



Report of All-China Federation of Trade Unions to the United Nations Human Rights Council

Cuba's status in the promotion and protection of workers' rights

March, 2023

The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) is highly concerned about the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of the human rights situation in Cuba conducted by the Human Rights Council in November 2023. We believe that over the years, the Cuban government has made great efforts and achieved remarkable results in promoting and protecting human rights, especially in safeguarding the equal and legitimate rights and interests of workers. Hereby, we would like to give a brief overview of what we know about the human rights status of workers in Cuba.

1. The new Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, approved in a national referendum in 2019, has strengthened the foundation of the rule of law to guarantee human rights. With the implementation of the new Constitution, Cuba has undergone extensive legislative updates that further guarantee the fundamental rights of its citizens. The new Constitution has



significantly expanded the list of citizens' rights and reaffirmed the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of human rights. The new Constitution underlines the principles of equality and non-discrimination and prohibits discrimination based on age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic origin, territorial origin, etc.

II. The Cuban government has always attached great importance to the right to development of workers, who play a leading role in the development and construction of the nation and the society, and fully enjoy the right to equal participation in the making of economic, political and social policies.

III. Cuba has ratified eight core conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO). It is one of the 15 countries that have ratified the most ILO conventions, with a total of 90 out of the 189 conventions adopted.

IV. The Cuban government has always attached importance to the social security of all workers. In addition to free education and medical care, workers are entitled to social insurance and assistance schemes. Social security covers all workers, pregnant and postpartum women, children, retirees, the sick, the disabled, and low-income earners. Social assistance covers older persons without a family who are unable to work, the sick, the disabled, and orphans who are unsupported. Free medical care is available to all. These cover not only active and retired workers and their families, urban self-employed, but also all farmers, including



agricultural workers, cooperative members and small individual farmers. The policy has enabled Cuba to eliminate the inequality of treatment between urban and rural residents that exists in many other countries.

V. The right of Cuban workers to join and form trade unions in accordance with the law is strongly guaranteed. The current Labor Code of Cuba recognizes the right of workers to voluntarily organize and form trade unions. At present, there are 17 national industrial unions and more than 80,000 grassroots trade union organizations in Cuba, covering more than 95% of workers.

VI. The legitimate rights and interests of Cuban workers are effectively defended. Cuban trade unions defend the legitimate rights and interests of workers, constantly improve their working and living conditions, coordinate, supervise and implement the provisions of collective agreements, current labor laws and employment policies; provide economic and legal education, technical, vocational and cultural training to workers according to the different stages of enterprise development; participate in the investigation and analysis of the causes of occupational accidents and diseases, and safeguard the safety and health of workers; encourage and stimulate the creativity of the working class and continuously improve the skills of workers.

VII. While the living standards of the Cuban people has improved significantly as a result of efficient social programs and



public policies, Cuba is still facing numerous difficulties and challenges in its development. For example, due to the long-standing economic sanctions and embargo, the economic situation in Cuba has been very difficult. The Cuban people is not yet able to purchase all the food and daily necessities they need in the market, and there are shortages of medicines. These are constraints on the improvement of the quality of life for the majority of workers and the entire population.

VIII. The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) supports Cuba in following a path of human rights development that is consistent with its actual national conditions. We actively recommend that Cuba continue its efforts to overcome internal and external difficulties, maintain the achievements already made while taking further effective measures to improve the legal framework for protecting workers' rights and interests in line with national conditions, improve the social security system, and promote equal rights and sustainable development for Cuban workers and the entire population in all fields. We call on all countries to abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, adhere to international justice, and conduct human rights exchanges and cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual respect. The acts by some to politicize, weaponize and instrumentalize human rights issues should be opposed. Human rights should not be used as a pretext for meddling in other countries' internal affairs or holding back other countries'



development. We oppose the embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, and the position of using human rights as a pretext to impose new sanctions against Cuba.