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

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The **Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation** (CPPC – in the Portuguese acronym) is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), established in Portugal in 1976, whose goals and purposes are to mobilize public opinion for the defense of peace and the pursuit of international security and cooperation, friendship and solidarity amongst peoples, in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

Republic of Cuba

– a Sovereign Country defender of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

1. International Cooperation for Health and Education

The Republic of Cuba is internationally recognized for the high quality of its public health system, with universal coverage and free assistance. Its national health system has almost five hundred thousand works, more than a hundred thousand of which are doctors. Cuba has 9.2 doctors for every 100 inhabitants, an indicator that places this country at the forefront of health care at the international level. Cuba ensures the basic conditions necessary to guarantee the right to health of the Cuban people and to practice solidarity with other peoples of the world.

The Cuban healthcare personnel on international missions – assisting in disaster and epidemic situations, among other health emergencies – extends their solidarity action around the World.

In 2019, the Cuban health personnel working abroad reached almost thirty thousand. The work of the Henry Reeve Emergency Response Medical Brigade, composed by more than five thousand Cuban professionals, has brought medical assistance to over three million people.

In 2020 and 2021, during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of Cuban health professionals travelled to more than three dozen countries to provide medical assistance. In addition, Cuba and its health research institutes developed several vaccines against COVID-19, providing an exemplary response throughout the vaccination process. As of July 2022, over 97.7% of the Cuban population was vaccinated against COVID-19.

Among other significative examples, after the recent devastating earthquake in Turkey and Syria, members of the Henry Reeve contingent treated more than two thousand patients and performed more than three thousand nursing procedures.

In Cuba, education is a right ensured to all people and constitutes a responsibility of the State,

which guarantees free public education services and quality comprehensive training, from early childhood to postgraduate university education.

The Cuban method "Yes, I can", which aimed to eradicate illiteracy, continues to be one of the great milestones in the history of education in Cuba, including for its contribution in many other countries teaching their peoples to read and write. In 2021, adult literacy rate in Cuba was 99.7 %.

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

Among the obstacles and issues that hamper human right promotion and protection in Cuba, we emphasize the hostile and aggressive policy led by successive Administrations of the United States of America, which has persisted for over 60 years and includes, among other elements: the illegal and criminal economic, commercial and financial blockade; the illegal occupation of Cuban territory, where there is a US military naval base and a prison that acts as a torture center; and the recruitment, financing and use of mercenary terrorists to act against the Cuban people.

In addition, the Trump administration once again included Cuba on the US's so-called list of "State Sponsors of Terrorism". An infamous measure that, despite Biden's promise, has yet to be reversed.

The criminal nature of this policy is well demonstrated by the US Administration not exempting Cuba from the US unilateral sanctions during the entire period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cuba has been the victim of a ferocious campaign to discredit its policies to defend and guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms. This campaign aims to promote generalized worldwide misinformation about the unequivocal respect regarding the political, social, and economic democratic Constitutional order in the country. The widespread of groundless accusations is part of an organized political campaign, well-funded by foreign sources, that aims only to tarnish the reality of Cuba and its promotion and defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms. A hypocritical campaign promoted by those who care nothing about the true and legitimate defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms.