

# *Speech by Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez in Geneva*

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**Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, Bruno Rodríguez, at the high-level segment of the 52nd session of the Human Rights Council. Geneva, 28 February 2023**

Mr. President:

Far from encouraging the construction of a more united and cooperative world, inequalities, poverty, hunger and exclusion are multiplying. A tiny minority enjoys the exponential increase of its wealth, while the vast majorities struggle for survival.

Current patterns of production and consumption are irrational and unsustainable and threaten the existence of the human species.

It is essential to fight for a just, democratic and equitable international order centered on the human being, on the peoples of the world.

The promotion and protection of human rights is a common ideal. No country is exempt from the challenges, and none has the authority to consider itself a paradigm in the matter, to judge others, and much less, to politicize and use them to stigmatize sovereign states and economic-social projects that do not conform to the designs of the masters of finance, markets and weapons.

The imperialist attempts to turn this Human Rights Council into a tribunal against countries that do not subordinate themselves to the geopolitical interests of powerful governments erode the credibility of this body and would seem to be trying to take it back to the ways of the defunct Commission on Human Rights, which imploded precisely because of those practices.

Cuba, as a founding member State of the Human Rights Council, defends respectful and constructive dialogue and international cooperation.

We advocate the full exercise of and respect for the principles of universality, indivisibility, objectivity and non-selectivity in the treatment of the subject.

In this spirit, we present our candidacy for re-election as a member of the Human Rights Council, for the period 2024-2026, in the elections to be held next October. We thank in advance the confidence of all those countries that have already given us their valuable support.

Cuba's voice will continue to be raised with a universal vision but from the South, in favor of the legitimate interests of developing countries, the poor, the neglected and excluded, from constructive engagement, responsible dialogue and the unwavering responsibility for the full realization of human rights for all.

Mr. President:

The U.S. government applies a genocidal policy of blockade, intensified in the extreme and of "maximum pressure", which has subjected the Cuban economy to extraordinary tensions that impact on the deterioration of consumption and the standard of living of families, on inflation, prices, salaries, availability of food and medicines, and on the electric service; and hits the country's income, financial transactions, industry, construction, services, trade, investment, health and education.

The infamous and unfounded inclusion of Cuba in the State Department's arbitrary list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism further aggravates the difficult situation caused by the blockade and has devastating effects on our financial system.

U.S. imperialism finances destabilization and "regime change" operations, slander against Cuban international medical cooperation, and smear campaigns; it uses powerful toxic technological platforms and encourages censorship and manipulation of large digital networks against Cuba.

This illegal policy deliberately stimulates emigration, especially of qualified people of active working age.

Cuba rises every day facing these attacks, joining efforts, innovating, with an unlimited capacity for resistance and creativity; and advances in the inclusive debate, democratic participation, particularly of young people; and the fruitful and renewing change of "everything that must be changed".

We continue with firm and irreversible steps to perfect the socialist state of law and social justice, and our socialist model of cultural, social and economic development, with the broad majority and active support of the Cuban people.

We are deeply grateful for the international solidarity and cooperation that Cuba receives from all corners of the world.

Mr. President:

In a free and universal referendum in 2019, we adopted a new Constitution with the secret vote of 87% of the citizens that strengthens the guarantees and the legal-institutional framework for the protection and promotion of human rights for all Cubans.

We implemented the National Program for the Advancement of Women, the Comprehensive Strategy for the Prevention and Attention to Gender Violence and in the Family Scenario; the National Program against Racism and Racial Discrimination, and the new Family Code, approved by referendum with 62% support.

Mr. President:

We will act from the high responsibility assumed with the Presidency of the Group of 77 plus China in 2023, convinced that a better world is possible, if we listen to the voice of our peoples, work for their benefit and defend with courage and close unity the collective and just interests of the South.

Thank you very much.

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