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CUBA SAYS YES: 'Code of freedom' for families

By Melinda Butterfield

Sept. 27 – Two days after the historic referendum approving Cuba's new Code of Families, diplomats held a special briefing at the Cuban Mission to the United Nations in New York City.

The evening gathering was attended by about a hundred people, including progressive attorneys and judges, representatives of nonprofits dedicated to protecting children and LGBTQ2S people, U.N. diplomats from friendly countries, and Cuba solidarity activists. Cuba's Ambassador to the U.S., Lianys Torres Rivera, traveled from Washington, D.C., to attend.

Two things were immediately apparent: the immense pride of the Cuban representatives in the victory of the new Code of Families; and the hunger of people from the U.S. to learn from Cuba's experience in light of ongoing right-wing efforts to roll back people's rights here.

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla opened the meeting. He explained that Cuba's revolutionary government and mass organizations were long committed to updating and strengthening the country's 1975 Family Code to reflect modern social realities.

Originally, Rodríguez explained, equality in marriage rights for same-sex couples and other updated provisions were to be included in the 2019 Constitution. But the democratic consultations throughout Cuban society at that time revealed there was no consensus on these questions.

It was decided to set the issues aside to permit more discussion and education, leading to the referendum on the Code of Families.

Rodríguez reviewed the enormous obstacles Cuba has faced in the last few years – from the COVID pandemic to climate-change-fueled disasters to last summer's terrible fuel fire – and of course, underlying all these problems, the tight-ened U.S. blockade and sabotage.

"We launched the referendum in these difficult conditions because we are committed to a family model based on social justice," Rodríguez said. The discussion in the leadup to the Sept. 25 vote "exposed differences, but that it was ratified showed progress."

'Expands rights'

Seventy-four percent of the electorate participated in the referendum. Of those who voted, over two-thirds of Cubans said "yes" to the updated code. This is despite a concerted "no" campaign by religious and social conservatives and foreign actors.

"The new code is "very progressive," said Rodríguez. "It expands rights; it doesn't take away from anybody. It is an act of justice for many people."

Diplomatic personnel then outlined some of the key points of the new Code of Families and how it was achieved.

They said Cuban and Latin American identity was central to the process of shaping the new code. Family laws throughout the hemisphere were reviewed and pulled from – even U.S. case law.

The guiding idea is that family plurality, diversity and human dignity are at the center of the Cuban Revolution. The code has an educational and pedagogical nature.

The definition of a family is now based on affection and emotional ties rather than blood relations, something new in the country's history.

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PHOTO: MISEN

In addition to expanding the definition of the family beyond the hetero-normative conception, the Code also enshrines the rights of women, promotes gender equality, protects the role of grandparents and much more.



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CHINA 7

OVER 50,000 HOMES WERE DESTROYED BY HURRICANE IAN. REBUILDING BEGINS NOW, BUT THE U.S. EMBARGO ON CUBA MAKES IT AN UPHILL BATTLE. LET'S HELP OUR NEIGHBORS!

Reprint of the full-page ad that appeared in the Sunday, Oct. 2, New York Times

LET CUBA REBUILD: AN URGENT APPEAL

The U.S. sanctions and embargo are preventing Cuba from rebuilding after Hurricane Ian.

The Biden Administration needs to act right now to help the Cuban people. Hurricane Ian caused great devastation. The power grid was damaged, and the electrical system collapsed. Over four thousand homes have been completely destroyed or badly damaged.

Cuba must be allowed, even if just for the next six months, to purchase the necessary construction materials to rebuild. Cubans are facing a major setback because of Hurricane Ian.

Despite Cuba's well-known preparedness for natural disasters, the damage from this hurricane has been immense. In the western province of Pinar del Rio, famous for its tobacco production, over 5,000 farms were destroyed. In small towns like San Luis, 80% of all homes were left damaged.

Despite previous assurances by the U.S. Embassy in Havana that the law authorizes U.S. entities and organizations to provide disaster relief and response, it's proven not so easy. For many organizations wanting to send aid to the island urgently, there are long, complex processes to receive licenses that often

require expensive lawyers. Also, Cuba's inclusion in the State Sponsors of Terrorism List means that banks in both the United States and abroad are reluctant to process any transactions, including humanitarian donations. The Trump administration absurdly placed Cuba on the State Sponsors of Terrorism list simply for hosting the internationally recognized peace talks for Colombia.

It is unconscionable at this critical hour to maintain the embargo and engage in collective punishment against an entire people by preventing Cuba from purchasing construction materials or receiving aid.

President Biden, put Cold War politics aside – even for six months!

The people of Cuba are part of our family – the human family. Don't let outdated Cold War politics prevent peace-loving people from helping the Cubans to rebuild and return to their homes, rebuild the electrical grid, and have clean drinking water and access to food. The time to act is now!

Cuba is our neighbor. The U.S. loses nothing by being a good neighbor and allowing Cuba to recover fully from this tragic moment.

LetCubaLive.info

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