

# The Republic of Cuba

## Positions for the Committee on Sustainable Development

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### I. Meeting the Unique Sustainable Development Needs of Africa

Contrary to the words of Joseph Stalin, "One death is a tragedy; a million is a statistic," the issues confronting Africa are statistically and ethically unsettling. Worldwide, 2.7 million people are living on less than two dollars a day, many of which reside in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> It is also estimated that 25 million out of the world's 40 million people infected with HIV live in Sub-Saharan Africa. As such conditions epidemically spread through the continent, the desperate need for the expansion of sustainable development practices expands. The Republic of Cuba is wholly committed to alleviating that which inhibits the sustainable development of Member States, especially in Africa.

The Republic of Cuba is currently working to domestic advances in sustainable development through programs like the Cuban Council of Churches (Consejo de Iglesias de Cuba, Departamento de Coordinación y Asesoría de Proyectos).<sup>2</sup> Cuba is also developing and promoting projects that advance rural sustainability, spreading the use and development of appropriate technologies without relying on outside technicians, and exploring techniques that can be shared independently from farmer to farmer. Nevertheless, Cuba understands that the implementation of sustainable development practices could be incredibly beneficial to African states seeking further economic growth. The successes of these programs have been proven in rural Cuban communities. In fact, Cubans are producing enough organic agriculture to not only sustain the Cuban population but also to export in great quantities. Schemes based on this successful model could prove beneficial to many countries in Africa.

The Republic of Cuba calls on the body to work collaboratively to find a way to spread sustainable development practices to the entire African continent, focusing especially on the spread of such practices in Africa's least developed states. To further this aim, Cuba recommends the formation of the United Nations Committee to Promote Sustainable Development in Africa (UNCPSDA). This committee, to fall under the auspices of the General Assembly First Committee, would help to coordinate all United Nations efforts to promote sustainable development within Africa. Furthermore, Cuba calls for the creation of the African Sustainable Development Summit to be held in 2009 and every two years after. This summit would bring together leaders of all African nations in addition to leaders of developed and developing countries from around the world. The open exchange of ideas that will take place will be beneficial to the implementation of sustainable development models in Africa.

### II. The International Water for Life Decade (2005-2015): A Discussion of Water Resources and Management

The Republic of Cuba is fully aware of the various problems that can be experienced due to the contamination of water. While Cuba has been successful in its endeavors to ensure clean drinking water to its citizens, Cuba understands the urgent need to take immediate and essential steps towards preventing contamination and find ways to treat contaminated water sources. Due to the fact that only 2.5 percent of the world's water is drinkable, Cuba along with many other Member States realize that conservation of existing water reserves must be an vital part of any program put forth by this body .

As Cuba is experiencing quick industrialization, its fresh water aquifers are often in danger of contamination. In addition to rapid industrialization, another source of contamination of clean water is population growth. Cuba is taking steps to both secure the safety of water and to promote clean water management programs and conservation techniques throughout the island. Cuba has begun to integrate these ideas into daily life by promoting these sustainable practices through Cuba's world class educational system. By taking advantage of this highly developed educational infrastructure, Cuban students can learn about all types of sustainable development practices during ordinary science lessons. This education in sustainable practices has lead to a high level of cooperation among citizens in the area of water safety and conservation.

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank. *Millennium Development Goals*  
[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

<sup>2</sup>Organizations in Cuba  
<http://www.cosg.org.uk/organisations.htm>

The Republic of Cuba calls for Member States to construct and pass a resolution that calls for heightened awareness of the safety of water sources worldwide and highlights the need for conservation programs. In addition, Cuba favors the creation of an international publicity program to promote such practices. This program would work to provide the educational systems of all Member States with materials in which students can be taught to properly conserve water. Additionally, these educational materials would help students gain a better perspective on how their actions affect the environment in which they live. Cuba calls on the body to work collaboratively on this issue, as a clean environment which provides access to safe, drinkable water for all global citizens is essential. Inaction is no longer a viable option, as it is the charge of this body and this organization to ensure that all people across the globe have access to this basic element of human life.

### **III. Eco-Tourism and Sustainable Land Management Practices**

The world has experienced a dramatic level of ecological devastation over the last 30 years. In fact, it has experienced more devastation in the past 30 years than in the last 10,000 preceding that time period. This rapid devastation was caused by the augmentation of urban populations and agricultural operations to sustain these new urban centers. Human impact will be felt for many generations. However, the Republic of Cuba stands ready to help prevent human interference from becoming an irreversible problem with the installation of organizations such as the Debt-For-Nature-Swaps and the BioCarbon Fund<sup>3</sup>. Cuba understands the horrible plight the world would face should it be without rainforests to prevent erosion, landslides, along with other valuable natural resources. Cuba realizes that urgent action must be taken worldwide to prevent more ecological devastation and understands that tourism is a valuable teaching mechanism in this effort.

Although the millions of people residing within the Republic of Cuba could potentially pose a threat to its rich biodiversity, a plethora of instilled preservation laws and regulations along with intensive environmental education from a young age, have successfully prevented mass degradation of its ecosystems.<sup>4</sup> Cuban citizens have taken great strides to preserve their own lands and the lands of the nation at large. By recognizing the issue and promoting international discussion on the topic, Cuba has demonstrated its commitment to global improvement on this issue.

Cuba fully understands the role that ordinary citizens play in the task of preserving pristine ecosystems. Therefore, Cuba calls on the body to promote education schemes, through tourism and otherwise, to educate the global population on inaction against environmental degradation affects the entire world. Cuba supports the formation on the Sub-Committee for Ecological Tourism Development, to be operated under the auspices of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). This subcommittee would identify areas of the world in need of Eco-Tourism for sustainable development plans. It would also suggest plans of action to develop these areas into centers of education and recreation. By displaying pristine examples of conserved natural resources, all Member States can make great strides in educating the public. This subcommittee would be charged with submitting a report to this body at the first of every year detailing its findings. By implementing such collaborative solutions, Cuba is firmly of the opinion that all citizens of the world can be educated in conservation and sustainable development practices.

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<sup>3</sup> The World Bank, *Carbon Finance Unit*  
<http://carbonfinance.org/Router.cfm?Page=BioCF>

<sup>4</sup> The Republic of Cuba, Law 81 of the Environment  
<http://www.internationalwildlifelaw.org/CubaWildlife.html>