

Australia Cuba Friendship Society  
**MELBOURNE BRANCH NEWSLETTER**



**ISSUE No.2 2022**

Contact us via email: [admin@melbourneacfs.org](mailto:admin@melbourneacfs.org)

[www.melbourneacfs.org](http://www.melbourneacfs.org)

## Cuba's ICAP grants award to the ACFS



*Representatives from the various Australia-Cuba Friendship Society branches with the Cuban Ambassador Ariel Lorenzo express their gratitude and honoured in receiving the award. Pictured from left: Rob Parnell, Maree Dellora, Lachlan Hurse, Ambassador Ariel Lorenzo Rodriguez, Bob Treasure, Vinnie Molina, Tony Lawler, Juan Garrido and Peter Hood.*

**The Australia-Cuba Friendship Society (ACFS) and the Southern Cross Brigade, have been awarded the '60th Anniversary Commemorative Seal' by the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).**

On June 4<sup>th</sup>, representatives of the state ACFS including Brigade Co-ordinators received the award from Cuban Ambassador to Australia Ariel Lorenzo Rodriguez, at an event in Canberra. The Ambassador recounted the contribution and solidarity actions carried out in support of Cuba and its people for more than 40 years.

Through the ACFS, several generations of Australians, have promoted cooperation projects in schools and children's hospitals in Cuba, as well as coordinating donations for the benefit of the Cuban population such as those raised recently for medical supplies. Support for Cuba's demands against the tightened US blockade also has historical roots in the Australian solidarity movement.

Maree Dellora, Sasha Gillies-Lekakis, and Pepe Gillies represented the Melbourne ACFS at this event. The ACFS is honoured to receive the seal, awarded by Fernando Gonzalez Llort, president of ICAP.



*Promoting Friendship between the People of Cuba and Australia*

# Supporting Cuba .....



*Members of the ACFS Melbourne calling for the end of the US Blockade - Melbourne May Day March 2022*



Congratulations to all those who joined the Brisbane ACFS' national initiative 'From Australia to Cuba with Love'. The campaign aimed to support Cuba by asking people to participate in a range of activities to collectively cover 14886 km, (the distance between Australia and Cuba) in a bid to raise money for much needed medical supplies and at the same time raise awareness of the devastating effects of the United States government's economic blockade of Cuba.

**The participants covered 30,574km – over twice the proposed distance, with \$22,896 raised in total.**





# Cuba, Nicaragua & Mexico

## lead world gender parity in parliaments



*Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power*

**Cuba, Nicaragua and Mexico have been ranked 2nd, 3rd and 4th in the world, having achieved the highest proportion of women in parliament out of 189 countries.**

These three along with Rwanda and the United Arab Emirates are the only five countries in the world to have achieved gender parity in their lower or single legislative house (National Assembly, Congress, or Parliament) as of February 2022.

In its 2021 report, *Women in Parliament*, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) found that Cuba, with 53.4% of women holding seats in the National Assembly, ranks second worldwide, followed by Nicaragua, with 50.6% of its National Assembly held by women lawmakers. In the #1 spot is Rwanda (61.3%), whose laws require that 24 seats be set aside for women.

Rwanda, Cuba and Nicaragua are the only countries in which women have more seats than men in their national parliament.

The IPU lists both Mexico (ranked 4th) and the United Arab Emirates (ranked 5th) at 50%. Also within the top 20 are Grenada (ranked #9 with 46.7%), Bolivia (ranked #11 with 46.2%), Argentina (ranked #15 with 44.8%) and Costa Rica (ranked #17 with 43.9%). The world average is just 26.1%.

In 2021, the region of the Americas had the highest share of women's representation (33.8%), beating all five other regions of the world. Europe as a region, sits nearly three points behind the Americas with 31.1%.

It's important to note that three countries in Latin America have reached or surpassed gender parity, along with one country in Africa and one in the Middle East/North Africa region.

No country in Europe has achieved equal representation of women in their governing bodies. The closest Europe comes to gender parity is in Iceland, which ranks #7 with women representing 47.6% of the parliament.

<https://kawsachunnews.com/cuba-nicaragua-mexico-lead-world-gender-parity-in-parliaments>



Promoting Friendship between the People of Cuba and Australia

# ALBA:

## Regional Integration is an imperative



The XXI Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-People's Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP) opened on May 27<sup>th</sup> in Havana, Cuba. This summit provides member nations of the Alliance with an opportunity to share common development strategies and analyze the regional political situation.

"Now, as never before, it is imperative to unite wills to build consensus and make progress in regional integration and political coordination," Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel told the heads of state, government and representatives of the ALBA-TCP member countries.

Stressing the importance of achieving a Latin America with an independent voice that coordinates its development strategies and the defense of sovereignty, the Cuban president said that "fragmented, they could ignore each one of our representatives, but united, no one will be able to silence us."

In relation to the great challenge posed to the entire world by the Covid-19 pandemic, Díaz-Canel recognized the achievement of Cuban biotechnology with the production of anti-COVID-19 vaccines. The president ratified Cuba's willingness to put its scientific capabilities and achievements at the service of the member countries of the Alliance.

In his speech, Díaz-Canel also condemned the U.S. decision to exclude Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua from the upcoming IX Summit of the Americas. While professing to promote



"Fragmented, each of our representatives could be ignored, but united, no one will be able to silence us," Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel said at the opening of the XXI Summit of Heads of State and Government of ALBA-TCP.



*Promoting Friendship between the People of Cuba and Australia*



“

Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez stated this Friday in Havana, during the XXI Summit of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our ALBA-TCP, that the Government of the United States does not have the moral or political authority to exclude any country from the Summit of the Americas.

democracy, Washington cannot guarantee a plural space. "They pretend to be interested in a constructive relationship with our region, but they do not respect differences," the Cuban leader said.

"The practice of excluding is not new and confirms the interest of the U.S. to control the Inter-American system in order to use it for hegemonic objectives and impose the power to control democracy. Neither politically nor morally do they have that right," he said.

The president acknowledged the strong opposition of several Latin American and Caribbean governments to an exclusive summit. "Our America has changed; exclusions are no longer possible." The Cuban president added that the decision not to invite everyone is a historical setback, and all countries must be "invited on equal terms."

<https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/ALBA-Regional-Integration-Is-an-Imperative---Cuban-President--20220527-0020.html>



Australia Cuba Friendship Society Canberra

## Annual National Consultation: 2022

The 2022 Australia Cuba Friendship Society National Consultation will be held in Canberra on Saturday 15th October and Sunday 16th October at the Spanish Australian Club.

The full registration cost per person for the two-day consultation is \$120 and is payable to ACFS Canberra by Friday, 23rd September 2022

There will be an informal evening get-together for those arriving on Friday 14th October at the Harmonie German Club, 49 Jerrabomberra Ave, Narrabundah, ACT.

For more information or registration forms please contact us at [admin@melbourneacfs.org](mailto:admin@melbourneacfs.org)



Promoting Friendship between the People of Cuba and Australia



Australia Cuba Friendship Society  
*Melbourne*

# Join us to celebrate the 26 July Movement and the Cuban Revolution

- ★ Guest speaker
- ★ Afternoon tea
- ★ Raffle prizes and more

**Sunday 24th July, 2pm**

Entry \$10, Concession \$5

**Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church  
110 Grey Street, East Melbourne**



*Promoting Friendship between the People of Cuba and Australia*



# Cuba reaffirms solidarity with people of Western Sahara

**Cuba has reaffirmed to the United Nations its solidarity with the people of Western Sahara and supported their right to self-determination, for which they are currently fighting.**

Cuba's Representative to the United Nations, Yusnier Romero, also expressed his country's commitment to a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the conflict in that region. During a session on the question of Western Sahara, Romero said that this position was in accordance with UN resolutions regarding the granting of independence to colonial peoples. For 58 years, the United Nations Committee on Decolonization has declared Western Sahara a non-self-governing territory. Romero stressed that the international community must commit itself to the implementation of the United Nations resolutions and decisions regarding this issue.

In addition, Romero said that Cuba stands in solidarity with the struggle of the Saharawi people to exercise their legitimate rights and referred to the support given by his country to the Saharawi people since 1976. This included more than 2,000 Saharawi students who have graduated from higher studies in Cuban universities.

Currently, he continued, more than 70 young people from that territory are studying in educational institutions in Cuba, while a medical brigade and a brigade of Cuban teachers of basic education are working in the Tindouf camps, in southwestern Algeria. In February this year, Cuba also donated a batch of 458,000 doses of its Soberana 02 Covid-19 vaccine, to immunize the Saharawi children.

<https://www.plenglish.com/news/2022/06/14/cuba-reaffirms-solidarity-with-people-of-western-sahara/>

## Russia Approves Protocols to Defer Cuban Debt



**Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law ratifying four protocols to the Russian-Cuban intergovernmental loan agreements granting Havana a deferral of payments. The International Affairs Committee of the Russian Federation Council noted that cooperation between Cuba and Russia is of special importance for the country.**

The document was ratified on June 8 by the Russian Federation Council (Senate) and on May 24 by the State Duma (Lower House of Parliament). During the exchange of views on the issue in the upper house, the senators stressed that the extension of these agreements will make it possible to provide assistance to Cuba in financing oil supplies and will contribute to strengthening Russia's positions in Latin America.

"Providing assistance to the friendly Republic of Cuba in the area of financing the procurement of oil and its derivatives will contribute to strengthening the political positions of the Russian Federation in Latin America," that committee stressed.

Between 2006 and 2019, Russia provided Cuba with state export loans in an amount equivalent to two billion three hundred million dollars, the explanatory note on the new law indicated. The funds were granted to the Antillean nation to finance projects in the fields of energy, metallurgy, transport infrastructure and the supply of products to develop and support its economy.

Due to the country's difficult situation, caused by the tightening of the U.S. blockade and the impact of the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Cuba stopped repaying the state loans provided by Russia at the beginning of 2020 and in September requested restructuring. Following Havana's request to review the terms of repayment of Russian state loan debts, the parties signed on August 7, 2021 intergovernmental protocols to defer payments. These protocols have now been ratified by law.

<https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Putin-Approved-Protocols-To-Defer-Cuban-Debt-Payment-20220611-0006.html>



---

## Latin American & Caribbean Leaders Boycott 9<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles

---

Top leaders from Mexico, Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador were all absent from the ninth Summit of the Americas in Los Angeles in the week of June 6<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> . Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador announced he would boycott the conference after the U.S. said it would not invite Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua. Historian Alejandro Velasco and Roberto Lovato, award-winning Salvadoran American journalist and author, have called the conference "a failure of hemispheric proportions and a global embarrassment for the United States and for the Biden administration." Lovato calls the Biden administration's condemnation of some countries as anti-democratic hypocritical and says the absence of so many Latin American countries represents a decline in U.S. hegemony

---

## Cuban President Offers Thanks for Solidarity Shown at the People's Summit

Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel thanked on Friday the solidarity of the peoples and governments of the region that strongly opposed the exclusion of his country, Venezuela and Nicaragua from the Summit of the Americas.

In the framework of the closing of the Peoples' Summit, the president said that "solidarity is not only an inseparable principle of revolutionary practice, it is the most formidable weapon for those of us who believe in the power of the masses, in the telluric force of the mobilized peoples and in the inspiring struggle for social justice".

In addition, he gave special recognition to President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico, the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Presidents of Bolivia, Luis Arce, and Honduras, Xiomara Castro; and other leaders of the Caribbean and Latin America who have rejected both the exclusion and the blockade against the Cuban people.



<https://www.telesureenglish.net/news/Cuban-President-Thanks-Solidarity-Shown-at-the-Peoples-Summit--20220611-0002.html>



*Promoting Friendship between the People of Cuba and Australia*





# MEXICO AND CUBA:

## *continuing a deep and historic bond*

Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, visited Cuba during May as the last stop of his tour of Central American and Caribbean countries. The visit celebrated 120 years since the establishment of uninterrupted relations between the two countries and honoured the history of friendship, and solidarity.

Opening the exchange between the official delegations, the Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez reiterated to López Obrador that it was a pleasure to have him in Cuba, stating that, "This was a much desired, expected, and longed-for visit, in which we can convey to you, on behalf of the Cuban government and people, all the admiration, respect and affection that we have for you here in Cuba for your expressions and gestures of support to the Cuban people." He also added that "Cuba has not forgotten when you expressed, for the whole world to hear, that the Cuban people were a people who, given their dignity and heroism, deserved to be recognized as a heritage of humanity."

In a 40-minute speech, López Obrador expressed his condemnation of the genocidal blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States government in the commercial, economic and financial arena, in addition to the current tightening of this blockade. The Mexican leader also recalled the history of relations between Cuba and Mexico, the deep ties shared by important forefathers in both countries, as well as the support and participation of these patriots in the struggles of both peoples from the 19th century to present. He stated that "It is time for a new coexistence among all countries of the Americas, because the model imposed more than two centuries ago is exhausted, has no future or way out, and no longer benefits anyone."

Díaz-Canel expressed "appreciation and recognition, to our friend, President López Obrador, for his role supporting the integration of Our America, evident in the laudable work done leading the presidency of CELAC last year, and in defending of the sovereignty and integrity of states. Díaz-Canel also highlighted the respect both nations have for international law and "the commitment of both countries to the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, made by the CELAC Summit in Havana in 2014"



---

Following official talks between the two delegations, the two parties signed “a statement that establishes a new stage in bilateral relations between Mexico and Cuba,” while the respective ministers of Health ratified a collaboration agreement to “facilitate taking advantage of all the health care and scientific potential, of joint efforts and intentions which together the two countries could develop in the field of health, to benefit our peoples in this noble arena.” He added that important issues on the bilateral agenda were addressed, “our relations, but also regional and international issues.”

Díaz-Canel assured Lopez Obrador that the Cuban Revolution “will continue our triumphant march of hope and future, and that the people of Mexico can always count on Cuba.”

In conclusion, Lopez Obrador stated: “On a personal note, I would not bet on the failure of the Cuban revolution, its legacy of justice and lessons of independence and dignity. I will never join coup plotters who conspire against the ideals of equality and universal brotherhood. Retreating means decadence and desolation, it is a matter of power and not of humanity, I prefer to continue maintaining the hope that the revolution is reborn in the revolution, and here in Cuba it is a new great lesson: this people will once again demonstrate that being right is more powerful than force.”

<https://en.granma.cu/cuba/2022-05-16/the-relations-shared-by-mexico-and-cuba-are-deep-and-histori>

---

## Latin American Leaders Celebrate Petro’s Historic Victory in Colombia

Latin American heads of state, former presidents, and public figures have congratulated the “historic” victory of Gustavo Petro, Francia Marquez, and the Colombian people in the second round of the presidential elections.

From Cuba, President Miguel Díaz-Canel tweeted

*“I express my most fraternal congratulations to Gustavo Petro for his election as President of Colombia in a historic popular victory. We reiterate willingness to advance in the development of bilateral relations for the well-being of our peoples.”*



<https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Colombia-LatAm-Leaders-Celebrate-Petros-Historic-Victory--20220620-0002.html>



Promoting Friendship between the People of Cuba and Australia



# VISIT CUBA

29 December 2022 – 17 January 2023

Join the  
SOUTHERN  
CROSS  
BRIGADE  
and experience  
the real Cuba  
for yourself



**TRAVEL TO CUBA!**  
Join the 2022  
Southern Cross Brigade

BE MORE THAN A TOURIST!  
EXPERIENCE THE HISTORY,  
CULTURE AND ACHIEVEMENTS  
OF CUBAN SOCIALISM.  
MEET WORKERS LEADING  
MEDICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION AND EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS.

TRAVEL TO HAVANA, MATANZAS,  
SANTA CLARA AND THE  
KORIMAKAO ART COMMUNITY.  
PARTICIPATE IN AGRICULTURAL  
WORK IN COOPERATIVE  
FARMS.

**≈ \$1,500**  
ACCOMMODATION, INTERNAL  
TRANSPORT, ACTIVITIES AND  
MOST MEALS INCLUSIVE

**SOUTHERN CROSS BRIGADE**  
TO CUBA  
29 DECEMBER 2022 - 17 JANUARY 2023  
SINCE 1983

For more information visit: [www.cubabrigade.org.au](http://www.cubabrigade.org.au)

Or contact us via email: [admin@melbourneacfs.org](mailto:admin@melbourneacfs.org) 0448121397

or

[southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com](mailto:southerncrossbrigade@gmail.com)

**KEEP THIS DATE FREE!**

[ACFS Melbourne Branch Meeting](#)

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July - 7.30pm

Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church

We look forward to seeing everyone soon



Promoting Friendship between the People of Cuba and Australia

# TUNE IN to LATIN AMERICAN UPDATE

The official program of the ACFS  
EVERY SUNDAY AT 10.30 AM

3CR  
Community  
Radio

855 AM

## CUBA NEEDS YOU!

### Join the Australia Cuba Friendship Society

The Australia-Cuba Friendship Society aims to promote and encourage friendship, understanding and cultural exchange between the peoples of Australia and Cuba.

We support the Cuban people by raising awareness of the illegal economic and political blockade imposed by the US in its attempts to subvert the revolutionary achievements of the Cuban people in their own country and abroad.

*You can become a member by:*

- applying online via the 'Contact' form at [www.melbourneacfs.org](http://www.melbourneacfs.org)
- or
- filling in the membership slip below and returning it with your cheque/money order to:  
*ACFS, PO Box 1051, Collingwood, Victoria, 3066*

## CURRENT MEMBERS

You can now pay your annual membership online.

### Direct Transfer Banking Details

ACCOUNT NAME:

Australia Cuba Friendship Society  
Victorian Branch

BSB No.: 063011

ACCOUNT No.: 00900817

BANK:

Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Join the Australia Cuba Friendship Society

## ACFS Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I wish to join the ACFS - \$30 (full membership), \$15 (concession)
- ☐ I am interested in the annual work/study trip to Cuba. Please send me information.
- ☐ I wish to donate \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the ACFS campaign for Cuba.

Please send this membership form and your cheque/money order to:  
ACFS PO Box 1051, Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia



Promoting Friendship between the People of Cuba and Australia