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Written statement* submitted by Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 February 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Individual Contribution of the Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba to the Universal Periodic Review Working Group

Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba is an entity of Christian inspiration, non-governmental, non-profit, legally established and recognized with its own legal status in the Registry of Associations of the Ministry of Justice of Cuba, which is registered on date of May 28, 1941.

Our entity appropriately expresses the fraternity and unity of the Christian Church in Cuba, and seeks to develop this task with other Christian organizations around the world, while being a space for consultations for churches, Christian-inspired movements and organizations of religious character that make up this Council, or that, not being part of it, recognize its capacity for inter-religious dialogue, fraternity and cooperation.

Its vision is to be an ecumenical fellowship of churches and other Christian institutions that confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior, in accordance with the Scriptures, and seek to realize their common calling for the Glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And it defines its mission which is based on the Word of God, to promote spaces for meeting, celebration, reflection, formation and joint actions of churches and other Christian institutions, as a visible expression of unity in Jesus Christ, in the service to our people, especially the less fortunate.

It has 25 full member denominations (Salvation Army, Fellowship of Baptist Churches of Cuba, Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, Pentecostal Congregational Church, New Life Christian Church, Church of Christ, Church of God in Cuba, Church of the Friends (Quakers) Church of the Nazarene, Episcopal Church of Cuba, Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession, Gethsemane Evangelical Church, Free Evangelical Church, United Evangelical Church, Agrarian Christian Brotherhood Church, Light of God Pentecostal Church, World Mission Church, Missionary Church of God, Greek Orthodox Church, Sovereign Grace Pentecostal Church in Cuba, Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba, The Unity of the Brethren (Moravian) in Cuba, World Evangelical Mission, Pentecostal Manger Church).

In addition 14 ecumenical centers and movements (Latin American Ecumenical Social Action (ASEL), Christian Center for Reflection and Dialogue (CCRD), “Augusto Cotto” Information and Studies Center (CIE “Augusto Cotto”), Dr. Martin Luther King Memorial Center Jr. (CMMLK), Commission for Studies of the History of the Church in Latin America (CEHILA), Christian Conference for Peace (CCP), Interdenominational Confraternity of Evangelical Ministers and Pastors of Cuba (CIMPEC), Baptist Worker-Student Coordination of Cuba (COEBAC), Christian Student Movement (MEC), KOINONIA Movement, Evangelical Theology Seminary (SET), Latin American Union of Ecumenical Youth (ULAJE), Christian Service and Training Center “B.G. Lavastida”, Oscar Arnulfo Romero Reflection Group) doing a total of 39 full member institutions.

There are also eight institutions in the status of fraternal Associates, the Interdenominational Christian Community, the Hebrew Community of Cuba, the Yoga Self-Realization Association, the Church in the Foursquare Evangelical Way, the Assemblies of Christian Churches, the Reformed Episcopal Church of Cuba, the “Fuente de Salvacion” Church. Missionary” Evangelical Church “Monte Calvario”

From our perspective of Christian experience of faith, we express our ideas focusing on the following opinions and expressions based on living and the mission developed in Cuba.

1. Religions in Cuba enjoy opportunities in spaces to develop all their activities typical of their centers of worship and liturgical celebration. They develop their educational and training activities included in their doctrines and teachings for both children and adults.
2. Churches carry out special public activities, especially during the designated times of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and other special liturgical times, which are characterized by unity between the different denominations to celebrate and give public testimony of their faith. At the national level, Christmas Day is a festive date and Easter Friday is a non-working day in the country.

3. There is a permanent dialogue with authorities at different levels, from the Popular Councils, municipalities, and provinces to the national level. This is done through political offices or state administration bodies. The CIC in particular maintains agreements with the ministries of Public Health, Agriculture, Education, Labor and Social Security and with multiple civil society organizations, such as NGOs, etc., in the case of MINREX, MINCEX and other companies that facilitate the work carried out by our institution based on advocacy, development, and humanitarian aid and cooperation agreements.
4. Religions in Cuba have broad freedoms to develop their ties with international counterparts, receiving visits, developing international events in our country, and leaders and pastors have all the facilities to participate in meetings abroad in other nations.
5. Three Popes have visited the island: John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, on two occasions. The latter to hold a meeting with Patriarch Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all the Russian Federation.
6. Several secretaries of the World Council of Churches, the World Reformed Communion, the Latin American Council of Churches and leaders of multiple ecumenical organizations have visited the island. Our churches are affiliated with various regional and global institutions through which they fully live their reason for being.
7. We are in a region that is a victim of the consequences of climate change, which is why it is often affected by natural disasters such as droughts, floods, high temperatures, among others. The church actively participates in the response to emergencies created by these climate events, articulated with the government and local actors. In addition to being able to implement and channel the help offered by international organizations.
8. We develop extensive work with, of people with disabilities, their families and municipal and community actors improve their knowledge, attitudes and practices to address disability within local development processes. People with disabilities begin to manage new community services as part of their job placement. Coordinators and collaborators of the Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba improve their skills to integrate into the work of the Pastoral Care of People with Disabilities and promote their coordination with other community advocacy actors.
9. We have great facilities for access to Bibles, they are distributed throughout the country equitably to meet the needs of different groups of believers: children, young people, women, pastors, prisoners, people with disabilities, the elderly, etc Public libraries have traditional Bibles and other materials, and in each provincial library there are copies written in Braille.
10. The entry of Bibles and material is carried out with great feasibility, and with easy customs costs, in an expeditious manner. In the last five years more than 2 million Bibles, new testaments and materials have entered the country equitably. Likewise, we must recognize the extensive facilities that all religious groups have to receive their materials and share and distribute them among their faithful and in their evangelistic and/or missionary work.
11. On the state radio station with national projection to broadcast, every Sunday and on the occasion of the main Christian festivities, its program: "The Gospel on the March". Likewise, for a few years there has been the "Our Time" program of the Cuban Interreligious Platform of which we are part. Likewise, the Catholic Church broadcasts masses on all radio stations in the dioceses.

12. We freely interact and work globally with counterparts, partners and twinning with whom we have exchanges, projects, receipt of funds, agencies and international counterparts: Joint Action of the Churches, Norwegian Church Aid, NGO Christoffel Blindenmission (CBM) Germany , World Church Service. New York, Lions Club International, Diakonia Sweden, World Day of Prayer, World Day of Prayer, Lutheran World Federation, Johny & Friends, Refuge of Hope, Bread for the World Germany, The Primate's Fund for World Security and Development of Canada, Latin American and Caribbean Network for the defense of the rights of children and adolescents, United Bible Societies, United Church of Canada, European Union, the United Nations UNFAP, European Union, WCC World Council of Churches, Latin American Council of Iglesias, National Council of Churches of USA, World Communion of Reformed Churches, Canada Council of Churches, Caribbean Council of Churches, Association of Presbyterian Churches of Latin America.

We Cubans, Christians and other religious denominations, have the real possibility of exercising the religious freedom that is stated in our Constitution and that this is expressed in multiple areas of the being and work of religious institutions and groups and it is worth highlighting the decided contribution to the exercise of this fundamental right by the political will of the Cuban rulers who manifestly recognize the important role that religious activity corresponds to in the life of our people.
