

Cuba's New Constitution Project: Everybody Matters

04/08/2018



Havana (PL) After its approval in the first regular session of the 9th Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power (Parliament), the new Constitution project of the Republic of Cuba will be submitted to popular consultation to collect the people's opinions.

Like this, Cubans will have the opportunity to speak up for or against the articles' content and offer their views on specific issues so that, as Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said, the text reflects the present and future of the Homeland.

The Cuban Parliament agreed on July 22 to hold a popular consultation between August 13 and November 15, and after this process the document will return to the Legislative for its final discussion.

When returning to the Assembly, the project enriched with the citizens' contributions could be approved or not, and on that condition will depend the realization of a referendum.

Gathered at Havana's Convention Center between July 18 and 22, Cuban deputies agreed on the need to provide the island with a modern and present-day constitution, marked by the updating of the socio-economic model.

Based on equity, social justice and against all types of discrimination, the new text ratifies the irrevocability of the socialist system as an unshakable pillar.

In this regard, the parliamentarian Miguel Barnet considered that it is a vanguard document, in which human rights, citizen duties and legal guarantees stand out.

The Constitution project is modern, signed by the times in which we live, said the President of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba and author of well-known books such as 'Biography of a Cimarron.'

He also called to support the document and to drive the country towards a future of humanism and prosperity.

It's worth highlighting the aim to bring the entire people the discussion of a text that is in tune with the changes to improve Cuban socialism, said in an interview with Prensa Latina Deputy Jose Angel Portal, recently appointed Minister of Public Health.

According to Portal, the project is on a par with the historical moment of the Revolution, and the most important thing now is the popular consultation.

For her part, the Secretary General of the Federation of Cuban Women, Teresa Amarelle, and the President of the University Student Federation, Raul Alejandro Palmero, told Prensa Latina the need for the country to have a law of laws appropriate to the progress in updating the socio-economic model.

CHANGES IN THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

Undoubtedly, one of the issues that provoked more debate among parliamentarians was the one referring to the changes in the institution of marriage proposed in the text.

The Magna Carta currently in force since 1976 defines marriage as the voluntary union between a man and a woman; nevertheless, the new text gets off that conception and proposes marriage just between two people, explained the Secretary of the Council of State, Homero Acosta, when presenting the article.

According to Acosta, in the future the law will establish that concept's development, because when it says 'between two people' it does not specify the sex.

It does not say that it is about equal marriage, just breaks with that barrier so that in the future the idea could be added as an act of justice, equality and humanism, noted the deputy.

We are not the first, nor would be the vanguard in this issue, because there are about 24 countries that have this concept incorporated, and we could not turn this issue away when preparing a new constitutional project, he said.

Acosta explained that after enacting the Constitution, those in charge of detailing the changes in the institution of marriage will have a year to introduce the necessary adjustments.

It is not only about the area of family law, this essentially impacts other rights that have to do with the Civil Code, records and successions (inheritance), the legislator added.

In Deputy Mariela Castro's opinion, the change proposed in the Constitution on marriage represents 'a marvelous revolutionary achievement.'

We hope that in the popular consultation the majority of the population will be able to understand the step taken in the matter of human rights, said the Director of the National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), known for her activism in favor of equal rights and full inclusion of the LGTBI community.

CUBAN REVOLUTION, BASED ON DEMOCRACY

For Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, the consultation transcends as an 'exercise of direct participation of the people', which 'acquires the greatest political relevance and will further show that the Revolution is based on the most genuine democracy.'

Each Cuban will be able to freely express his/her opinions and contribute to reach a constitutional text that reflects the present and future of the Homeland, he said when closing the plenary session.

The new Constitution project ratifies Cuba's socialist nature and includes changes in the structure of the State, such as the creation of the offices of President and Vice President of the Republic, and of the Prime Minister.

In the legal field, the text extends the rights of individuals, with issues such as the guarantees of due process, Habeas Corpus, the presumption of innocence and the social reintegration of those deprived of liberty.

It also includes several forms of property, including all the people's socialist, mixed and private properties.

The preservation and study of the legacy of the Cuban Revolution's historical leader, Fidel Castro (1926-2016), occupied several moments of the meeting attended by more than 600 legislators.

In their interventions, the Cuban deputies agreed on the importance of the document prepared by a 33-parliamentarian commission, chaired by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, Raul Castro.

From August 13 to November 15, men and women can issue their opinions in order to improve the draft that will give way to a new Magna Carta of the country.

* Journalist of Prensa Latina News Agency's National Editorial Department.
