

An End to the Trade Blockade of Cuba

Every year since 1992 the overwhelming majority of UN member countries have voted for Cuba's resolution demanding an end to the US economic blockade. The aim of America's 50 year-long economic siege is to turn Cubans against their revolutionary government by subjecting them to deprivation, hunger and disease. In 2011, 186 UN members voted in favour of ending the blockade while only 2, America and Israel voted for its retention.

For example, the surgical treatment of Cuban children with cardiovascular disease has been hampered by Cuba's inability to purchase the necessary medications, thanks to the blockade. Cuba's Institute of Oncology and Radiobiology was prevented from purchasing positron emission tomography (PET) diagnostic imaging equipment, which produces the highest quality medical images. There are three manufacturers of this technology in the world, and America has banned all three from selling their equipment to Cuba.

Cuba is free to trade with other nations, but the U.S. threatens sanctions against foreign companies that don't abide by its restrictions. A stark example arrived off the coast of Havana in January this year: A massive oil exploration rig built with less than 10 percent U.S. parts to qualify under the embargo was brought all the way from Singapore at great expense, while comparable platforms sat idle in U.S. waters just across the Gulf of Mexico.

Conference recognises that despite the blockade, Cuba has made massive achievements in health, education and social services for its people, and applauds the country's international solidarity throughout the world, where Cuba is providing medical care and free training in more than 79 developing countries. Special recognition and praise is given to the Cuban medical teams in Haiti who were not only working in the country before the 2010 earthquake, but who have been at the forefront of the humanitarian relief efforts since and are committed to working to develop a long term health care programme with, and for, the Haitian people.

Conference expresses support for the right of Cuba to choose their own economic, social and political path and opposes the USA's illegal economic blockade and policies to isolate and interfere in the internal affairs of the island.

UNISON has a long history of links with trade unions in Cuba. UNISON has vigorously opposed the illegal blockade of the island by the US government and through twinning with regions and branches has been able to establish formal links to support our sister unions in Cuba and strengthen our union's international profile.

Conference calls on the National Executive Council to:

1. Campaign for the removal of the 50 year old American blockade of Cuba,
2. Encourage regions and branches to send delegations to Cuba to see first hand the effect that the trade blockade has on Cuban families, and
3. Encourage branches to affiliate to the Cuba Solidarity Campaign.