



REPUBLIC OF CUBA
Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office at Geneva
and other International Organizations in Switzerland

Note No. 130/2021

Geneva, 16 March 2021

Dear Ms. Lawlor,

I hereby refer to the press release issued on Cuba on March 11, on which we have held exchanges. I reiterate my gratitude for expressing a desire for dialogue and cooperation with Cuba, which is our intention to reciprocate.

In this regard, we take note of the changes made with respect to the original text on January 18th.

However, the content of the press release issued contains elements that should not be left unanswered, and that we now reject.

The Republic of Cuba provided extensive information in a clear and timely manner, in response to note AL/CUB/1/21 dated January 18, exposing the falsehood of the allegations contained therein. We note with concern that the response of the Cuban government has not been taken into account appropriately about alleged violations or limitations of the rights of people who claim to fight "racism and discrimination against Afro-Cubans", and the misuse of the term "human rights defenders". We reiterate our rejection to such false accusations.

This is a clear illustration of the position adopted by the Special Procedures involved, which was already predefined and conceived in advance, and which does not help the spirit of dialogue and cooperation that should prevail between special procedures and States.

**Ms. Mary Lawlor
Special Rapporteur
on the situation of
human rights defenders**

We wonder what sources of information and criteria have been used and which methodology has been applied to qualify as "human rights defenders" the individuals mentioned in the aforementioned communications. Whatever the criteria used, we strongly reject the implication of the use of said qualifier in the referred cases.

Ms. Lawlor,

Cuba continues to be committed to fighting racism and racial discrimination. Therefore, there is progress in the eradication of racist demonstrations in society. In November 2019, the National Program against Racism and Racial Discrimination, a Government Program, was adopted in order to fight and definitively eliminate the vestiges of racism, racial prejudice and racial discrimination.

The Cuban State is committed to achieving the program's goals. For this reason, a commission was created to ensure its implementation. The President of the Republic, Miguel Díaz Canel Bermúdez, heads this commission and the program is carefully revised on a regular basis at the highest level.

The implementation of the Program already has satisfactory results. A comprehensive study on the historical roots and current manifestations of the problem has been conducted. There has been an analysis of the subjective and objective factors that contribute to the persistence of the problem. The research programs of academic institutions have been updated. Specific sub-programs were designed and implemented by the educational institutions attached to the Ministries of Education, Higher Education, Public Health and the Sports Institute. The Cuban program for the International Decade for People of African Descent has been revised and updated. A media awareness-raising campaign has been launched.

The Program's main lines of action include the dialogue and exchange with groups and citizens who have stood out for anti-racist activism. The overwhelming majority of them expressed their interest in participating in the planning and implementation of the Program in order to consolidate an inclusive and non-fragmented society, in opposition to the one promoted by some people who, behind the fictitious defense of racial issues, seek to fracture the social consensus and subvert the freely endorsed constitutional order.

For Cuba, the fight against racism is a sacred responsibility. It is directly and inextricably linked to the more than 153 years of struggle for the independence of our nation, since the very 10 October 1868.

Ms. Lawlor,

No one has the right to invoke the cause of the fight against racism to subvert the political order on behalf of a foreign power. No special procedure or human rights mechanism should serve as a legitimating body for such ignoble and illegitimate activity.

We invite you to observe the current scenario of the attacks that Cuba is currently subjected to, in order to better understand the true objectives and implications behind the aforementioned allegations, as well as the role of the manipulation of the racial issue and the misuse of the term "human rights defenders" in that context.

Ms. Lawlor,

We sincerely hope that human rights mechanisms, including special procedures, truly serve the promotion of human rights in all countries, without manipulation or politicization, instead of serving political agendas that contribute nothing to that objective.

Under this premise, I reiterate the willingness to continue cooperating with your mandate.

Please, accept, Ms. Lawlor, the assurances of my highest consideration.



*Juan
Quintanilla*

Juan Antonio Quintanilla Román
Ambassador
Permanent Representative