



Presbyterian Mission

**Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations**

# CUBA

## The United Nations in Cuba

**UN Development Program (UNDP):** The primary development assistance office of the U.N. supports a process of economic decentralization and the empowerment of local actors for economic management. This includes projects that strengthen institutional capacities at the local level for disaster risk reduction. At the same time, UNDP facilitates environmental protections, preservation, and adaptation to climate change as part of its work.<sup>1</sup>

**UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):** The UNHCR monitors migration patterns across the Americas and writes reports which inform policymaking in the U.S. and Cuba.<sup>2</sup>

**UN General Assembly (UNGA):** The General Assembly includes representatives from every member state and provides a unique forum to discuss international issues. Every year since 1992, the Assembly has passed a resolution that calls on the United States to lift its economic blockade against Cuba. Although the U.S. voted in favor of the resolution in 2016, U.S. policy has since changed.<sup>3</sup>

**UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):** In the wake of Hurricane Irma in 2017, OCHA coordinated the humanitarian response to address the urgent needs of two million people affected in the wake of the disaster.<sup>4</sup>

## The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) & Cuba

**Presbyterian Mission:** Presbyterian witness in Cuba began in 1890. The PC(USA) continues to accompany Cubans through the work of mission personnel and church partnerships. Ministry in Cuba tends to focus on diaconal work in the communities, church development, and Christian education through the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas.<sup>5</sup>

**Cuba Partners Network:** The Network is made up of congregations and presbyteries with a commitment to explore partnership with the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba (IPRC). Members encourage reflection, prayer, and conversation on the relationship between the partner churches, their governments, and their people.<sup>6</sup>

**PC(USA) Policy on Cuba:** Since 1969, the church has addressed U.S.-Cuba relations with a focus on human rights, immigration, and regional tensions sprouting from the Cold War. At the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly in St. Louis (2018), the PC(USA) reaffirmed its partnership with the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba. Two years earlier, the General Assembly approved a policy focusing on the “Nuevo Momento” in the country. This included support for the reclamation of private property lost during the revolution, normalization of diplomatic relations and immigration policies, an end to U.S. attempts to encourage regime change or isolate Cuba, and the return of Guantanamo Bay. Recent policies have also encouraged the U.S. to remove Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism and lifting all travel restrictions for U.S. citizens visiting Cuba.<sup>7</sup>

## **Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations (PMUN)**

Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations is called to act on an issue when it meets three criteria: the PC(USA) has a policy regarding the topic, partner churches are in favor of action, and it appears on the UN agenda. In the case of Cuba, PMUN has interpreted their ministry through sharing perspective with U.N. missions from the United States and Cuba and policymakers with a focus on human rights and immigration between the two countries.

Every year since 1992, the U.N. General Assembly has voted in favor of condemning the U.S. embargo against Cuba.<sup>8</sup> For years, the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations would send letters of support to member-states, asking missions to support this cause. Last year, this advocacy and relationship-building culminated in an ecumenical meeting of faith leaders with the president of Cuba.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.cu.undp.org/content/cuba/es/home/projects.html>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.refworld.org/country,,UNHCR,,CUB,,,,0.html>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/cuba/article220920255.html>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.unocha.org/story/hurricane-irma-un-system-cuba-launches-plan-action-seeking-558-million-assist-over-2-million>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/cuba/>

<sup>6</sup><https://cubapartnersnetwork.org/>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.pc-biz.org/#/search/3000459>

<sup>8</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/11/1024672>