



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
315 Lexington Avenue \* New York \* N.Y. 10016 - (212) 689-7215 - FAX (212) 689-9073

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ILEANA NOÑEZ MORDOCHE, CHARGÉ  
D'AFFAIRES, a.i. OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE HIGH  
LEVEL MEETING ON HIV/AIDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY, NEW YORK, MAY 31<sup>st</sup>, TO JUNE 2<sup>Nº</sup>, 2006.**

Mr. President

Today I am compelled to read the speech that Dr. Jose Ramon Balaguer Cabrera, Minister of Public Health of the Republic of Cuba should have delivered here since he did not get the required visa from the Government of the United States of America to travel here. Once again the authorities of the host country fail to fulfill their obligations of facilitating the participation of a Minister from a Member State to the United Nations.

Cuba rejects any type of discriminatory action anyone might try to impose against us and demands full respect to the sovereign rights attained by its people, in a strong confrontation with pretentious imperial domination.

The US government pretends to silence the eloquent achievements attained by Cuba - in spite of the genocide blockade imposed against us by the United States of America- in the battle against HIV-AIDS. It also attempts to silence the unselfish and solidarity cooperation Cuba is rendering to the Third World in its battle against this serious calamity. Be sure, it will not succeed in this action.

**Speech by Dr. José Ramón Balaguer Cabrera, Minister of Public Health, Head of the Cuban Delegation to the Plenary Session of the High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS of the United Nations General Assembly. New York, May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006.**

Mister President

Mister Secretary General of the United Nations

Distinguished delegations:

The speech of the head of the Cuban delegation delivered five years ago at the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on HIV/AIDS began with these words:

"There is no country free from AIDS. Few nations -wealthy and privileged -have managed to reduce mortality rate by using drugs of high and irrational prices. Many others -unfortunate and poor -- witness a frightening decrease in the life expectancy of their peoples and a population decline that may lead to extinction...."

Today, we find that despite the advances of some countries in the struggle against this scourge, there have been very small changes. Mankind is facing a world where increasing poverty generates growing inequalities leading to greater vulnerability of the poorest to HIV/AIDS.

Cuba has managed to deal with the effects of this pandemic despite the tough economic, business and financial blockade imposed by the United States Government which hinders the access to most of the new drugs, manufactured by U.S companies or their subsidiaries that due to the laws of such genocide blockade, are prevented from keeping neither economic nor business relations with my country.

The Cuban Program for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS implemented since 1986 comprises educational, prevention, diagnostic, epidemiological surveillance, care and research components which has been enabled by the political commitment and priority given by the Cuban state to the population's health status, in addition to the existence of a Health Care System characterized by universal free access and the involvement of social and community organizations.

At the closing of 2005, there were 5532 persons living with HIV/AIDS in our country of which 1450 were AIDS patients. One thousand and three hundred thirty eight people have died so far. After 20 years of epidemics, the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the 15- 49 years-old group is kept in 0.09%. Since 2001, a free universal antiretroviral treatment is implemented and the mortality rate from this cause begins to be reduced. The decline in the number of AIDS patients started in 2003.

Within the setting of international struggle against HIV/AIDS epidemics, Cuba has offered cooperation to developing countries in areas such as human resources training and medical care and nowadays there are 29, 223 Cuban physicians and health workers in 70 countries participating in AIDS programs at African, Latin American and Caribbean communities. Moreover, 17, 495 students from 17 nations are studying in Cuba while, Cuban Medical Brigades abroad contribute to the training of 536 youngsters in their own countries.

I reckon the sum of 22,1 billions USD needed for facing this epidemics until the year 2008 should not be considered as exaggerated, if we take into account that we must educate the exposed population regarding prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles, guarantee the free antiretroviral therapy, create the due health infrastructure for carrying out these actions and increase research in order to achieve more effective drugs as well as a vaccine.

I conclude my speech by recalling the words we expressed 5 years ago:

**"The only possible cure is that place the infinite resources available in the planet at the service of mankind, free from mean business interests or national selfishness. To meet this goal is our responsibility"**

Thank you very much.