



Национальный Совет молодёжных и детских объединений России National Youth Council of Russia

телефон, факс: +7 (495) 249-11-49
e-mail: info@youthrussia.ru
сайт: www.youthrussia.ru
адрес: 119571, г. Москва, Ленинский пр-т, д. 158, офис 0211

The National Youth Council of Russia is submitting the following information on the Republic of Cuba for the Universal Periodic Review (Fourth cycle):

1. The protection of human rights and human dignity is a priority for the Republic of Cuba and is based on the universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated nature of these rights. In October 2020 Cuba was elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the period 2021-2023, while the country's leadership focused on fostering international order based on inclusion, cooperation, social justice, human dignity and respect for diversity.

2. The Republic of Cuba is seeking to strengthen its legal and institutional framework for the protection and promotion of human rights, in particular by updating the country's economic and social development model and by adopting a new Constitution of the Republic.

3. The new Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, which was adopted in 2019, should be regarded as an important step taken by the country towards full legal expression of human rights and greater citizen protection. Compared with the previous version, not only does the 2019 Constitution include new important provisions on the rights and freedoms of citizens in various areas, but also the process of adopting the new Constitution itself should be regarded as an expression of the Cuban democracy. The process of adopting the new Constitution involved consultations, approvals and ratifications, with the participation of more than 8 million people (considering that Cuba has a population of slightly over 11 million people). The consultation processes resulted in 760 changes to the text of the Constitution, and almost 60% of the total number of articles was amended according to the opinion of the population.

4. The new Constitution includes important provisions and additions in terms of human rights protection. For example, in terms of discrimination prohibition the

list of grounds on which discrimination is prohibited has been broadened: it is prohibited to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age and national or territorial origin. This innovation illustrates the implementation of the country recommendation following the Third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Cuba, Third cycle, 30th session, Matrix of recommendations, theme B31 "Equality & non-discrimination", recommendation 24.75 (Plurinational State of Bolivia). The new Constitution also strengthened the recognition and legal protection of workers' rights and established the right of every citizen to work, decent work conditions, receive payment in accordance with the quality and quantity of work performed, as well as the right to rest, an eight-hour working day, paid annual leave and social security (social support). This initiative marks the initial implementation of a series of country recommendations from the Third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Cuba, Third cycle, 30th session, Matrix of recommendations, theme E31 "Right to work", recommendation 24.234 (Morocco), recommendation 24.236 (Eritrea).

5. The Republic of Cuba has taken a remarkable step towards legal regulation of enforced disappearances by enshrining in the Constitution the clause that individuals may not be subject to forced disappearance, torture, or cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment. It can therefore be concluded that the initial steps have been taken to implement the recommendation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights following the Third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review regarding the issue of enforced disappearances (letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, dated 2 November 2018, Annex, paragraph "Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law", point B "Civil and political rights").

6. The current legal framework establishes necessary provisions to prevent child, early and forced marriages. The prohibition of child labour (carried out by children and minors) is a fundamental principle of labour law and is enshrined in the Constitution. Moreover, corporal punishment is not allowed by law, in family or school practice and is not socially tolerated. There is a system of children and

adolescents protection from any act that violates their normal development and rights. The abovementioned facts and initiatives demonstrate partial or full implementation of a number of country recommendations from the Third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Cuba, Third cycle, 30th session, Matrix of recommendations, theme F31 "Children: definition; general principles; protection", recommendation 24.321 (Turkey), recommendation 24.314 (Morocco); theme F32 "Children: family environment and alternative care", recommendation 24.317 (Montenegro). It is recommended to continue to take measures to ensure full legal protection of children in different life situations.

7. The Republic of Cuba is actively working to ensure full gender equality and empowerment of women in all spheres of life (political, economic and social) and has already made progress that can be assessed as "excellent". The Constitution of the country stipulates that the State encourages the holistic development of women and their full social participation, as well as the exercise of their sexual and reproductive rights, protects them from gender-based violence in all of its forms and in all spaces, and creates the institutional and legal mechanisms to do so. The concept of women's leadership, empowerment, and equal participation is actively developing in Cuba: the number of women holding leadership positions shows a steady increase of 50%. Cuba is among the world leading countries regarding the number of women parliamentarians: women make up more than 50% of the Cuban parliament, holding two of three highest positions in this authority; they also make up more than 45% of the members of the Council of State, more than 75% of prosecutors, more than 75% of professional judges and more than 60% of judges of the Supreme Court. In the civil public sector women make up more than 45% of the workforce. Cuban legislation protects women's right to decent work and enshrines the prohibition of discrimination in employment and remuneration: women and men are to receive equal pay for the same work. The abovementioned facts and initiatives indicate a high-level implementation of a number of country recommendations following the Third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Cuba, Third cycle, 30th session, Matrix of recommendations, theme E31 "Right to work", recommendation 24.235 (Iceland); theme F11 "Advancement of

women", recommendation 24.294 (Benin), recommendation 24.289 (Ghana), recommendation 24.293 (Bahrain); theme F12 "Discrimination against women", recommendation 24.308 (Syrian Arab Republic), recommendation 24.311 (Viet Nam).

8. The new Constitution of the Republic has ensured and strengthened the recognition and protection of the equality of all citizens of the Republic, as well as the prohibition of discrimination of any kind. All people are equal before the law, receive the same protection and treatment from the authorities and enjoy the same rights, freedoms and opportunities without any discrimination. However, despite significant progress in ensuring equality and combating discrimination, behavioral racial prejudice and intolerant statements still persist. In November 2019 the National Program against Racism and Racial Discrimination was initiated, aimed at combating and finally eradicating racism, racial prejudice and racial discrimination. It is the governmental programme led by the President of the Republic and its objectives include identifying the root causes of racial discrimination, spreading the historical and cultural heritage of Africa, indigenous peoples and persons of another colour as part of the cultural diversity of Cuba, promoting organized public discussions of racial issues in political, mass and public organizations, as well as their presence and discussion in the media. These initiatives demonstrate the implementation of the recommendation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights following the Third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, dated 2 November 2018, paragraph "Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law", point A "Cross-cutting issues").

9. Freedom of religion is enshrined in the Constitution and protected by the State, which complies with the Cuban obligations under international documents to which it is a party and international standards in this field. There are more than 1,800 functioning religious organizations, institutes and associations in the country. In recent years, more than 500 new organizations have obtained legal recognition. The abovementioned facts indicate that a number of country recommendations have been successfully implemented following the Third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

(Universal Periodic Review of the Republic of Cuba, Third cycle, 30th session, Matrix of recommendations, theme D42 "Freedom of thought, conscience and religion", recommendation 24.176 (India), recommendation 24.191 (Mozambique), recommendation 24.207 (United Arab Emirates).

10. Over the past five years, the Republic of Cuba has achieved notable results in treatment of such diseases as cancer and Covid-19. In 2021 Cuba was among the leading countries in terms of daily vaccination of the population against Covid-19 (in terms of the number of doses of vaccines received per day), as well as the Republic was one of the first 15 countries in the world in which more than 70% of the population were fully immunized. Outside the Cuban borders Cuban doctors have also provided medical help to countries and territories in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic: Cuba has sent more than 50 units of "Contingente Internacional de Médicos Especializados en Situaciones de Desastre y Graves Epidemias Henry Reeve" to 39 countries and territories to assist in the fight against the pandemic.

11. It is essential to note that Cuba still has to exist under the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the government of the United States of America, which causes human rights violations in the country in various areas and serves as an obstacle to Cuba's economic and social development. For example, during the period from April 2018 to March 2019 the damage to the healthcare sector of the Republic caused by the blockade amounted to more than 104 million dollars. The total damage caused by the blockade to this sector is about 3 billion dollars.

12. The right to education, which has a constitutional status, is guaranteed by a free and comprehensive system of accessible and high-quality education services, starting from early childhood and ending with postgraduate education. More than 20% of Cuba's annual budget is spent on providing and developing the country's educational system. The preschool education system covers children from birth to six years of age. The literacy rate of the population aged 10-49 is 99.8%. There is a developed network of schools both in cities and in rural areas: about 70% of primary schools are located in rural areas. Continuity of education is guaranteed for students, depending on their achievements and professional intentions. Children with special educational needs receive educational services of appropriate quality and proper

delivery. These facts indicate successful implementation of a series of country recommendations following the Third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Universal periodic Review of the Republic of Cuba, Third cycle, 30th session, Matrix of recommendations, theme E51 "Right to education – General", recommendation 24.271 (Brunei Darussalam), recommendation 24.274 (China), recommendation 24.286 (United Arab Emirates).

13. In order to effectuate the constitutional provision on the duty of the State to protect the health of its citizens, as well as to provide them with access to quality medical attention, Cuba has a developed healthcare system that is universal, free and accessible to the entire population throughout the country. There are about 150 hospitals in the country, more than 100 intensive care units, more than 100 urban reanimations, more than 400 healthcare centres, more than 100 dental clinics, more than 120 maternity hospitals, as well as 12 research institutes. The average life expectancy is slightly over 78 years. In 2019 the infant mortality rate was 5.0 per 1,000 newborns and remained at this level (or lower) for the twelfth year in a row. The mortality rate of children under the age of five is 6.6 per 1,000 newborns, and the survival rate at this age is 99.3%. 99% of births occur in medical institutions. These facts indicate high level implementation of a series of country recommendations following the Third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (Universal periodic Review of the Republic of Cuba, Third cycle, 30th session, Matrix of recommendations, theme E41 "Right to health – General", recommendation 24.264 (Maldives); theme E42 "Access to health-care (general)", recommendation 24.261 (Kazakhstan).