

Canadian Network on Cuba
Working in friendship and solidarity with Cuba

FINAL DRAFT
APPROVED AT THE FOUNDING
CONVENTION
31 Aug. – 2 Sept, 2002

Statement of principles

PREAMBLE

1 - Since the early days of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, a number of Canadians from a broad cross-section of society have actively sought to support the progressive and far-reaching achievements Cubans have made. Cuba's efforts to eliminate illiteracy, provide quality, universal health care and education, and inculcate the values of respect, dignity and community in an attempt to alter social relations between the classes, combined with the tremendous impact that Cuba has had internationally, in terms of culture and development, are cause for celebration. At the same time, Cuba has been threatened militarily, economically and politically by the United States.

2 - The Canada-Cuba solidarity movement recognizes the unique challenges facing Cuba, and supports Cuba in its struggle to assert its sovereignty. The Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) condemns the illegal, immoral, criminal US blockade against Cuba, and seeks to have the longstanding US policy of misinformation about Cuba countered with a balanced, contemporary view of the Cuban reality.

3 - The culmination of myriad efforts and gestures of friendship, whether they be at the individual or organizational levels, combined with the plurality of grass-roots campaigns in support of Cuba, has led to the establishment of a united Canada-Cuba solidarity movement, encapsulated as the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC).

4 - We seek the support of progressive Canadians, who believe in the right of self-determination, from coast to coast to stand together to work toward the uplifting and enlightenment of all societies, and to celebrate Cuba's achievements as well as supporting their decades-long struggle to create a society in which the fundamental values of sharing and compassion can be realized.

5 - Our movement is for inclusion, for peace, for goodwill, for mutual respect, for harmony among all peoples of all backgrounds and origins, and for the right to self-determination. We support Cuba in its quest to create a socially just society. We condemn injustice and oppression, and stand with our Cuban sisters and brothers as they strive to present a model for the elimination of poverty, especially in the developing world. We applaud Cuba's internationalist vision and commitment.

6 - We support a sovereign Cuba with the same vigour and passion that we support a sovereign Canada, free from intimidation, threats and external intervention.

7 - We are united in our belief that the ideals so eloquently espoused by José Martí a century ago remain true, and must be defended.

*We are free, but not to be evil, not to be indifferent to human suffering, not to profit from the people...
We are not free to watch impassively the enslavement and dishonour of humankind, nor their struggles
for liberty and honour.*

PRINCIPLES

1. We are committed to the expansion and strengthening of friendship and solidarity between the peoples of Canada and Cuba.
2. We uphold the right of the Canadian and Cuban peoples to self-determination and national sovereignty, the right to choose their own social, political, economic and cultural development.
3. We oppose the illegal and immoral U.S. blockade and sanctions against Cuba and all foreign intervention which attempts to undermine the social, economic and political achievements of the Cuban people.
4. We promote the development of diplomatic, cultural, economic, political and social relations between Canada and Cuba on the basis of full equality, mutual respect and non-interference.

AIMS

1. To educate Canadians about the achievements of the Cuban Revolution in such areas as education, public health, culture, democracy and human rights, and about Cuba's invaluable contribution to the peoples of the world in order to counter disinformation spread about Cuban reality.
2. To coordinate common actions and campaigns in friendship and solidarity with the people of Cuba.
3. To establish links with friendship and solidarity organizations internationally and from coast to coast.

OBJECTIVES

1. To coordinate the implementation of various campaigns, projects and other initiatives undertaken by the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC).
2. To promote public awareness about Cuban reality by information distribution to member organizations and to other groups and institutions including the mass, independent and local media.
3. To work with all groups, organizations and individuals in furtherance of the aims of the CNC.
4. To initiate any emergency solidarity actions as required.
5. To maintain and promote relations with the Cuban Institute for Friendship amongst the Peoples (ICAP) and other partners.

6. To dialogue on a continuous basis with the Canadian Government on its policies with regard to Cuba.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership to the CNC shall be open to all organizations – including friendship and solidarity groups, trade unions, political parties, non-governmental and other organizations – that agree with and abide by the principles and aims of the organization.
2. All members have full voting rights – one organization one vote.
3. Admission to the CNC requires a majority vote of the coordinating committee to be ratified by the membership.
4. Any member that violates the principles of the CNC may be expelled.
5. Expulsion of a member requires a two-thirds vote.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

1. The Coordinating Committee (CC) is composed of delegates representing each member organization.
2. It shall represent all the member organizations.
3. It shall oversee all decision-making and the implementation of common initiatives, projects, campaigns, relations with member organizations and public relations.
4. It shall maintain working relations with ICAP and other Cuban partners as deemed necessary.
5. It shall define its working sub-committees according to the demands of the projects and campaigns.
6. It shall regularly disseminate information on its work to all member organizations.
7. It shall determine its own way of organizing itself.
8. It shall have a duration of close to one year until new members are selected by member organizations.

An interim Coordinating Committee is established consisting of one delegate from each group attending the founding convention of the CNC (Aug 31 – Sept 2, 2002), pending election of a permanent representative by the respective organizations as soon as possible.

FINANCES

The Coordinating Committee will propose to the member organizations, through their representatives, options for raising the funds for its operation in a prompt manner.

WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE CNC

1. TWO MAIN CAMPAIGNS:
 - FREE THE FIVE
 - IMPROVE CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CUBA (INCLUDING LOBBYING ON JAMES SABZALI, ENDING THE US BLOCKADE , EXPOSING THE FALLACIES OF THE VOTE AT THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION)
2. TO DEVELOP A CALENDAR OF SIGNIFICANT DAYS FOR CANADA CUBA SOLIDARITY AND WORK TO PROMOTE IT.
3. TO MARK JULY 26TH, THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONCADA ATTACK; AS A CANADA-WIDE SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA DAY
4. TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT THE ANTI-FTAA CONFERENCE IN HAVANA
5. TO MAKE THE CANADIAN CHE GUEVARA VOLUNTEER WORK BRIGADE A CNC ONGOING PROJECT
6. TO ESTABLISH A CNC WEBSITE
7. TO DEVELOP A CNC JOURNAL TO BE DISTRIBUTED ACROSS CANADA; ANNUAL OR BIENNIAL. THAT THIS BE REFERRED TO THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR FEASIBILITY AND CONSIDERATION OF DETAILS.
8. TO PUBLICIZE OUR WORK TO THE NATIONAL NETWORK ON CUBA IN THE US, AND SUPPORT THE PASTORS FOR PEACE CARAVAN.