



### ***Slow Food position statement on the embargo against Cuba***

The well-known embargo against Cuba consists of a series of specific actions and policies that were implemented under the Kennedy administration in 1962, and which today are clearly anachronistic and represent serious interference in Cuba's sovereignty. The *bloqueo* ("blockade"), as it is called in Cuba, is the unilateral imposition of economic, commercial, and financial restrictions by the United States against Cuba, and includes prohibitions against Cuban exports to the US, against US citizens travelling to Cuba and carrying out financial transactions with Cuba, and against third parties making transactions in Cuba in US dollars.

Consequently, since 1992, Cuba has been denouncing the unilateral US embargo and its serious consequences for the Cuban people. Despite the United Nations expressing, on 24 occasions, its position that the embargo runs contrary to the UN Charter and international law, the United States and Israel continue to vote against lifting this unjust sanction, and thus the embargo is still effective.

Amnesty International's 2009 report quotes the Personal Representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as saying that, "The restrictions imposed by the embargo help to deprive Cuba of vital access to medicines, new scientific and medical technology, food, chemical water treatment and electricity," and the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system for operational activities for development as saying that, "The negative impact of the embargo is pervasive in the social, economic and environmental dimensions of human development in Cuba, severely affecting the most vulnerable socioeconomic groups of the Cuban population."

More than 190 countries trade regularly with Cuba, but the embargo still makes it impossible for Cuba to do business with the US market, which is very attractive for its prices and proximity. The total effect on Cuba's foreign trade between April 2018 and May 2019 was a loss of 2.9 billion dollars. In addition, tourism in Cuba has been badly harmed, especially due to the actions of the Trump administration: From April 2018 to March 2019, the US embargo against Cuba caused tourism losses of up to 1.4 billion dollars.

But the problems resulting from the embargo are not only financial: One of the natural consequences of reduced development possibilities resulting from the embargo has been migration. According to UN data (2017), 1,558,312 Cubans, or almost 14% of the Cuban population, live abroad. Eighty percent of these emigrants (1,251,037 Cubans) reside in the US.

The world could keep on debating and pointing to numbers and statistics, but such an approach fails to account for the suffering of Cuban people, which includes physical and emotional losses for individuals, families, and communities.



For all of these reasons, Slow Food joins the international community in firmly demanding an end to the embargo so that Cuba and its citizens can have the same opportunities for their future and their development, and the same right to self determination, that other countries have and to which all peoples are entitled.

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