



mediCuba-Europa - Annual Assembly in Luxembourg the 5th of March 2016

**Mr President Barack Obama**  
**The White House**  
**Washington DC 20500 USA**

Dear Mr. President

We congratulate you on your steps to develop dialogue with Cuba and make progress towards normalization of relations between the USA and Cuba. The establishment of Embassies and your upcoming state visit to Cuba give hope.

MediCuba-Europa has, since its foundation in 1997, initiated and coordinated humanitarian medical projects in support of medical care in Cuba. **mediCuba-Europa has member and associate member organizations in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.** Our role has been important especially because of your country's Cuba blockade that against moral principles, ethics and international law, has hindered the Cuban people to obtain medicines and medical equipment wholly or partly produced by your country's companies.

Due to our collaboration with Cuba during the years, we can confirm that, despite economic challenges in large part caused by your blockade, Cuba has developed a world renowned health system and reached out to the poorest people in our global community. Cuban doctors, nurses, social workers and teachers have provided support to communities across the world. Through the Latin American School of Medicine, Cuba has educated impressive numbers of students from third world countries to become doctors of service in their home countries.

In your speeches referring to Cuba you stress your aim to "help the Cuban people improve their lives". Without doubt it is your country's blockade against Cuba, that is the greatest hindrance. The international community underlined this a few months ago when 191 countries voted in the United Nations condemning the blockade.

The blockade is especially hurting in the field of medicine. During 2015, that is after you declared you would change US policy towards Cuba, the application of the US blockade laws has continued to prevent Cuba to obtain life essential medicines and equipment.

For instance certain cancer treatment equipment in Cuba cannot function normally because of the lack of the radioactive isotope indium 192, the principal supplier of which is a US company. When the Canadian firm XLTEK was taken over by a US company, purchase from them of their medical equipment was stopped. Treatment of leukaemia has been impaired because the blockade has hindered ARK Diagnostics of California from selling their diagnostic systems to Cuba.

As you Mr President know, your blockade also hurts your own people. Cuba has an advanced pharmaceutical research and development and production, creating some unique medicines and treatments. One of the most well known examples is Heberprot-P for treatment of diabetic foot patients. Another example is Cuba's lung cancer vaccine CimaVax-EGF. The blockade laws delay and complicate availability in the USA.

Mr. President Barack Obama, you have in your speeches urged the US Congress to annul the US blockade laws. However, as we all know, this can only come about in the unknown future. In the meantime people in Cuba, and also in the USA, suffer and die unnecessarily because of the blockade.

We therefore appeal to you to take the steps now needed and use your executive powers to as far as possible limit the application of your blockade laws within medicine and all other fields. Such action would bring great joy in connection with your forthcoming visit to Cuba.

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