

CHAPTER 2

Meeting Basic Human Needs in the Areas of Health, Education, Housing, and Human Services

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Overview

Cuba's transition from the Castro regime to a democratic society with a free economy will be a challenging process. Meeting the basic human needs of the Cuban population involves the removal of the manifestations of Castro's communism; the introduction of the values and practices of democracy and free enterprise; and the building of institutions and services that will improve the health, nutrition, education, housing, and social services available to the Cuban people.

The fundamental goal of any assistance to a free Cuba must be to empower the Cuban people to enable them to create an authentic democracy and free market economy. Empowering the Cuban people will mean improving their economic and social well-being, ensuring that adequate health and social services are provided, reconstructing a democratic civic culture through education and institution-building, dealing with the human cost of the totalitarian police state, and supporting the Cuban people as they cope with these issues and work to transform themselves.

Improving their condition will require dramatic reforms to ensure that democratic values and a civic culture return, that important democratic institutions — including private and faith-based organizations — are able to flourish, and that helping agents such as schools, clinics, and community centers respond to real needs and are accountable to the citizenry.

Some of the effort to meet basic human needs will involve immediate, short-term assistance to ensure that critical health, nutrition, and social services are addressed; that schools are kept open and provided with needed instructional materials; that housing emergencies are attended to; that comprehensive needs assessments and data collection are begun; and that food aid is distributed as needed.

Over the medium- and long-term, a variety of programs and services are identified that U.S. public and private sources can provide to the Cuban people, as a new Cuban government initiates the process of fundamental reform, establishing a rule of law, safeguarding human rights, and creating a new climate of opportunity. It is expected that such assistance will be available not only from U.S. Government agencies and contractors, but also from other international

donors, international organizations and institutions, philanthropic foundations, non-profit expert organizations, and businesses interested in investing in Cuba's future. Cuban-American and other U.S. citizens and organizations would be involved in these efforts.

Both short- and long-term issues will involve the work of many players and will need to be coordinated. The Cuban people are educated and, despite the repression of the Castro regime, have shown themselves to be remarkably resilient, savvy, and entrepreneurial. They will need the resources (including short- and long-term loans), technical assistance, and general support to enable them to improve health standards, manage the change to a market economy, and maintain and improve their infrastructure and services.

B. Seven Foundations for Action in Cuba's Transformation

There are seven overarching principles that are so fundamental to a successful transition that they cut across all other actions and issues. They are:

1. All that is done must have the goal of empowering the Cuban people. Cuba must be free and sovereign, and the pride its people have in their culture, history and hopes for the future must be affirmed. Assistance proposed herein is illustrative. It will be up to the Cuban people through an open, democratic process to decide what assistance Cuba may seek from international sources.
2. The international community, especially organizations in the Western Hemisphere, can play a leading role in assisting the transition process. The U.S. Government can work through the Organization of American States and regional agencies, and with the United Nations and its agencies, and other organizations and individual countries.
3. Churches and other religious bodies have an important role in building a free Cuba.
4. The Cuban diaspora will want to take a role in helping the homeland. It might be useful to establish an umbrella organization to help coordinate diaspora assistance, such as a "Foundation for Assistance to a Free Cuba."
5. U.S. and other assistance to Cuba should be coordinated to ensure it is managed effectively and provides help where it is needed most. The U.S. Government might consider creating a planning and coordination team before Castro's regime

falls, and, as appropriate, involve public and private sector donors including foundations, non-profit organizations, and corporations.

6. The United States and others should be prepared to help Cuba depoliticize its institutions and promote justice and reconciliation. The U.S. Government can assist Cuban efforts to eliminate profoundly politicized Castro-era textbooks, other instructional materials and media resources, as well as support the Free Libraries of Cuba network to enhance the physical presence of diverse materials and circulation of free ideas. Cubans may want to establish a justice and reconciliation process to address Castro's crimes, identify regime victims, and assist the social healing process; they may request outside help.

7. The United States and the international community should enable the Cuban people to develop a democratic and civic culture, a free economy, and the values and habits essential to both. The U.S. Government could create the "Cuba Civil Society Education Project" to help provide the resources, training, and materials for education in democracy, civic values, and entrepreneurship at all levels. Radio and Television Martí can continue to provide transition information, support and information to civil society, and training opportunities for free Cuba's journalists.

II. INTRODUCTION¹

The Cuban people will soon undergo a change from the personal rule of Fidel Castro and his communist regime, which have run Cuba since 1959. What follows in this chapter is a survey of areas in which the U.S. Government and private organizations could offer assistance to a free Cuba in the areas of health, education, housing, nutrition, and human services. This document proposes a wide range of possible actions, which a Cuban transition government might request or which the U.S. Government might propose, and a Cuban transition government may accept. They are not intended to be prescriptive; the fundamental goal of any assistance to a free Cuba must be to empower the people to enable them to create an authentic democracy and free market economy.

Empowering the Cuban people will mean improving their economic and social well-being, ensuring that adequate health and social services are provided,

¹ The following federal agencies contributed to this section of the Report: Department of Education (Chair of Working Group and lead agency); Agency for International Development; Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs; Peace Corps; Department of Agriculture; Department of Health and Human Services; Social Security Administration; Department of Housing and Urban Development; Department of Labor; and the Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy.

reconstructing a democratic civic culture through education and institution-building, dealing with the human cost of the totalitarian police state, and supporting the Cuban people as they cope with these issues and work to transform their country.

Empowering the Cuban people and improving their condition will require dramatic reforms to ensure that democratic values and civic culture return, that important democratic institutions — including private and faith-based organizations — are able to flourish, and that helping agents such as schools, clinics and community centers respond to real needs and are accountable to the citizenry.

According to a report issued by the Cuba Transition Project (CTP) in June 2003, “living conditions have deteriorated as evinced by an acute housing shortage estimated at 1.66 million dwellings. At least 13 percent of the population is clinically undernourished as the state food rationing system now provides for only a week to ten days of basic alimentary needs [per month]. Unemployment has reached 12 percent, based on official data, and as many as 30 percent of workers are displaced or underemployed” while “university enrollment has fallen 46 percent as would-be college students opt for more lucrative jobs in the tourism industry.”²

Further, a paper by Jerry Haar published by CTP in October 2003 indicated that, “while working conditions and labor rights in the Americas offer a mixed picture, in no country in the hemisphere are they worse than in Cuba.”³

Some of the effort to meet basic human needs will involve immediate, short-term assistance to ensure that critical health, nutrition, and social services issues are addressed; that schools are kept open and provided with depoliticized texts, other instructional materials; that any housing emergencies are attended to; and that comprehensive needs assessments and data collection are begun. Short-term assistance should be planned in advance and be available as appropriate while a new Cuban government forms itself and sets its plans and priorities for the important work ahead.

Different components of the Inter-American system, such as the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the

² Staff Report, Cuba Transition Project, June 2003

³ Jerry Haar, “Working Conditions and Labor Rights in Cuba,” Cuba Transition Project, October 2003

Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, the Pan American Health Organization, and the Pan American Development Foundation could coordinate the delivery of assistance offered by other nations of the hemisphere using the same mechanisms and procedures available to all member states. In addition, private organizations (e.g., foundations, expert associations, and faith-based organizations) and businesses could supply much needed assistance, experience, and knowledge. It will be important to coordinate these elements to determine which actions to take and to implement them as quickly and smoothly as possible.

A rapid assessment of immediate needs should focus on the critical initial six months. Longer-term assistance will be necessary for an undetermined period of time as the new Cuban government initiates the process of reforming what exists, establishing a rule of law, safeguarding human rights, renovating and reconstructing infrastructure and services, building new institutions, and creating a new climate of opportunity.

Both short- and long-term issues will involve the work of many players and will need to be coordinated. The Cuban people are educated and, despite the Castro regime, have shown themselves to be remarkably resilient, savvy, and entrepreneurial. They will need resources (including short- and long-term loans), technical assistance, and general support to enable them to improve health standards, manage the change to a market economy, and maintain and improve their infrastructure and services.

A. Foundations for Action in Relation to Cuba's Transition

A well-educated and healthy population, a safe environment, and adequate human services are critical to the success of most, if not all, of the recommendations in the other sections of this report. At the same time, meeting human needs in the special Cuban context depends upon a transition process that ideally embraces several fundamental principles.

1. Assistance to a Cuban Transition Must Be a Multilateral Effort

Many different international organizations and donors are interested in Cuba and will want, and need, to be involved in the transition. It will be important to:

- Mobilize and rely on regional assistance through the Organization of American States, Pan American Development Foundation, and other bodies.

- Invite and work with international organizations, including specialized agencies such as UNESCO, as appropriate.
- Encourage the participation of nongovernmental donors such as religious groups, relief organizations, philanthropic foundations, and corporations.

2. Churches and Other Religious Bodies Can Play an Important Role in Building a Free Cuba

Religious organizations can play an indispensable role in the transition to a free Cuba. This is not simply because religion and religious institutions have been suppressed under the communists or because external religious bodies have roots in Cuba and seek to help. Rather, the special importance of religious institutions in the transition is due to the fact that they are one of the few intact nongovernmental organizations on the island that have the trust of the people and the means to organize through an existing social network of communications and distribution channels at all levels of society.

In the words of Teo A. Babun, Jr., executive director of the aid association Evangelical Christian Humanitarian Outreach (ECHO)-Cuba: “Faith-based nongovernmental organizations currently conduct neighborhood humanitarian services, providing transportation, obtaining medical supplies, and providing meals. Church-affiliated social services are permitted to receive educational, financial, and material support from sister organizations in the United States [and elsewhere]. In return, the Cuban government demands that church-affiliated NGOs on the island serve people without regard to their religious beliefs.”⁴

Religious charities have established a climate of popular trust, a reputation for service to all as opposed to the narrow sectarianism of the past, and effective grassroots networks. Given the manifest difficulties, some of these organizations are truly remarkable:

- The Roman Catholic aid service *Cáritas de Cuba* is reported to have a staff of 30 and some 8,000 local volunteers, located in every Cuban diocese. It conducts a full range of social projects, the most important of which are elder care, care for persons with disabilities and families with disabled children, day

⁴ Teo A. Babun, Jr., “Faith-Based NGOs: Their Role in Distributing Humanitarian Aid and Delivering Social Services in the Special Period,” White Paper Report Association of Cuban Economists, August 7, 2001, p. 4.

care, support for single mothers, outreach to alcoholics, tutoring for adolescents with learning disabilities, aid for small farmers, and classes in subjects like sewing and computer use.

- ECHO-Cuba distributes medicines, medical supplies, food, clothing, and provides educational services through a network of over 100 locations (often house churches) throughout Cuba. Evangelical denominations are the fastest growing Protestant churches in Cuba.
- Indigenous mainline Cuban Protestant churches are also growing and are supported by sister churches in the United States, Mexico, and other countries. They are very active in providing social and medical services. The Protestant interfaith seminary at Matanzas, despite interference from the Castro regime, has managed to educate over 30 percent of the ordained Cuban pastors working in Cuba.

The renewal of Cubans' interest in religion has been considerable in recent years. A modest thaw in religious persecution occurred after the Pope's visit to Cuba in 1998. Religious bodies are now permitted to operate churches, provide social services and even limited educational services (but not open evangelism), and distribute some literature. The Bible is the number one selling book in Cuba, even at officially sponsored book fairs.

Despite a recent relative decline in numbers, Catholics are still by far the largest group of Christians in Cuba and the Church today is probably far stronger and more authentically Cuban than in the past. There are rapidly growing evangelical and mainline Protestant Christian communities, and a small but active Jewish community. They are centered in the cities of Havana and Santiago de Cuba, and supported by B'nai B'rith and various U.S. congregations. In addition, there are a significant numbers of followers of Afro-Caribbean religions such as Santeria. Religion in Cuba appears to have been strengthened, not weakened, by the people's ordeal under Castro.

Reasonably accurate data as of 2000 for the number and distribution of religious Cubans are as follows⁵:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Population of Cuba (2000) | 11,199,176 | 100 % |
| Protestant Churches: | | |
| Adventist | 26,000 | 0.2 % |
| Baptist | 68,100 | 0.6 % |
| Disciples/Christian | 30,000 | 0.3 % |
| Holiness/Church of God | 10,200 | 0.1 % |
| Methodist | 45,000 | 0.4 % |
| Pentecostal | 198,538 | 1.8 % |
| Reformed/Presbyterian | 17,443 | 0.2 % |
| Independent, House Churches | 5,400 | 0.1 % |
| Isolated Radio Believers | 39,200 | 0.3 % |
| Other Protestant | 1,550 | 0.9 % |
| Protestant Subtotal | 541,431 | 4.8 % |
| Roman Catholic Church | 5,178,652 | 46.2 % |
| Orthodox Christians | 1,300 | under 0.1 % |
| Other Christians | 180,100 | 1.6 % |
| Jews | 823 | under 0.1 % |
| Afro-Caribbean Religions | 1,923,683 | 17.2 % |
| Other Religions | 61,664 | 0.6 % |
| Total Religious Population | 7,887,653 | 70.4 % |
| Non-religious Population | 3,313,025 | 29.6 % |

⁵ Source: Detail for Country: Cuba, World Christian Database, Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2003, <http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/default.asp>. Data derived from the 2001 editions of the “World Christian Encyclopedia and World Christian Trends.”

3. Strengthening Social Service Delivery Capability of Independent Churches and Synagogues in Cuba

Organized assistance bodies such as *Cáritas de Cuba*, ECHO-Cuba, B'nai B'rith, and the relief organizations of the major Protestant churches with Cuban connections (Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Presbyterian) should be included in any planning for short-term and medium- to long-term transition assistance.

i. Use the networks of churches within Cuba and invite sister organizations outside Cuba to assist them.

a. Religion and short-term assistance

The churches can play a role in the initial planning and coordination of donor services for short-term humanitarian assistance. Ideally, they would have a “seat at the table” in whatever intergovernmental and interorganizational committees are constituted to oversee provision of immediate transition assistance. Cuban church leaders, as well as members of sister faith communities outside Cuba, can play an important role in the diplomatic and organizational work accompanying the political transformation.

Within most communities, churches and faith-based organizations are a major part of the support system. The Cuban people during a transition likely will want to maintain and strengthen those systems. Faith-based organizations can provide emotional support, a sense of trust, and continuity. They can also be used to educate and to communicate information to individuals and communities on the subject areas covered in this chapter.

b. Religion and medium- and long-term assistance

Religious organizations and leadership, from the local community up to the national and international levels, can also play significant roles in medium- and long-term reconstruction work in Cuba. Religious congregations, charities, orders, and other bodies will be needed to help provide social services, education, community organization, health care, and to address infrastructure issues such as housing and communications. Houses of worship can play a major role in helping Cuban society make independent ethical and moral judgments, and in providing the values needed to function in a free society.

ii. Differentiate the leadership of the Cuban Council of Churches, a Castro-infiltrated body, from the sincere grassroots churches that have been forced to join it.

In 1941, the Cuban Protestant Christian churches formed an ecumenical council to work together on joint initiatives, such as providing aid to the poor and supporting the interfaith seminary at Matanzas. The Council remained independent until it was taken over by the Castro regime in the early 1960s and used as a means to control the Protestant churches then operating on the island. Since then, it is fully identified with the regime and is controlled by Castro supporters, including Christian Marxists and liberationists, several head of the Council are or were members of Castro's rubber-stamp communist national assembly. The Council is now the only legal religious body other than the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cuba.

At the same time, it should be noted that most of the grassroots clergy and laity of the denominations that belong to the Cuban Council of Churches (CCC)⁶ are sincere Christians who have been caught in an impossible situation. (No member church has been able to leave the CCC since several Baptist groups did so in the early 1960s.) Like the Roman Catholics and others who have had to deal with the regime, the overwhelming majority of these mainline and evangelical Christians are not sympathizers with Castro and the communists, and therefore should not be denied assistance or a role in Cuban religious affairs due to “guilt by association.”

The U.S. government should not deal directly with the CCC during the transition, but should work with the individual member churches and other religious groups that have a stake in Cuba. It is important not to appear to take sides in internal Cuban religious affairs or endorse one faith group or set of groups over another. It should be U.S. policy to support the involvement of all genuinely non-political religious groups in both the transition and the development of a free Cuba, regardless of their beliefs or forced associations with the former regime.

⁶ The CCC includes both evangelical and mainline churches, including Methodists, Presbyterian and Reformed Christians, Anglicans, Friends (Quakers), Lutherans, Mennonites, Nazarenes, the Cuban Salvation Army, and some Baptist and Pentecostal denominations.

4. The Cuban diaspora will want to take a role in helping the homeland

Well over 1,500,000 Cubans have left the island for opportunities and freedom elsewhere since the communist revolution of 1958.⁷ This exceeds ten percent of Cuba's current population of slightly over 11 million. Today, over 1.2 million persons of Cuban ancestry live in the United States alone, over 813,000 of whom are estimated to be Cuban-born.⁸ Many other Cubans and persons of Cuban ancestry live in Spain, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and other countries.

i. Urge the Creation of a “Foundation for Assistance to a Free Cuba” to help diaspora Cubans channel assistance and coordinate relief operations

One important way diaspora Cubans might contribute to a Cuban transition is to set up a foundation through which assistance to Cuba can be channeled. Such a foundation could coordinate donations and other assistance, and would be a more efficient and powerful voice in the transition process than a variety of uncoordinated individual activities.

5. U.S. and other assistance to Cuba should be coordinated to ensure it is managed effectively and provides help where it is needed most

A defined core team of key U.S. Government agencies, NGOs, international organizations, and vendor representatives should be identified, which can work with Cuban transition authorities to facilitate assistance, manage priorities, and help prevent inefficient or poorly unorganized situations. This assistance should be delivered under the umbrella of the inter-American system to provide other hemispheric nations a framework within which they can make their own contributions.

i. Create and put in place a short-term assistance planning and coordination team before a transition begins

A team of U.S. Government agencies, in contact with international organizations, private sector organizations (secular relief and assistance organizations, corporations), and religious bodies, should be formed to organize

⁷ “Emigration,” Cuba On-Line Database, Institute for Cuban & Cuban-American Studies, University of Miami, 2001, <http://cuba.iccas.miami.edu/Docs/c01305.pdf>.

⁸ U.S. Bureau of the Census, “2000 Census and Current Population Survey Tables,” Census Factfinder, February 2004, <http://www.factfinder.census.gov/>.

and coordinate the initial phase of transition assistance. This should be done, if possible, prior to any actual change of regime and be ready to move quickly into operational mode.

The mission of a short-term coordination team should be to plan for various humanitarian relief contingencies, depending on the situations that develop when the Castro regime ends. All of the priorities discussed in the section on short-term humanitarian assistance would fall within the jurisdiction of this team.

It is vital that relief efforts be coordinated and managed in conjunction with emergent Cuban authorities and those engaged in diplomatic and security measures. Without coordination across all sectors, short-term assistance activities could degenerate into a situation dangerous for assistance workers, unreliable for transshipment of supplies, and overwhelming for the Cuban people and authorities.

ii. Create medium- and long-term coordination groups for public and private sector donors that can continue to work with a new Cuban government

The cooperation and coordination established during the initial short-term assistance phase should be continued into the subsequent phases of the transition, when planning and cooperation on projects will still be desirable.

Donors, vendors, charities and agencies should be encouraged to work with the new Cuban government and non-governmental organizations in Cuba to select priority projects, develop action plans, and carry out joint endeavors. There will be a tremendous amount of work to do. Without continuing coordination there could be problems involving movement of persons, shipments, communications and payment, as well as unnecessary duplication and overlap. Helping ensure the safety and security of key infrastructure, including public buildings, transportation, and communications networks will also be important.

iii. The special case of drug use prevention and control

Castro's Cuba is a proven trafficking point for drugs and has its own drug problems. Drug use and addiction are public health concerns, best dealt with by public health approaches — prevention, early intervention, and treatment — provided the procedures are based on solid findings of scientific research. Outreach, identification, referral, and treatment programs will need to be developed in sufficient number and type until they are available and accessible in every part of Cuba. Once Cuba has established the conditions that will allow it to

rejoin the inter-American system, particularly the OAS, standards and commitments set by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Commission in the Anti-Drug Strategy of the Americas and the Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism will facilitate meeting the objectives outlined.

Resources devoted to education about drug abuse prevention and stopping drug problems could be balanced with near equal emphasis on public health, public safety, and market disruption. Cuban and international resources could be devoted to prevention efforts and to instituting adequate interdiction and control efforts.

6. As Cuba seeks to depoliticize its institutions and promote justice and reconciliation, the United States and others should stand ready to assist.

The Cuban transition is likely to resemble other post-communist transitions in that there will be a need to help Cuban society begin the long process of recovering from the effects of ideology, terror, corruption, and warped institutional and social attitudes and habits.

7. The Cuban people should be enabled to develop a democratic civic culture, a free economy, and the values and habits essential to both.

Cuban society under Castro operates on the principle of “*resolver*,” or getting by via deals and other informal arrangements to resolve issues. This principle works in the peculiar climate of a communist regime with a pervasive bureaucracy, insufficient and corruptly distributed resources, and a thriving black market. It is not a good foundation for building a free society with an objective rule of law, honest institutions, and formal market institutions. Even though many Cubans understand the concepts of freedom and seek self-reliance, experience with other post-communist transitions indicates that it will take a concerted effort to change old habits and develop a genuine culture of democratic free enterprise.

III. IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

A. The Current Situation in Cuba Prior to Transition

A thorough, accurate, and comprehensive assessment of Cuba’s humanitarian needs must await the end of the Castro dictatorship. The Castro government rigidly controls calculation of mortality and morbidity rates, estimates of household income, food availability, nutrition, and other key indicators of

humanitarian needs, in order to score political points and win debates in international fora. These data are fundamentally unreliable.

1. The Health Care System

Partial reporting from independent sources inside and outside Cuba indicates the health sector is near collapse and the nutritional needs of the Cuban people are increasingly unmet. This is the result of a long process of decline that began to accelerate fifteen years ago.

The demise of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s led to the sudden withdrawal of billions of dollars in annual Soviet subsidies to Cuba. By 1989, Cuba's entire economy was in crisis. Cuban GDP fell by some 40 percent between 1989 and 1993. The emergence of an epidemic of optic neuropathy in 1991 (a disease caused by nutrient deficiency) characterized that decline. By 1992, the Cuban curative health system was in shambles due to serious shortages of equipment, medicine, and supplies.

The health sector, more than any other, depends on hard currency imports. In 1989, Cuba imported an estimated \$227 million in health-related goods. Part of this value was in-kind or the result of bartering arrangements provided by the former Soviet Union. These non-monetary arrangements disappeared after 1989 with the loss of socialist trade relations. By 1993, Cuba's health-related hard currency imports amounted to only an estimated \$67 million.

Access to basic medicines declined precipitously from 1989 to 1993 and supplies became irregular, depending on unstable access to foreign exchange, rapidly changing sources of purchase, and changing patterns of donation. The Cuban ration system substituted herbal medicines. Cuban hospitals increasingly turned to acupuncture as a substitute for anesthesia.

Cuban GDP grew by only 10 percent from 1993 to 1996, and sporadically thereafter, accompanied by a serious decline in the purchasing power of the Cuban peso that gutted salaries and health ministry budgets. The process of stagnation and deterioration continues to the present.

Today, the Cuban government still prohibits physicians from engaging in private practice, and pays them only about US\$20-\$30 per month, far less than a what a maid or bellboy earns from tips in a Cuban government-run tourist hotel.

As a result, many Cuban doctors and nurses have given up their professions to work in tourism or the informal economy.

2. Nutrition and Sanitation

The failure of the Castro regime's Marxist economic policies together with external factors such as the declining price of sugar have made it impossible for the Cuban government to maintain an effective food-rationing system, either through food imports or through domestic production.

During the first thirty years after the Cuban revolution, the Cuban government imported about half of all protein and calories intended for human consumption. After the withdrawal of Soviet subsidies, importation of foodstuffs declined by about 50 percent from 1989 to 1993, and per capita protein and calorie availability from all sources declined by 25 percent and 18 percent from 1989 to 1992, respectively. Currently, only about 1200 calories per person per day are available from low-cost rationed distribution.

Cuban government statistics show that the burden of calorie, protein and micronutrient deficits falls predominantly on adult men, whose caloric intake fell from 3100 in 1989 to 1863 in 1994. However, infants, children, pregnant women, and the elderly also suffer acute deprivation.

The proportion of newborns weighing less than 2500 grams rose 23 percent, from 7.3 percent of all births in 1989 to 9.0 percent in 1993. Guaranteed daily milk rations reached only children up to the age of 7 after 1992. Anemia affected about half of all children and adolescents and half of pregnant women aged 15 to 45 during the 1990s.

Cuban government data on pregnant women show that, from 1988 to 1993, the percentage of women with inadequate weight at pregnancy rose 18 percent, from 7.9 percent to 9.3 percent. Women with weight gains of less than 8 kilogram during pregnancy rose from 5.3 percent to 5.8 percent.

Cuba's economic decline in the 1990s also resulted in a reduction of the materials needed to ensure clean water. From 1990 to 1994, Cuban government statistics show the proportion of the population with domestic water connections declined from 83 percent to 81 percent in urban areas and from 30 percent to 24 percent in rural areas.

During the same period, the portion of the population without access to potable water increased from 10 percent to 12 percent. The country's ability to produce or import chlorine declined, reducing the population covered by chlorinated water systems from 98 percent in 1988 to 26 percent in 1994. In 1994, only 13 percent of the country's 161 municipal water systems were chlorinated. Mortality from diarrheal diseases rose from 2.7 per 100,000 in 1989 to 6.8 per 100,000 in 1993.

Poor nutrition and deteriorating housing and sanitary conditions were associated with a rising incidence of tuberculosis, from 5.5 per 100,000 in 1990 to 15.3 per 100,000 in 1994. Medication shortages were associated with a 48 percent increase in tuberculosis deaths from 1992 to 1993. From 1989 to 1993, these conditions were also associated with a 67 percent increase in deaths due to infections and parasitic diseases and a 77 percent increase in deaths due to influenza and pneumonia.

3. Education

The Cuban school and higher education curricula are completely politicized. Mathematics, for example is taught by solving problems related to such things as how many guns are needed to defeat counterrevolutionaries. Professionals such as lawyers are trained to function as servants of the regime rather than as ethically independent practitioners. Educators as well as students are required to be state informants. Individuals are not allowed to finish school or enter postsecondary training or education programs unless they are deemed politically acceptable, have demonstrated loyalty to the Castro regime, and have actively participated in required organizations and labor activities.

The state of the educational physical plant is deteriorating due to the collapsing economy, the age of the facilities, and the poor management of available resources. Many facilities dating from before 1958 are in poor shape, especially those in rural areas, particularly in the east of the island. Formerly private and church schools seized by the regime have deteriorated out of neglect.

School and university textbooks and library materials are written and produced by the regime, and the content is suspect in all but the most advanced technical and scientific fields. Access to imported materials is severely restricted, and many books and journals are outdated by the time anyone is allowed to use them.

The educational system has also suffered the loss of hundreds of qualified teachers because of poor pay (the equivalent of less than \$10 a month). Many teachers have left the system to work in tourism. Elementary and early childhood education has been especially hard hit due to both teacher attrition and the relatively low priority placed on these areas by the state. The staffing situation is now such that the regime has instituted programs of training “courageous ones,” secondary teachers who will teach every subject except English and physical education, and crash courses to train secondary students to teach in primary schools.

School completion is also affected by economic problems. Students increasingly see the earning potential of the black market and even menial jobs in the dollar-based tourist industry as incentives to drop out of school. Only about five percent of Cuban school graduates now go on to higher education. Vocational education and training suffers from lack of resources, modern programs, incentives to stay in school, and the traditional low prestige of studying occupational subjects as opposed to academic subjects.

4. Current International Assistance to the Castro Regime

According to information provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), total foreign aid from official sources to all sectors of the Cuban government in 2003 was estimated at \$106.6 million. This includes \$33.6 million in multilateral aid through the United Nations, \$6.37 million from the European Union, \$5.8 million from the OPEC fund, and the remaining amount (in millions of dollars) from bilateral donors including Spain (Central Government and Basque Regional Government), Japan, Canada, China, France, Kuwait, Sweden, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, and Brazil. In addition, Venezuela provides Cuba up to 82,000 barrels of petroleum per day under concessionary financing.

In July 2003, Fidel Castro announced Cuba would no longer accept “scraps of aid” from the European Union (EU). The following month, Cuban authorities informed the EU delegation in Havana of its plan to cancel 22 cooperative projects managed by the EU and other European countries. This came after the EU censured the sentencing of 75 Cuban dissidents to an average of 28 years in prison after mock trials, and the execution of three Afro-Cubans who hijacked a ferry in an attempt to flee the island.

5. Traditional Coping Mechanisms of the Cuban People

Cubans have long used five coping mechanisms to survive:

- Remittances from relatives living abroad;
- Return to rural areas to grow food;
- Humanitarian aid;
- Tourism; and
- The informal sector.

The weakness of these coping mechanisms is that a great portion of the population does not have access to them; this gap combined with high unemployment has meant that a sizeable portion of the population has suffered great deprivation. It is likely that much of this distressed population is in urban areas where there is little tourism. Evidence for this distress may be found in the decline of caloric intake to the lowest per capita level in Latin America as of 1995. According to the UN Statistical Yearbook (2000), Cubans now have less access to cereals, tubers and meats than they had in the late 1940's.

Officially reported ration levels are likely not distributed evenly among all classes of the population given the tendency of Marxist societies to distribute food and medicine based on bureaucratic rank — the more important you are to the survival of the state apparatus the higher your ration.

Thus, it is likely that the official food distribution system is no longer a main source of food for the Cuban poor who increasingly survive through the informal sector, or that there is widespread acute malnutrition, or both. A well designed humanitarian aid program should be targeted on this distressed population of urban poor for whom these coping mechanisms are not available, who are suffering disproportionate deprivation from the economic collapse, and whose precarious livelihoods may be endangered by disruptions during the transition.

6. The Link Between Coping Mechanisms and Relief Operations

At the heart of all humanitarian relief strategies lie two priorities: saving lives and reducing human suffering. While relief commodities can supplement a humanitarian relief effort, it is the immediate rehabilitation programs that yield the greatest and most productive results in making people self-sufficient.

The two essential missions — saving lives and reducing suffering — need to form the basis of the work done by and through UN agencies, the Red Cross, non-governmental organizations, and donor aid agencies such as USAID. An implied part of these two imperatives is the notion that humanitarian assistance should stabilize people's condition, at a minimum, so their situation does not worsen through unintended consequences or inadvertently flawed programming. The more chaotic conditions become, the more likely it will be that the rule of unintended consequences will apply and that humanitarian relief programming will get drawn into the chaos or even exacerbate it if not properly designed.

B. Developing a Transition Assistance Plan⁹

How the transition in Cuba proceeds will profoundly affect the nature of the humanitarian response. Humanitarian relief managers, as a professional principle, plan for the worst and hope for the best.

1. Humanitarian Aid Objectives

The adoption of the following objectives depends on the political situation, the nature and assistance requests of the transition government, and the diplomatic objectives of donor governments.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *A set of basic objectives should be considered in the case of short-term assistance to a free Cuba, and should include:*
 - *Supporting the democratic transition by having relief organizations work closely with ministries in the transition government, so that the public credits the new government with the improvement in living conditions rather than international groups;*
 - *Encouraging building civil society and democratic pluralism by having relief organizations work with emerging local institutions such as churches to administer the relief effort. This joint work should be designed to build local capacity and institutional strength in running programs;*

⁹ Based on the article "Humanitarian Assistance during a Democratic Transition in Cuba," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, volume 34, number 4 (Winter) 2000, written by Andrew S. Natsios.

- *Preparing for long-term development by creatively designing short-term relief programs to serve both purposes simultaneously. This is called the relief-to-development continuum where the humanitarian aid programs are designed to encourage long-term development. For example, seed programs to increase food production over the short-term on an emergency basis could be used to introduce new seed varieties (after they have been locally tested for appropriateness), improved cropping techniques could increase yields, and better storage of the harvest and marketing of produce could increase general availability of food; and*
- *If the transition government is contending for permanent status in an election campaign against other legitimate democratic parties, then the humanitarian relief program should attempt to remain neutral in the campaign by distancing itself from any political party including the incumbent government.*

C. Humanitarian Assessment and Program Design

1. Conduct a Needs Assessment at the Outset of Transition

We will not know for certain what the needs are in Cuba until a humanitarian assessment can be done by an objective outside agency, given that reports from the current Cuban government are politicized. If requested, this assessment can be done by the United States Government through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) within USAID using a standard format widely accepted among humanitarian agencies. UN agencies or the Red Cross movement could also do such an assessment.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Given the importance of being as prepared as possible to respond rapidly to changes on the island, the OFDA should conduct a needs assessment, based on the information currently available, to:*
 - *determine the food supply situation;*
 - *assess the nutritional status of children;*
 - *examine and report on housing and other shelter;*

- *examine and report on transportation and communications;*
- *assess agricultural production;*
- *assess water quality and supply;*
- *evaluate sanitation conditions and identify hazardous environmental sites;*
- *evaluate the true state of local medical care and facilities;*
- *make a preliminary report on school conditions and resources;*
- *assess the microeconomic situation in Cuba; and*
- *recommend programmatic measures to address the findings.*

Accepting media accounts or reports from non-technical people on these conditions is usually a short route to serious trouble: the wrong medicines, the wrong tonnage and kind of food, and the wrong economic remedies are frequently ordered by people who accept uncritically what they see or hear. This assessment of the microeconomic situation will be of central importance, particularly in the case of Cuba because its economy has been so distorted by Marxist ideology for so long. The microeconomic study will explain the cause of malnutrition or starvation, the relationship of family income to food prices, how expensive food is in local markets, whether famine conditions are developing, the robustness of markets in various regions of the country, any impediments to the development of more efficient markets, and whether localized political tensions or conflicts are rooted in economics.

D. Challenges in Providing Humanitarian Aid

The challenges to the proper design and successful implementation of the program will be substantial. Some of the issues are predictable.

1. International humanitarian agencies have developed a set of standards for working in complex emergencies called the “Code of Conduct,” which has sought to correct problems uncovered in previous relief efforts.

It is essential that all aid groups be familiar with the “Code of Conduct” and the established international standards that have been developed for working in

complex emergencies. One way to facilitate this process could be through the establishment of a “Foundation for Assistance to a Free Cuba,” referred to earlier in this Chapter.

2. The old order will not relinquish power willingly and will try to subvert or corrupt the transition process to enrich itself and maintain its influence.

In other post-communist countries, the party cadres have used their inside understanding of bureaucratic offices, their old boy network of connections within the party, their superior education, and any money they had amassed under the old regime to put themselves in a commanding position to disrupt the transition or for personal gain. They will likely see the resources represented in the aid effort as a source of wealth from which they may further enrich themselves.

Following the collapse of other communist regimes, members of internal security apparatus privatized themselves and formed organized criminal syndicates to feed off legitimate new businesses and the humanitarian aid agencies. They did this through protection rackets, threats of violence against aid agencies, raking off rent and equipment, and other schemes. It is possible that a similar phenomenon could appear in Cuba, as the old order seeks to protect its privileges, unless an organized effort is made to protect the aid agencies doing the humanitarian response.

3. A very large number of aid agencies will likely want to participate in the humanitarian aid response in Cuba because of its visibility within the United States and the public demand for action.

These efforts must be coordinated. Directing and managing the response of humanitarian agencies to the Cuban transition will not be easy: reducing overlapping aid agencies’ sectoral and geographic jurisdiction, managing the inevitable competition for aid resources and media coverage, and coordinating programmatic conflict among agencies will be a major undertaking. A large number of diverse, eager assistance donors is yet another reason to establish a coordinating committee.

4. The participation of people at the neighborhood level in making decisions about the aid effort in their communities is desirable and will provide a critical opportunity to build civil society, help develop local institutions, and nurture the democratic values needed to build self-government.

Because Cuba has not functioned under a stable democratic system within the living memory of most people in the country, we cannot expect democratic values and decision-making processes to be readily understood. The transformation of values will be rocky but important to encourage.

E. Implementing Short-Term Assistance

The architecture of the international humanitarian response system that has developed in the post-cold war period to respond to emergencies similar to the one expected in Cuba is highly diffuse, decentralized, extraordinarily complex, and full of internal tension.

1. Key Non-governmental Organizations

The architecture of the system includes NGOs, which are the front line distributors of aid and managers of local aid programs. While there are perhaps 400 NGOs registered with USAID, only 150 of them are members of the NGO trade association called InterAction, and of these, only 40 to 50 do humanitarian relief programming (the rest are focused entirely on long-term development). Of these 40 to 50 NGOs, only 20 to 25 run large enough programs, possess the technical proficiency and resources, and have sufficient staff to have a serious impact in Cuba.

The qualified NGOs have developed, through past experience as well as their own internal strategic planning, certain sectoral expertise in areas such as public health, medicine, agriculture, and food aid. Many of these 20 to 25 NGOs have been informally meeting within the InterAction umbrella for the past three years to coordinate their ongoing work in Cuba. Those NGOs with a presence in Cuba now have a comparative advantage over those who enter the country for the first time during a democratic transition. They know the local elite, for better or worse, the operation of the local markets, agricultural conditions, medical facilities, and have a staff of some kind in place. Groups that are not established parts of the humanitarian assistance architecture may want to consider coming together to create an umbrella foundation that could work with other donors and to funnel assistance.

One major benefit of NGOs, beyond their experience in emergency response and technical field expertise, is their grassroots network within American society that can mobilize public support among their contributors for an aid effort in an emergency. NGOs have been increasing their presence on the ground in Cuba

gradually, as the economic deterioration has grown more severe. Because they are constrained by the Cuban government from developing indigenous, grassroots organizational structures, NGOs do not have the same ground presence they might have in other countries.

2. International Organizations

Four UN agencies have the operational and legal mandates under the UN Charter to do humanitarian relief work: the World Food Program (providing food aid and food for work projects), UNICEF (addressing the long-term needs of developing countries), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (providing international protection for refugees), and the UN Development Program (providing long-term development). One UN secretariat level agency, the Office of the Coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), has the mandate to coordinate the emergency response for UN agencies and NGOs. The new High Commissioner for Human Rights has been given the mandate to monitor and protect against human rights abuses.

3. Key U.S. Federal Agencies

The bulk of recent funding for assistance that moves through the international relief aid system has come from two sources: the U.S. Government, through USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food for Peace; and the European Union's European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). When there are refugee emergencies, the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration is crucial to the response.

F. Food Aid for Cuba in the Short Term

There are a number of different food security scenarios that could confront a transition government in Cuba. For instance, the domestic Cuban food supply, transportation, infrastructure, and the storage base could be disrupted by turmoil that could follow a vacuum of authority. The U.S. Government and private organizations have determined that there may very well exist a severe case of malnutrition and lack of available supply and money to feed the Cuban people, or sectors of the Cuban people, to avoid massive sickness and disease.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The U.S. Department of Agriculture has food aid authorities that could be used to address any of the potential food security scenarios listed above and others:*
 - *Food for Progress is a grant program that can provide any U.S. food commodity to governments, private voluntary organizations, or the World Food Program. While the program is not large, if Cuban food needs are determined to be a priority, an estimated 100,000 tons of food could be quickly purchased and shipped to Cuba. Likely commodities would be rice, beans, vegetable oil, and wheat or flour if needed;*
 - *Section 416(b) is a USAID grant program that could provide nonfat dry milk that could be distributed directly to people or used in processing. If distributed for direct feeding, it would be best to do so through institutions — schools, hospitals, orphanages — and probably through a private voluntary organization or the World Food Program; and*
 - *These programs could be implemented to provide an immediate response to a dire food aid situation as well as serve as a first step for additional U.S. Government and international food aid responses.*

G. Action Plan

We have learned enough from other humanitarian emergencies to begin planning for a transition in Cuba.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Prior to the transition, establish a coordinating committee for government and international intervention and assistance and a parallel committee for NGO assistance. Planning and coordination will be critical for an efficient and rapid response. These mechanisms will help ensure that the diversity of donors can be managed and that Cuban conditions and problems can be addressed as they appear.*
- *Encourage existing Cuban-American charities, which will likely wish to participate in a humanitarian response, to become members of InterAction, the NGO trade association, to become registered with USAID, and to learn USAID*

grant-making processes and InterAction governance and programming standards.

- *Encourage charities, particularly those without field experience, to create a joint assistance foundation, the “Foundation for Assistance to a Free Cuba,” to provide resources through established channels and begin collaborative programming efforts with established NGOs in Central American or Caribbean countries, including the coordinating committee.*
- *Prepare to conduct a hands-on needs assessment as soon as possible, to provide objective data and professional observations. Terms and conditions could be developed now for four tracking systems, two in food and two in public health. These should include nutritional surveys of children under five, morbidity and mortality tracking, food market surveys of prices, and household surveys of family food stocks. Data from these surveys are crucial in predicting crises before they occur, determining whether aid programs are reaching the needy population, and where aid should be targeted. Procedures for assessing infrastructure, housing, education, agriculture (from field to market), food distribution systems, plant and animal health, and the microeconomy should also be planned.*
- *A plan should be developed for the immediate immunization for the major childhood diseases of all children under five who have not been already immunized under the existing health system. Should the food security system in Cuba deteriorate and malnutrition rates rise, children under five will be at particular risk.*
 - *The reported high level of immunization coverage in Cuba should be surveyed, as the quality control in the production of these immunizations may be weak. This will reduce the mortality rates among children under five who are always the most vulnerable in any food emergency.*
 - *The well-established primary and secondary school system could be used to provide the nutritional supplements to children to maintain an adequate diet until the new government can create its own public health system.*
- *Work with Cuban churches and their external supporting church institutions to use local religious networks and structures to assist with humanitarian relief. If the transition of previous communist societies is any indication of what will happen in Cuba, the churches will grow rapidly.*

- *The church's established grassroots organizations and volunteer networks could be used together with NGO counterparts as mechanisms for the provision of humanitarian assistance if careful accountability systems are set up to ensure proper targeting of need and control over relief commodities.*
- *While official U.S. Government funding cannot be used to build or support churches, these grassroots institutions can be a stabilizing force during the stresses of a transition and an important force in longer-term development of civil society to guard against the return of totalitarianism.*
- *Prepare to respond positively to a request from a transition government to assist with public security and law enforcement during the initial stages of transition, to protect both humanitarian assistance providers and the Cuban population.*
- *Be prepared, if asked by the transition government, to commission appropriate NGOs to manage large-scale public works projects using local Cuban day labor to provide immediate jobs to ensure minimal income for families that are most at risk during the economic transition and to help with the relief and reconstruction efforts. Such public works projects could be centered, for example, on the rehabilitation of the road system*
- *Prepare to respond positively to a request from transition authorities to help keep schools open, even if teachers are paid with food aid or volunteers have to be temporarily imported, in order to keep children and teenagers off the streets during this potentially unstable period. School attendance can keep teenagers from becoming involved in street crimes, and restore a degree of normalcy to home life. While support for schools is not typically seen as a humanitarian relief program, schools can have an ameliorative affect on the social order during a time of high stress.*
- *Prepare to provide short-term food aid via existing U.S. emergency programs, augmented by cooperation with international organizations, private donors, and other countries*
- *Be prepared to propose a food aid monetization program to merchants, to maintain the price of food at a reasonable level.*

- *U.S. agencies should seek to form a coordination unit with NGOs, the Red Cross movement, and UN agencies operating in Cuba to deal with the transition government as a single humanitarian voice. Studies of coordination mechanisms in other emergencies have found that the most effective system is for the indigenous government to demand a single point of contact.*
- *Recommend that the transition government request that such a coordination mechanism set up and that all humanitarian agencies join this unit and work through it with the transition government agencies.*
- *Use the humanitarian aid program to encourage the democratic transition. Experts on democratization argue that the democratic process is best taught through local government.*
 - *USAID could encourage NGOs that specialize in democratization programming to develop a joint program with humanitarian relief NGOs to set up local mechanisms for the public at the town and neighborhood level to participate in making important decisions in the relief program.*

IV. MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM ACTIONS

A. Health

The Cuban health system of socialized medicine was designed for the population to receive free preventive, curative, and rehabilitation care, including primary care, routine medical attention, dentistry, and hospital care requiring advanced medical technology. Cuba's state-operated medical system started to decline when Soviet subsidies ended in 1989. Cuba is now faced with shortages of equipment, medical supplies and medication. Although the problem is not as severe as in other Caribbean nations, Cuba has an unquantified HIV/AIDS problem, fueled by the regime's tacit acceptance of prostitution.

The physical, mental, and emotional health of the Cuban people is directly linked to their level of empowerment. Healthy individuals are better able to make informed decisions about their own well-being and that of their community. This ability to be involved in the decision-making process leads, in and of itself, to a sense of empowerment.

The Cuban people will likely expect a new government to place an emphasis on public health. With the proper equipment and supplies, Cuban physicians and

other health care professionals will be able to practice medicine to an even higher standard. This will lead to a healthier population that will want to be involved in all areas affecting their lives.

1. Public Health Infrastructure: Ensuring Adequate Systems and Resources

It will be important, if asked by the transition government, to provide adequate epidemiological data and other health unit assistance. Cuban health care units integrate the monitoring, epidemiological surveys, and evaluation of the health care system. Such units also conduct rapid assessments and epidemiological investigations. Good epidemiological data will be necessary to determine where needs exist for short-term interventions and long-term plans in the health sector. UN agencies, along with the World Health Organization/PAHO, already have a presence in Cuba. Several NGOs in New York and Florida may also be able to provide technical assistance to Cuba.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *U.S. Government agencies, along with other partners, could work with Cuban epidemiologists by providing technical assistance, training, and equipment needed to update the national surveillance system.*
- *Exchange opportunities, including organized visits to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), could be arranged for Cuban epidemiologists in order to receive training and instruction in the latest means of collecting and evaluating data.*
- *The calibration and measurement traceability for existing medical equipment and laboratory equipment could be provided organized as well.*

2. State of Health Care Delivery: Ensuring Adequate Systems and Resources

i. Acute Care

Cuba has by all accounts enough hospitals and hospital beds; however, the physical structure of these buildings is often in disrepair and unsafe. There is some question as to whether Cuba, in fact, has a surplus of secondary and tertiary health care facilities. Cuba also produces a surplus of medical professionals. There is no private health care, either in terms of insurance or providers. Sanitation is a concern in health care facilities and hospitals. Medical and surgical supplies,

furniture, equipment, and medications (inpatient and outpatient prescribed and over-the-counter) are in short supply.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *U.S. Government agencies and international partners could evaluate hospitals. Although supposedly more than enough hospitals exist, there may be a need for improved safety of the physical structures and improved sanitation.*
- *A “twinning program” could be established between Cuban and U.S. hospitals and/or Cuban provincial and U.S. county health departments to help improve Cuban practices and offer professional assistance.*
- *Cuban pharmacists, who may have been underutilized in the past, may be using a wide variety of medications. They may need additional and up-to-date training, which could be provided via U.S. and other pharmaceutical agencies and exchange programs.*
- *Many Caribbean nations and universities have outstanding medical facilities and programs, and may be able to assist in continuing medical education for Cuban healthcare professionals.*

ii. Primary Care

Family doctors in Cuba, who number some 28,500, provide the vast majority of primary care coverage. There is a surplus of physicians, to the point that the Castro regime exports doctors as part of subsidized programs in the developing world. Cuba’s primary care and preventive medicine systems are faced with shortages of medicines and supplies even though Cuba has an established pharmaceutical industry. Primary care is also hampered by a poor transportation infrastructure, especially outside major urban centers. There are several avenues for assistance to Cuban health authorities in improving primary care services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *U.S. Government agencies and international partners could evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the Cuban healthcare system, and help determine the need for restructuring and/or modernization.*

- *Encourage institutions in the U.S. and other countries to offer scholarships and fellowships to improve professional training.*
- *Encourage NGOs, Caribbean universities, and private institutions to work with Cuban healthcare providers to address needs identified by Cuban authorities.*

iii. Elder Primary Care Services

Older people present a potentially vulnerable population in Cuba. Fourteen percent of Cuba's population is 60 and over. According to a just released joint MERCK/PAHO report, in the next 20 years Cuba will have more people over 60 than under 15. By 2025, over ten percent will be over 80.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *It might be useful to evaluate the quality of eldercare in Cuba. At present, there are 190 homes for the elderly on the island. Usually the residents of Cuban nursing homes have no extended family. With an aging population, surveillance studies could help prepare for immediate and future needs.*
- *It would be useful to evaluate older people's specific health needs for short- and long-term planning. The present and future older population will require medical services tailored to their needs. According to HelpAge International, most NGOs emphasize primary healthcare programs that neglect older people. Emergency food and nutrition programs are seldom adjusted to their needs and there is a tendency to overlook supplementary food programs for them. Reduced mobility, combined with distances to centralized health systems and water-points, can create significant barriers to older people's access to health services.*
- *Initial efforts might include surveying the acute and chronic health care needs of older people both in the cities and rural areas. PAHO has done some initial work in its SABE study and could continue to be involved. At risk older persons need to be identified.*
- *Systems could be put in place to ensure that older Cubans receive adequate medical treatment, especially for chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and the need for assistive devices. HHS has the expertise to offer technical assistance in establishing elder care programs. Care of the elderly involves communities, families, and NGO's.*

- *The nutritional situation of the Cuban elderly, reported as severe, could pose a challenge during any transition. In the initial stages, nutritional screening and comprehensive health assessments could be made to prevent malnutrition and severe medical crises.*
- *Nutritional support programs should be mobilized from the world community including U.S. Government agencies, other governments and governmental agencies, faith-based organizations, humanitarian organizations, and UN organizations.*

3. HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care

Cuba currently reports a low prevalence of HIV infection but is at high risk for a rapid spread of the epidemic. Men who have sex with other men represent 85 percent of infected men. They and people practicing commercial sex are the most vulnerable groups for HIV infection. There has now been an increase in the transmission of HIV in the heterosexual population. It is estimated for every case diagnosed there is one case that is not diagnosed. Although the rates are low, it is important that during the transition the prevention message and treatment continue.

i. Changing the Sanitarium Policy

From the onset of the HIV/AIDS pandemic until 1993, the Castro regime forcibly isolated HIV/AIDS patients in state sanitariums. Since 1993, the regime has not required that HIV positive people live in sanitariums indefinitely. Newly diagnosed patients are required to spend eight weeks in a sanitarium completing courses on how to live with the virus, how to avoid transmitting it to others, the importance of follow-up treatment, and how to handle discrimination. Forty-eight percent of HIV positive Cubans live in these sanitariums. Many of these patients are rejected by their families and are the target of widespread discrimination, and thus choose to remain in the facilities.

ii. International Collaboration

It will be important to coordinate with the Global Fund for AIDS, TB, and Malaria (GFATM), which has given funding to Cuba for the prevention of HIV and treatment and care of people living with HIV.

iii. Combating Prostitution and Irresponsible Sexual Activity

Prostitution and child prostitution and exploitation are already a significant problem in Cuba due to increased tourism. Youth often become sexually active due to the absence of support systems and increased unemployment that may occur with changes in established systems. During the transition, the message of prevention can be disseminated through many means, including schools, churches, printed material, television and radio, and peer education. Along with the prevention message, child prostitutes may need additional intervention with psychological issues. The GFATM has also given funding to Cuba for this prevention activity. Several Caribbean countries have very good programs and could share their experiences.

iv. Workplace HIV/AIDS Prevention

Although the reported incidence of HIV/AIDS in Cuba is relatively low, the growing rate of infection in the heterosexual population and the lack of awareness by many people who carry the virus create conditions in which the disease could rapidly spread. Any spread of HIV/AIDS could have a devastating impact in the workplace and the economy by causing declines in output and productivity; losses of income and available labor; and higher health and labor costs related to sick leave, absenteeism, medical insurance, replacement and training, death-related costs, and shortage of skilled labor. The stigma attached to HIV/AIDS can also be particularly onerous in the workplace, making those who carry the virus subject to severe employment discrimination. On the prevention side, the potential impact of HIV/AIDS in the workplace makes it a powerful forum for raising awareness and attacking the spread of the disease.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Encourage evaluation of sanitariums for quality of care and treatment. If patients are truly voluntary residents, suggest discussions with Cuban healthcare providers as to whether these institutions should continue.*
- *During the government transition, there may be a need for temporary facilities in communities and prisons where patients receiving antiretrovirals can continue receiving their medications. Non-compliance with medications can interfere with the efficacy of the treatment and increase the risk of resistant strains of HIV. USAID and HHS could coordinate this activity with Cuban physicians.*

- *U.S. Government agencies should coordinate their efforts with the GFATM.*
- *It will be important to continue HIV prevention messages. HHS, USAID, and the Peace Corps could give technical assistance in this regard and in establishing prevention programs.*
- *In cooperation with transition authorities, Cuban employers, the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Academy for Educational Development, free Cuban trade unions, and Cuban health and education authorities, the U.S. Department of Labor could help to design and implement a workplace program to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, enhance workplace protections, and reduce the disease's adverse consequences for social, labor, and economic development. Such a program could strengthen Cuba's capacity deal with HIV/AIDS through some or all of the following activities:*
 - *Assisting the review and revision of existing policy and legislation related to HIV/AIDS;*
 - *Collecting and analyzing data and best practices on HIV prevention and care;*
 - *Developing comprehensive workplace-based prevention and education programs;*
 - *Promoting and facilitating employer and employee interest in such programs;*
 - *Developing and disseminating informational and instructional materials;*
 - *Training outreach workers, instructors, and volunteers; and*
 - *Fostering linkages with relevant HIV/AIDS programs in other countries.*

4. Care for Prisoners

According to estimates, the Castro regime holds more than 100,000 prisoners, or 900 inmates for every 100,000 people, in some 200 labor camps and prisons. At least 300 members of the total prison population are documented political detainees. It is possible that the total number of prisoners detained on various questionable charges is actually higher. The high number of prisoners, one

of the world's highest rates of incarceration, is reflective of both the communist dictatorship's control practices and the high real crime rate that is the result of the post-Soviet economic decline and the regime-induced breakdown of family structures. By all accounts, prison and camp conditions are extremely poor and inmates are frequently denied proper medical care, external contact, and other services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Offer to assist health and security authorities to survey the prison population, assessing living conditions and immediate health needs as well as their legal status.*
- *Be prepared to assist in providing treatment for inmates whose detention is in violation of human rights laws, who may need treatment for medical conditions as well as counseling and assistance to help them reunite with their families and regain their occupational status and civil rights.*
- *Be prepared to assist in providing all inmates proper health services, counseling, educational opportunities, and legal services so that they can eventually re-enter society as free and potentially productive citizens.*

5. Improving Biomedical and Behavioral Sciences Research

Cuba shares common health problems with the U.S. and other regional partners. Similar interests exist across a broad spectrum of priority health concerns, including HIV/AIDS, dengue, and other infectious diseases; cardiovascular disease; hypertension; diabetes; nutritional disorders; cancer; and chronic pulmonary diseases, including asthma.

Four initiatives could be undertaken by HHS/NIH, in the short-, medium-, or long-term to help build new or strengthen capacities to help address priority health concerns:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Development of research collaborations and consultations focused on health problems that represent a high burden in Cuba and throughout the region could lead to projects of benefit to the Cuban people and the global community. Workshops, conferences, and scientific meetings, small or large scale, and*

could include PAHO, U.S. universities, the private sector, HHS/CDC, and other relevant U.S. Government agencies, and NGOs.

- *HHS could open more broadly its current training programs at HHS/NIH laboratory facilities in Bethesda, Maryland, to Cuban scientists and researchers, as well as its research training programs administered through U.S. universities. These programs cover a broad array of research interests, including HIV/AIDS, emerging infectious diseases, environmental health, and population and health. In addition, expanded efforts to support a return home after U.S.-based training could be considered.*
- *Through a new travel award program, HHS could invite and support travel of Cuban scientists to international consultations on health research issues, or to attend state-of-the-art clinical and scientific conferences held in the U.S. These could include professional society meetings such as the annual meetings of the Infectious Diseases Society, the American Society for Tropical Medicine, American Pediatric Society, and Society for Neuroscience, American Association of Immunologists, and others. Individual research projects would be facilitated through personal contacts.*
- *HHS/NIH could support grant-writing workshops as a means of building Cuban expertise.*

6. Mental Health Services

During the transition, the mental and emotional health of the Cuban people will be subjected to increased stress. Significant events and changes, whether positive or negative, can disrupt daily lives. Emotional stress is most often seen fairly early. It is important that healthcare professionals — including physicians, mental healthcare workers, and other counselors such as qualified clergy — be prepared to deal with this possibility.

i. Community-based Intervention

Initially, the community and community leaders, faith-based organizations, schools, and other civic institutions might benefit from some basic training in community-based interventions to restore a sense of wellness and hope to the general public. Humanitarian organizations and organizations that are trained in these situations can provide crisis intervention as needed.

ii. Mental Health Education

Similarly, mental health professionals may benefit from continuing medical education in the use of the new medications for various psychiatric diagnoses. This can be accomplished through exchange programs with partner countries.

iii. Evaluation of Patients in Mental Institutions

Evaluation of patients in Cuban mental institutions could be done fairly quickly. There are suggestions that the regime has used psychiatric and mental health facilities as instruments of repression and intimidation. The incarcerated population may also need a rapid mental health assessment since many may be political prisoners.

iv. Evaluation of the Elderly

Older people are often overlooked in times of emergency. The feelings of loss, trauma, confusion, and fear familiar to all people in emergencies can be more damaging for older people. They may need special support to recover emotionally and find new roles. Elderly people's chronic health, mobility, and mental-health problems are not a priority for aid agencies in most emergencies.

Relief efforts could include sensitizing and training community mental health professionals to the special needs of older Cubans who may have an especially difficult time dealing with changes and losses. Older Cubans could be provided with crisis intervention, counseling, and information. Outreach efforts to older Cubans could be made, as they may not reach out for services. These efforts could involve organizations such as the American Red Cross, HelpAge International, and Little Havana Activities & Nutrition Center of Dade County, Inc.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *U.S. agencies could develop a toolkit for community workers on health promotion that stresses prevention, self-efficacy, and rebuilding trust in each other and the government.*
- *HHS and USAID could work with Cuban mental health professionals to determine how to best rapidly evaluate and decide if urgent intervention is needed for a patient.*

- *U.S. agencies could assist in evaluating patients in Cuban mental institutions.*
- *U.S. programs such as HelpAge International could provide elder health care advice and assistance.*
- *HHS's Administration on Aging and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) could facilitate outreach efforts to older Cubans.*

7. Drug Use and Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Treatment

Cuba is a proven trafficking point for drugs and possesses its own drug problems. With the possible stresses on individuals during the transition there may be an increase in drug use, including alcohol. There are several U.S. and international sources of assistance that could help address these challenges. A great deal of data and written material in many languages can be translated into Spanish. For example, existing health professions training in Spanish developed by SAMHSA could be provided in the early stages of transition, on issues such as screening mechanisms within primary care settings for identifying addictive disorders, co-occurring mental health problems, and traumatic stress. Moreover, in Puerto Rico, the Addiction Technology Transfer Center is an immediate resource that can be tapped as a vehicle to establish host country links and to coordinate addiction training and treatment programs with other NGOs and international relief agencies. There may need to be Cuba-specific research and data on drug use and effective treatment methods. Drug use and addiction are public health problems, which are best dealt with by public health approaches — prevention, early intervention, and treatment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Be prepared to conduct an evaluation, if necessary, to determine if current regime claims that intravenous drug use is not a problem in Cuba, and to identify the “drug of choice” of the Cuban population. Data may be needed to formulate the best prevention message.*
- *In the initial stages of Cuban freedom, Spanish-language educational materials on prevention from the United States could be reprinted and shared with Cuba. Prevention messages to children should include the dangers of tobacco and alcohol.*

- *As U.S. companies begin operations in Cuba they should be encouraged to adopt drug-testing policies, especially those companies with sensitive positions such as transportation providers. SAMHSA could serve as a resource on drug testing in the government workforce.*
- *Make provisions for continuing medical education through U.S. institutions and the universities in the Caribbean. Primary care health professionals could be trained and prepared to identify and intervene in cases of suspected or reported drug abuse.*
- *The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences and Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools can contribute to research, dissemination, and educational efforts in Cuba.*
- *HHS's National Institute on Drug Abuse could help establish a research infrastructure. Surveys and data reporting may have to take place in person, as the infrastructure in Cuba will not immediately support polling by mail or telephone. Sources of information include the general public, schools, criminal law enforcement, employers, and medical professionals.*

B. Education and Culture

1. Overview

The current state of the Cuban education system may be summarized by a statement from Cuban scholar Graciella Cruz-Taura in a report to the University of Miami's Cuban Transition Project:

Most assessments of the state of Cuban education continue to conclude that Cuba is an indebted, poor country with a highly educated population that is particularly well trained in the exact and military sciences. One decade after the collapse of the Soviet world, the Cuban educational system is besieged by diminishing resources, ideological ambiguity, and labor demands unable to accommodate the scientifically trained graduates the Revolution had showcased as one of its major accomplishments and as the cornerstone of its legitimacy. It was a system designed to service Marxist-Leninist ideology and the one-party state. If Cuba is going to make a peaceful transition into an age of globalization and post-communism, this philosophy of

education must be reversed to one that will legitimately and effectively service the individual.¹⁰

Implementing the change proposed by Cruz-Taura and other experts likely will require actions focused on renewing a participatory civic culture that supports free enterprise, the rule of law, and personal accountability; promotes alternative solutions to problems, including those solutions provided by public, private, and faith-based entities; encourages high standards for students and educators; and introduces new governance models that encourage parental and community involvement and devolve significant responsibilities to local and institutional leadership. The aims of education and training at all levels could be to reinforce democracy and produce the knowledge and skills needed to allow Cubans to be successful in the global economy.

This section is divided into three parts: recommendations that apply to the whole Cuban education system; recommendations specific to particular levels and types of education; and recommendations for the related areas of cultural preservation and exchange.

2. Assistance for System-wide Reform of Cuban Education

i. Reintroducing Democratic Values Through Education

A Cuban transitional government, together with assisting governments, international organizations, and private donors, may want to complete a comprehensive review and needs assessment regarding system reform, priorities for action, and available resources. We have identified certain issues as basic to long-term reform and critical at all levels of the education system.

a. Civil Rights and Equal Access to Educational Opportunity

A democratic Cuba likely will operate a free public education system that is open to all parents who choose to enroll their children in it, and will permit and recognize private and church-related schools and allow parents the option of using them. Access to postsecondary education, both vocational and academic, likely will be encouraged for all qualified graduates of secondary schools, and the higher education system should be open to public, private, and church-related institutions. Assistance to parents and adults in financing education likely will be made

¹⁰ Graciella Cruz-Taura, "Rehabilitating Cuban Education," 2002

available as resources permit and should be available to all who qualify for it. Cuba has a sad history of separating disabled citizens and denying them access to mainstream opportunities, as well as socioeconomic, racial-ethnic, and political discrimination. The new system likely will cease discriminatory practices that exist and avoid introducing new ones such as discrimination for reasons of political revenge or elitism. The United States could offer several forms of assistance, if asked, to help the transition government establish such a system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The U.S. Government could assist transition authorities assess areas of vulnerability in providing equal access to educational opportunity for all population groups regardless of racial/ethnic background, religious preference, gender, disability, legitimate political affiliation, or family history.*
- *The U.S. Government could provide technical assistance to Cuban policy makers in the development of laws and regulations that protect the educational rights of all individuals and groups. Experts from the U.S. could advise on this issue, as could agencies such as the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education.*
- *The U.S. Government could assist in putting in place a framework to ensure access to and training for the teaching profession without discrimination with regard to political, religious, or philosophical beliefs, race, ethnicity, family or social background, gender, or disability.*
- *The U.S. Government could assist in training Cuban print and broadcast journalists through educational programs at U.S. colleges and universities, professional exchange programs with U.S. media outlets, and professional mentoring relationships between Cuban and U.S. media professionals*

b. Education for a Culture of Democracy

A priority of the new Cuban education system may well be building a culture of shared democratic ideals and citizenship skills. This likely will require the removal and replacement of biased, ideological, and outdated instructional materials; the retraining of educators; a comprehensive civic education program involving schools, communities, churches, and the media; and curricula designed to address specific post-communist transition issues such as respect for law and trusting others, responsibility and accountability, participatory democracy, and entrepreneurship.

Once initial replacement of heavily politicized materials is complete, a transition government may want to introduce curriculum content in civic and democracy education and in character education programs that inculcate values at all levels by working with public education authorities and appropriate civil society groups, including those providing or sponsoring private education. Training and retraining educators likely will be an essential component, as will be the introduction of material on the new Cuban legal and political systems. Models for this civic curriculum could involve resources such as the Department of Education's *Civitas* Latin America program. In order to minimize resistance to the change, efforts should be made to identify educational texts and materials from other Spanish-speaking countries that could be used by Cuba.

Cubans at all education levels can benefit from education in the principles and values of free enterprise economics and the appropriate knowledge and skills for employment and advancement. This probably requires the modification of the curriculum at all levels, retraining of educators, and encouraging the nascent business community to engage in economics and business education in partnership with public and private educational providers.

Cubans will want to feel that the new system works for them, and they likely would benefit from informal advice, counseling, and networking in addition to more formal services. A useful part of the overall civic and economic education process can be to establish mentoring networks, via churches, business and professional associations, fraternal associations, and clubs to enable Cubans to build the contacts and obtain the advice that will be important as they navigate the new civil society, consider career options, seek to start businesses, or look for jobs or specific assistance. Organizations outside Cuba that have island connections, such as church groups, Freemasons, Rotary and other business clubs, and other private groups can be beneficial as mentoring partners to Cuban citizens of all ages, professions, and circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The U.S. Government should be prepared, if asked by the transition government, to assist in the following manner:*
 - *Introduce modern civic education curriculum concepts and practices (instruction) at all levels;*

- *Introduce modern instruction in economics and business;*
- *Expand and emphasize exchange opportunities, making them available to Cuban educators, students, community leaders, civic groups, and business entrepreneurs, including arrangements providing opportunities for two-way exchange of people and information (the U.S. Fulbright Exchange program and related programs can be of great assistance in this process); and*
- *Institute mentoring programs and partnerships.*

ii. Reforming Educational Governance

Cuba has always had a national education system overseen by an education ministry. The new Cuban government will determine what kind of governance structure is best for Cuba's future. Regardless, the extreme centralized control, security institutions, and opposition to private education that characterized the Castro regime will no doubt be modified or eliminated. Suggestions for how the U.S. Government could assist a transition change a free Cuban educational governance organization include the following.

a. Encourage Educational Diversity

Modern systems of education are increasingly diverse. Strong public education sectors are supplemented by private sectors that supply both general and specialized services to populations that choose them. Alternative approaches to education, such as distance learning, are becoming increasingly common and important as tools for both traditional and nontraditional providers. And the national system will be more responsive to Cubans and cost-effective if a mechanism is provided that permits public input as well as a measure of self-governance. The post-transition Cuban education system will be stronger and better able to serve all of the needs of the Cuban people and economy if it recognizes and encourages educational diversity.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The Offices of Non-Public Schools and Faith-Based Initiatives, U.S. Department of Education, could serve as facilitating agencies in ensuring that the system recognizes private as well as public educational providers, and could:*

- *Facilitate the development of private, including faith-based, education and training solutions where these can fill demand niches, improve quality, and provide services more efficiently than public institutions;*
- *Ascertain which of the religious groups that had schools in Cuba have plans to reopen their schools, such as the famous Colégio Belen Jesuit Preparatory School in Havana;*
- *Assist in consideration of changing laws and regulations to permit private providers to operate and offer a full range of services, from short courses to degree programs;*
- *Encourage Cuba's new education authorities to consider some degree of decentralization and self-governance, by considering national policies, laws, and regulations that permit local communities and parent organizations a voice in the operation of public schools;*
- *Likewise, they could be encouraged to allow public schools and postsecondary institutions a measure of self-governance, including the capacity to raise funds and accept gifts;*
- *Private schools, postsecondary institutions, and other providers could be allowed complete self-governing rights so long as adequate educational standards are maintained (the Inter-American System could coordinate governance reform assistance provided by Hemispheric partners consisting of law and education experts such as the Inter-American Justice Studies Center or other similar institutions); and*
- *The U.S. Department of Education could contribute research and assistance, in cooperation with USAID, in promoting new and non-traditional solutions. Cuban authorities could be encouraged to consider new solutions to the organization and delivery of education, such as the development of private and charter schools, distance education, and possibly the development of institutions similar to community colleges to help prepare youth and adults for careers or job changes.*

b. Education Statistics and Management Tools

As with other aspects of a transition, Cuba's education system can benefit from the establishment of a modern information system. This step will be

important in order to be able to make and implement good policy decisions and monitor progress over time. A transition government likely will want to ensure that data collection is regular and that all institutions, public and private, are held accountable for performance. This effort could make use of the Summit of the Americas Regional Indicators project and enlist the help of other countries. The National Center for Education Statistics can contribute expertise.

c. Parent, Employer, and Community Involvement

No matter how a free Cuba decides to organize the governance of education, it will be useful to be able to provide ways for the government and the schools to receive assistance from interested donors and to help build democracy through organic connections to the communities in which schools are located and which they serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The U.S. Government should be prepared to assist the transition government in doing the following:*
 - *Give parents and communities a supportive role in local education. By working with Cuban leaders and educators, and with advising governments and private organizations, to encourage the involvement of parents, the private sector, and community leaders in education through volunteering, participating in school governance, fundraising, equipment donations, and other forms of partnering. Peace Corps Volunteers could provide assistance to communities in this process.*
 - *Help to build viable stakeholder relations, by offering technical assistance and facilitation for the establishment of parent and community groups, including faith-based groups, and encouraging the establishment of business partnerships with schools and post-secondary institutions.*
 - *Help develop Cuba-specific parent toolkits and other aids to assist in developing research-based, user-friendly publications and other resources in Spanish and other languages for community, faith-based, and parent organizations, and design toolkits for parent and community group use. Possible topics include how to be involved in your child's education, tutoring and homework, keeping children safe and drug-free, and character education. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Intergovernmental*

and Interagency Affairs, Institute of Education Sciences, and Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools could provide assistance.

d. National Commission on Progress through Education

To promote national dialogue on school reform, the United States could assist a transition government in establishing a National Commission on Progress through Education, in association with Cuba's existing network of libraries. Each library could be designated as the organizing entity for a local "Progress through Education" dialogue. Community members in attendance could voice concerns and share ideas directly with officials from the new Ministry of Education. The dialogue could focus on particular themes, such as curriculum and teacher education. In addition to serving as a community needs assessment, such a process could help to establish ownership and empowerment in education reform and send the message that the government is dedicated to creating a system of education that is responsive to the needs of the people.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Assist a transition government establish a National Commission on Progress through Education, in association with Cuba's existing network of libraries.*

e. Community Education Boards

Working with a new Cuban Ministry of Education, community education boards could encourage local community participation in local school affairs by establishing an outreach program focused on community ownership and investment in schools. Building from the success of similar initiatives in the region, officials from the Inter-American system and the United States could work with the Cuban Ministry of Education, the Independent Libraries network, and other national stakeholders to establish local school community education boards. The specific functions of these boards would evolve as necessary, yet the two primary goals might be to (1) encourage support and accountability for education in the community by promoting the importance of quality education to a private sector, NGOs, and private agencies, and by demonstrating ways in which these entities can become involved in local schools; and (2) formally represent the needs of the community (teachers, students, and administrators alike) to the national government, and the private and non-profit sectors on an on-going basis.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Be prepared to work with the new Cuban Ministry of Education, the Independent Libraries network, and other national stakeholders to establish local school community education boards.*

f. Leadership Development

After a transition, a free Cuba will develop a new generation of educational and civic leaders even as it reorients current students, educators, and community leaders. These twin needs provide an opportunity to develop a cadre of potential leaders, experts, and researchers, who can assume positions of influence in academic, government, and nongovernmental sectors.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Through the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Partnerships for Learning program, a variety of educational, youth, cultural, and professional exchange programs can be employed to promote civil society, development of nongovernmental organizations, and good governance practices and linking of Cuban schools, students, and teachers with their U.S. counterparts.*
- *The U.S. Government should be prepared early in a transition to implement exchanges for the purposes of professional development.*

iii. High Standards for All

A free Cuba will likely seek to create an education system that is modern, flexible, and open. There are mechanisms for maintaining high standards that may have particular relevance for the transition process in Cuba and for the specific needs of the Cuban education system as it reforms itself.

a. Curricular Standards and Assessments

A new Cuba's educational leaders will likely revise the school curriculum to rid it of communist ideology and to update those portions that could not keep pace with international intellectual developments while the Castro regime controlled what people learned and how. Vocational and higher education institutions may also need to revise their curricula as appropriate. If requested, U.S. educators

could assist in the creation of a system of standards, curricula, and assessments in core academic content areas and elective areas in the Cuban school curriculum.

1. Duration of Schooling

Cuba is a country that has operated a school cycle consisting of 9 years of compulsory education. Incentives to drop out and seek employment in the black market or tourism sectors, and perceived disincentives to finish school (through the 12th year) and seek postsecondary education, have produced a significant population of undereducated persons.

2. Academic Standards for All Students

A system of standards and assessment may be needed to ensure that all Cuban children (including those with disabilities) have access to a quality education and that their performance is assessed on their achievement of set standards. Individual student achievement data could inform education policy decision regarding curriculum, academic focus, and professional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The U.S. Department of Education should be prepared to participate, perhaps in cooperation with the OAS and the private sector, in the creation of a system of standards, curricula, and assessments in core academic content areas and elective areas in the Cuban school curriculum.*
- *Encourage Cuban authorities to adopt policies after the transition that recognize the need for employable adults to have completed school and that provides incentives for youth to stay in school for twelve years and graduate.*
- *Be prepared to assist Cuban authorities in devising a system of standards and assessment to ensure that all Cuban children have access to a quality education and that their performance is assessed based on their achievement of set standards.*

b. The Teaching Profession

Education is one of the professions that a transition Cuban government may need to evaluate and reform. Cuba may suffer a temporary teacher shortage due to a combination of the reform process and the loss of many teachers who had left the

profession during the Castro years, often for work in tourism and other jobs. Several opportunities may exist to offer assistance to Cuba in restoring and maintaining the high professional standards that its education system needs.

1. Encourage Cubans to Enter, or Re-enter, the Education Profession

Aid donors could assist the transition government in providing positive incentives for former educators to re-enter teaching and for new higher education graduates to be attracted to the profession.

2. Establish effective Teacher Preparation Practices Through Partnerships

The United States could facilitate partnerships between Cuban educators and institutions, and those in the United States and other assisting nations, to develop professional teacher standards that are aligned to academic standards, and to redesign teacher preparation programs (including curriculum) as well as programs preparing administrators and other professionals. The U.S. Department of Education could assist with teacher standards development.

3. Help Design and Implement Effective Professional Development Programs

U.S. and other experts could participate in technical assistance missions and teacher and faculty exchanges to implement models for professional development to increase the knowledge base (general knowledge content as well as democratic and civic education content and values) of current pre-K-12 teachers and paraprofessionals, vocational instructors, and postsecondary faculty. The Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program could assist this process, and the effort could involve U.S. community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities.

4. Develop a Corps of Potential Leaders Who Would Assume Positions of Influence in Academic, Public, and Private Education

The Department of State, through the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Fulbright and Humphrey exchange programs, could implement programs to achieve this objective.

5. Establish a “Teach for Cuba’s Future” Program

One of the critical steps to reform education in Cuba and support the development of a democratic culture may be a fundamental shift in instruction

from a system based on rote learning and ideology to one that teaches independent thinking and problem solving. Such a shift may require not only entirely new teaching materials, but also teachers who are prepared to teach these skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *USAID should be prepared to collaborate with IARB, private sector donors, and businesses in providing low-cost or free educations for prospective teachers and salary and living cost incentives for returning teachers.*
- *The U.S. Government should be prepared to facilitate partnerships between Cuban educators and institutions, and those in the United States and other assisting nations, to develop professional teacher standards that are aligned to academic standards, and to redesign teacher preparation programs as well as programs preparing administrators and other professionals. The U.S. Department of Education could assist with teacher standards development.*
- *The U.S. Government should be prepared to participate in technical assistance missions and teacher and faculty exchanges. The Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program could assist this process.*
- *The Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Fulbright and Humphrey exchange programs should be prepared to implement programs to develop a corps of potential leaders who would assume positions of influence in academic, public, and private education.*
- *The U.S. government, perhaps in cooperation with the OAS, IDB, and countries in the region, could provide funding, technical assistance, and materials in Spanish to a new Cuban Ministry of Education to support a "Teach for Cuba's Future" program, which would be open both to existing teachers and those who seek to enter the classroom for the first time. It could consist of the following components:*
 - *Vacation Institutes of three weeks' duration, to teach teachers how to present lessons that encourage children to think and to work in groups to solve problems, also fostering a spirit of trust and mutual support.*
 - *Resource Centers to provide ongoing assistance to teachers who have attended the Vacation Institutes and to provide sample lesson plans and*

other resources that support the new national curriculum and the development of thinking skills.

- *Networks of Teachers and possibly a “buddy” system will be set up during the Institutes, to provide ongoing support to teachers from among their peers as they try out their new skills in the classroom.*

c. Accreditation and Quality Assurance

It will be important for Cuban educational authorities to develop and implement a non-political process for the recognition and regular quality assurance inspection of all schools, post-secondary institutions, and other education providers operating in the country. There are several successful models for such a process, but there is no doubt that a high-quality modern education system needs a quality assurance process to achieve and maintain credibility as well as to protect its standards and its people.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *U.S. Government and other experts, including accrediting associations and quality assurance authorities, should be prepared to cooperate with Cuban educators to develop a workable national system of ensuring the quality of Cuban public and private education providers and programs of study at all levels.*

iv. Educational Technology

Information technology has the potential to help a free Cuba make a technological leap in education reform and also overcome poor physical communications facilities, especially in rural areas and eastern Cuba.

The use of computer-assisted learning techniques and other information technology resources is now common in education systems, and Cuba is no exception. While the Castro regime claims that over 80 percent of Cuban schools are wired for computers and possess Internet access, the truth will have to await an inventory during a transition. What is known is that the Castro regime restricts Internet access to selected sites and operates a very powerful national firewall that blocks most signals. It also censors other electronic media and polices their use.

In addition, school buildings in Cuba are known to vary widely in condition and upkeep, and technology is not always current.

Despite these barriers, many Cubans have learned to operate modern information technology and bypass Castro's censors. In addition, churches have assisted in providing community-based instruction in computer use and access to modern equipment and software.

a. Share Best Practices and Resources

The United States and other assistance providers can assist the Cuban authorities in developing and implementing good instructional uses of information technology as well as with equipment upgrades and training. Some specific suggestions include:

1. Encourage the Use of Educational Technology Where Possible

Share expertise on the training of teachers to use technology in the classroom by facilitating technical assistance efforts between Cuban teacher training programs and U.S. school districts, universities and colleges, and other expert groups in examining best practices and integrating educational technology into subject content areas.

2. Assist Cubans in Developing Accessible and High-Quality Educational Technology

Organize technical assistance for national planning and policy development in the use of educational technology that ensures accessibility and connectivity for all potential users. Develop public-private partnerships and networks of experts to serve as valuable resources for Cuban leadership involved in future strategic planning and policy development efforts.

3. Join and Make use of the Education Portal of the Americas

This international Internet service is managed by the OAS to facilitate online training offered by over 250 partner institutions of higher learning from throughout the Hemisphere and Spain.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The Department of Education’s Office of Educational Technology could share its database of successful projects on the use of educational technology and coordinate the provision of outside expertise.*
- *The Office of Educational Technology can also provide assistance and resources in the area of technology planning.*
- *The U.S. Government should encourage a free Cuba to join the OAS Education Portals of the Americas electronic network and make use of its resources.*

b. Classroom-to-Classroom Linkages

For Cuban schools that are wired, a program could be implemented to promote classroom-to-classroom connections between Cuban schools and teachers and their U.S. counterparts — including those schools with large numbers of Cuban-Americans — using models such as those established by the Friendship Through Education initiative and the World Wise Schools program of the Peace Corps. Such linkages could also be expanded to other countries, providing an array of new, mutually beneficial linkages with Cuban schools.

c. Distance Education

Distance education can provide many advantages to a free Cuba if it is developed intelligently and if high standards are imposed as for other types of education. Properly done, distance education is an excellent resource for reaching into all locations and for empowering people who may not otherwise have access to educational opportunities.

1. Establish Good Policies and Standards for Distance Education

Cuban authorities, in concert with outside experts, could undertake the development of a national distance learning policy, including standards for accredited providers, and tools such as a resource database

2. Create Cuban Versions of Neighborhood Technology Centers

Cuba could establish its own versions of neighborhood Technology Centers via collaborations involving Cuban leaders and educators, agencies from countries with significant distance learning experience and appropriate private organizations. These centers could be located in rural and urban areas, providing the entire

community with access to technology, computers, and the Internet. Partner with OAS, IICA, and other institutions that are working to establish centers throughout the nations of this Hemisphere.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The Office of Educational Technology, Office of Post Secondary Education, and regional and state policy groups in the United States could assist in the effort to establish good policies and standards for distance education.*

v. Improve Cuba's Educational Infrastructure

There is little doubt, based on the observation of visitors over the past decade, that Cuba's educational infrastructure is in poor shape. Even "model" schools and other facilities (laboratories, libraries, computing centers) in or near Havana that the Castro regime allows visitors to see show signs of decay and age (often superficially covered by a fresh coat of paint or stucco) and lack the amenities and necessities considered normal elsewhere. Reports of church leaders and others from remote and underserved areas like eastern Cuba indicate much worse conditions. Private educational facilities are at present nonexistent. Former private establishments seized after 1959 have either been converted for other uses and are no longer suitable for educational use, or have been abandoned and allowed to go to ruin for 45 years. Tackling this decay and neglect will take money, time, and expertise, but it may need to be done if Cuba's people are to reap the benefits of a modern and free education system.

a. Develop an Infrastructure Plan Based on a Facilities Inventory

An educational facilities inventory might be one of the first tasks of educational authorities during the transition after Castro. Based on this, plus an assessment of priorities and resources, Cuba could develop an infrastructure improvement plan. This may well involve the sale or discard of some properties as well as coordination with private and religious educational foundations. The renovation and reconstruction of Cuban schools, community learning centers, and vocational and higher education facilities could be a priority in infrastructural assistance planning. Cuban authorities could work with international financial organizations to introduce low-cost capital financing and other mechanisms to improve the infrastructure.

b. Accessibility and Universal Design

The principle of empowering all Cubans likely will require attention to making as much of Cuba's educational infrastructure as possible accessible to all, including persons with disabilities. Public and private education authorities should ensure that renovated and new education and training facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities and are wired to accommodate modern educational technology. Assistance agencies, organizations, and businesses should work with Cuban authorities to develop cost-effective design and construction solutions.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services can assist Cuban authorities make as much of Cuba's educational infrastructure as possible accessible to all.*

c. Libraries and Information Resources

The renovation and modernization of Cuba's libraries, museums, and other information resources will be a major undertaking that might best operate in coordination with reforming and modernizing the education system. Public libraries, school libraries, and university libraries, will need adequate current materials to replace outmoded and deteriorated holdings. There could also be assistance in providing needed technical services and in upgrading facilities in conjunction with other educational infrastructure improvements. Cuban libraries and information centers can benefit from modern information technology, and their staffs can be trained or retrained to provide modern information services for a free society. Foreign assistance providers and Cuban experts could cooperate in revitalizing Cuban libraries. Organizations such as the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the American Library Association, and other interested private sector organizations should be encouraged to support this endeavor.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs should offer to cooperate in the effort to bring to Cuban libraries and information centers new, up to date information.*
- *To promote literacy and reading among Cubans, the Department of Education could provide assistance to Cuban libraries to conduct book fairs.*

d. Adopt-a-School Programs

Business investors in Cuba may be in a position, and inclined, to assist local schools, vocational education centers, and higher education institutions that supply them with their workforce and support the whole community. This is an opportunity that could extend the resources available to Cuban education reformers, and if possible it should be encouraged.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The U.S. Department of Education could join U.S. private organizations and state agencies, partnership organizations such as Sister Cities International, and other countries with successful business-school partnerships to assist in this process.*

3. Assistance at Specific Levels and for Specific Types of Education

i. Early Childhood Education

a. Modernize and Professionalize Early Education

Both teachers in the primary grades and child day care providers are frequently poorly qualified in Castro's Cuba because labor shortages have led to allowing secondary (high school) students to provide these services on so-called "emergency" appointments. In addition to encouraging qualified persons to enter the field of early childhood education, transition authorities could review existing policies on early childhood education and related day care and improve or establish standards for professional certification, for accreditation of providers, and curricular and program guidelines that synchronize with the initial school grades.

b. Make Early Education Accessible Through Choice of Providers

The aforementioned labor shortages plus the fact that many current teachers are may need to be retrained may make it difficult for Cuban authorities to supply adequate early childhood services from the existing public education workforce. Therefore, assistance donors, including private and faith-based organizations, could work with Cuban authorities to provide a variety of early childhood options for families with different needs. The goal should be to ensure equal access to early childhood programs for all families, including those with children with disabilities.

ii. Second- (English-) Language Learning

a. Help Strengthen Second (English) Language Education for All

The Castro regime enforced Russian as the main foreign language to be learned by Cubans prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since 1990, there has been some move toward English, but this has been slowed by the large-scale departure of qualified English language teachers for jobs in the tourism industry. Assistance donors can help improve this situation — which will be very important for competitiveness and to attract foreign investment — by cooperating with Cuban educators and employers in the establishment of effective second-language programs in English in the schools at the primary and secondary levels, in postsecondary institutions, and in courses for adults who need improved language skills. Teacher exchanges in this area could be particularly valuable. Establish school-to-school programs rapidly.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition could assist with this objective in conjunction with the Peace Corps, USAID, and the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

iii. Safe and Drug-Free Schools

a. Ensure Safe and Drug-Free Learning Environments

There is no clear evidence that serious crime or drug abuse problems exist in Cuban schools, but these problems do exist in Cuban society and could infect the schools during a transition if adequate preventive steps are not taken. If asked, U.S. authorities, churches, and other donors should work with Cuban transition authorities and those providing other assistance to ensure that drug abuse prevention and anti-crime measures are implemented as needed in Cuba's schools. This effort could involve coordination across the areas of infrastructural renovation, civic and character education programs, parent and community involvement, and professional development to create learning environments free of crime, health hazards, and climates of mistrust and intimidation.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The Departments of Justice, Education (Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools), and Housing and Urban Development, plus the Office of National Drug Control Policy, could provide assistance and expertise, and work with private donors to help Cuban transition authorities develop and implement drug abuse prevention and anti-crime initiatives for Cuba's schools.*

b. Develop Cuban Drug Use Prevention, Health, and Nutrition Education Programs

Technical assistance should be offered to a transition government to assist Cuban educators to develop and implement national curricula, programs, and services to inform students, parents, and adults of the dangers of drug use, to identify patterns of abuse, and to refer cases as appropriate to health and law enforcement authorities. Assistance in the development of curricula can be supplied by experienced private organizations, including religious bodies.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The Department of Education and Office of National Drug Control Policy should provide joint assistance in developing action and management strategies.*

c. Encourage Cooperation Between Educators and Health and Law Enforcement Professionals

A Cuban transition government will develop its own policies and procedures for coordinating the development and implementation of appropriate health education and drug use prevention programs, referral protocols, training materials, and instructor training across its education, health, and law enforcement authorities.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *If asked, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, perhaps together with partner agencies in OAS countries and their local jurisdictions, could help provide law enforcement coordination.*

iv. Career and Technical Education

a. Help Improve Preparation for the Transition from School to Postsecondary Education and Work

The transition to a free economy, the curtailing of the black market economy, and the demobilization of the state security apparatus likely will result in career transition challenges as well as the need for information and programs to prepare Cubans for a host of new employment opportunities. Cuban educational authorities may benefit from assistance in improving and modernizing educational and career counseling and assessment services. These services could be provided for students at the secondary and postsecondary levels as well as for adult learners.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The U.S. Departments of Labor and Education could provide assistance in conjunction with state employment agency networks, and the State Department's Faculty Development and Fulbright Senior Specialist Programs can assist in building essential infrastructure.*

b. Implement High-Quality Career Education Programs and Standards

The transition government may want to increase the quality and relevance of vocational and technical training for secondary students and adults. In keeping with the requirements of the knowledge revolution and the global economy, there could be a focus on higher-order competencies, problem-solving abilities, and communication and critical thinking skills rather than a focus on manual abilities alone. This will involve facilitating the provision of technical assistance, equipment and instructional materials, instructor training, facilitating exchanges, and designing curricula. It is unlikely that the state can do all of this itself, so training collaborations should be encouraged with and among businesses, governments, associations, and faith-based groups.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Coordination and assistance to increase the quality and relevance of vocational and technical training could be provided by the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education.*

c. Implement Entrepreneurship and Business Education

General education in the values and principles of democracy and market economies could be provided through innovations in Cuban civic education programs, but more specific technical education may also be needed. Both Cuban and international employers likely will need persons qualified in all levels and types of business and industry operations, and preparation for starting small businesses as well as enrichment training and assistance for established entrepreneurs may be desirable. Cuban entrepreneurship education at the technical and vocational level could seek to prepare workers as well as to improve economic literacy skills and promote the start-up of small businesses.

d. Focus Training on Tourism and Other Employment Markets

The Castro regime is belatedly attempting to develop a competitive tourism industry, has a modest reputation in pharmaceuticals, an emerging need for geriatric services, and can develop other sectors and niches where training programs can be focused as foreign investment revives and Cuban entrepreneurs are free to operate normally. Post secondary training programs could be focused on locally important industries and job markets, and collaborations with business can strengthen this effort as well as help finance it.

e. Consider Innovative Career and Technical Education Solutions

A variety of programs for career and technical education should be considered, including solutions new to Cuba but common elsewhere. These could include:

1. Bridge programs

Bridge programs in career education that span the last years of high school and the first years of post secondary education would be useful to introduce the community college model. These programs permit interested and qualified graduates to continue their educations at higher levels with recognition for prior credit, and provide alternative education programs to address the need to qualify Cubans who possess skills and experience acquired outside the formal economy.

Distance education approaches could be considered whenever appropriate, since this would permit instruction to be supplied from outside as well as inside Cuba.

v. Higher Education and Research

a. Consider the Community College Model as Appropriate

Cuba, like other countries, has many post-secondary needs and opportunities that could benefit from being organized and structured to better serve students and employers needing short programs that also provide access to higher level programs. The U.S. community college is one model solution, and partnerships and exchanges should be encouraged that can expose Cuban higher education to this type of institution and its potential.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education, and the American Association of Community Colleges, can help Cuba establish links and partnerships with U.S. community colleges to facilitate the development of this model.*

b. Encourage Private and Non-Traditional Higher Education

Post-Castro Cuba likely will want a higher education sector that consists of strong public institutions and strong private institutions, and that includes institutions that provide instruction and services via traditional programs as well as via distance education. Religiously affiliated institutions could be allowed to operate without hindrance.

c. Help to Improve Higher Education Teaching and Research

The United States, as well as international research organizations, can facilitate partnerships and collaborations between Cuban faculty, institutions, and their counterparts abroad to develop and improve content and standards in instructional and research programs in academic and professional subjects at the postsecondary level.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) could assist in this effort through a program cooperating with the new Cuba.*
- *The Department of State's Faculty Development and Fulbright Senior Specialist Programs can assist in building essential infrastructure.*

d. Ensure High Standards Through Proper Accreditation

The best way to prevent problems like those that developed in other post-communist transition states — such as educational frauds and marginal quality providers whose credits and degrees are not recognized elsewhere — may be to establish a strong system of accreditation and quality assurance plus a transparent process for recognizing foreign academic credits, degrees, and professional qualifications. (The latter will be brought to Cuba by Cubans returning from overseas educational programs as well as by foreigners working and living in Cuba.) Licensing and chartering laws that tie approval to operate to becoming accredited by recognized bodies could reinforce a strong accrediting system.

e. Build a Strong Academic Research Sector

It will be important to strengthen and modernize Cuban university and research strengths in established fields such as the health professions and pharmaceuticals, and to encourage concentration in additional fields that support the emerging free economy and the needs of investors. Cuban experts could emphasize internationalization through partnerships with foreign institutions, collaborations with industry, international exchanges, and outreach. Partnerships can be formed with U.S. universities that have already established such programs.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *Cooperative assistance in this area can be provided by the Department of Education's FIPSE, its Office of Post Secondary Education graduate and research programs, and the private sector.*

vi. Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

a. Life Skills Education

Foreign donors and Cuban authorities could work together to develop and implement special functional skills programs targeted to post-communist Cuba that emphasize needs such as consumer skills, job-related skills, economic literacy and financial skills, and assist with civic education for out-of-school adults.

Organizations and countries with experience in post-communist transitions, including USAID and other U.S. organizations can be instrumental in helping produce and disseminate practical and high-quality functional literacy resources for the Cuban transition.

b. Basic Literacy Skills

There are inevitably going to be some adults who did not attain proficiency in basic literacy and numerical skills when they were enrolled in school. Technical assistance from both adult basic education and community college developmental programs to Cuban adult literacy programs could help in developing effective instructional services to build adult basic literacy among adults needing such services. Findings from experimental and field-based research in the United States, which address basic adult reading and teaching English as a Second Language, can also be shared with Cuban program administrators and teachers.

4. Cultural Ties and Cultural Preservation

i. Reinvigorate Intellectual and Cultural Ties

a. Establish a Vigorous Cultural Exchange Program

Cuban culture is famous for its contributions to fine arts, music, folklore, decorative arts, architecture, and sports. These strengths and sources of national pride could be maintained and strengthened during and after transition through a broad range of professional and cultural exchanges and other means. Specific exchange areas that could be implemented immediately include: music groups and individual performers; artists, visual and performing; sports, both professional and amateur; and cooperation in major sporting events such as the Special Olympics.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The Department of State’s ECA cultural exchange programs, such as scholarships for dance or two-way exchanges within the Jazz Ambassador Program, as well as foundations and U.S. cultural organizations could help support Cuban fine arts, music, folklore, decorative arts, architecture, and sports.*
- *A similar scholarship and exchange program could be developed for scholar-athletes and professionals in the field of sports, as well as joint ventures in the sponsorship of athletic events such as Special Olympics, interscholastic, intercollegiate, and touring competitions.*

ii. Urban and Cultural Preservation

a. Assistance to Cuban Museums, Urban Planners, and Heritage Groups

The transition government likely will preserve Cuba’s material cultural heritage to be able to present it to future generations. As with libraries, U.S., UNESCO, and other nations’ experts and foundations can assist Cuba to depoliticize and modernize its museums and galleries, inventory historical sites and develop preservation plans, balance conservation and development, train professionals, and seek financing and resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The Department of State could propose a cultural preservation project under the “Ambassador’s Fund for Cultural Preservation.” The project could be directed at object(s) in need of conservation; a site/neighborhood in need of preservation; or forms of traditional expression (dance, music, language).*
- *There are also opportunities under the Department of State’s International Visitor Program sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; e.g., a museum project to bring Cuban museum professionals to meet with their counterparts in the U.S. to engage in dialogue about professional and exhibition exchanges.*
- *Under the Department of States’ Citizen Exchanges Program, there is the International Partnerships Among Museums which seeks to bring together*

foreign museums with American museums for the purpose of exchanging professional staff who work toward a mutually agreed upon project.

- *The areas of greatest preservation need are in the historic neighborhoods that are in grave danger of being lost and the protection of designated cultural heritage sites. Department of State-sponsored exchanges or “comparative” professional experience in urban planning, preservation, and development could offer Cuban professionals expertise in these areas to maintain both historic neighborhoods and the character of downtown Havana, which has been largely preserved, as well as focusing on Santiago de Cuba and other sites that have suffered neglect.*

C. Food and Agriculture

Cuba currently has a command-driven food, agriculture, and forestry sector. Nutritional issues exist because availability of food has long been a critical issue. However, Cuba has the potential to greatly expand agricultural production if it were to make a transition into a market economy. Such a transition should be one overriding goal during a transition, while ensuring that basic food and nutritional needs are met and that natural resources are not degraded. Additionally, it may be important for Cuba to focus on food safety and animal and plant health issues to ensure consumer safety and a vibrant agricultural sector, as well as to enhance its export capacity to increase income.

Technical assistance should be a key component in assisting Cuba’s transition to a market economy. For example, the use of technology could modernize Cuba’s food safety system. The country’s agricultural production system and processing facilities need updating to give Cuba the chance to achieve global and hemispheric standards. Cuba’s food security can be strengthened by providing a free Cuba access to the U.S. land-grant system of colleges and universities. Such partnerships could help Cuba move from a command-driven system to one that is more in tune with market economies. Additional on-the-ground assessment may be needed, including a thorough examination of: the animal and plant disease situation; existing Cuban statistical capabilities; and the current status of the Cuban agricultural sector, its markets, and its educational/training system.

A vital factor in addressing Cuba’s food security would be the ability to collect relevant and accurate data and to disseminate it in a timely fashion. Provided that there is technical assistance, Cuba would be able to develop a

dependable system of agricultural statistics, market information, and market analysis geared specifically to a market-driven economy. Components of such a program might include the following:

- Assessments of the quality of information available for market analysis and the capacity of relevant institutions;
- Guidance in assembling and evaluating data on key commodity markets;
- Training and assistance in conducting short-term market analysis and medium-term forecasts for key commodities;
- Assistance to establish systems that effectively disseminate information and analysis (including publications, e-publications, and websites);
- Collaborative analysis of trade or policy issues of mutual interest; and
- Provision of personal computers and Internet access facilities to Cuban individuals and organizations involved in the food and agriculture production and marketing process.

Direct nutritional technical assistance support could help the transition government set up logistics and stock control systems for the centralized food banks, helping ensure the delivery of healthful meals. Technical assistance should support commodity assistance programs that supplement the diets of program participants with nutritious foods.

Public awareness initiatives should include help to establish educational programs regarding the link between nutritional meals and health. Assistance could be provided to assist social marketing to better inform the Cuban public of nutritional feeding and education programs and to encourage broad public participation.

International organizations could also offer assistance. The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), an agricultural development organization, currently led by ministers of agriculture from every country in the hemisphere except for Cuba, has international programs and partnerships in place, all of which can be used to coordinate international assistance for Cuba. Working with other international organizations, for instance, the United Nations Food and

Agriculture Organization (FAO) could help to make the transition process easier to manage.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *If requested by a transition government, the U.S. Government should be prepared to provide technical assistance and capacity building to:*
 - *Establish in Havana an Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA) and an Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which would enable the U.S. Government to assist with development activities and to foster increased trade opportunities for both countries;*
 - *Allow Cuban importers to use credit guarantee programs that enhance Cuba's ability to import agricultural products to help meet its food needs;*
 - *Provide technical assistance that would help Cuba come fully into World Trade Organization (WTO) compliance, including trade-related food safety, and plant and animal health;*
 - *In the short-term, provide technical assistance on post-harvest handling, the transport of tropical fruits and vegetables, and the development of an exporter/importer transportation education program;*
 - *In the intermediate-term, provide assistance to enhance the collection and reporting system of domestic and international shipment costs, to develop commodity and agricultural product grades and standards, and to generate commodity/agricultural product market price news;*
 - *Offer, through the USDA's Cochran Fellowship Program, short-term agricultural marketing and agribusiness-related training with the help of U.S. universities, agricultural trade organizations, market development associations, government agencies, and the private sector;*
 - *Encourage partnerships between experts from land-grant institutions and Cuban counterparts to ensure that extension systems are responsive to farmers' needs, that research is guided by near- and long-term needs, and that teaching adequately prepares the next generation of Cuban agriculturalists;*

- *Assist, through such programs as the International Institute for Tropical Forestry and the White Water 2 Blue Water initiative, in developing sustainable agricultural and forestry practices to limit environmental degradation and assess Cuba's watershed management; and*
- *Assist in defining specific objectives and indicators for the progress and success of nutrition and food security programs, including:*
 - *The design and implementation of a household food consumption survey;*
 - *Providing information on programs that provide low-cost or free meals for children;*
 - *Technical support for commodity delivery, food storage, and food tracking systems; and*
 - *Information and technical assistance for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children found to be at nutritional risk.*
- *Provide technical assistance to cooperative and marketing organizations. Such assistance might include:*
 - *Assessing Cuba's cooperative and farmer organization sector capacity for establishing commercial relations with U.S. firms and markets;*
 - *Assessing the capacity of Cuban government and educational institutions to provide training in commercial agriculture and agribusiness management for farmer-based organizations;*
 - *Assessing agricultural and rural credit and lending institutions in Cuba;*
 - *Providing initial training workshops in principles of U.S. cooperative and commercial marketing organizations; and*
 - *Developing, with appropriate Cuban institutions, a plan for building training program curricula in the areas of cooperative organization, agribusiness management, and agricultural and rural finance.*

- *Providing initial training workshops in principles of U.S. cooperative and commercial marketing organizations.*
- *Developing, with appropriate Cuban institutions, a plan for building training program curricula in the areas of cooperative organization, agribusiness management, and agricultural and rural finance.*

D. Housing and Urban Policy

1. Introduction

Deferred maintenance, lack of resources, and lack of private property rights have created difficult, overcrowded and deteriorated housing conditions for many Cubans. Surveys have revealed that housing considered in “good shape” range from 56 percent in Havana (pop. 2,550,000) to 44 and 38 percent in provinces such as Las Tunas and Granma in the central and eastern portions of the island. Reports of *derrumbes* (houses that collapse) have become more frequent in Old Havana. Almost all visitors to the island comment on the beautiful yet deteriorated structures as well as the lack of paint on buildings throughout Cuban towns and cities.

Once, the Castro regime attempted to remove slums and improve rural housing conditions, but many of the challenges have been difficult to overcome due to lack of resources, shoddy workmanship, and failed government policies. Many rural Cubans left traditional *bohios*, the traditional palm-thatched one room dwelling for *barracones*, or tin roofed concrete dwellings. Meanwhile, large population increases, coupled with an inability to construct an adequate number of units, have led Cubans to live in overcrowded housing in most cities. Large efforts to build modernist Soviet-style public housing have only concentrated the poor in the outskirts of cities. So although housing conditions improved for some, today the difficulties outweigh the successes of Cuba’s housing policy.

Low incomes in Cuban pesos paired with a black-market economy that functions on the U.S. dollar have made daily life difficult for Cubans when most goods are either rationed or available at high prices for dollars. Therefore, Cubans currently are unable to improve their living conditions. Because many Cubans live in deplorable or difficult living conditions, improving living conditions likely will be an immediate priority for many Cubans. Cuban Americans might bring new appliances and building materials to family members and Cubans will attempt to patch roofs, paint, and repair homes that are structurally unsafe and unsound.

International and U.S. non-profit organizations will attempt to meet immediate humanitarian needs that may include housing repair and housing rehabilitation.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) could aid a new transition government in Cuba through the following actions: (1) recommend steps to assist Cubans immediately; (2) provide technical assistance in relevant program areas; (3) help coordinate organizations, trade associations, and companies in the design, planning, and construction fields; and (4) recommend approaches and policies in the planning, housing, and community development that work toward the establishment of democratic institutions that engage and empower the Cuban people.

2. Immediate Steps

As Cubans begin to change their lives and their country, many will try to meet the immediate material needs of their families. The suggestions below will go a long way in providing families a way to assess the work that is needed on their homes as well as means to obtain the funds necessary for the repairs. This immediate assistance will also provide hope for the future. Within the first 60 to 90 days after a transition, the Department of Housing and Urban Development could coordinate the following:

i. A Commission on Housing and Urban Policies

Under HUD's aegis, the Department can bring together national and international organizations in the planning and design fields, such as the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Architects, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, among others, to coordinate assistance in the housing, community development, planning, and design fields. Additional members could include universities, representatives from construction and trade groups, foundations, and international financial institutions interested in housing issues in Cuba, as well as Cuban American experts in the planning and design fields. The latter are familiar with Cuba's history, traditions, and idiosyncrasies and could be helpful in working with Cubans on the island.

ii. Temporary Roofing Materials

Many Cuban homes suffer from leaky roofs that have not been repaired in many years. Cuba's rainy weather, particularly in the summer, is blamed for many of the building collapses. Since water damage is the number one cause of building

deterioration and degradation, providing temporary plastic or PVC material to cover roofs will help stabilize buildings, give some measure of protection, and allow time to develop more permanent solutions. Priority could be given to buildings most in danger of collapse or damage, paying special attention to buildings with historic or cultural significance. Manufacturers of these materials and retail corporations in the building trades might donate or provide deep discounts for the necessary materials.

iii. Paint

Visitors to the island often comment on the deteriorated appearance of Cuban buildings. Cuba is well known for its architectural heritage, but many of buildings look worn and faded. A coordinated effort by foundations and home supply corporations could coordinate volunteers to assist in painting buildings. Exterior painting might require more professional volunteers in the construction trades, but there is no doubt that an immediate improvement in the exterior appearance of buildings would provide a sense of hope and progress to the Cuban people.

iv. Microloans for Rehabilitation

Small loans to help repair dangerous building code violations, update kitchens and bathrooms, and complete other necessary repairs can be an important part in making immediate improvements and help spur the construction sector of the economy. HUD could help coordinate assistance provided by the federal government, foundations, and the private sector. A foundation might be created to fund this specific purpose.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Within the first 60 to 90 days after a transition, HUD should be prepared, if asked, to coordinate:*
 - *Establishment of a Commission to advise on Housing and Urban Policies; and*
 - *Assistance provided by the U.S. Government, foundations, and the private sector, including such things as temporary roofing materials, paint and microloans for housing rehabilitation.*

3. Housing Priorities During the First Year

Within the first year of a transition government, HUD can provide or coordinate assistance in a wide variety of areas including: housing policy, housing finance, building design, construction, and planning issues. HUD also can establish relationships with its counterpart agencies, such as a new Cuban Ministries of Housing and Construction. At the request of its agency counterparts in Cuba, HUD would be willing to provide the following assistance:

i. Assessment of Housing Ministry Strengths and Weaknesses

Cuba currently has a Ministry of Housing and a Ministry of Construction that built much of the public or “social” housing. An assessment of its strengths and weaknesses could help determine how HUD can best communicate and assist the new ministries.

ii. Survey of Housing Conditions

Many Cubans live in dangerous and overcrowded housing conditions. Families live in one room apartments and lofts. Forty-five years of deferred maintenance and lack of access to materials and funding have created dangerous electrical, gas, and structural issues. Resolving many of these issues may be of the highest priority. In addition, accurate information on Cuba’s housing conditions is limited. A survey of housing conditions is essential in order to gain an accurate picture of short-term and long-term housing needs. HUD, along with partner universities, would be willing and able to assist Cuba in developing and implementing a survey that will provide a baseline for future needs and goals.

iii. Temporary Housing

The current regime prevents and controls all external migration from Cuba and all internal migration within the island. The immediate collapse of such controls could cause a rapid population increase in large cities, especially Havana, where change and growth will be most rapid. There may be an immediate need for modular homes that are easy to transport and assemble. There are several companies that build good high quality modular or manufactured housing. Modular or manufactured housing can alleviate some of the overcrowding that already exists as well as the overcrowding that might result from internal migration.

iv. Historic Preservation Efforts

Cuba has a wealth of architecture built throughout its five hundred year history. Many of these resources are in a deplorable state. Although health and safety issues come first, many of Cuba's buildings should be protected for future generations as evidence of Cuba's cultural accomplishments and heritage. Cuba already recognizes that historic preservation is an important part of its economic development and tourism strategy, and cultural and natural resources also could be a key part in its redevelopment. Several organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, U.S. International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Cuban National Heritage, and several schools of architecture are familiar with preservation issues in Cuba. Preservation requires specialized knowledge in construction, design, and resource management. A working group could coordinate technical assistance provided to Cuban design professionals.

v. A Cuban National Trust and Revolving Loan Fund

With the overwhelming amount of historic resources in Cuba, the private sector can play an important role in saving, rehabilitating, and reusing historic buildings. Many countries around the world have created national trusts that buy historic properties and open them for the public. Most notable are the U.S. National Trust for Historic Preservation and the British National Trust, credited with saving many of Britain's historic country houses and landscapes. In this way, private money could help save important historical sites for future generations by supplementing government's limited scope. At the same time, the Trust could foster active participation among Cuban citizens and Cuban Americans interested in protecting their common heritage. The idea of a Cuban National Trust could be taken a step further by the addition of a revolving loan fund. The Trust could be used to buy historic properties and sell them to potential buyers who are willing to rehabilitate the property and find compatible uses for the buildings.

vi. Professional Exchanges

HUD's Office of International Affairs could serve as a clearinghouse for requests for U.S. technical assistance and organize exchanges of professionals in the planning, design, and community development fields. International Affairs could sponsor U.S. professionals interested in working in Cuba and place Cuban professionals or emerging leaders in U.S. local, state, or Federal agencies, as well as in non-profit or private sector offices.

vii. Training

A new government, democracy, and a free market will bring forth many development opportunities. New investments will also bring about new construction and redevelopment. Reducing overcrowded conditions will also require the construction of new homes. HUD is willing to assemble a group of experts in the fields of architecture and construction familiar with Cuban housing typologies that will help the private sector develop model homes palatable to the potential Cuban consumer. HUD might sponsor a design competition to develop model housing that is reflective of Cuban design traditions yet includes the latest in energy saving technology and construction techniques.

viii. University Partnerships

HUD currently funds two programs that encourage universities to work with their communities and develop future community development and planning professionals. The University Partnership program seeks to tap the intellectual resources of colleges and universities to develop creative and innovative solutions to housing and urban development issues. The Community Work-Study program seeks to attract minority and economically disadvantaged students into graduate programs in community planning and development. The program provides tuition assistance and stipends to students who combine an academic program with practical field experience. A variation on both themes could potentially partner Cuban and American universities by helping Cubans establish program strategies in the field and allowing Cuban students to work directly in neighborhoods. Furthermore, American students interested in the planning, community development, and design fields could be placed in a community work-study program that would allow them to work in local planning agencies, the housing and construction ministries, or new NGO's dedicated to housing and community development. Interested Cuban students might also be placed in a similar work-study program that would allow them to gain experience and coursework in the United States.

ix. A Geographic Information System

A geographic information system (GIS) involves the geo-coding of data for computer mapping of land use and infrastructure to guide urban policy decisions. HUD currently has working relationships with the U.S. Geological Survey and the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science (UCGIS) for work with communities along the U.S.-Mexico Border and for GIS training between

U.S. universities and research institutions throughout the world. A GIS is one of the most effective tools in the phasing and planning of infrastructure. With the overwhelming amount of deferred infrastructure needs, GIS could be an important tool in helping to prioritize needs and identify redevelopment areas.

x. Areas for Redevelopment

Certain areas surrounding ports, airports, and downtown areas will be ripe for development. Special attention could be placed in identifying these areas so that they may be planned in as orderly a manner as possible. Infrastructure needs cannot be upgraded all at once so selecting areas wisely throughout the island can help spur investment in certain neighborhoods, creating the construction of new housing. These ‘islands of redevelopment’ could also help lessen internal migration pressures. Good planning has been at the heart of redevelopment efforts in many East European cities of the former Communist Bloc. Of particular note are Berlin, Prague, Budapest, and Warsaw.

xi. A Model Permitting System

HUD could assist a post-Castro Cuba in the development of an efficient and speedy permitting system that can keep track of redevelopment and new construction that will likely take place at a rapid pace. Permitting is necessary to ensure safe building construction methods, good design, and appropriate development. However, a slow and bureaucratic system could discourage investment and development. An efficient system that uses the latest technology and good management could serve as a model for other cities throughout the island.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *Within the first year of a transition government, HUD should be prepared to establish relationships with its counterpart agencies, such as a new Cuban Ministries of Housing and Construction, and at the request of its agency counterparts in Cuba, HUD could provide the following assistance:*
 - *Assess the strengths and weaknesses of new Ministries of Housing and Construction;*
 - *Conduct a survey of housing conditions along with partner universities that will provide a baseline for future needs and goals;*

- *Form a working group on preservation issues to coordinate technical assistance provided to Cuban design professionals;*
- *Support creation of a Cuban National Trust and a revolving loan fund;*
- *Serve as a clearinghouse for requests for U.S. technical assistance and organize exchanges of professionals in the planning, design, and community development fields, and sponsor U.S. professionals interested in working in Cuba or place Cuban professionals or emerging leaders in local, state, or Federal agencies as well as in non-profit or private sector offices;*
- *Assemble a group of experts in architecture and construction familiar with Cuban housing typologies to help the private sector develop model homes palatable to the potential Cuban consumer;*
- *Consider sponsoring a design competition to develop model housing that is reflective of Cuban design traditions yet includes the latest in energy saving technology and construction techniques;*
- *Develop university partnerships;*
- *Assist a free Cuba to establish a Geographic Information System;*
- *Assist in the determination of areas for redevelopment; and*
- *Assist a free Cuba in the development of a system that can keep track of redevelopment and new construction.*

4. Longer-Term Planning, Community Development, and Housing Issues

After the first or second year, urban policy likely will be focused on long range planning, community development, and housing issues. Assistance will be focused on transforming Cuba's centralized planning structure into one that provides for citizen participation yet allows professionals to make wise recommendations using up-to-date and accurate information. Involvement at the local and neighborhood level is at the foundation of civic life and democracy building. It is at the local level that citizens learn to work together and make community choices. Oftentimes, new leaders emerge from local politics and civic involvement. Cuba also has a dearth of NGOs focused on housing and community

development. In the U.S., these organizations help organize neighborhood resources, attract new investment, and build housing in neighborhoods that might otherwise be overlooked. Community development NGOs play an important role in the development of new civic institutions. Finally, the U.S. has resources and experiences that it can share with its Cuban counterparts on a variety of housing issues that are particularly focused on those citizens most in need.

i. Planning Assistance

Cuba has a long tradition of urban planning that dates from four hundred years of Spanish influence. Later, French and American notions of planning and urban design greatly influenced the landscape. This was later replaced by Soviet-style autocratic central planning. Cuba's new planning system likely will respect Cuba's long tradition in urban design and planning that includes civic participation — an important foundation for participation in a democratic society.

a. Local planning

The U.S. can assist local planning to reorganize, allowing for methods and work styles that will help guide the orderly and more efficient construction and redevelopment of cities and neighborhoods. Teaching methods that include participation by local citizens in the decision-making process will also be a key part in the exchange of U.S. and Cuban planning professionals. Organizations such as the American Planning Association and the International City Management Association can assist in training Cuban professionals.

b. Development management tools

HUD can assist a free Cuba by bringing together planning professionals and training Cuban professionals on the various development management tools that help guide development in a market-driven economy. Tools such as impact fees can help raise necessary funds for infrastructure in need of repair such as water and sewage systems and community facilities such as schools and libraries that are necessary components of a vibrant neighborhood. Other tools include buying development rights in neighborhoods where dense development might not be desirable, or performance standards that develop a point system for development proposals. The American Planning Association and departments of planning at leading U.S. universities are natural partners in this effort.

c. Specialized working groups

U.S. planners along with international counterparts could also help Cubans develop strategies for special planning issues in Havana and other provincial capitals. Havana has special urban design and redevelopment issues that will be the focus of initial investment and redevelopment. In addition, many of Cuba's provincial capitals and smaller cities such as Trinidad are UNESCO World Heritage Sites and are worthy of special care and attention. Other larger cities such as Santiago and Cienfuegos also offer a rich array of architecture that deserves protection. At a transition government's request, HUD can help assemble U.S. and international experts to tackle a particular issue.

ii. Community Development

Certain areas in Havana and in some major cities presumably will be the focus of redevelopment due to their geographic location and their tourism (Cayo Coco) or economic (Havana's port area) potential. However, Cubans in other areas also may want to begin repairing their homes and open new businesses that will create vibrant neighborhoods. Community development non-profits and faith-based organizations can play an important part in helping Cubans improve housing conditions and create new housing opportunities.

a. Community Development Corporations

HUD, along with its partners in the community development field, can help Cubans create new community development corporations and non-governmental organizations focused on building new housing. These non-profit corporations could include small investors, international foundations, and churches as partners. Cuba currently has very limited non-governmental organizations that are mostly affiliated with churches, international organizations, and dissident groups. Growth of these organizations could be a key component in improving housing conditions and creating new investment opportunities throughout the island. National groups such as the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Enterprise Foundations, and the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation have a large network and extensive training from which new Cuban organizations could benefit.

b. Faith-based Organizations

Cuba's Catholic Church and to a lesser extent Protestant churches sponsor some of the few nongovernmental organizations on the island. Faith-based organizations can be an important part of the island's redevelopment efforts,

particularly in the health sector. HUD can present models of how faith-based organizations in the U.S. are involved in housing and community development. HUD's Office of Faith-based Initiatives can help link faith-based organizations in the United States with their new counterparts in Cuba.

c. Self-Help Organizations

Although Cuba has a failed experience with so-called microbrigades, more organized efforts by successful organizations such as Habitat for Humanity can help meet an immediate need for housing, while organizations such as Youthbuild can help train young people in highly-prized construction skills. Spain's *Escuelas Talleres* focuses on specialized training techniques useful in rehabilitating historic buildings. These self-help organizations can help interested Cubans acquire new skills in the construction industry.

iii. Housing Reform

HUD can help its likely counterpart agencies, the new Ministries of Housing and Construction, to consider new housing policies necessary in a market-oriented and democratic society. Some families may still need assistance in the forms of loans or grants, at least to get them started. Below are some housing policies and issues to consider.

a. Historic Preservation

Urban areas were long neglected, but since the late 1980s, historic preservation and restoration has been a limited tool for economic development of the tourist industry. Cuba has one of the largest collections of Spanish colonial architecture in the world, as well as notable buildings from the 18th and 19th century. Its own unique style of modernist architecture was recently recognized as worthy of protection. Historic preservation can be a key tool in developing Cuba's tourism economy and an important factor in developing national pride. Cubans could consider new tools that would help protect their unique architecture but that would still accommodate appropriate development. Some ideas to consider include establishing areas of protection that require more stringent development review. Another idea to consider is Spain's One Percent Fund. One percent of all public works projects goes to cultural and historic preservation projects. These projects are usually historic sites worthy of public protection as cultural facilities, such as museums, or which may have a portion open to the public. HUD can help gather experts that can provide technical assistance in the preservation field.

b. Fair Housing Laws

Currently, Cuba claims that there is no housing discrimination, but Cubans are discriminated against in their choice of housing for political reasons. Internal migration controls prevent Cubans from making housing choices on their own, and racial discrimination also exists on the island. HUD can provide direct assistance in establishing laws that protect Cuba's citizens from housing discrimination.

c. Private-Sector Housing Markets

A transition government can adopt homeownership strategies used by other Spanish-speaking countries, like Chile and Spain, which possess a proven track record of extremely high homeownership. For example, Chile has a homeownership rate of 75 percent. Long-term loans and a secondary market have made homeownership an attainable goal for many Chileans. Spain's housing policies have also created a high homeownership rate (85 percent) by giving direct subsidies on mortgage interest rates and releasing jumbo issues of mortgage-backed bonds. More specific recommendations are given in Chapter 4.

d. Social Housing Policy

Cuba currently has a large number of social (public) housing units built mostly in the 1960s and 1970s in the Soviet style. Much of this housing has become overcrowded and is in disrepair. It tends to be depressing and dreary, but inhabitants have few alternatives. If asked, HUD would be willing to directly assist the transition government in surveying public housing conditions and make recommendations for immediate improvement. Since the 1990s, the U.S. has focused its efforts on improving public housing by creating new opportunities for the private sector and creating public-private partnerships. Many of these lessons might be useful to the new Ministry of Housing responsible for Cuba's social housing complexes.

e. Subsidy Assistance

The Cuban transition government may wish to provide some direct investment in housing, including new construction, rehabilitation, and financial assistance to renters and homeowners. In particular, creating a long-term sustainable rehabilitation program can be very important in helping to improve the living conditions of Cubans. If so, there is a wide range of options. Examples of

program models in the United States include public housing, housing vouchers, tax credits, down payment assistance, high-risk mortgage insurance, and interest subsidies. The specific type of assistance would vary greatly in terms of the level of need, the nature of the assistance, and how the assistance is administered. To the greatest extent possible, we recommend that funds be leveraged with private sector funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *HUD should be prepared to do the following at the request of the transition government:*
 - *Assist local planners establish a local planning system for cities;*
 - *Bring together planning professionals and train Cuban professionals on development management tools that help guide development in a market-driven economy;*
 - *Help assemble U.S. and international experts to tackle specific planning issues;*
 - *Along with partners in the community development field, help Cubans create new community development corporations and non-governmental organizations focused on building new housing;*
 - *Present models of how faith-based organizations in the U.S. are involved in housing and community development. HUD's Office of Faith-based Initiatives can help link faith-based organizations in the United States with their new counterparts in Cuba;*
 - *Help its new counterpart agencies consider new housing policies necessary in a market-oriented and democratic society;*
 - *Help gather experts that can provide technical assistance in preservation;*
 - *Provide direct assistance in establishing laws that protect Cuba's citizens from housing discrimination;*
 - *Directly assist the transition government survey public housing conditions and make recommendations for immediate improvement; and*

- *Recommend new subsidy assistance models.*

5. Special Transition Issues in Housing

i. Transition and Socialized Housing

Although it is important to encourage the development of a free-market economy, some families likely will need assistance to afford decent housing. Government subsidies of housing can be an essential element of social policy. There are a variety of subsidies and delivery systems for providing such assistance.

A first step is to assess the need for assistance. Initially, assistance would probably take the form of direct governmental intervention to ameliorate hazardous conditions. This suggests programs directly administered by the central government to rehabilitate existing housing, to provide emergency assistance to the homeless, or to construct housing to eliminate severe over-crowding. An early step also would be to facilitate the investment of international agencies in Cuban housing.

As institutions for delivering housing assistance are developed, housing assistance programs may need to resolve a series of issues. One of these is the level of need to be addressed. Simply, what portion of the population should receive assistance, how poor should recipients of assistance be, and how much assistance should they receive?

ii. Geographic and Community Issues

Another set of issues concerns geographic targeting. Housing is not only shelter, but also part of community development. Focusing subsidies on certain priority cities, or in certain rural areas, can have a very different impact than providing assistance to individuals regardless of where they live. For example, Cuban rural areas and the eastern part of the main island are very poorly served from a housing standpoint in comparison to greater Havana and the northwest. Targeted allocation of housing resources, including external assistance, may be needed in certain cases. Similarly, some communities are likely to have been deprived of resources in comparison to others, or have enjoyed advantages due to connections to the political and black market centers of power and influence. There will also be geographic issues of topography, microclimates, locally available materials and skills, and infrastructure.

iii. What Form Should Housing Assistance Take?

Another set of issues concerns the nature of assistance. For example, in the United States there is experience building and operating public housing, subsidizing privately-owned rental housing (e.g., Section 8 New Construction, Low Income Housing Tax Credits), subsidizing rents (Housing Choice Vouchers), subsidizing purchasing power (e.g., down payment assistance, interest subsidies), subsidizing rehabilitation (e.g., CDBG, HOME), and subsidizing infrastructure to support housing (e.g., CDBG).

Another issue to be resolved is who receives the assistance. One model is to provide funding to local governments or non-profit organizations to carry out activities on behalf of needy families. Another model would provide funding to private landlords to build and maintain housing. Still another model would provide assistance directly to families that they could apply to building, maintaining, or renting their homes.

Determining how assistance is distributed must also be addressed. At one extreme, assistance could be directed to a particular city or project based on known priority needs. At another, given good data on local needs and an appropriate administrative infrastructure, it is possible to implement a block grant system. In this, HOME and CDBG funds could be divided among local entities that determine local priorities and deliver the programs. A model between these would be some set of categorical programs, in which local entities would write competitive applications for funding and the best proposals would then receive it.

iv. Accounting for and Evaluating Assistance

Finally, in any sort of subsidy system, an accountability system is usually required to ensure that available funds are used for intended purposes. Wherever government subsidies are involved, there is a potential for waste, fraud, and abuse. An auditing and monitoring system also is usually required.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *If asked, HUD would be willing to provide training in developing a new subsidy system as well as training professionals responsible for managing the new programs.*

E. Other Human Services

1. Introduction

A new Cuba may face a number of social challenges that require significant attention from human services agencies and organizations. During a transition, critical challenges could include serving a large aging population, combating prostitution, guaranteeing child welfare, and providing adequate services for victims of torture and human trafficking. Also, it will be important to develop alternative programs to engage youth, who are currently indoctrinated by government programs that promote complete allegiance to the state and minimize family influence.

Incomes in Cuba are already considerably lower than those of the transition economies of Eastern Europe at the time of the Soviet collapse. Therefore, a free Cuba may share many of the same or worse demographic and social challenges that have confronted other former communist countries. These include a rapidly aging population and a highly developed welfare state that is dependent for revenues on a crumbling centrally planned economy, in which non-compliance and corruption have become endemic.

All of these challenges likely will call for a strong effort from the social services arena. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) could become involved in advising and assisting a free Cuban government to address social problems in the manner outlined below.

i. Surveying Social and Economic Needs

At the outset of the post-Castro transition, Cuban authorities may want to conduct as comprehensive a social services survey as possible. Cuban experts could work with PAHO, USAID, and private organizations (e.g., HelpAge International, the main internationally operated NGO to support the elderly in the Caribbean) in assessing the social and economic needs of older Cubans and in developing social care systems that meet the needs of older persons. Assistance providers should prepare for the possibility of the collapse of existing programs — pensions, stipends for caregivers, health care, food, etc.

2. Maintaining Social Security for the Retired and Disabled

i. Problems Facing a Transition Government

In Cuba, social security refers to old age, survivor and disability insurance, cash benefits for illness, maternity, and work injury. Each employer, mainly state-owned enterprises, contributes up to 14 percent of payroll to cover all of these programs and the government covers any deficit.

The Cuban pension system's financial problems, created in part by the 1990s economic crisis, changing social attitudes, and population aging, include the following:¹¹

a. Adverse demographic factors

The fertility rate declined from 3.7 to 1.6 between 1970 and 1998, while life expectancy reached developed world levels. The effect was to create rapidly aging population. The UN estimates that 36.4 percent of Cubans will be over age 60 in 2050, up from 15.6 percent today and 25.9 percent expected in 2025. Cuba's working age population (ages 15-59) is projected to peak in 2010, and then shrink by more than one third over the ensuing 40 years. By 2030, there could be only 1.8 working age Cubans for each person of pension-age, compared to 4.2 today.

b. Decreased coverage of the labor force

The number of employers contributing to social security fell from 4.3 million in 1989 to 3.1 million in 1997. At the same time, the share of the labor force covered by social security declined from about 90 percent in 1990 to about 66 percent in 1997. This trend — reflecting the rapid growth of the informal economy — has considerably reduced the dependency ratio of workers to retirees (falling from 6.6 in 1970 to 2.5 in 1998) and produced a severe funding crisis.

c. Permissive qualifying conditions and benefit formulae

A relatively low retirement age and generous benefit formula (based on the highest 5 years out of the last 10, replacing between 50 and 90 percent of earnings), combined with a high life expectancy, has meant that the average pensioner receives a benefit for about 20 years. During the economic crisis, the average retirement age fell from age 63.5 to 60 and the number of disability

¹¹ Most of the information in the rest of the section on social security comes from several recent papers written by Carmelo Mesa-Lago, a noted economist and expert on Latin American social security systems.

pensions increased, as Cuba used the pension system as an unemployment and welfare program for older unemployed workers.

d. A growing deficit and actuarial imbalance

The social insurance system is deeply in the red. In 2000, the government paid 34 percent of social security expenses. In 2001, the pension deficit totaled 2.2% of GDP, while expenses were 6.5 percent of GDP — and growing rapidly. Cuba has no reserve fund.

e. Deterioration of the real value of benefits

Although nominal costs of social security rose during the 1990s, this rise was due mainly to inflation, which dramatically reduced the real value of un-indexed benefits. By 1998, the real value of pensions had declined 41 percent from the 1989 level. At the same time, government expenditures for social assistance, such as cash benefits to the needy elderly, underwent an even steeper decline. While the Castro regime has been discussing reforms to the system for at least 10 years, nothing significant has been done.

3. Reforming the Retirement and Pension Systems

The Cuban economy and government budget after transition may not be able to sustain the level of unearned benefits and the lax requirements for eligibility that the communist system permitted. At the same time, it will be important to ensure that the retired and disabled populations receive a level of support that prevents health problems, acknowledges the worth of their contribution to society, and limits protests and unrest.

The current Cuban retirement system is funded in part from a 14 percent payroll tax. It is not known how much of that goes to health or other services. What is known is that one-third of pension monies have to come from other sources (presumably the VAT), because payroll tax collections are not sufficient. If only half of the 14 percent goes to pensions and it covers only two-thirds of the pension bill, then under current compliance rates and eligibility rules Cuba needs approximately 11-12 percent of payroll to cover pension costs alone.

In the initial transition period, there will probably be a large increase in non-compliance resulting from the simultaneous collapse of the centrally planned economy and the coercive power of the tax authorities. During this period, paying

the very low benefit levels under the existing system could require significant infusions of aid. Raising taxes to the higher levels needed to sustain current benefits, even under the best of circumstances, probably would undermine job creation in the formal economy and generate even more non-compliance. (China, which also has a large and fast-growing aged population, faces a similar problem.)

The challenge likely will be to create a broad based revenue source designed to minimize the current problem of widespread non-compliance. Cuba has a good chance of being the world's oldest society by mid-century, and any solution must take this fact into account.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *In light of the coming collapse of Cuba's centrally planned economy, the U.S. Government should be prepared to encourage a free Cuba to initiate a sustainable, pre-funded social security system, as has been done in other transition economies.*
- *The U.S. Government should be prepared to encourage the transition government to consider funding the transition as much as possible through the sale of state-owned assets. The World Bank has been leading the way in promoting funded approaches in Latin America and Eastern Europe.*
- *Other reforms the U.S. Government should consider encouraging a free Cuba to take include:*
 - *Increasing the minimum pension and adjusting pensions to the consumer price index;*
 - *Moving to eliminate the black market economy, license businesses, and institute laws requiring employer contributions with small business exemptions;*
 - *Applying some of the proceeds from the sale of state assets to a pension fund for the Cuban people;*
 - *Working with lending organizations to obtain loans to help Cuba build the beginnings of a real reserve fund;*

- *Working with charities and churches to find in-kind solutions to providing pensioners with access to basic medical care and human services on the community level; and*
- *Creating a Cuban Elder Corps to help develop income-generating projects for older Cubans who may be without resources, thus also employing them, if in good health, to assist in reconstructing the nation.*
- *The Peace Corps could help provide micro-enterprise training, and HHS's Administration on Aging (AoA) and its aging network could serve as a resource in developing intergenerational programs — providing support to youth and assistance to the elderly.*

f. A national insurance market

The post-transition Cuban government may want to adopt some or all of the above proposals. The United States has an interest in preventing both a humanitarian crisis within Cuba and a situation that could prompt thousands of Cubans to try to migrate to where benefits are more reliably financed and generous. We and a free Cuban government also may share an interest in finding pension solutions that do not further bankrupt the Cuban economy or drive away the business investments and start-ups on which a new Cuba will depend.

4. Social Assistance

i. Services for the Elderly

The Cuban government also provides social assistance benefits to those in need, including disabled, single mothers, relatives dependent on a deceased insured, pensioners with low benefits, and workers reaching retirement age but not entitled to a pension, cash benefits, and benefits-in-kind such as food, shelter, and medications. Some of the social assistance programs include free medical care, low-cost meals at soup kitchens, subsidized housing, day care centers, and public and private nursing homes for some elderly. However, these programs do not cover all of those who are in need. The social protection network has also deteriorated in recent years. Rations that in the past covered one month now barely cover 10 days. Many elderly Cubans may become even more vulnerable during and after a transition period.

Development of community and home-based services will be important. It

may be important to assess the short- and long-term needs of older Cubans and to create home and community-based services that meet their needs, and those of their caregivers. These programs may include supportive, nutritional, preventive health, caregiver, and protection of the elderly services. The Administration on Aging, together with other HHS agencies and faith- and community-based organizations could support these efforts by providing or arranging for training, technical assistance, and sharing of materials developed in Spanish.

a. Public information campaign

During a transition, some older Cuban-Americans may desire to return to Cuba. There could be establishment of educational efforts to inform older returning Cubans about the availability or lack of food, housing, health and medical services, lifestyle changes, and availability of social security and other benefits when they return to Cuba.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *At the request of a transition government, HHS could develop and distribute educational materials, conduct local workshops, and prepare mental health services to help Cuban Americans with the anxiety and decision making process about returning.*

b. Church and community assistance

The existing pattern of home-based elder care and care for those with disabilities will benefit from an increased presence and greater freedom for churches and private charities, as well as renewed support for families and community organizations. This assistance will not be able to shoulder the entire burden, but it can do more if it is allowed to do so. Florida International University, under a USAID grant, has worked with Cubans (including visiting religious leaders) to develop program guides for working with older Cubans.

c. Prevent abuse and neglect of the elderly

Older people may be particularly at risk of abuse and neglect by family members and others during a transition period.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The Administration on Aging, working with other HHS agencies and NGOs could, if asked by a transition government, help to prepare and distribute information concerning elder abuse and neglect as well as available resources. AoA could also identify potential foster homes or “shared housing” arrangements to provide immediate shelter to the most vulnerable elderly.*

d. Discounted medical services

A Cuban transition government might consider, in cooperation with private pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, and aid donors, instituting access to basic medical services and medicines on a discounted basis, as is now being done in Africa and other poverty-stricken countries. This solution could also extend to special populations such as those living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic conditions.

e. Train and support more social and community workers

A free Cuba may need to retrain its existing social workers and community organizers, as well as prepare new professionals who can help individuals, families, and groups locate assistance and opportunities in a post-Castro system. Exchange programs and service providers can assist Cuba in doing this.

ii. Services for Youth

Cuba is known to have serious problems with runaway and homeless youth, school dropouts, juvenile delinquency, and child prostitution. Concerted efforts by Cuban transition authorities and public and private assistance donors may be needed to counter these problems.

a. Youth Development Programs

It could be important to introduce positive youth development programs as part of civic engagement efforts, and to provide street outreach, education, and mental health services through shelters for runaways and homeless youth. HHS/SAMHSA could support these efforts, while the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) could use its Family Youth Services Bureau’s (FYSB) clearinghouse and training and technical assistance providers to provide street outreach materials in both English and Spanish. FYSB could form a team of

Government and private/nonprofit youth service agencies to go to Cuba. The latter could include partnerships with faith-based and community-based organizations

b. Youth Rescue Programs

The new Cuban authorities, churches, and other private organizations, including concerned employers, may want to develop special outreach programs to deal with youth crises such as drug abuse, criminal activity (including gangs), prostitution, and diseases such as HIV/AIDS. U.S. federal agencies such as HHS, churches, and specialized youth crisis intervention organizations could assist their Cuban counterparts in developing and implementing special programs to deal with abused, troubled, and diseased youth. Cooperation with youth development program providers and law enforcement could be useful in this effort.

c. Youth Mentoring

American and Cuban adults can also assist Cuban youth through the establishment of mentoring programs sponsored by mentoring associations, counseling services, and churches. Mentoring services can address specific problems faced by Cuban youth as well as general counseling and companionship. Adult mentors could be provided from either Cuba or other countries such as the United States, and can help Cuban youth get the extra emotional and educational support they need to start a new, healthy and productive life. A special mentoring program could be established for children and youth with disabilities to assist and encourage this heretofore isolated segment of Cuban society to find necessary care and appropriate work, and to make sure they have respect and access to needed services.

iii. Child Welfare

Child welfare services involve a combination of services to families and single parents who have infants and young children, as well as a program of care and adoption services for infants and children without living parents or who have been abandoned. Assistance to parents is likely to be provided via other social, educational, and health services in the public and private sectors, as well as through the churches. Abandoned or orphaned children require special services not commonly available under the Castro regime.

a. Establish Child-Centered Adoption Services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *If asked by transition authorities, the U.S. Government in cooperation with private donors such as churches could initiate a technical assistance program to offer a child-centered adoption process:*
 - *HHS could work with USAID to assess the Cuban adoption system and provide necessary assistance to create a child-centered approach. Child tracking systems developed by the World Bank could be implemented and training of Cuban nationals could be developed in partnership with HHS/ACF and USAID, as well as international agencies like UNICEF and/or the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); and*
 - *ACF could use the methodology of Child and Family Services reviews to conduct an analysis of the overall services providing a benchmark for improving those services.*

HHS's Head Start Bureau currently works with seven Hispanic Serving Institutions (colleges and universities) that are redefining their approach to working with early education staff in new and innovative ways toward attaining an academic degree. Head Start could work to expand the use of the Head Start Bureau's Web-based Learning Center, which is under development, and help implement web-based learning opportunities. The Learning Center is immediately accessible for online technical assistance, resource materials, specialized cottages for a variety of concerns, chat rooms where experts monitor and respond in a problem-solving mode, national consultant pool rosters of expert consultants, and Spanish-speaking consultants, staff, and materials. Head Start could share lessons learned from initiatives for teaching early literacy, such as Good Start/Grow Smart.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *The Administration for Children, Youth, and Families at HHS could offer to assist the transition government in the creation of a clearinghouse and provide Spanish- language information and training materials on a wide range of child welfare programs and the creation of performance standards. Training and technical assistance can include early childhood education, fatherhood and family development, homelessness, and developing and enriching the Early Childhood Curriculum and syllabus at colleges and universities in Cuba.*

5. Special Social Assistance to Castro Regime Victims

i. Victim Identification and Outreach System

It could be helpful to create an outreach program to vulnerable populations for the purpose of identifying victims and preventing people from becoming victims. HHS's Administration for Children and Families (ACF) could use lessons learned from the Trafficking in Persons model that includes public awareness strategies, rapid education of intermediaries, and a referral system to handle informational inquiries and crisis and law enforcement calls. Examples of intermediaries include faith-based and community-based institutions, social service providers, NGOs, health and welfare services, the travel industry, and educational institutions.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *U.S. federal and local experts, as well as private sector providers, could help a transition government establish an integrated call center for telephone crisis counseling to address counseling tasks for victims of trafficking, as well as other social ills such as rape, domestic abuse, at-risk/runaway youth, and homelessness.*

ii. Victims of Torture

It likely will be important to help provide emergency treatment and care to meet victims' immediate needs. Assistance could include helping conduct an assessment of the prevalence of torture victims and the current capacity for providing immediate, short-term and long-term services for victims.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- *ACF, through its Office of Refugee Resettlement, could work with USAID and a number of NGOs to develop this assessment if a transition government so requests.*
- *ACF also could undertake assist transition authorities with publicity campaign to gain domestic assistance and support.*

- *The U.S. Government could, if asked, help in the creation of national legislation and legal authorities to continue to help victims of torture and provide long-term services.*

6. Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Prostitution is illegal in Cuba. Nevertheless, the Department of State reports that prostitution of girls and boys is a serious problem, particularly in areas of the country that attract foreign tourists. Police in Cuba have led a general crackdown on prostitution in recent years, but these efforts have not eliminated child prostitution. A transition government will need to find effective ways to address what is formally called the *commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC)*, particularly if the government adopts policies that promote more tourism. Simultaneously, the government likely will need to provide counseling and support services to children who have been victimized by CSEC.

The causes and effects of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, including child prostitution and trafficking, are complex and multifaceted. Relevant factors include poverty, child abuse and/or abandonment, social attitudes that undervalue children, and weak application of existing laws. Victims of CSEC often suffer irreparable damage to their physical and mental health. Common problems that they experience are early pregnancy, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, such as AIDS, and dropping out of school. A CSEC program would need to address all of these aspects to effectively combat this complex and tragic problem.

i. Remedial Steps

The U.S. Government, particularly the Department of Labor, has significant experience in developing and implementing programs to combat child trafficking and prostitution. In the Americas alone, the Department of Labor has funded and overseen cooperative CSEC programs in Central America, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Brazil, and Paraguay. These programs have provided funding and technical assistance to aid in reforming laws covering CSEC, raising awareness about the problem, and providing vital services to its victims.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *If asked, the Department of Labor could assist a transition government in designing and managing a program to combat the commercial sexual*

exploitation of children and adolescents. Partners could include international organizations that the Department of Labor has worked with and through on past CSEC projects, including the International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor, UNICEF, and relevant NGOs. Local Cuban authorities and leaders, including the education community, would also be important partners in any CSEC assistance.

- *Drawing from experience, a Cuban CSEC project could include the following objectives:*
 - *Identify gaps in the existing legal systems and formulate recommendations for improved legislation for the protection of sexually exploited children and adolescents;*
 - *Make available credible information and intelligence related to CSEC, including possible child trafficking networks, for use in the planning, design, and implementation of public interventions;*
 - *Develop an information system to identify exploiters, and train government personnel in the application of the system;*
 - *Build the capacity of relevant public, private, and religious institutions to fight CSEC in terms of their ability to formulate and implement plans and programs;*
 - *Organize workshops and meetings, and develop coordinated partnership among nongovernmental organizations, law enforcement authorities, trade unions, employers' organizations, community leaders, and the media to mobilize against CSEC;*
 - *Implement outreach campaigns — including school-based programs — and establish youth clubs to raise awareness of the problem nationally, and particularly in target areas and populations;*
 - *Organize and provide legal, health, psycho-social, and educational services to children and their families to remove children from CSEC and prevent children at risk from involvement in CSEC;*
 - *Train professional staff in psycho-social trauma treatment methods and case management with a focus on child participation, and help develop national*

*standards and guidelines for care facilities and the training of caregivers;
and*

- *Help to develop income generation programs for families in high-risk areas to help reduce vulnerability to involvement in CSEC.*

7. The Challenge from a Social Security Perspective

In the past, the U.S. Social Security Administration has sent specialists to other countries to evaluate their system and propose change. It could provide similar technical assistance to a free Cuba. Other international organizations active in pension reform include the International Labor Organization, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

Technical assistance alone, however, may not be sufficient to deal with the financial and social challenges facing a rapidly aging Cuba. Even under the most optimistic of scenarios, Cuba faces severe pension and health care crises with the potential to delay economic recovery in a post-Castro transition. Under a worst-case scenario, these crises could lead to unacceptable social outcomes requiring a dramatic humanitarian response from U.S. policymakers and the Cuban émigré community.

RECOMMENDATION:

- *The U.S. Social Security Administration should offer to send specialists to evaluate and propose changes to the transition government.*

V. CONSULTING AND COORDINATING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Many different international organizations and donors are interested in Cuba and will desire to be involved in the transition. Assistance to a Cuban transition must be a multilateral effort and U.S. efforts will generally prove more successful if taken in consultation and cooperation with these groups. Coordinating plans will need to take this into account and be ready to accommodate diverse assistance providers according to interests, capabilities, and the needs of the Cuban people. The U.S. Government should begin to plan how to coordinate with these organizations to show Cubans that legitimate assistance providers have their interests at heart and should not be feared or suspect.

Within the Inter-American system, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, PAHO, and the Pan-American Development Foundation could all have roles to play and expertise and assistance to offer.

Several UN agencies already operate in Cuba, including the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), UNICEF, PAHO, UNESCO, and the World Food Program. A free Cuban government may want to invite them to remain in Cuba during a transition and to provide services during the short- and longer-term phases. It may be appropriate for other UN agencies to be involved, as circumstances require.

In addition, NGOs can play an important role, including universities humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and fraternal organizations such as the Masonic Order.