

**Cross Party Group on Cuba**  
**9<sup>th</sup> May 2012**  
**Committee Room 6**

1. Elaine Smith MSP welcomed everyone and special guests;

Cuban Ambassador, Esther Armenteros Cardenas  
Miami Five Family Members; Antonio Guerrero Carbrera and Rose Aurora Freijanes Coca, and Mr John McAllion, former MSP, who set up the Cross Party Group in 1999

## 2. ATTENDEES

Elaine Smith MSP  
Neil Findlay MSP  
Lesley Dobbin  
Kath Campbell  
Ian Parsons  
Jan Pietrasik  
Tommy Kane  
Pauline Byrne  
Sue McAllion  
Sue Barnaid  
Pauline Boyle  
Stewart Hyslop  
Paul Shaw  
Vicky Grandon  
Rena Matthew  
Dorothy Sharkey  
David Russell  
Joan Cutting  
Billy Kane

Sandra White MSP  
Hugh Henry MSP  
Drew Smith MSP  
Bridget Bevan  
Carol Regan  
Ronnie Moran  
Dodi Wepler  
John McAllion  
Vann Smith  
Lindsey Stewart  
John Quinn  
Adrienne Chalmers  
Hernando Fernandez  
Gloria Fernandez  
Margaret McGregor  
Kath Bateman  
Valentina Montoya  
Helen Kane  
Ray Newton

## APOLOGIES

Murdo Fraser MSP, Jim Hume MSP, Freida Park, Lynn Henderson,  
Liz Elkind, Ann Henderson, Brian Pollit

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes of the last meeting (14<sup>th</sup> December 2011) moved as a correct record by Ronnie Moran and seconded by Jan Pietrasik

### **4. Matters Arising**

i) Possible visit of New Cuban Ambassador  
Elaine Smith MSP was pleased that the Ambassador was now present to address the meeting.

ii) Joint Cuba/UK Art Exhibition  
Beyond the Frame was currently underway in Glasgow and Elaine urged anyone who had not yet seen the exhibition to attend. Elaine also stated that the preview exhibition the previous week in the Parliament was well received by the Members.

iii) Scottish Parliament – Developing closer links with Cuban Embassy  
Neil Findlay MSP was still awaiting a response from Minister, Fiona Hyslop

iv) Scotland Week  
The “Scotland” week held in Cuba seemed to be more of a trade event which was attended mainly by Whisky companies.

v) Scotland Honorary Consul  
This issue will be carried forward to a future meeting of the group.

vi) 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Blockade  
A motion on the Anniversary was lodged by Neil Findlay. That and other motions lodged were circulated.

vii) Cuba conservation Trust - Ian Parsons  
The Trust has now been registered as a charity by the OSCR; charity number SCO43095. It has been registered as a Scottish company limited by guarantee (Company Number 421841).  
The initial draft fundraising presentation, intended for commercial sponsors can be seen at: <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/76819133/CCT-120507.ppt>

This document is confidential until approved by the main interested parties, when it will be placed on the Trust web site.

The comments of members of the cross party group were invited

## 5. Venezuela Solidarity Campaign

Phil McGarry was unavailable to attend the meeting, however, **Elaine Smith MSP** advised that most recent information on the region was the 6<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Americas which opened with the issue of Cuba. Only two countries dissented over the inclusion of Cuba, while the member states of ALBA said that a summit without Cuba was "unjustified and unsustainable" and that they would boycott future summits without Cuba.

## 6. Miami Five

**Elaine** welcomed the family members from Miami Five in attendance and expressed how pleased she was that they and the Cuban Ambassador were able to visit to attend the Beyond the Frame Exhibition in Glasgow and also the first ever Debate on Cuba which was held earlier in the Chamber. Elaine then invited Tonito, son of Antonia Guerrero to speak to the group.

**Tonito** thanked the group for their continuing efforts and support on behalf of his father and the Miami Five and his extended family. This was the first time he had been to the country and found it to be an amazing experience and spoke of the positive effect that all supporters were having on the spirits of the Miami Five.

**Rose Aurora** then addressed the group expressing her appreciation of the warmth and solidarity shown. She said she found the Members Debate inspiring, motivating and challenging. Rose Aurora also expressed the need to keep up all support for the injustice of the Miami Five.

**The Family members** then answered questions from MSP'S and the group.

**Kath Campbell** gave an update on the Scottish Cuba Solidarity Campaign, the on-going support they give to the Miami Five and that they recently had a very good meeting with STUC to encourage their Members to be more involved.

**Elaine** thanked everyone for their contributions and stated that she hoped the Miami Five will address the group personally in the future, when justice is achieved and they are released.

## **7. Esther Armenteros Cardenas, Cuban Ambassador**

**Elaine** then welcomed the Ambassador, stating that the timing of the visit had come together very well with the Ambassador attending Beyond the Frame and the Members Debate.

The **Ambassador** then addressed the group expressing her pleasure at being able to come the group meeting and thanking everyone for their solidarity.

The Ambassador outlined her own background and the benefits the revolution had given to Cuba especially in areas of health, culture, education and renewable energy. She also discussed the Miami Five, current reforms in Cuba and changes to the economy.

The Ambassador then answered questions on a number of topics from the group.

- 8.** Elaine thanked Tonito, Aurora and the Ambassador for their contributions and closed the meeting.

The date of the next meeting will be advised in due course.