

Todos Unidos

(All of Us, United)

Oswaldo Paya Sardinás

November 12, 1999

We, representatives from independent, civic, social, cultural, and political organizations, have worked together with a spirit of brotherhood and in service to our Nation. The result of our joint efforts is the development of *Todos Unidos*, this declaration that we are now presenting to the people of Cuba, the representatives of Latin American nations, and the international community. All of the children of this nation are brothers and sisters, regardless of our beliefs, political views, life experiences, race, or religion, whether we live in Cuba or abroad. At this moment, as we find ourselves on the threshold of a new millennium, we, the Cuban people, need and want to chart a path to improve our society and lay a foundation for future generations. We pursue the vocation of solidarity and liberty through which our national identity was forged, in this beautiful land that God gave us. Here, we must build a nation “with everybody and for the good of everybody,” just as our Apostle, José Martí, wanted.

We work for a reconciliation of the Cuban people and to achieve the legal framework and conditions that will guarantee our rights, so we can exercise our freedom of expression, ensure that all people can access the media, and exercise our freedoms of thought, religion, assembly, and political pluralism.

We work to achieve growth and improvements in quality of life for everyone, which can only be achieved if all economic and social rights are respected and exercised. This would entail the right of the Cuban people to participate in the economic life of the country through their labor, creativity, and enterprise, including the right to individually and collectively establish, own, and operate businesses as well as the right to freely choose the terms of their employment. Particular attention must be given to the demands and suggestions made by peasants and rural communities, guaranteeing their freedoms of association and expression. All of these new economic dynamics, which are so urgently needed to overcome Cuba’s current crisis, can and must be achieved within a framework of equitable distribution and respect for human dignity, with a view to achieving the common good.

We demand that the Cuban government release all who have been imprisoned or detained for political reasons. This is not merely a step toward justice or a gesture of good will by the government; it is an essential condition for moving down the path toward an authentic reconciliation of the Cuban people and a renewal of Cuban society.

The Cuban people have a sovereign right to amend their Constitution and modify their laws to precisely reflect their rights, interests, and prospects for the future. Many want to speak with the Cuban people. It is time we consult the Cuban people at the ballot boxes, so they can lawfully decide how the laws that govern their lives should be.

We urge the Cuban people to civilly demand that their rights be respected, beginning with those that are granted to us in the Cuban Constitution but are not recognized by the authorities. We urge the Cuban government to promote an atmosphere of respect for all civil rights. In such an environment, we will be able to peacefully transform our society in accordance with the will of the Cuban people.

We, the Cuban people, are the protagonists of our history. We are the ones who must create the spaces to build a better society as free men and women. After the diversity of past experiences we have endured, we, the Cuban people, are fully capable of carrying out our own projects in pursuit of social justice and comprehensive development, whose ultimate aim will be the full realization of ourselves as human beings.

We do not support, nor are we asking for, measures taken by foreign governments to isolate Cuba. Even though the political and economic system that governs our nation isolates us as a people, we would like to remind everyone that it is wrong to believe that the people of Cuba benefit from their relationships with government institutions or participate in these relationships with dignity. One type of isolation is not justification for the other. Therefore, anyone who wishes to be morally consistent in their actions, respect our sovereignty, and express their solidarity with Cuba must always demand both the democratization of Cuba and an end to the embargo.

Freely, as brothers and sisters, we, the Cuban people, head toward the year 2000, all of us united.

This document was signed by the following participants on November 12, 1999

Gisela Delgado Sablón, *Centro de Estudios y Formación para el Desarrollo Integral del la Mujer Cubana [Research and Training Center for the Holistic Development of Cuban Women]*

Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas, *Movimiento Cristiano de Liberación [Christian Liberation Movement]*

Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz, *Comisión de Derechos Humanos y Reconciliación Nacional [Human Rights and National Reconciliation Commission]*

Roberto Larramendi, *Movimiento Independiente de Estudios Martianos [Independent Movement for the Study of Jose Martí]*

Carmelo Díaz Fernández, *Unión Sindical Cristiana [Union of Christian Workers]*

Carlos Ríos Otero, *Asociación de Veteranos Independientes Pro Paz [The Association of Independent Veterans for Peace]*

Jorge Omar Lorenzo Pimienta, *Consejo Nacional por los Derechos Civil [National Civil Rights Council]*

José Antonio Fornaris Ramos, *Agencia Cuba Voz [A Voice for Cuba Agency]*

Santiago Martínez Trujillo, *Hermanos Fraternal por la Dignidad* [*Fraternal Brothers for Dignity*]

José Manuel Rodríguez, *Partido Federalista* [*Federalist Party*]

José Gabriel Ramón Castillo, *Proyecto del Instituto Independiente Cultura y Democracia* [*Project for an Independent Institute for Culture and Democracy*]

Roberto de Miranda Hernández, *Colegio Independiente de Pedagogos de Cuba* [*Independent Union of Cuban Educators*]

Marcos Lázaro Torres León, *Partido 30 de Noviembre* [*November 30th Party*] (signed but does not agree with the reference to the embargo)

Héctor Palacios Ruíz, *Centro de Estudios Sociales* [*Center for Social Studies*]

Three rapporteurs were chosen to draft this document:

Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas

Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz

Gisela Delgado Sablón (representing Héctor Palacios Ruiz, who was imprisoned)

Translated by Ashley Caja