

# *Despite U.S. blockade, Cuba advances in the protection of children's rights*

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Havana, October 11 (RHC)-- Cuba's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Ana Silvia Rodriguez, said Thursday that despite the intensification of the U.S. blockade, which has a substantial impact on children and adolescents, the island is advancing in the protection of children's rights.

At a UN General Assembly meeting on the promotion and protection of children's rights, the diplomat said that in the largest Caribbean island, national plans, policies, and programs are designed, taking into consideration the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"This situation contrasts with the fact that only one country member of the UN has not yet ratified this document: the United States, where, according to 2016 data, 18 percent of the children (13.3 million) lived in poverty," she said.

Rodriguez pointed out that minors also represented 32.6 percent of the poor and 21 percent of the homeless in the U.S.

The ambassador stressed that Cuba has free and universal national health and education systems at all levels, which are essential pillars for the promotion and protection of children's rights.

"The Parliament of my country allocates more than 50 percent of the state budget for health, education, and social assistance," she said.

Rodriguez recalled that Cuba has an infant mortality rate of 4.0 per 1,000 live births, and all children are vaccinated at birth against 13 infectious diseases and priority is given to the early detection of congenital ailments.

"It was the first nation to receive validation from the World Health Organization for eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and syphilis," she explained.

On behalf of Cuba, Rodriguez called on the international community to join forces to save children, to build a just and equitable world that will ensure a better future for children.

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