



Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica

Address:

HONOURABLE ROOSEVELT SKERRIT
PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA

**on the Occasion of
Ceremony to bestow the Jose Marti Award**

**“PLAZA DE LA REVOLUTION”
HAVANA, CUBA
April 26th, 2022
7:00 p.m.**

Hermanos y Hermanas de Cuba, I greet you today as a brother; a brother in the human family, a brother of the Caribbean family and a brother in the struggle for dignity for all people, particularly the poor and the oppressed. I greet you as a brother of Cuba.

Today, you honour me; but today, I celebrate you and I salute you ... all of the people of Cuba..., not because you have chosen to bestow this honour on me, but for your vision, for your example, for your perseverance and for your accomplishments.

I salute you for your generosity in the face of all the odds, despite the deliberate obstacles that you have had placed in your path and for your victory over it all.

I celebrate you for holding fast to the ideas and ideals of Jose Martí, to the revolutionary spirit of Ché Guevarra and to the vigour and vision of Comrade El Presidente Fidel.

Through the example of the Cuban people, the world has seen that size is no bar to excellence or global leadership; that determination is the greatest driver for success; and that the human spirit is indomitable in its quest for dignity and freedom.

I sense that spirit Revolution still in this land; A spirit which arises out of your history, your character and your values. The Revolution is no longer one of guns but one of ideas, one which seeks to elevate the dominant principle of our world as the dignity of the human person.

The Cuban Revolution has shown the world that despite the global contention of war and trial, there is reward in the desire for and pursuit of peace; that on the landscape of underdevelopment and poverty, nation-states can offer citizens equity and inclusion; that against bitter oppression, countries must stand on the side of social and economic justice.

The world has witnessed the failings of the naked idolization of capital, but Cuba's voice has been firm and consistent in insisting that first and foremost, must be the prioritization of the human person.

For the people of Cuba, ideas and principles of peace, dignity, prosperity, freedom, self-determination, justice, equity and a generosity which seeks always to improve the condition of people everywhere, are not abstract constructs. They are at the core of the purpose of your nationhood.

History will record that at every stage of the existence of the independent Cuba, you have remained true to your principles. When enlightenment and upliftment were necessary, the education and health care systems of Cuba provided gateways of universal access, that placed the person at the centre of development and demonstrated how a society should care for its citizens.

The scientists of Cuba, without the resources of the developed world, have been amongst some of the most pioneering and innovative across the world, particularly in the areas of health sciences. While many countries hope for the achievement of the sustainable development goals, or fear they may not be reached, Cuba has already achieved most of the SDGs.

It cannot be denied that Cuba is a light amongst nations, showing what can be accomplished when a people in a just cause do not let a blockade become a barrier to their success, when they remain rooted to their principles and the chief principle is the dignity of the person. It was Cuba which declared that the Caribbean and Americas should be a "zone of peace." When Africa needed freedom fighters, Cuba was there as a brother in arms.

When COVID-19 struck, Cuban health professionals were deployed to every corner of the globe, bringing comfort and healing to many, without discrimination. In the aftermath of almost every humanitarian crisis or natural disaster on our planet, Cuba is always amongst the first responders, offering tangible support in restoring normalcy.

Many nations across the world have been the recipients of Cuba's generosity, friendship, brotherhood, and solidarity. It is for these reasons that Cuba should be celebrated, saluted, and honoured.

It was Jose Martí who said, "***happiness exists on earth, and it is won through prudent exercise of reason, knowledge of the harmony of the universe, and constant practice of generosity.***"

The people of Cuba, by becoming thought leaders and practitioners of the principles of sustainable development; by working in protection of the planet and the natural and built environments; by promoting peace, equal rights, and opportunity for all peoples; and by your generosity to others in service of the

human family; you have contributed to the happiness of the rest of the world.

I look forward to the day when Cuba will no longer be the target of a continuing imperialism and will be allowed to fully take its deserved and rightful place among the family of nations.

For Cuba's service to the Commonwealth of Dominica, the world and to humanity, I thank you.

For finding me worthy of honour, I express my most humble and deep gratitude.

¡Viva el pueblo de Cuba! ¡Viva la revolución!

Que la luz de Cuba nunca se apague!

Long live the people of Cuba! Long live the revolution!

May Cuba's light never go dim!