

# Cross-Party Group on Cuba

June 7<sup>th</sup> 2023 at 1pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Carol Mochan MSP, Katy Clark MSP, Mercedes Villalba MSP, Maggie Chapman MSP,

Invited guests

Her Excellency Barbara Montalvo Alvarez, Aymee Diaz

Non-MSP Group Members

Kath Campbell, Pauline Boyle, Kate Arnott, Kath Bateman, Andrew Bustard, Chris Costello, Chris Barbour, Matt Kerr.

**Introduction:** Carol Mochan MSP opened the meeting, thanked attendees for coming along to what was the first in person meeting of the CPG since pre pandemic. Carol Mochan welcomed the Cuban Ambassador to the United Kingdom to the meeting as well as others from the Embassy and expressed the desire of the CPG to maintain strong links with the embassy moving forward.

**Keynote Speaker: Her Excellency Bárbara Montalvo Álvarez – Cuban Ambassador to the United Kingdom:** The Ambassador made an extremely comprehensive and thought-provoking speech which covered a wide range of issues such as the US Blockade, the efforts of the Cuban people during the Covid-19 pandemic, the importance of strong support for Cuba and calls for an end to the blockade to come from Scotland and the UK more widely, the work of the embassy in the UK, and the future for Cuba and its potential to grow. Following the speech, members of the CPG asked several questions linked to their own experiences and the Ambassador was more than happy to go into further detail on areas of keen interest to members of the CPG.

**Scottish Cuba Solidarity Campaign Update & Caravan Against the Blockade at the Scottish Parliament:** The next items on the agenda were discussed together as Kath Campbell from the Scottish Cuba Solidarity Campaign provided a comprehensive update on the ongoing work in Scotland. Kath expressed thanks to the Ambassador for her attendance at the CPG and other events. Kath notified the meeting that Caravan Against the Blockade events were still being held regularly in Glasgow and that MSPs were more than welcome to attend where possible. Indeed, it was suggested that a Caravan Against the Blockade event should take place at the Scottish Parliament

ahead of the next meeting of the Cross-Party Group. Updates were provided on the travel of young Trade Unionists to Cuba, and it was hoped that further detail on this experience would be provided to the CPG in the future.

**Date of Next Meeting:** The date of the next meeting would be agreed between SCSC and the Office of Carol Mochan MSP before being circulated to MSPs.

**AOCB:** There was no further competent business.