

# *Speech delivered by the President of the Republic, before the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola*

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**Díaz-Canel speaks before the Angolan Assembly**

Speech delivered by Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Republic, before the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola, on August 21, 2023, "Year 65 of the Revolution."

Her Excellency Mrs. Carolina Cerqueira, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola;

Vice Presidents and leaders of Parliamentary Groups;

Members of the National Assembly;

Political, local and traditional authorities;

Dear "caimaneros",

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you to Her Excellency Mrs. Carolina Cerqueira, President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola, for her words of welcome that touch us and for the warm welcome we have been offered.

Thanks also to the artists of the Angolan Choir for their magnificent interpretation of the Guajira Guantanamera.

I thank the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola for her warm invitation to address this august audience on the occasion of our official visit to this country.

I convey my warmest greetings to all the deputies on behalf of the Cuban government and people, whom I represent today in this sister nation, to which I am arriving for the first time as President of the Republic of Cuba (Applause).

Likewise, please receive a message of friendship from the President of the National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba, comrade Esteban Lazo Hernandez, and from all the members of the Cuban legislative body.

Dear President:

The close relations between Cuba and Angola were forged during the abhorrent period of colonialism and slavery, when millions of their children were forcibly uprooted from African lands to serve as labor force in the hard work of cane cutting and other activities that demanded high physical rigor.

The mark left in our country by those sons of Africa and of Angola in particular is so deep that with all conviction we can say that it is a fundamental part of the melting pot of the Cuban nationality. Cuba is the daughter of African blood and from Africa we received fundamental values that explain our own existence; I am thinking mainly of the resistance in the face of adversity, which has been proven so many times throughout Cuban history (Applause).

Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro said in 1988, in a decisive period of collaboration in Angola, that "to be internationalists is to settle our own debt with humanity", and that "whoever is not capable of fighting for others will never be capable enough to fight for himself" (Applause).

We Cubans relate this principle defined by the historical leader of the Revolution with the absolute dedication to the struggles for independence of the men and women brought to Cuba by that forced emigration, who during the second half of the 19th century became a legend within the Cuban mambisado, fighting with machetes for their personal freedom and for the freedom of the newborn Homeland. Their contribution was vital in the forging of the Cuban nation and culture.

And I quote again that great defender of the African peoples, Fidel. He said: "Without Africa, without its sons and daughters, without its culture and customs, without its languages and its gods, Cuba would not be what it is today. The Cuban people therefore owe a debt to Africa that is increased by the heroic history we have shared".

Over the years, relations between Angola and Cuba have transcended the political-diplomatic plane; they are characterized by the brotherhood that flourished in the field of shared battles for the definitive independence and to preserve their sovereignty.

In honor of this history of intimate friendship that became a symbol and example embodied in the thoughts and actions of historic leaders such as Fidel Castro and Agostinho Neto, the generations in which today rest the destinies of both countries have the duty to preserve what has been achieved and

move forward together on the path of development that our peoples deserve.

Angola is the African country where we have the most diverse and numerous collaborations. And it is a verifiable fact that there is potential to explore new mutually beneficial economic sectors.

Last April, the XV Session of the Intergovernmental Commission was held in Havana. At that time, several legal instruments were signed between the parties, to which are added the agreements we have just signed today in Luanda.

Parliamentary management will be essential to support initiatives that multiply the current levels of bilateral cooperation; strengthen economic and commercial exchange and mutual investments.

Dear Members of Parliament:

Last April, the National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba held the Constitutive Session of its 10th Legislature, in accordance with the provisions of the Cuban Constitution and Electoral Law.

The Cuban Parliament is made up of 470 deputies elected in representation of the 168 municipalities of the country; 226 are women, who represent 55.74 % of the total number of deputies (Applause), which places Cuba as the second Parliament in the world, after Rwanda, with more women in its membership.

We have also made progress in the age group component, with 93 young people under 35 years of age in our Parliament, 19.79%, and with an average age of 46 years.

In the last three years Cuba has approved a new Constitution and has multiplied the Legislative Schedule to update our legal framework with more popular participation.

It is in our best interest that both Assemblies strengthen ties through their respective parliamentary friendship groups and other contacts at different levels that allow us to better know each other's experiences in the difficult legislative exercise in the interest of responding more efficiently to the needs of the respective electorates.

I insist on the importance of maintaining exchanges on topics of the international parliamentary agenda and I take this opportunity to recognize Angola as the next venue for the 147th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to be held in Luanda next October. We wish you success in the development of this important meeting and we confirm the presence of a high-level delegation from the Parliament of Cuba (Applause).

Distinguished members of this Assembly:

The world is going through a complex international situation in the aftermath of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Several crises are affecting nations due to the high prices of food and fuel, in addition to the marked effects of climate change.

Cuba is going through a difficult socio-economic situation derived from world problems, but very particularly affected by the persistence of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed for more than 60 years by successive governments of the United States against Cuba. Its unprecedented tightening, with the application of 243 measures taken under President Donald Trump and the unjustified inclusion of the country on the list of State sponsors of terrorism, causes devastating effects on the economy and on the standard of living of the Cuban people.

In these complex circumstances Cuba has been able to count on the support and understanding of our longstanding friends. In particular, we feel that we have a bastion of friendship in Africa to continue working for the economic recovery and development of the country.

And I take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to Angola for always joining its voice to those of the vast majority of the world in favor of the end of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba. This decisive support is materialized every year with the favorable vote in favor of the Cuban resolution at the United Nations, as well as by the approval of a similar resolution within the African Union (Applause).

I convey infinite gratitude to the people, the Government, civil society organizations and individuals for the material aid sent to Cuba on the occasion of adverse events of various kinds, all of which has served to alleviate the needs of our population.

Dear Members of the House of Representatives:

Allow me to wish success to the National Assembly of the Republic of Angola in its 5th Legislature.

Likewise, I congratulate this country for holding the pro tempore presidency of the Southern African Development Community since last week, which, together with the presidency of the Organization of Asian, Caribbean and Pacific States, is evidence of the international strength of this beloved nation.

We conclude our stay in Angola with the certainty of having shared with part of our family. As an African proverb says: The footprints of those who walk together are never erased; ours, those of Cuba and Angola, are deepened!

Thank you very much.

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