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Globalization and Human Development: The Experience of Cuba

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"Human development is the expression of people's freedom to live a long-lasting, healthy and creative life, pursuing objectives that are valued as worthy, and participating and contributing to a sustainable and equitable development of the planet that all share"

1. Part I

1.1 General overview

1.1.1 The world at the beginnings of the 21st century

Since the beginnings of the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st Century, mankind has been suffering the destructive effects of the economic-financial crisis of capitalism, together with a food crisis, the global warming and the climate change; an energy crisis that has been aggravated by the thermo-nuclear threat that became evident in the Fukushima disaster in Japan, showing the lack of safety in nuclear-power plants and the lack of control of radioactive wastes and their impact on environmental pollution. In connection with these crises with unforeseeable consequences, Joseph Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics 2002, stated, for example, that: "The costs of reducing emissions are insignificant if compared to the risks faced by the world." In addition, he pointed out to another crisis, the crisis of values, when he mentioned "The experts in the nuclear industry and in the finance sector reassured us that micro-technology had practically eliminated all risks of a disaster. The events have proved that they were wrong; because not only risks existed, but their effects were so appalling that they easily did away with the security systems extolled by the industry's leaders." (1)

The international situation at the beginning of the new Millenium has also been negatively affected by military conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, with the idea of favoring democracy and boosting changes in the Near East. All of this seems fiction today and has brought about disastrous consequences for peace, global economy and for the construction of a new global politico-economic order, which is aspired by the majority of the peoples worldwide who are aware that the fundamentalist conflicts that are promoting wars in the

21st Century will take a heavy toll on all of us for decades. Stiglitz, in his book entitled *"The War of the Three Billion Dollars"*, when referring to the human suffering, stated: "The human suffering that has been caused by the war in Iraq could be seen as useless; even the thought of its financial cost in sterile numbers could never express the pain of those who died, who have been wounded and crippled for life." (2)

1.2 The neo-liberal globalization and the Washington Consensus

Since the 1980s, neo-liberal globalization has been one of the most complex and controversial processes within industrialized nations and developing countries alike. Globalization is understood as the broadening and strengthening of financial and technological trends, linked to an ideological belief that the emancipation of markets for capital, commerce, and information would lead to growth, development and human well-being.

This vision of the neo-liberal globalization prevailing since the late 1980s and the beginnings of the 1990s, coalesced into a single doctrine the so-called Washington Consensus. One of the founding tenets of neo-liberal globalization is that it is inevitable and that the technological, economic and political developments converge to shape a New Global Order, linked to the capitalist market and the observance of specific norms as guidelines for the *modus operandi* among nations worldwide. These norms are: austerity and fiscal discipline, the restructuring of public expenditure, tax reforms, the privatization of public enterprises, the establishment of competitive money exchange rates, free markets, the deregulation of the financial world, openness to capital flows, removal of restrictions to direct foreign investments, flexibility in economic and work relationships, and the guarantee of the rights of private property. The abovementioned norms are expected to create the appropriate conditions to ensure global economic restructuring, under the rationality of the capitalist system.

The above tautological vision of the neo-liberal globalization could lead us to neglect the historical reasons for globalization: the heterogeneity of socioeconomic formations in a given historical period; the antagonisms and contradictions which, as dynamic processes, can overcome different moments to redefine or reconstruct the doctrinal bases; and the interrelations between the modes of production and governments, in the light of the *desideratum* of blind laws of the free market, as the supreme expression of governing capacity.

Several experts in the field of economics and finance have questioned the rationale of the Washington Consensus. Joseph Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, considered that those were not the actual reasons, but simply a collection of "myths", so powerful and hegemonic when implemented, that to understand them it is necessary to resort to scientific reasoning, to economic theory and its very practice, to re-address a new global economic order. Stiglitz advanced this idea in his book *The Roaring Nineties. The Seed of Destruction* (2003). (3)

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, then the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) of the IMF, further elaborated Stiglitz's observations in a lecture at George Washington University in April, 2011. In that lecture, Strauss-Kahn announced the death of the Washington Consensus, when he stated: "The Consensus is history; it should be

replaced by a new economic policy that emphasizes social cohesion and multilateralism.” While admitting that what had been promised to Latin America instead of favoring development brought about a severe economic crisis in the late 1990s and early 2000s, an increase in the external debt and more underdevelopment, he argued that governments should be urged to play a bigger role in controlling market excesses, because a more humane face of globalization is needed and because inequalities are the silent causes of the crisis, so as to reach a new economic policy, that emphasizes social cohesion and multilateralism.” (4)

The ideas expressed by Stiglitz and Strauss-Kahn are based on solid and scientific foundations and take into account the broken promises and crises in Ethiopia, East Asia, Mexico, Argentina, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and the United States, all of which are in what seems to be an economic dead-end.

1.3 United Nations’ s Human Development Initiative

In the light of a complex global situation, the United Nations and the governments of its member states, made political and economic efforts to convene in the 1990s, the largest number of Summits and Conferences held by the United Nations in a decade to discuss topics and problems of global interest, namely: the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990); World Summit on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992); the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994); World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995); World Conference on Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995); the Second Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (Istanbul, 1996); and the World Food Summit (Rome, 1996). This historical decade for the United Nations and the Governments of its member states was rounded up in New York in 2000 with the Declaration of the Millennium Development and Goals towards 2015, underpinned by the agreements and resolutions approved in the previous summits.

Despite the enormous efforts made within the United Nations, there is still no consensus concerning development policies; there are opposed trends, as a binary antagonism, between the concept of development advocated by the United Nations and the paradigm of the Neo-Liberal Globalization that fosters market fundamentalism, arguing that it could resolve by itself the global economic and social problems, through a collection of myths, such as: the reduction of fiscal deficit; the idea that prosperity was due to economic gurus; the myth of the invisible hand in the free market and the financial “bubbles”; the myth that strong governments are bad ; and the myth of global capitalism, a triumphant capitalism, following the US model.

In the Report on Human Development (2010) it is clearly stated that the conventional package for development advocated in the global document of the Washington Consensus is unsustainable as a collection of universal prescriptions, although it admits that it still has influence on many levels. In the current situation, in the reflection made concerning development, there are opposing views, which are not all new, and some are complementary. Their actual influence depends on the country and in many of them the influence of the approach of human development is used to resolve the disastrous effects existing in those countries which opted for the Washington Consensus. As indicated in Box 1, it is now accepted that:

“There is need to adopt measures to regulate the economy, to outreach vulnerable groups and produce social goods:-health education, infrastructure, and to overcome the crisis of the climate change.

- The multiple dimensions of well-being should be made operational so as to go beyond average income and the monetary measurements of poverty.
- Poverty, growth, and inequity are essentially indivisible. The reduction of poverty does not depend on the growth rate, but on the levels and changes of the distribution of income.
- There is not a one and only solution. The advantages and benefits of some normative reforms are different depending on the circumstances and the suitability of strategies at a local level.
- The importance of the national role is now highlighted, as a key element to support and achieve sustainability in the ongoing reforms.” (5).

Challenges faced by humanity to advance in the road to Human Development in the 21 st Century	
KEY ASPECTS	CHALLENGES
Opposing views with the conventional package of development policies proposed by the Washington Consensus, as being unsustainable given its universal prescriptions.	Admitting that there is not a one and only solution to development. Resuming national roles in government policies Considering restrictions on external cooperation, its negative effects, and limitations
The economic and financial crisis; the crisis of climate change; the crisis of traditional energy boosted by the thermonuclear energy; the food crisis and human poverty and the crisis of moral values	Recognizing that the crises are systemic and that solutions depend on all the actors. Raising awareness that the disastrous effects of the crisis are bigger and the consequences more negative for developing countries Reaching global consensus on how to overcome the crises
Alignment of public policies with economic policies	Admitting that an economy market without restrictions is not sustainable
Human poverty, growth and inequity are indivisible	Recognizing that the reduction of poverty does not only depend on growth rates but mainly on levels of change in the distribution
Gender inequity and gender empowerment	Redirecting public policies for the expansion of freedom for all – women and men – to live a long-lasting, healthy and creative life.
Discrepancies between local and national development	Strengthening local dimension and promoting the development of local capacity.
This table was devised by the authors with information collected in the Report on Human Development 2010. Mexico Multi-Prensa; 2010	

Ten years have passed since the world leaders settled the objectives and goals to emancipate humankind from extreme poverty, hunger, illiteracy and diseases.

The Report released in 2011 on the progress achieved towards reaching the targets set by the Millennium Development Goals, stated that:

- “Poverty is being reduced in many countries and regions. It is expected that by 2015 the global poverty rate would be less than 15%, quite distant from the 23% in the objective.
- Some of the poorest countries have achieved outstanding advances in education and it is expected that this objective will be fulfilled.
- The specific interventions have reduced infant mortality rate in children under 5 years of age. The deaths prevented represent a fourth of the decrease in the mortality rate and every day 12, 000 deaths among children are prevented.
- The increase in funding and the efforts made to curb malaria have reduced mortality in 20%.
- The investment made in the prevention and treatment of HIV is yielding fruit. In 2009 there was a fall in 21% in reported cases and 19% in mortality.
- As a result of effective strategies against tuberculosis, the deaths attributed to this disease have decreased in more than one third since 1990.
- All the regions have made progress concerning access to drinking water. It is estimated that in 2008, 1, 100 million people in urban areas and 723 million in rural areas had access to sources of drinking water.” (6)

Furthermore, the Report underlines that despite the progress achieved, no attention is paid to the living standards of the most vulnerable groups:

- “The people living in extreme poverty and those with disadvantages due to sex, age, ethnic group or special needs, show outrageous differences.
- The poor children have been the less benefited with respect to an improved diet. This was reflected in the indicator of 25% of children in developing countries are underweight. Opportunities for a productive and full-time job are still scarce, particularly for women.
- Advances in sanitary conditions often neither reach the poor people nor those living in rural areas.
- Improving the lives of the increasing number of poor people in urban areas is still a colossal challenge.
- Improved access to sources of drinking water has not been even among the vulnerable population groups. “

In the top-level plenary session at the General Assembly of the United Nations, when approving the Millennium Development Goals, world leaders emphasized that steady progress demands a full commitment to peace, equity, equality, and sustainability.

1.4 Cuba in the 21st century

In the period 2004 -2011, Cuba has shown an outstanding improvement of all its social indicators: health, education, and social security. Alongside, it has shown a slow but steady

advance in its economy, as reflected in the increase of its GDP 1.4% in 2009; 1.91% in 2010, and 2.9% in 2011. (4). Of great significance this year was the adoption by the 6th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, in April 2011, of the "Guidelines for the Political and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution", which will be the basis for the work of the Cuban Parliament, the Government and other State bodies which will devise and approve, in some cases, the norms required for the establishment of a legal and institutional framework to support the economic changes to be further adopted.

In his book entitled **Notes on Cuban Economy** (2011), Rodriguez presents, with a solid scientific reasoning, the experience that Cuba has undergone in the past 50 years, including the so called Special Period (1990-2003) that ensued after the breakup of the former Soviet Union. He stated: "A factor of vital importance is expressed in the political will of maintaining Cuban economy as a planned economy, while opening to some extent to non-state forms of property, but establishing limits. " Rodriguez underlined that "...in the updating of the economic model, it will be planning and not the market, what will prevail in the new forms of individual economic activities outside the realm of the state non-state management. The concentration of property in the hands of legal entities or individuals will not be allowed." (7)

When implemented, the guidelines will represent the beginning of a new stage in the country's development strategy, which will move from a phase of survival and of tackling the crisis, to another phase of paving the way to a sustainable development of the economy, by overcoming the essential limitations of the Special Period. (Castro, 2010a).

Nonetheless, the decisions made and their implementation at a short term, particularly concerning the adoption of new forms of employment and individual economic activity are complex and are expected to bring about some social tensions; but, at the same time, they are indispensable for introducing the rationality and efficiency so required by the Cuban economy. In this respect, and due to its alignment in the main considerations with the abovementioned economic policies, the principal efforts to be made in the coming years at the macroeconomic level could be summarized as follows:

- In the first place, in the short-term a solution has to be found to the deficit in the balance of payments, by reducing the expenditures in convertible pesos and by negotiating anew the service of the external debt. More importantly, special efforts will be made to increase exports, since the reduction of the expenditures has material and social limits which prevent from advancing beyond a given point.
- Secondly, a financial domestic balance should be maintained, with control of inflationary pressures, together with the development and introduction of new incentives to increase work productivity significantly. At the same time, all the measures should take into consideration the need for a gradual reduction of disparities in the distribution of income generated during the Special Period. This should be done by prioritizing the recognition of higher payments pay to the most efficient work.
- Lastly, an increase should be attained in the investment rate, so as to allow for completing the productive infrastructure necessary for development, on the one hand, and for resuming the road to industrialization in more competitive branches and with greater added value, on the other.

The Cuban experience in the past 50 years, including the twenty years of the Special Period, clearly shows the complexity on an economy while building Socialism, where errors pay dearly and can destroy the Revolution. (Castro, F. 2005).

If the country has reached its current development state, overcoming obstacles that seemed insurmountable, it is because the policies adopted to promote the country's development have taken into account economic considerations as well as social and political objectives and priorities.

2. Part II

2.1 Cuba's strategy for human development

The experience of multiple countries at different levels of development has shown that although economic growth is an indispensable condition for Human Development, not all economic growth leads to development. To attain a positive outcome, the growth must occur in the strategic economic sectors that can assure steady and balanced levels of economic activity.

At the same time, the implementation of adequate strategies is required to assure a rational income distribution to favor social development programs. This requires a consistent government intervention, something which is one of the most controversial issues at present.

In recent years, several experts have shown through research that social investment - for a long time considered as a non-productive expenditure - is actually the capital needed to boost development.

Ironically, a new scenario is emerging which pits theories of social justice against neo-liberal strategies and policies that results in the deterioration of living standards.

This process is not rational since the global problems that affect humankind are threatening the very survival of the human race. In the light of this situation, a focus on human needs should be prioritized, because people are not only the agents of development but also the fundamental recipients.

From the outset and with a view to providing a comprehensive solution to this dilemma, the Cuban Revolution envisaged the close relationship between the economic foundation and social outcomes.

The Revolution conceived the process of development as one which would be simultaneously dealing with both economic and social problems. The attention to social aspects was fully in line with the belief that a social revolution is meaningful to the extent that it solves existing social problems.

Fidel Castro, in his historical speech, *History Will Absolve Me*, which was delivered during the trial of the participants in the assault on the Moncada Garrison more than 50 years ago, pointed out the fundamental problems that had to be solved in the country. (1)

The political platform of the revolutionary movement was devised taking into consideration the possible solutions to such problems; it defined the socio-economic objectives of the Cuban Revolution.

<p>Socio-economic problems in Cuba before 1959</p> <p>The problems were related to the land, industrialization, housing, unemployment, public education, and public health. In a nutshell, these are the six issues which would receive our full attention, together with ensuring public liberties and political democracy.</p> <p>Castro. F <i>La Historia me Absolverá</i>. La Habana. Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1981, p.41</p>
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Table 1.

Without doubt, the elimination of centuries-old problems of underdevelopment, such as extreme poverty, monoculture and concentrated landownership, high rates of unemployment, and industrial backwardness, demanded the resolution of structural problems, such as the distorted economic sector and the dependency relationship on the United States of America. (1)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 43% illiterates; 44% never attended school• 74.2% of houses in rural areas were in an appalling or bad state; only 10% had electric power.• Only 8% of the population received free medical care from the State; 14% suffered or had suffered from TB; 13 % from typhoid and 36% from parasitism• Only 11.% drank milk, 4% ate meat; 2.1 % ate eggs; 1% ate fish and 3.4% ate bread <p>Castro. F <i>La Historia me Absolverá</i>. La Habana. Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1981</p>
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Table 2. Social conditions of Cuban peasants before 1959

In 1959 Cuba presented a socio-economic panorama typical of a neo-colonial country, mainly characterized by the following features: (2-3-4)

- High dependency on the United States of America, which ran the most important national industry: sugar production. US capital owned 1 200 000 hectares, including 25% of the best arable lands. In addition the US controlled the generation and marketing of electric power, a share of the dairy industry, the importation of fuels and financial credits.
- The structure of landownership was characterized by large estates that dramatically increased in the 1950s. In 1958, 73.3% of the country’s arable land was distributed into farms with more than 400 hectares, while 8% of the owners controlled 75% of the land. In this period, a growing trend of eliminating small subsistence landholdings began to be seen, due to massive exodus of impoverished peasants to the cities. Some estimates indicate that by 1952 big landownership devoted to sugarcane and to livestock accounted for 87% of the total farm area nationwide.
- The prevailing economic structure was agricultural. The principal industry was that of sugarcane, which was developed through traditional means; the remaining sectors did not show a significant development.
- Dependency on foreign trade, which generated a fully open economy that registered between 25 and 28 cents of imports per peso of material produced. Geographically, commerce was concentrated with the USA, which imported 60% of Cuba’s productions

(sugarcane monoproduction accounted for 80% of total exports) and provided 75-80% of Cuban imports.

- High polarization of incomes: The top 20 % of the population received 58% of the income, while the poorest 20% received only 2%.
- The economic situation previously described was reflected in the few advances made in the period in key social support sectors, such as education and health care.
- Actually in 1958 around 45% of children aged 6 to 14 did not attend school; 23.6% of the population over 10 years of age was illiterate; 22.6% of the population aged 10 years or older had completed basic schooling; and the average schooling level among the population over 15 years of age was below third grade. Paradoxically, 10,000 teachers were unemployed, and no serious effort was made to attain quality education.
- The health care provided by the state was insufficient and of poor quality, and there was no national health care system. Private health care institutions prevailed. The services provided were mainly curative in nature, with practically no preventive medical care. The training of medical doctors did not take into consideration the social needs of the population, and there was an almost complete lack of health care services in rural areas. There were 98 hospitals and one medical doctor per 1,067 inhabitants. There was only one rural hospital in the country and the system of emergency medical posts mainly provided only first-aid services. Havana, the capital city, with only 22% of the country's population had 65% of all medical doctors and 62% of hospital beds. The state budget allotted to public health in the fiscal year 1956-1957 was of 18 million pesos, representing only 5.3% of all government expenditures for that year.
- Levels of unemployment and underemployment were very high and proportionally higher than the ones observed in other Latin American countries, since they often affected more than the 25% of the workforce. There were more than 600,000 unemployed in the periods between sugarcane harvests and an average of 300,000 unemployed year round.
- Women were particularly negatively impacted by the poor level of economic and cultural underdevelopment. Only 12% of the labor force was made up of women, and their activities were practically limited to the service sector and household chores. Women were prohibited from holding official and government positions.
- Housing conditions were extremely poor. According to the Population and Housing Census carried out in 1953, 46.6% of dwellings showed deplorable or bad conditions, and only 33% were made of stone masonry. In rural areas these indicators were even worse: 74.2% and 2.5% respectively.

Since 1959 the Cuban Government has sought to transform all the aforementioned structural problems.

The first steps towards the fulfillment of the main objective – the comprehensive development of Cuba-- were taken in the early years of the Revolution. Transformations in the economy and in the social structure have been governed by the basic tenet of the Cuban revolutionary process: to attain development through an equitable distribution of incomes, with top priority given to social justice.

Socio-economic transformations were reflected in the measures taken to immediately redistribute incomes to favor workers and marginalized groups, eliminate unemployment and to enhance living standards.

3. Part III

3.1 Main features of the policies for human development in Cuba

The concept of comprehensive development is the first feature of Human Development. Another essential feature is the implementation of a unified social policy directed by the State which allowed for the concentration and distribution of available resources to favor Human Development policy. This approach has proven to be appropriate, particularly in times of economic restrictions that have brought about a sharp reduction in the availability of resources. In spite of this, Cuba maintains favorable indicators of Human Development.

On the other hand, the actions of the State could not have produced such outstanding results if there had not been the support and the participation of the people in the programs for educational and health development, and advances in areas such as the availability of housing, the supply of consumer goods, and in cultural and sports programs.

Social organizations particularly the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), the Central Union of Cuban Workers (CTC) and the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) have developed diverse campaigns to support the social policy.

The CDRs --founded on September 28, 1960 -- have more than 6.7 million members and have carried out diverse campaigns:

- Campaigns to foster a health culture through massive education.
- Campaigns for epidemiological surveillance
- Campaigns for massive vaccination and screening
- Promotion of blood donations
- Movement for recruiting teachers and for strengthening the school-family relationship.
- Support for the organization and distribution of consumer goods and supplies

Trade unions have played a decisive role through the CTC. They participated in the National Literacy Campaign in 1961 and have been participating in several campaigns for the educational development of workers such as the campaigns to help them reach the 6th and 9th grades, the promotion of social services, social security and social welfare, and the adoption of measures to improve working conditions and hygiene in the workplace.

The FMC was founded on August 23, 1960 to demand women's rights, ensure attention to gender interests, eliminate all discriminatory practices and promote the broadest participation of women in the country's economic, social and political spheres.

To look after the interests of peasants nationwide, the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) was created to support socio-economic transformations in rural areas.

This policy of social development has improved the living standards of the Cuban people, combining an increase of individual consumption with the implementation of basic social services.

At the same time, the policies implemented have included a preferential treatment to certain sectors of the population, namely: women, children, elderly citizens and inhabitants of rural areas. It is precisely in such vulnerable groups where the structural problems of underdevelopment become more critical. Their solution demands not only profound

changes in the socio-economic system, but also a gradual and steady process of assimilation of these vulnerable groups into all processes of social and economic changes.

It is difficult to overcome centuries-old prejudices generated by economic and cultural distortions. Therefore, this special treatment demanded attention far beyond the establishment of balanced social relationships.

In the Cuban case, the basic premises for the implementation of a strategy for comprehensive development lay in the adoption of a Socialist system.

The nationalization of the fundamental means of production during the initial years of the Revolution laid the foundations for the establishment of a single socio-economic core, capable of coordinating in a gradual and planned manner the different actors in the development process.

On the other hand, the possibility of counting on the support of the Socialist countries, particularly the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was a significant factor in the development of the country during thirty years.

After 1959, the development strategy implemented by Cuba would have to face simultaneously the following two obstacles:

- An inherited centuries-old underdevelopment, with a worsening trend due to the new challenges posed by the transformations
- The negative effects of the US economic blockade, with intensified once the Revolution demonstrated its capacity to survive.

From 1961 to 1963, priority was given to the strategy that promoted an intensive industrialization of the country, which had as its counterpart a diversification of agricultural production. At that time, Cuba did not have the internal conditions that such a process required. Therefore, it brought about an enormous tension in the balance of payments, and the development program had to be reconsidered.

Between 1964 and 1975 efforts were geared to ensuring the conditions to start the industrialization process that had been postponed. To this end, sugarcane production was selected as the generator of the revenue necessary for development.

It was only after 1976 that the minimum of conditions necessary could be attained to start a gradual process of industrialization. The essential feature of this process was that it had to be embedded in the international Socialist division of labor. Within this system, which prevailed until 1989, Cuba was considered as a country with a lesser relative development. The sectors susceptible to being developed were the production of sugarcane, tobacco, citrus and nickel. The remaining sectors received minor attention influenced by - among other factors - the flow of goods from other Socialist countries to meet the other needs of the country.

From a qualitative point of view, the development strategy of the Revolution was, from the outset, conceived as a process in which economic and social advances were supposed to be profoundly interrelated and complementary to each other.

Following this approach has enabled Cuba to address the entire process of economic growth while at the same time adequately satisfying the level of basic social needs.

The history of the development process reveals that although the vision towards a comprehensive development was present from the start, it did not automatically guarantee the appropriate relationship among all the factors that such a process demanded.

The reality of life has shown that for thirty years, the economic policy witnessed unquestionable advances, but also deficiencies and errors that although common to any development process, in the Cuban case these were worsened by the conditions imposed by the US blockade.

In this context, the country's capacity to continually adapt to emerging circumstances has been vital, while maintaining a flexible approach and a sense of self-criticism in the evaluation of adopted policies.

After an initial stage of searching for appropriate mechanisms for the economic development – which lasted up to the mid 1960s – the 1967-1970 period was characterized by an idealistic spirit that neglected the existence of economic –commercial relationships under the conditions of Socialism. This approach was corrected in the 1971-1975 period and was critically analyzed during the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba.

In contrast, between 1976 and 1985 the economic policy gave too much emphasis to the capacity of economic mechanisms in the solution of most problems faced by our society, neglecting political and social factors. The outcome of that period is considered to have been a constraining effect on the comprehensive development of the system. The fulfillment of strategic objectives was equally threatened.

Between 1986 and 1989, a process of rectification was started in an attempt to correct the abovementioned imbalances, trying to strike a balance between economic factors and political and social factors. This process became known in our history as “period of transition” -- the search for unprecedented solutions, not only to specific problems of the Cuban Revolution, but also to general problems of the Socialist system which were not solved in a timely way globally.(5)

The process of rectification of errors was curtailed by the worsening of external conditions in the 1990s. Both the disappearance of the former Soviet Union and the political changes in other Eastern European countries as well as the toughening of the US blockade put Cuba on the threshold of a qualitatively new stage of development.

However, despite the aforementioned deficiencies, there is no doubt concerning the outstanding economic and social advances achieved in Cuba in the period 1959-1989. These achievements reflected the country's strategic objectives: to eliminate the causes that generated poverty and to place the development of human beings as active social agents, and to consider this as the ultimate goal of the development model.

The reality of life shows that during this period the social development attained in Cuba took the utmost advantage of the opportunities generated by the economic growth, which was based, to a great extent, on a system of specific economic relations with the Socialist countries, particularly with the USSR.

The economic development of the country has been directly linked to the performance of its main national industry: the sugarcane industry. This was a traditional industry that greatly

fluctuates in response to international markets. Between 1972 and 1976 the rate of economic growth was higher than 10%, as a result of increased prices in sugar and the increasing demand for it, while by the end of that decade, between 1976 and 1980, when the demand was moderate, economic growth averaged only 3.5%.

The process of rectification 1986-1989
People living in Cuba during the process of rectification almost unanimously emphasize that its momentous effects transcended the narrow economic framework. According to Jean Stubbs: “Although it is generally assumed that the objective was the rectification of errors in the economic sphere, it also included rectification in the political and socio-cultural spheres.” Fernando Martínez agrees that “in the Cuban process of rectification... although absolutely concerned with the economy, in no way was it limited to the economy. “ The campaign devised to improve public communication in the period 1986-1987 and the broad debates about the need to improve the functioning of the Party and of the People’s Power, prior to the celebration of the 4 th PCC Congress are examples that clearly illustrate this reality.
Campbell, A “Una introducción a la economía cubana: sus objetivos, estrategias y desempeño”. <i>Temas</i> . Havana. Num. 2. 1995 p.43

Table 3.

The efforts to reduce dependency on the sugarcane sector and to achieve an industrial diversification began to yield fruit in the 1980s, when a strong investment process began to consolidate itself.

During the 1981-1985 five-year period, the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) reached an annual rate of 8.5%, 3.5% higher than planned. Although the economy experienced a significant growth in this period, it was insufficient in important sectors such as the exports of goods and services, and the substitution of exports.

The Cuban economy did not develop in the expected way during the 1985-1989 period, and its average annual growth rate was only 0.7% in the GDP product per capita.

By the 1980s it became evident that there was a need to move on from a quantitative to a qualitative growth, an essential element included as one of the main objectives of the rectification process. The most remarkable deficiencies in this respect were found in the investment process, with delays in the construction, restoration, and modernization of buildings and in the quality of the services offered to the population.

During this period advances could be observed in relation to the equitable growth in the consumption of calories and proteins, but there was a need to improve the quality and content of the diet. The system of food supply generated a high dependency of the population on the State, which in turn depended on an agricultural sector that highly depended on imports. Estimates made by the Institute of Economic Research in Havana revealed that approximately 57% of proteins and more than 50% of the calories consumed came from abroad.

On the other hand, the problem of unemployment had been partially solved because although access to a job had been practically guaranteed to the population and the participation of women had been increased, both were more in line with the strategy concerning social justice than with criteria of economic efficiency. Therefore, enterprises absorbed more workers than the numbers actually needed.

Neither did the construction of dwellings grow in accordance with the demand or needs of the population. At the same time, maintenance of existing buildings and houses declined. In fact in the 1980s the levels of construction of new dwellings were lower than the levels of deterioration of existing ones.

By the end of the 1980s, some of the difficulties in the international arena became more evident, and the country was to face them with the crumbling of the Socialist community.

However, the problems that have been mentioned should not mar the results achieved in this period by an underdeveloped country under the conditions and characteristics previously analyzed.

Between 1959 and 1989, the national economy showed an average annual growth of 4.3%, and the GDP per capita, a growth of 2.8%, with an estimated increase in worker productivity of 2%.

Such results were based on a gross state investment of 62, 250 million pesos, for an accumulation rate between 20% and 25 %. Per capita industrial production grew by 2.9%, agriculture by 0.9% and the construction sector by 6%.

These results are higher, in general, than the ones attained in the Latin American region as a whole between 1960 and 1985. In the region, the GDP per capita grew at an average annual rate of 1.8%, while Cuba showed 3.1%. According to some estimates, in the 1981-1989 period, the GDP *per capita* in Cuba had an average annual growth rate of 3.8%, while in Latin America it showed a decrease in an annual 1%. (7)

With the transformations undertaken, in 1989 the country was experiencing a process of creation of the basic conditions to commence the plans for its gradual industrialization, once the essential problems for doing this had been solved.

It is obvious that the economic development as well as the opportunities provided by the commercial exchange with the USSR and other Socialist countries and the relatively stability of financial conditions contributed to ensuring a significant level of development.

The different policies aimed at distributing wealth with equity have brought about a substantial reduction in social imbalances and disparities. Whereas in 1953, the poorest 20% only received 6.5% of the total income and the wealthiest 20% received 57.9%, by the 1980s, the results were of 11.3% and 33.8%, respectively, according to academic estimates.

After 1989, the situation changed as the tensions provoked by external events generated limitations and shortages in the country. Even under these circumstances, the rational distribution of available resources has reduced the social cost of the present crisis.

4. Part IV

4.1 Current situation and prospects of human development after 1989

The problems faced by the country were worsened by the adverse international situation, which was characterized by two factors: the disappearance of the European Socialist system and the toughening of the blockade imposed by the United States.

The crisis not only revealed phenomena that demanded top priority attention and that questioned the rationale of the development model that had been implemented up to that moment, but it also threatened the very continuation of the revolutionary project.

In 1990 and as a reaction to the situation taking shape, the country started a stage known as the special period in times of peace. The need to preserve the integrity of the model, in opposition to the external economic tensions that emerged after 1989, began to shape the economic strategy that underlies the concept of the special period: the minimum time that the Cuban society needs to reorient its international economic and commercial relations and to restructure its productive and service sectors to cope with the new circumstances and to do so with a view to preserving the main achievements of the Socialist revolution and the right and determination to resume the construction of Socialism when conditions make it possible. (8)

The crumbling of the Socialist camp meant the extinction of the system of economic integration and of participation in the world economy that had guaranteed the development strategy for more than thirty years.

It should be borne in mind that the Cuban economy showed an index of external openness of about 50% and that imports represented somewhat more than a third of the country's GDP. The Socialist countries participated in more than 80% of total trade. The member countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) supplied Cuba with the 86% of raw materials; 98% of fuels; 80% machinery and equipment and over 70% of consumer goods.

Moreover, the problems caused by the blockade imposed by the United States have become more critical.

Among the measures taken under the blockade are the following:

- Cuba has been denied the purchase of any US product made in the USA or in a third country. US companies are banned from buying any Cuban product.
- Citizens of third countries are banned from re-exporting to Cuba goods of US origin or containing any US components. Banks and companies in third countries are banned from using US dollars in their accounts with Cuba.
- The representatives of the US Government in international financial institutions have been instructed to oppose the granting of credits or financial concessions to Cuba
- The rights of US citizens have been restricted, since they are banned from visiting Cuba.

With the cooperation of the Socialist camp the Cuban economy had defined its strategy to tackle the obstacles imposed by the blockade. However, since 1990 Cuba has needed to

redirect its foreign trade, in a context in which the blockade imposed by the United States was toughened by the passage of the Torricelli Act in 1992. This Act provides for, among other measures, the ban on branch offices of US companies in third countries carrying out transactions with Cuba. In 1991, these subsidiary companies had sold products to Cuba with a value of 718.7 million dollars, 90% of which were for food and drugs. In addition, the Act bans the entrance in US harbors, within 180 days, to vessels shipping goods to Cuba or from Cuba, or on Cuba’s account, and establishes sanctions to countries providing assistance to the island.

The Torricelli Act put the Cuban economy under new pressures. Delays in ship freight increased as a result of the immobility of financial resources. There was also an increase in storage charges. The flow of supplies for the population faced interruptions. More difficulties arose in signing contracts with ships with the appropriate technical features, and the terms of contracts concerning storage and freight worsened. Under a new law, which was adopted to tighten the embargo, Helms-Burton Act, a failure of any country to comply with the measures of the economic blockade is seen as an obstacle for the relations between such country and the USA. The Act includes provisions such as a ban on entering the USA for on CEOs (and their families) of foreign companies that had acquired former US properties (and also properties owned by Cuban citizens who are now American citizens) that were nationalized in Cuba; the reduction of US contributions to financial international bodies in the same amount that they had granted to Cuba; the instruction given by the President to eliminate commercial preferential treatment to those countries that sell sugar previously bought from Cuba, and the elimination of US assistance to countries that had belonged to the former USSR which subsidize their commerce with Cuba or provide Cuba with any form of aid or credits.

Estimates made by the Institute of Economic Research of Cuba show that in cumulative terms, through 1995 the blockade has cost Cuba more than 60 billion dollars.

In fact, these actions have directly affected the Cuban people to the extent that there has also been a ban on the acquisition of drugs, food and other consumer goods required by the population.

Within this context it is understandable that the search for internal solutions and the adaptation to the new conditions were accompanied by a period of economic contraction. The economic policy was determined to allocate the scarce available resources to the development of productions that could generate income in hard currency.

CUBA: SOME BASIC INDICATORS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

	1980	1989	1995	2004	2009
EMPLOYMENT					
Average number of workers (thousands)	2 734	3 527	...	4 779	5 158
% productive sector	72	71	...	37	41
Female participation in the workforce (%)	32	38	...	44	67
Workers with secondary or higher education (%)	25	39	...		

	1980	1989	1995	2004	2009
EDUCATION					(1)
Number of day-care centers (U)	832	1 072	1 107	1 123	1 108
Enrollment in day-care centres (thousands)	92	149	149	140	130
Enrollment in pre-primary and primary education (thousands)	1 673	1 015	1 026	1 487	938
Enrollment in secondary education (thousands)	1 128	1 073	703	1 000	871.470
Enrollment in higher education (thousands)	146	243	122	361,0	606.8
Enrollment in special education (thousands)	25	55	54 (2)	46.900	411.200
Graduates from higher education (thousands)	9.4	33.2	31.7	23.891	74.845
Schooling rate (6-14 years)	92.0	98.0	97.1 (2)	98.000	99.31
HEALTH					
Infant mortality rate (per one thousand live births)	19.6	11.1	9.4		
Life expectancy (years)	74.2	75.22	75.48 (3)	76.9	79.97
Men	72.6	73.4	73.5	75.0	77.0
Women	76	77.0	77.5	78.0	81.0
Population per medical doctor	635	302	193		66
Population per dentist	2 667	1 621	1 200	1.100	1.000
Hospital beds (per one thousand population)	4.5	6.0			
Medical doctors (thousands)	15.2	34.8	56.8	69.000	74.800
Dentists (thousands)	3.6	6.4	9.1	10.000	11.572

CEE Anuario Estadístico de Cuba.1989. La Habana. Editorial Estadística, 1989, 2004-2009

MINSAP Anuario Estadístico 1995. La Habana.1996, 2004-2009

ONE. Indicadores sociales y demográficos de Cuba. 1995 La Habana, junio 1996

CEE Cuba: Proyección de la población a nivel nacional y provincial, período 1993-200. La Habana, Editorial Estadística, 1993, 2000 -2004-2009.

Table 4.

In 1990, the Cuban Government started a number of reforms that gave way to new market mechanisms within the model of a planned economy. In their initial stage, these reforms affected the external sector, the promotion of foreign investments, and tourism. Since 1993, the reforms have directly impacted the functioning of the economy. The principal ones are the following:

- The concentration of investments in sectors with rapid recovery, mainly the tourism sector.
- Greater opening-up to foreign capital, assumed as a complement to the internal forces of accumulation and savings.

- Elimination of the state monopoly on foreign trade, together with the implementation of schemes for self-financing in hard currency.
- Legalizing the possession of hard currency with the purpose of incorporating in the legal economy the dollars that circulated in the black market, of increasing hard-currency reserves and of alleviating the shortage of goods
- Broadening the spheres of action of self-employed workers, with the passage of an Act that lists 135 activities in the private sector. At present, around 200,000 workers have been authorized to be self-employed in 160 work activities.
- Restructuring of State agricultural estates with a view to increasing efficiency in that sector. Creation of the Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC), which for an unlimited period will have the usufruct right to the land.
- Restructuring of the State organization that simplified and rationalized the State apparatus.
- Implementation of a more flexible and active financial policy to cope with internal and external financial imbalances
- Opening of free markets (agricultural, industrial and crafts) that are ruled by supply and demand with respect to prices. These markets provide the population with options for consumer goods, and they also stimulate production.

Following 1990 there was a widespread drop in all economic indicators. The most characteristic feature was the fall by 34.8% of the GDP until 1993. In 1994 there was a slight growth of 0.7% since the fall of principal indicators was stopped and some growth could be observed in strategic sectors and in some non-traditional productions.

By 1995, the growth of 2.5% of GDP ratified the trend of improvement which had started a year earlier. Such growth was based on growth in GDP in agriculture (4.1%) and in the manufacturing section (6.4%), as well as in the service sector. (9)

In 1989 the import capacity was of 8.1 billion dollars. In 1993, it had shrunk by 75% to 2 billion dollars. An increase was observed in 1995, when it reached 3.527 billion dollars.

The reduction of oil imports affected both industrial and population consumption. In 1989, oil imports were at the level of 13.4 million tons, while in 1993 this had reduced to approximately 6 million, thus severely affecting the country in many ways, including daily power-outages.

As a result of enormous efforts made, there has been an increase in the national oil extractions, although the domestic demand has not been satisfied yet. In addition, the oil being extracted so far has a high content of sulphur, thus making it more difficult to use with the existing technologies. In 1995, oil extracting reached 1.4 million tons, which represents 30% of the oil consumption needed for generating electric power.

The sugarcane industry, considered the most important sector in the generation of hard currency, has neither had a favorable evolution. Since 1991, sugarcane production has been decreasing. In the 1993-1994 period 4.3 million tons were produced; while in the 1994-95 harvest, only 4 million. Such performance meant a loss of approximately a billion dollars in national incomes.

The incomes generated by tourism and the high-tech sectors (medical equipment and the biotechnology-based medical-pharmaceutical industry) have kept on growing, although they have not yet been able to compensate for the decline in other productive sectors. Tourism has been developing rapidly. In 1994 it contributed a gross income of about 800 million dollars, and it has kept on growing at an annual rate of approximately 17% since 1991.

Incomes in the biotechnology sector and the medical pharmaceutical industry surpassed 100 million dollars in 1994.

Industry has been one of the sectors most affected by the crisis. In 1993 the utilized industrial capacity was estimated between 10 and 20 %. In spite of this, in 1994 there was an 8.5% growth because some industrial sectors had recovered.

In contrast, agriculture has not managed to eliminate its deficiencies and the lack of inputs that affect it. In 1995 it showed a better performance with an increase in the production of root-crops and vegetables.

The country's internal financial situation became more critical as a result of the abovementioned difficulties. The absence of a satisfactory production, as well as the continuity of the policy concerning full employment and subsidies brought about an excess of accumulated liquidity that reached around 11 million pesos (about 15 months of salaries) in July 1993. In addition, there was a budget deficit estimated at 4, 200 billion pesos (over 30% of GNP).(10)

In this sense, the fiscal adjustment implemented has shown positive results. Taking into account the impossibility of a rapid economic recovery, the measures that have been taken have managed to strike a balance between the adjustment and the interests of the population, since there has been a reduction of negative effects on the main achievements of the process.

In 1994, the budget deficit was reduced to 1, 400 billion pesos (7.3% of GNP) and liquidity closed the year around 9, 500 billion, for a 20% reduction in only eight months.

The year ended in 1995 with a reduction of the deficit by 775 million pesos, which represented 5.8% of GDP (3.6% of GDP at market prices). In relation to 1994, it represented a reduction of 56%.(11)

The fiscal adjustment has been reached in a relatively short period and the deficit is 85% smaller than the deficit two years before, representing 8% of GDP compared to 33.5 % in February 1994. This process has been developing under very harsh conditions without support of lines of credit. Although it has been based on the reduction of the added demand, it has allowed for a growth in the GDP.(12)

Since the beginnings, the Cuban State decided to assume the cost of the crisis so as to prevent, to the extent possible, the negative impacts on basic social programs. This has resulted in maintenance of popular support for the government's socio-economic project.

For the Cuban Government, it was essential to avoid the implementation of any measure of the classical neo-liberal nature as were taken by the former Socialist countries and also in Latin America. The State has ensured an equitable distribution of the negative effect of the

crisis and has given priority to social assistances to sectors of the population that have been more naturally affected.

The reality of life has shown that the preservation of social achievements amidst economic restructuring necessarily poses new challenges, since centuries-old problems are exacerbated and new ones emerge. Despite the difficulties, basic health services and education have been maintained, although the population, particularly the most vulnerable groups, suffers from a shortage of goods and lack of services. Both the current economic situation as well as the reforms undertaken has posed diverse economic and social challenges.

The closing down of enterprises due to shortages of raw material and fuel made unemployment a problem of structural nature. The search for efficiency demands the current economic and institutional restructuring, because for a long time the industries assimilated a level of workforce beyond their needs.

At present the readjustment of workforce has been envisaged in a gradual manner, without causing traumas, and providing the corresponding social compensation. Likewise, other options of employment have been opened, such as the authorization for self-employment, the retraining of redundant personnel and special attention to the groups that are most affected: young people and women.

It is obvious that the financial measures taken to control the added demand (an increase in prices on non-basic goods, an increase in the electric power tariff, elimination of gratuities, among others) directly affect the population at large, particularly the most vulnerable sectors. At present, steps are being taken to implement a system of social assistance or some other alternative solutions to protect these social groups.

Since 1993 measures have been taken to improve food production, such as the creation of the UBPC, the authorization for self-employment, the establishment of the agricultural markets (with prices following the law of supply and demand), the decriminalization of possession of hard currency and the expansion of stores charging in hard currency. (It has been estimated that 40-50% of the population had access to hard currency in 1996.)

The high degree of dependency on food imports and the deficiencies of the agricultural sector have been reflected in the reduction of the consumption of calories and proteins.

Consequently, with the new measures the sources of food consumption have been diversified, thus reducing the high dependency on the State-rationed market and broadening the possibilities of consumption concerning quality and assortment. However, this has brought about a heightening of differential access among different social groups.

The State has maintained the rationing system, thus ensuring a basic food basket.

Social security is under improvement and expansion, with an increase in its expenditures in recent years, but it has to face the challenge of assuming the protection of the most vulnerable groups, with alternatives and compensatory options until macroeconomic imbalances that affect the country are overcome.

In the political sphere, important decisions were also made in 2005, when the dollar was devalued as to the convertible peso, there was an increase in the minimum wages, pensions and social assistance with a view to compensating for increase in the cost of living.

Alternative solutions are important, but what is really essential is to preserve the levels of comprehensive development attained, by introducing the necessary social changes and by generating new mechanisms of participation adapted to changing realities.

It is important to increase the supply of goods and services to the population, implementing policies to revive agricultural and industrial production, as a decisive element for stabilizing domestic markets and the level of unemployment.

The social policy is also experiencing changes, and it owes its capacity to adapt to the fundamental principles upon which it is based, namely:

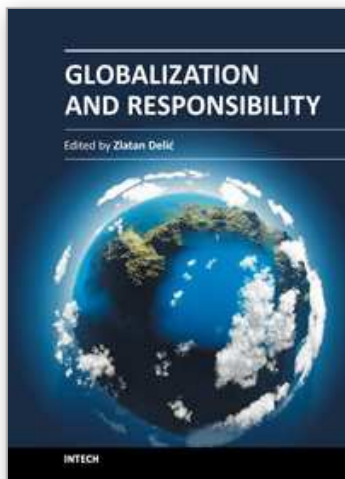
- A centralization run by the State that has permitted more comprehensiveness, equal opportunities in the access to social services, stability and the possibility to give priority attention to the most vulnerable sectors.
- A high level of popular participation in decision-making, which has ensured the understanding and support of the population to the measures implemented to overcome the crisis.

When assessing social development in Cuba, it is necessary to underline that the greatest success of this process is precisely that it has managed to sustain and improve the chosen strategy that has tended to protect the negative social impact of economic measures. Despite the current problems, the achievements reached until 2001 have allowed the continuation and improvement of a considerable number of them in the past years.

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The book "Globalization and Responsibility" consists of 8 chapters. The chapters in the book offer a decentered and dynamic terminology. They show that globalization consists of not only an objective process, but also of a lot of statements that define, describe and analyze the different experiences of the process. The chapters are written by authors and researchers from different academic disciplines, cultures and social contexts, therefore different experiences and scientific analyses on the consequences of globalization have been unified, starting from the multicultural and social epistemology to ethics of responsibility. Each chapter can be read separately, but in a complex, interconnected global universe of intertextuality of our world.

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