

## **First Section**

Name of the NGO: Latin American and Caribbean Continental Students Organization

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## **Second Section**

Language: Spanish

## **Third Section**

CEDAW's Committee. 55<sup>th</sup> session. July 8<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## **Fourth Section**

Written individual exposition presented by the Latin American and Caribbean Continental Students Organization, a non-governmental organization with special consultative status with ECOSOC.

## **Fifth Section**

Title: Analysis of the Latin American and Caribbean Continental Students Organization (OCLAE) on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Cuba.

## **Sixth Section**

1. The Latin American and Caribbean Continental Students Organization (OCLAE) represents thirty- six student federations (36) in the region, including organizations of the Secondary, university and post-graduate student movement from 23 countries in the Americas. As a student union platform, it has Consultative Status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 1997 and Operational Category to UNESCO. The Organization has also remained a joint platform in the Latin American student movement fighting for the rights of young people and students.

2. Its main working objectives are: to fight for the eradication of illiteracy, the access to education, the student welfare and equality more education coverage, the defense of university autonomy, freedom and plurality of the academy and free public education; to promote and develop effective student solidarity in their struggle against fascism, imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, hunger, social injustice and any behavior or statement that injures human dignity.

3. During the last Congress of the organization held in Montevideo in August 2011 the platform brought together more than 100 million students. It works in the Social Network for Public Education in America (Red-Sepa), in the Latin American Space of Higher Education (IESALC-ENLACES), in the Association of Universities of the Montevideo

Group (AUGM) in the Educational MERCOSUR segment, in the Leading Board of the World Social Forum (WSF) in the Continental Social Alliance (ASC), the Latin American Youth Forum (FLAJ), the World Federation of Democratic Youths (WFDY) and the Section of Higher Education of the International for Higher Education in Latin America (IE).

4. More than 50 million women in Latin America and the Caribbean belong to OCLAE of which about 300 000 are Cuban, members of the platform through their membership in the University Student Federation and the Federation Students in Intermediate Education.

5. The platform has developed a clear policy in defense of gender equality in all areas, processes and activities it performs and it has defended it at the continental level as part of their more traditional struggles. OCLAE had the presence of women in its leadership for many times, not only as presidents but also as members of the Executive Secretariat. A significant number of member organizations are also led by women, highlighting Cuba and Brazil as the most representative ones. Mechanisms have been implemented to promote the participation of females in OCLAE spaces (Latin American Student Conference and Career, Continental Days of Struggle) and their presence in OCLAE's Magazine articles, the media of our organization, which the main responsible and designer is a woman.

6. OCLAE, since its founding in 1966, has had Cuba as its executive headquarters keeping a deeper relationship with civil society; therefore it knows the reality of the people and especially the student movement and reality on the issue of gender equality and empowerment of women.

7. We consider that Cuba is an example regarding the access of its citizens to the enjoyment of rights such as access to education, health, sport and healthy recreation and the participation in political life and in other areas without discrimination due to sex, race, religion or political trend. Aspect that appears in the Constitution of the island and in our opinion is palpable and undeniable.

8. Regarding this, it particularly highlights the Cuban women, who are involved without any impediment, exclusion or restriction, in the economic, political, social, civil and cultural life, being protected by the existence of laws such as legislative, judicial and administrative ones to ensure the full enjoyment of rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with men. (Family Code, Labor, etc..)

9. We reaffirm that in Cuba we are working as in elsewhere in Latin America to encourage recognition of the common responsibility of parents in the upbringing of children, by understanding the social role of motherhood and transforming the social-cultural factors related to prejudices and patriarchal practices and behaviors devoted to show relationships of superiority and inferiority among genders influencing this through civic education and values through school, mass media, etc..

10. Cuban women are actively present in the elections as part of the Nominations and Election Commissions, as candidates or exercising the right to vote and, in the political life, being assignable, eligible, designated and elected for all responsibilities in institutions, organizations, companies, government bodies and agencies, legislation, government, etc.. They participate in policy formulation and implementation and enforcement of these, as

well as in political and social organizations which leads the life of the country. The important presence of women in the National Assembly of People's Power (48.86% of the seats in Parliament), the Council of Ministers, the Council of State (41% of its members, two of 5 Vice chairs), the provincial and municipality governments, among others, reaffirm the previous statement.

11. Today in Cuba there are guarantees to obtain and enjoy employment as an inalienable right, applying the same selection criteria among the candidates, with security job placement after completing studies in technical and vocational education and higher education, with the possibility of trainings, and vocational trainings. Women, like men, freely choose the profession, have the right to stability in the jobs, they are provided facilities like maternity leave and are evaluated for the quality of work on equal terms. There are guarantees for the health and safety at work and to enjoy social security like men.

12. As a student platform we have proven the existence of equal access to health and sport between men and women, whether in urban or rural area. In the case of health in all types of medicines with access to clinics, polyclinics, general and specialized hospitals, enjoying the same facilities, technologies, medicines, medical and special facilities for the care of pregnancy, motherhood, etc. Regarding sports, there are equal opportunities to participate actively in it, physical and recreational activity.

13. OCLAE, among its 36 member organizations, supported by the Federation of University Students (FEU) and the Federation of Students in Intermediate Education (FEEM) of Cuba reaffirms in this country, in the equal access to education for women and men in all teachings, forms of training, postgraduate, enjoying the same curricula, examinations, teachers. Unlike the reality experienced by members of other organizations in Latin America, Cuban female students as young people have a public, free and quality education that guarantees access to a transforming and liberating training, and consider them as citizens not only to work but to transform and improve society. The clearest example is the data that shows that 62% of college students and two thirds of professionals and technicians are female and 65% of teachers.

14. The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba for over 50 years has increasingly worsened by the adoption of presidential proclamations and legislation that have become increasingly tight and comprehensive. The policy of economic strangulation accounting has not ceased for a moment, clearly reflecting the obsession of successive governments of the United States by destroying the political, economic and social chosen by the Cuban people in exercising their rights to free determination and sovereignty. During all these years have intensified and strengthened the mechanisms that have a direct impact on health, food and other areas of the lives of Cubans.

There is strong and specific evidence of the blockade effects in the access to medicines and treatments in support of maternal and child health in the country. It may be mentioned that in the cardiovascular surgery department at Children's Hospital William Soler occur annually between 100 and 110 children under 1 year, in more than 90%, require parenteral

nutrition intervention to undergo surgery and achieve a better prognosis. Cuba does not have access to nutritional supplements for parenteral produced in the United States, the best quality for the uses to which they would go to the hospital.

Another case is that the company Medicuba SA, importing drugs, reagents and medical supplies, has been unable to acquire instrumental in obstetrics and gynecology because the company providing A / E Panamanian canceled the operation stating that the factory that had produced been acquired by a U.S. company, which did not allow the export to Cuba.

In the case of HIV / AIDS, an intermediary company Canadian sales canceled the contract it had signed with Medicuba to purchase kits (ELISA HIV-1P24) American manufacturing that enable the diagnosis of AIDS in children of HIV positive mothers / AIDS, knowing that the final destination of the product was Cuba. Therefore, the Cuban health authorities have been forced to resort to other options, involving the search and import of these kits more distant markets and higher prices.

Despite all these obstacles, the Cuban government made great efforts to achieve raise the quality of care and medical treatment in the country for all Cubans and get indices for infant and maternal mortality according to the commitments internationally within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.