

# Cuba acknowledges the persistence of racial prejudice despite progress

## James Early

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I believe this statement from the Cuban government about the unfinished struggle against racism, despite many advances against racism in the material and spiritual lives of Cuban Afro-Descendants by the policies of the Revolution, could be a critically important juncture at which Cuban citizens, especially those of Afro-Descent, and the Cuban government, can become central players in the Continental wide ideological and political discourses and policies of Afro-racial-cultural identity and related discrimination, participatory democracy and integration of the Caribbean and Latin America. Cuba has not played a leading role in the network of networks of Afro-Descendants throughout Latin America, and many feel that the Continental movement of Afro descendants against racism in their respective nations has been limited by not having consistent input from experiences of socialist Cuba. Anti-racists models from the U.S. African American community movements for civil rights and government models developed by the U.S. State Department in collaboration with the governments of Brazil and Colombia have been highly touted. Hopefully, now, the Cuban experience within the Revolution which has produced such extraordinary achievements in education, health, culture, science and solidarity among its citizens will assume a more prominent role of collaboration and leadership with other citizens and nations in Latin America and the Caribbean to overcome racism.

For example, it will be very important to learn what contributions the "Cuban Commission Against Racism and Discrimination" (inaugurated in January 2010 on the important and high profile "Mesa Redonda" --"Round Table" news and analysis program -- on Cuban television by the Cuban Union of Artists and Writers) is accomplishing to better the material and spiritual circumstances of Cuban Afro-Descendants and to advance their full participation in Cuban life and politics. It will be instructive to other Caribbean and Latin American citizens and governments to see whether and how the deliberations of the Cuban Communist Party and Cuban citizens speak to and develop public policies to combat the unfinished issues of racism as a part of the next phases of the maturation of Cuban socialist democracy in the new economic plan that will be developed. Much also might be learned in the United States from anti-racist social movements and government policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in

relationship to the under-developed communities where racism inflicts the most devastation against democratic participation and the quality of material and spiritual life.

Latin American leftists' discourses about participatory democracy and class struggle has, it seems to many, given less attention and practical application to analyzing structural and cultural racism through consistent collaboration with Afro-Descendant citizens, and insufficient attention has been given to fuller integration of Afro-Descendant progressives into leading fora for debate and planning in regional integration. New developments in Cuba about participatory democracy and the unfinished struggle against racism against Afro-Descendants could also be instructive about why and how to further institutionalize anti-racist policies in the integration with Latin America and South-South relations. Full democratic participation of Afro-Descendants as protagonist in national and regional development is a key measure in assessing equality and justice in the region.

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News agencies

Cuba acknowledges the persistence of racial prejudice in the island despite progress  
(UN) SOCIEDAD-SALUD, SOLIDARIDAD-DERECHOS | > AREA: policy  
16-02-2011 / 18: 30 h

Geneva, 16 February (EFE).-Cuba today acknowledged that the island remain certain racial prejudice in spite of the efforts and progress made in combating discrimination and the promotion of equality.

Thus affirmed the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Cuban, Abelardo Moreno Fernández to present today his country report before the Committee on the Elimination of Racial discrimination of the UN.

"Still remain certain racial prejudices derived from historical and sociocultural factors." "Fifty years of anti-discrimination revolution can not delete completely stereotypes that characterized a society that was deeply racist for over 500 years", said the Cuban Deputy Minister speaking at the said Committee today and Thursday study and debate on Cuba.

Moreno Fernández explained in his presentation aspects of Cuban legislation which "condemns and punishes acts of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions".

He said that the Cuban law "condemns, prohibits and punishes racial segregation, apartheid and genocide" and "establishes the right for all, without distinction, to occupy all positions and jobs in the State (...)" "Administration (...)" and the armed forces".

The Committee completed its study of Cuba's report this Thursday and will present its conclusions on 11 March. EFE

Noticias agencias

Cuba reconoce que persisten prejuicios raciales en la isla pese a avances  
(ONU) SOCIEDAD-SALUD,SOLIDARIDAD-DERECHOS | > AREA: Política  
16-02-2011 / 18:30 h

Ginebra, 16 feb (EFE).- Cuba reconoció hoy que en la isla persisten ciertos prejuicios raciales a pesar de los esfuerzos y avances registrados en la lucha contra la discriminación y por la promoción de la igualdad.

Así lo afirmó el viceministro de Relaciones Exteriores cubano, Abelardo Moreno Fernández, al presentar hoy el informe de su país ante el Comité sobre la Eliminación de la Discriminación Racial de la ONU.

"Aún subsisten ciertos prejuicios raciales derivados de factores históricos y socioculturales. Cincuenta años de Revolución antidiscriminatoria no pueden borrar totalmente estereotipos que caracterizaron una sociedad que fue profundamente racista por más de 500 años", señaló el viceministro cubano en su intervención en el mencionado Comité que hoy y este jueves estudia y debate sobre Cuba.

Moreno Fernández expuso a lo largo de su presentación los aspectos de la legislación cubana que "condena y sanciona todo acto de discriminación racial contra personas, grupos de personas o instituciones".

Dijo que la ley cubana "condena, prohíbe y sanciona la segregación racial, el apartheid y el genocidio", y "consagra el derecho de todos, sin distinción, a ocupar todos los cargos y empleos del Estado (...) de la Administración (...) y de las Fuerzas Armadas".

El Comité completará este jueves su estudio del informe de Cuba y presentará sus conclusiones el 11 de marzo.