



## A NEW CHAPTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A handbook on issues of transition  
from the Commission on Human Rights  
to the Human Rights Council



### Annex 3.1

#### Personal Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Cuba

**Current mandate holder:** Christine Chanet  
**Mandate started:** 2002

**Term of mandate holder:** 2002 – not specified  
**Mandate up for renewal:** duration not specified

#### Background and areas of focus

- Established in 2002 due to concern over the persistence of poverty;
- Examine the situation of human rights in Cuba;
- Facilitate cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government of Cuba in the implementation of a resolution regarding the human rights situation in Cuba, calling for progress in respect of human, civil and political rights, in accordance with the provisions of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the principles and standards of the rule of law, and for Cuba's accession to the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*;
- Gathers information from the Commission's Special Rapporteurs, NGOs, representatives of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and academics.

#### Cooperation with the Government

- The Personal Representative made several attempts to contact the Cuban authorities to initiate a dialogue with them to fulfill her mandate. She has received no reply from the Cuban authorities.
- Cuba has accepted visits from the Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights defenders and the Chairperson of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

#### Key developments

- The economic, trade and financial embargo by the United States of America against Cuba has ongoing affects on the economic, social and cultural rights as well as the civil and political rights of Cuban citizens;
- Difficulties faced by the Cuban population have been compounded by the tighter economic and financial restrictions imposed by the USA in May 2004;
- The Government has made efforts, especially in the budgetary field, in the area of health, education, and discrimination against women;
- Ongoing human rights issues include arbitrary detention and ongoing limitations on participation by civil society, such as the deportation of journalists.

#### Country visits

None.

#### Pending reports

Annual report (E/CN.4/2006/33).

**Communications to the Government of Cuba (2005)**

- On 6 February and 12 May 2003, the Personal Representative sent a letter to the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva, and invited the Cuban authorities to meet her with a view to planning a constructive dialogue with her;
- On 30 May 2003, the High Commissioner sent a letter backing up this request. On 26 June 2003, the Cuban authorities notified the High Commissioner that they did not recognize the Personal Representative's mandate;
- The Personal Representative has attempted to establish contact with the Cuban authorities each year, most recently on 19 and 28 July 2005. Her requests were met with no response.

