



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

26 June 2024

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of Cuba by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 44<sup>th</sup> session in November 2023. As the final outcome report on the review of Cuba was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 55<sup>th</sup> session, I have taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/cu-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Volker Türk

His Excellency  
Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba



## **Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review**

The adoption of the new Constitution and the Family Code and the prohibition of child marriage are welcomed. It is also noted that Cuba has reaffirmed its commitment to work with international human rights mechanisms to continue improving its institutional and legal human rights framework, and to promote the construction of an increasingly democratic society.

The acceptance of recommendations to improve prison conditions for all inmates and ensure compliance with the Nelson Mandela Rules and other international standards, including by conducting human rights educational programmes and other type of training in prisons, and enhancing prisoners' access to culture and sports, is positively noted, and so is the acceptance of recommendations to strengthen human rights training of public officials, especially in law enforcement agencies, including on combatting gender-based violence and racism, as well as of teachers and education staff.

The acceptance by Cuba of recommendations to continue efforts to improve the protection of women and children from violence through measures such as facilitating public spaces for debate and awareness-raising campaigns and establishing shelters is also noteworthy. Approving a law on gender violence, criminalizing femicide and ensuring that these cases are investigated, and guaranteeing comprehensive reparation for victims would be an effective step to ensure its implementation. Cuba's commitment for the development of a gender strategy in the legal system to promote a cross-cutting approach to the elimination of stereotypes in the drafting and interpretation of legal regulations is also welcomed.

Further to its UPR review, Cuba is encouraged to take all necessary actions to ensure the full respect of freedoms of expression, association and assembly by law enforcement agents, including establishing protocols regulating their conduct during social protests in conformity with international standards, and creating a favourable climate for independent civil society, protecting human rights defenders, journalists and artists from harassment, attacks, arbitrary arrests and reprisals, and ensuring that these acts are duly investigated. Additional efforts would also be necessary to ensure unhindered public access to diverse independent sources of information, both online and offline, and removing internet access restrictions.

Cuba is also encouraged to continue developing an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the National Assembly of the People's Power, the judiciary, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations from other international and regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR



implementation and SDG-related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).

The Government is further encouraged, as accepted during the fourth cycle, to consolidate its National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Monitoring of Recommendations on human rights and to establish a human rights recommendation tracking database to support its work, with the support of OHCHR, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report in about two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of Cuba may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2026, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR  
26 June 2024