

## Cuba

**The Development Challenge:** Cuba continues to suffer under one of the world's most repressive regimes. The Cuban government denies its people the opportunity to read the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights, labeling it a "subversive document." The government continues to violate fundamental human rights, and directly controls all educational institutions, trade unions, and formal economic activity. They censor access to all information, banning foreign books, newspapers and magazines, and forbidding importation of videocassettes and videocassette recorders. Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and other human rights organizations have systematically documented the human rights abuses of the Cuban government.

During 2003, the Cuban government cracked down on Cuba's emerging independent civil society. The government imprisoned 75 leading human rights activists, independent journalists, and independent librarians, sentencing them to 15 to 25 year prison terms. Nevertheless, the peaceful opposition continued to operate openly. Organizers of a petition calling for a referendum on economic and political reform gathered nearly 30,000 signatures and presented them to the National Assembly. The government dismissed this action, although it is authorized by the current Cuban Constitution.

The average Cuban's standard of living remains at a lower level than before the severe economic depression of the early 1990s, which was caused by the loss of Soviet aid and domestic inefficiencies. Most economists attribute the poor performance of the Cuban economy to the inefficiency created by the Cuban socialist system. Other causes such as high oil import prices, recessions in key export markets, damage from Hurricanes Michelle and Isidore, and the tourist slump after 11 September 2001 have also hampered economic growth on the island.

The Cuban government tries to reduce self-employment as well as all unofficial economic activity. In 1997, the government issued 210,000 licenses for self employment. The number fell to 110,000 by the end of 2001. In 2002, the government stopped issuing new licenses. They also have continually defaulted on loans from other countries while their chances of obtaining the new credits needed have significantly decreased.

The country remains on the list of terrorist countries compiled by the U.S. Department of State. The goal of U.S. policy toward Cuba is to promote a rapid, peaceful transition to democracy. To achieve this goal, U.S. policy continues a multifaceted approach: comprehensive economic sanctions; outreach to the Cuban people; promotion and protection of human rights; multilateral efforts to press for democracy; and migration accords to promote safe, orderly and legal migration.

**The USAID Program:** To support a rapid, peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba, USAID focuses on development of civil society through information dissemination. The objective is to increase the flow of accurate information on democracy, human rights, and free enterprise to, from, and within Cuba, as authorized by the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 and the Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996. Authorized assistance includes informational material, assistance to victims of political repression and their families, support for democratic and human rights groups in Cuba, and support for visits to Cuba by independent international human rights monitors.

USAID requests funds under the formulated objective, "Civil Society Developed through Information Dissemination," as described in the Data Sheet below. The program provides grant support to U.S. universities and nongovernmental organizations to further achievement of this objective. The program also encourages grantees to undertake humanitarian, information-sharing, and civil society-building activities in Cuba with private funds, subject to applicable U.S. Treasury and Commerce Department regulations. Over the past seven years, USAID has provided \$30 million to 25 U.S. universities and nongovernmental organizations for this purpose.

**Other Program Elements:** USAID participates in all five working groups of the Presidential Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba, chaired by the Secretary of State. These groups plan for U.S. Government support to a future transition government in Cuba.

**Other Donors:** The Roman Catholic Church provides assistance to CARITAS Cubana, one of the few independent Cuban nongovernmental organizations. In 2000, Canada, China, Russia, the European Union, Japan, and the United Nations Development Program delivered more than \$90 million in economic and humanitarian aid through Cuban government organizations.

## Data Sheet

<b>USAID Mission:</b>	Cuba
<b>Program Title:</b>	Civil Society Developed
<b>Pillar:</b>	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
<b>Strategic Objective:</b>	516-001
<b>Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:</b>	\$7,000,000 ESF
<b>Prior Year Unobligated:</b>	\$0
<b>Proposed FY 2005 Obligation:</b>	\$9,000,000 ESF
<b>Year of Initial Obligation:</b>	FY 1996
<b>Year of Final Obligation:</b>	2005

**Summary:** USAID's Cuba program seeks to develop civil society on the island. The program: 1) builds solidarity with democratic activist's groups on the island and funds visits to Cuba by international human rights monitors; 2) gives voice to Cuba's independent journalists by disseminating their reports on human rights violations within Cuba; 3) develops independent nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Cuba; 4) defends the rights of Cuban workers; 5) provides direct outreach to the Cuban people, providing information on democracy, human rights, and free enterprise; and 6) plans for assistance to a future transition government in Cuba, and communicates the plans to the Cuban people.

### Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

#### FY 2004 Program:

Build solidarity with democratic activists (\$4,000,000 ESF). USAID will continue to provide humanitarian aid to political prisoners, their families, and other victims of repression; promote information-sharing and other assistance to Cuba's human rights activists; and support visits to Cuba by international human rights monitors. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

Give voice to independent journalists (\$1,000,000 ESF). USAID will provide information and training to Cuban independent journalists and publish their reports worldwide. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

Help develop independent Cuban nongovernmental organizations (\$600,000 ESF). USAID will help independent NGOs to provide humanitarian assistance to victims of repression. USAID support will also help build the institutional capability of independent libraries and strengthen independent groups so they can evolve into stronger and more effective civil society organizations. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

Defend the rights of Cuban workers (\$200,000 ESF). The program will continue to denounce Government of Cuba violations of worker rights, and will fund activities to strengthen independent labor organizations on the island. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

Providing direct outreach to the Cuban people (\$700,000 ESF). USAID will transmit information on democracy, human rights, and free market economics directly to the Cuban people in hard copy and by electronic means. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

Planning for transition (\$500,000 ESF). USAID will expand on-line data bases, publish transition studies, and sponsor seminars that discuss study findings and make policy recommendations. USAID will also provide training for future Cuban leaders in democracy and enterprise. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

#### FY 2005 Program:

Build solidarity with democratic activists (\$5,000,000 ESF). In FY 2005 the program will continue to support humanitarian aid to political prisoners, their families, and other victims of repression; information-sharing and other assistance to Cuba's human rights activists; and visits to Cuba by international human rights monitors. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

Give voice to independent journalists (\$1,300,000 ESF). USAID will continue to provide information and training to Cuban independent journalists and publish their reports worldwide. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

Help develop independent Cuban nongovernmental organizations (\$800,000 ESF). USAID will continue to help independent NGO's provide humanitarian assistance to victims of repression. USAID support will also continue to help build the institutional capability of independent libraries and strengthen independent groups so they can evolve into stronger and more effective civil society organizations. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process

Defend the rights of Cuban workers (\$300,000 ESF). The program will continue to denounce Government of Cuba (GOC) violations of worker rights, and will fund activities to strengthen independent labor organizations on the island. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

Providing direct outreach to the Cuban people (\$900,000 ESF). USAID will continue to transmit information on democracy, human rights, and free market economics directly to the Cuban people. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

Planning for transition (\$700,000 ESF). USAID will expand on-line data bases, publish transition studies, and sponsor seminars that discuss study findings and make policy recommendations for approaches to Cuba's transition. USAID will also provide training for future Cuban leaders in democracy and enterprise. Implementing NGOs are selected through a competitive process.

**Performance and Results:** In FY 2003, USAID provided food and medicine to political prisoners, their families, and other victims of repression; information sharing and other assistance to Cuba's human rights activists; and supported visits to Cuba by international human rights monitors. Cuba On-Line sent copies of its newsletter, and reports by independent journalists, directly to the Cuban people. The program also supported the training of Cuban NGO leaders in the management and delivery of social services. Books, pamphlets and magazines on democracy, human rights, and free enterprise were procured and shipped to support Cuba's growing independent library network. The program also continued to denounce Government of Cuba (GOC) violations of workers' rights, and funded activities to strengthen independent labor organizations on the island. To support the plan for transition, the University of Miami expanded on-line databases, published transition studies, and sponsored seminars. Two Washington-based seminars and one Miami-based seminar discussed study findings and make policy recommendations. A grant to Georgetown University trained future Cuban leaders in private sector development and democratic principles.

Successful implementation of this objective will result in the development of a Cuban civil society increasingly knowledgeable of their civil and legal rights and responsibilities under a freely elected Cuban government. It will provide understanding of the function and benefits of a free market enterprise system. It will help to alleviate the suffering of political prisoners and their families. It also will strengthen the role and delivery capacity of independent Cuban NGOs and provide transition scenarios on the development of economic, financial, and legal institutions required in a post-Castro democratic and free-market Cuban society.

**Cuba  
PROGRAM SUMMARY**

(in thousands of dollars)

Accounts	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Current	FY 2005 Request
Economic Support Fund	5,000	6,000	6,959	9,000
<b>Total Program Funds</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>6,959</b>	<b>9,000</b>

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SUMMARY**

516-001 Civil Society Developed				
ESF	5,000	5,668	6,959	9,000

TRANSFER				
ESF	0	332	0	0

Mission Director,  
David Mutchler