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HE DR MARION WILLIAMS
AMBASSADOR

**Statement by Barbados on the Occasion of the Universal Periodic
Review (UPR) of Cuba, Wednesday, May 1, 2013**

Thank you Chairman.

On behalf of the Government of Barbados, I wish to extend a very warm welcome to the delegation of Cuba, in particular the Head of Delegation, H.E. ***** THE HONOURABLE ~~MEMBER~~ MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CUBA.

My delegation wishes to commend Cuba for the work which they have put into producing their national report and for the presentation made here today. The high quality of the report is not only a testament to the importance which Cuba attaches to the UPR mechanism, but it reflects a continued commitment towards the development of a sustainable, socially and economically equitable and independent Cuban society.

We commend the steps taken between 2009 and 2012 towards further strengthening the legal and institutional framework for human rights in Cuba and in this regard wish to highlight the following:

- We view positively, recent policy decisions aimed at improving access to justice with special emphasis on the preservation of guarantees of due process.
- We commend cooperative efforts with UNICEF aimed at raising awareness on the rights of the Child and the exceptional strides made with regard to improving access to education for all children, enhancing the rights of the youth, women, as well the protection of the elderly.
- We view the completion and update of the National Plan for Persons with Disabilities as a proactive and progressive step towards the further empowerment of the disabled community and their further integration and involvement in Cuban society.
- The recent amendment of the "General Housing Act" and other policy decisions aimed at improving the housing stock on the island and enhancing ownership and transfer of property constitutes a positive step in strengthening the economic rights of the Cuban people and the right to adequate housing.

- We also note ongoing efforts to implement a new agro-industrial policy aimed at restructuring the economic management of the said sector with the aim of enhancing its viability and productivity and by extension enhancing the right to food.

Chair, it is evident that many of the policies detailed in Cuba's report, recognize the indispensable link between human rights and development. Considerable progress has been made on key social indicators however, as with all countries, there are areas where additional progress is possible. In this regard, we call on the international community as well as the UN to support the efforts of the Cuban Government in further strengthening the institutional framework for the protection of human rights including economic and political rights. We also recommend that Cuba give further consideration towards the ratification of both the ICCPR and the ICESCR.

My delegation is of the view that there is much in this report and in the manner in which Cuba has approached its human rights obligations which must be commended and as such we would like to take this opportunity to wish them a successful UPR.

Thank you.

Permanent Mission of Barbados
April 29, 2013