibility in the care of children, and encourages the permanence and reincorporation of women into the labor force.
34. Cuba has made several advances in gender equality and women's empowerment.
35. Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic broadens the bases of equality and non-discrimination. It establishes equal protection and treatment by the authorities and the



- same rights, freedoms and opportunities, without any discrimination.
36. Article 43 of the Magna Carta establishes equal rights and responsibilities between women and men in economic, political, cultural, labor, social, family and any other sphere.
 37. One of the main legislative changes that reflects the progress made in this area is the new Family Code, approved by popular referendum after specialized consultations and broad citizen participation.
 38. The Family Code seeks to solve family matters with immediate and specialized legal measures, improves and expands legal figures based on real situations that arise, taking as a basis relations of equality, based both on the affective and biological aspects, on the solidarity inherent to this social group and on human dignity as the supreme value that sustains the recognition and exercise of the rights and duties enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, in international treaties and in the Code itself.
 39. It discards prejudices and stereotypes anchored in society. It seeks to unify the protection of the various forms of organization of families on an absolutely equal footing, to implement parental and kinship relationships, the protection of persons with disabilities, among other issues.
 40. Among the most relevant aspects of the Code is the express recognition of the right to a family life free of violence in any of its manifestations and presents protective formulas for these situations, such as the impossibility of exercising guardianship and care or having limited communication with daughters and sons, the deprivation of inheritance rights to those who incur in it, among others.
 41. Women's participation in decision-making is growing. They represent 51.5% in State and Government positions at the end of the first quarter of 2021.
 42. Women represent 52.3% of the members of the Council of State. 8 are female ministers and 30 are female vice ministers, for 48.5%. In the Council of Ministers, out of 34 members, 8 are women for 23.5%. Of 23 first deputy minister positions, 10 are held by women, for 43.5%. Of the elected governors and deputy governors, 53.3% are women.
 43. The participation of women in the economic life of the country is reflected in indicators such as: the economic activity rate of women, which is 53.2%, and the unemployment rate, which is 1.6% (the lowest in the region). Of women employed, 78.5% work in the state sector and 35.4% are self-employed, enjoying social guarantees, such as maternity leave, the same as in the state sector.
 44. Of the 4 487 professional union leaders in the country, 63% are women, which represents an increase of 14% since 2012. They also represent 63.3% of provincial and municipal leaders.
 45. In the Ministry of Justice (MINJUS) system, 1 523 women are notaries, civil and property registrars, for 80% of the total.
 46. 1,419 prosecutors are women, for 80% of the total. Seventy-five percent of the FGR's managerial positions are held by women. In terms of decision-making positions, the Attorney General and one Deputy Attorney General are held by women.
 47. Of the 932 judges in the country, 755 are women, or 81%. Of the 248 management positions in the court system, 187 are held by women, or 75.4%.



48. The Family Code, approved in September 2022, in a popular referendum, recognizes, strengthens and guarantees rights relevant to children and adolescents within the family environment, while regulating a broad catalog of rights, exclusive to children and adolescents, consistent with the postulates of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
49. Exceptions to the minimum legal age for marriage are eliminated.
50. The best interest of the child is included as one of the principles governing the applicability of the Code, the delimitation of elements to be taken into account for its evaluation and determination, as well as the express regulation of its relevance in specific matters.
51. The requirement of specialization of the authorities and officials who intervene or resolve family matters involving children is regulated.
52. The family ombudsman's office is included for children and adolescents, persons with disabilities, the elderly and victims of violence.
53. Violence against children and adolescents is recognized as family violence and its requirement of urgent judicial protection, with imprescriptible action, and with the possibility of demanding compensation for damages.
54. It highlights the relevance given to the right to participation of children and adolescents, both in the daily life of families and in judicial or administrative processes, which supports the conception of each child and adolescent as a subject of rights, an element already included in the Constitution of the Republic of 2019.
55. Shared custody and care is included as a regime of organization of family relations after divorce or separation of parents, which promotes parental co-responsibility and the meaningful participation of both parents in the lives of their children.