



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Information received from Cuba on follow-up to
the concluding observations on its combined
nineteenth to twenty-first periodic reports***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Introduction

1. Cuba hereby presents follow-up information in relation to the recommendations referred to in paragraph 41 of the concluding observations on its combined nineteenth to twenty-first periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Follow-up information (CERD/C/CUB/CO/19-21)

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 14 (d) and (e) of the concluding observations

2. Cuba recognizes, protects and fully guarantees the exercise of all human rights, including the right to defend these freedoms. Human rights defenders enjoy a safe and enabling environment that allows them to conduct their work unhindered. As in most countries, the exercise of these rights is regulated by law.

3. In Cuba, human rights defenders and civil society leaders, including those who work against racial discrimination and for the human rights of persons who may experience racial discrimination, are not subjected to arbitrary restrictions on the exercise of their freedoms. They certainly do not face reprisals for attending or participating in meetings and activities conducted by international human rights mechanisms. They are protected, on an equal basis, in accordance with the provisions of the 1998 Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

4. This is illustrated by the fact that representatives of Cuban civil society and human rights defenders involved in combating racial and all other forms of discrimination were present when the periodic report of Cuba was presented to the Committee in Geneva. One such representative was part of the country's delegation and established a frank and direct dialogue with the Committee's experts. These representatives travelled freely and were not subjected to any form of reprisal, threat or attack for their work.

5. In Cuba, thousands of human rights defenders and hundreds of institutions are participating in the National Programme against Racism and Racial Discrimination, whose work centres on improving the quality of life of the Cuban people and persons from other nations in such areas as education, health, social security and welfare, and the fight against discrimination.

6. The national media, in all formats, report on and promote the work of the legitimate representatives of Cuban civil society in their pursuit of a fairer society, free from discrimination of any kind.

7. However, the thousands of human rights defenders referred to above do not receive the foreign funding or media attention afforded to those whose aim is to attempt to overthrow the legitimate Government that the Cuban people have chosen in the exercise of their right to self-determination.

8. It should be made clear that individuals or groups who accept funding from abroad for the purpose of attempting to subvert the constitutional order of their home country do not deserve to be called human rights defenders. Their activities and the financial and logistical support they receive from abroad violate articles 4 and 20 of the 1998 Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, since they violate the right of the Cuban people to self-determination and flout the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 20 of the concluding observations

9. At its meeting in November 2019, the Council of Ministers approved the National Programme against Racism and Racial Discrimination, the aim of which is to combat and eradicate the vestiges of racism, racial prejudice and racial discrimination that still exist in the country, as well as to combat regionalism and discrimination based on ethnic or national origin, which are linked to racism.

10. It is a government programme whose implementation will be monitored as part of the system of work overseen by the President of the Republic. A National Commission chaired by the President was established to coordinate the Programme's activities.

11. The objectives of the Programme include identifying and diagnosing the causes of racially discriminatory practices; designing potential measures to be taken by regional and local authorities and in different sectors of the economy and society; raising awareness of the historical and cultural importance of African heritage, the indigenous peoples of Cuba and other non-white peoples to the cultural diversity of Cuba; and encouraging organized public debate and media coverage with regard to racial issues in Cuban society.

12. In the development of the Programme, due consideration is being paid to the recommendations of the Committee and the practical guide for the development of national action plans against racial discrimination of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

13. Civil society organizations and human rights defenders, especially those working to combat racial discrimination, have played an active role in this process. They are represented, alongside the main agencies of the central State administration, in the National Commission set up to coordinate the Programme.

Follow-up information relating to paragraph 22 (c) and (f) of the concluding observations

14. In Cuba, high priority is given to the technical and professional training of members of the National Revolutionary Police, public servants, and civilian and military law enforcement officers in general.

15. As part of the process of strengthening the legal and regulatory framework for the protection of human rights, steps have been taken to ensure that the work of the law enforcement institutions is constantly improved upon; these steps include the provision of general and thematic initial and in-service training in human rights for law enforcement officials, officers and authorities.

16. These training programmes cover international human rights instruments and, in particular, the provisions of the Convention, in accordance with article 7.

17. The Attorney General's Office, the People's Supreme Court and the National Union of Jurists of Cuba run diploma and postgraduate-level training courses every year for judges and prosecutors. These courses provide judicial officials with much more comprehensive professional training. The results obtained in recent years have laid the groundwork for a progressively more rigorous training programme rooted in practical experience. This programme equips judges and prosecutors, particularly those who are just taking up their duties, with the skills required for the proper performance of their work.

18. The Directorate of Training and Development of the Attorney General's Office handles the training and professional development of prosecutors. The Directorate has established a professional development system for managers, prosecutors and other personnel of the Office.

19. The court system has a Judicial Training School, established pursuant to an agreement of the Governing Council of the People's Supreme Court. The School develops an annual training and professional development strategy for the judiciary. It offers various diploma, postgraduate and master's programmes, which cover topics related to human rights, including the provisions of the Convention.

20. The training provided to the Cuban police force is being continuously improved. Training programmes are developed as and when operations are reorganized, in order to ensure that training is in line with police requirements.

21. Different study programmes have been designed for the various training levels, from basic to advanced. The main aim is to firmly instil proper modes of behaviour so that officers display appropriate professional conduct in line with the legal order and the humanist ethic of the Cuban Revolution.

22. However, there is no room for complacency, and we continue to evaluate possible further measures that could be taken to improve the initial and in-service training provided to public officials, prosecutors, judges, magistrates and law enforcement personnel, particularly in the area of citizens' rights, so that they might provide an even better service to the people in the performance of their duties.

23. One of the objectives of the National Commission established to combat racism and racial discrimination is to follow up on the Committee's recommendations.

24. There are still no tools for accessing information on crime and violence incorporating the variables of the victims' colour, national origin or ethnic origin and other relevant variables related to intersectional discrimination. This is one of the topics that will be reviewed by the National Commission.

25. During the preparation of the National Programme against Racism and Racial Discrimination, due account was taken of the experience of civil society organizations in combating those scourges. Of particular note is the work of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, which, since 2010, has consistently been engaged in activities aimed at confronting the issues, raising awareness and promoting values through the José Antonio Aponte Commission, composed of more than 200 artists, intellectuals and activists from every province of the country; the Neighbourhood Network of Persons of African Descent, whose work has had a notable impact at the community level; the United Nations Association of Cuba; the Nicolás Guillén and Fernando Ortiz Foundations; and professional organizations of journalists, lawyers and social communicators.

26. These efforts, brought together under a nationwide programme run by State agencies and civil society organizations, have helped to bring about progress in the recognition of the importance of African heritage to the national identity, to diagnose economic and social disadvantages associated with skin colour, to introduce anti-racist values into educational and cultural programmes, to define clear and specific goals in relation to anti-discrimination measures, and to articulate a responsible form of activism that is committed to the comprehensive defence of human rights.
