

## **MINUTES**

### **Cross Party Group on Cuba 1st March 2017 6pm TG 20/21**

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Elaine Smith MSP, Neil Findlay MSP, Colin McCulloch, Ian Parsons, Paul Harding, Margaret Cameron, Lesley Dobbin, Dr Joan Cutting, Pauline Boyle, Kath Bateman, Ronnie Moran, Rev Graham McGeoch Elena Kuhnappel Richard Smith,

#### **APOLOGIES**

Sandra White MSP, Kath Campbell, Matthew Crighton, Murdo Fraser MSP, Jim Hume MSP, Neil Anderson, Dougie Kerr, Marlyn Glen, Margaret McGregor, Ann Henderson, Frieda Park, Cllr Gordon Munro, Arthur West, Liz Elkind, Stuart Hyslop, Kevin Carroll

#### **1. Convenors Welcome**

Elaine Smith MSP opened the meeting by formally acknowledgment the sad death of Fidel Castro and distributed copies of the motion she lodged (appended below) and noted the amendment that was lodged by a Conservative MSP.

Elaine welcomed everyone to what was the first official meeting since the group reconvened and explained and gave apologies why the previous meeting scheduled for September had been curtailed due to a high number of last minute apologies given. Elaine then acknowledged the well-attended Miami Five Freedom tour held in July attended Rene Gonzalez and Gerardo Hernandez, acknowledging the work done by the CPG in the past in support of the Miami Five.

#### **2. Minutes of the last meeting (21st September 2016)**

As the previous meeting was for the purpose of re-registration no minutes were required and a copy of the re-registration form was distributed.

#### **3. Update of Cuba Solidarity Campaign**

Apologies were noted for Kath Campbell who was unable to attend and give her usual update.

Arthur West, Secretary of Scottish Cuba Solidarity Campaign, reported on recent events and campaigns and noted that at the UN vote on the Cuban Embargo the USA abstained for the first time.

#### **4. Update from the Venezuela Solidarity Campaign on matters of interest in the region.**

Apologies were noted for Matthew Crighton and therefore no update was provided.

#### **5. Rev Graeme McGeoch**

Rev McGeoch gave a welcome and insightful presentation on his recent study trip when he spent 2 months living in Brazil and 1 month in Cuba and answered questions from the group.

#### **6. Cuba Conservation Trust**

Colin McCulloch, Paul Harding and Ian Parsons gave a well received and informative presentation on the developments of the Trust's aims and work in Cuba followed by questions from the group.

#### **7. A.O.C.B.**

Kath Bateman advised the group of the Manana Showcase music event taking place at the Barbican in London in May.

Elaine Smith MSP closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. The next meeting will be advised when the availability of a Cuban speaker has been confirmed.

***Motion S5M-02902: Elaine Smith, Central Scotland, Scottish Labour, Date Lodged: 01/12/2016  
Sympathy and Solidarity with the People of Cuba, Hasta la victoria siempre***

***That the Parliament sends its condolences on the loss of Fidel Castro (1926-2016) to his family and the people of Cuba; respects the nine days of national mourning undertaken by the people of Cuba to mark the passing of an icon of socialism; considers that during Fidel Castro's time in office, from 1959 to 2008, Cuba built world-class health and education systems and decreased poverty, despite suffering economically for decades under a United States blockade; further notes what it sees as Cuba's impressive record of international solidarity abroad, including sending medical workers to the world's poorest regions, leading the fight against Ebola and providing the largest medical contingent after the 2010 Haitian earthquake disaster; recalls the words of the late Nelson Mandela, when referring to Cuban volunteers driving South African apartheid forces out of Angola, that "the Cuban Internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom and justice unparalleled for its principled and selfless character"; recognises what it sees as Fidel Castro's individual contribution as a champion of global social justice and his maxim of "not an inch to imperialism", and believes that his legacy and spirit will live on in the many great achievements of the small socialist state of Cuba, teaching and inspiring future generations and showing that another world is possible.***

***Supported by: Richard Lyle, David Stewart, Neil Findlay, Colin Beattie, Alex Rowley, Richard Leonard***