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NAME Statement on Cuba

Since 2015 the [National Association for Multicultural Education](http://www.nameorg.org) has taken members on cultural and professional exchanges to one of the United States' nearest neighbors — Cuba. The annual trips have included educators, health care professionals, state officials, former military personnel, journalists, and past and present NAME board members and presidents. The cultural and professional exchanges started in July 2015, only seven months after then-[U.S. President Barack Obama and then-Cuban President Raul Castro in December 2014](#) took the long-overdue, historic step to normalize relations between the two countries. It followed the two leaders shaking hands for the first time in December 2013 in Soweto, South Africa, at the [memorial service for Nelson Mandela](#). NAME applauds this powerful tribute to the South African leader who championed peace and reconciliation. In 2015, both Cuba and the United States reopened their embassies, which had been closed for more than 50 years.

The nearly 100 NAME members who have journeyed to Cuba have experienced the wonderful and [welcoming hospitality](#) of the [Cuban people](#), their revolutionary leaders beautiful language, landmarks, customs and cultures. Because of colonialism, [Cuba's history](#) is not dissimilar from the United States'. People in both countries suffered brutal indigenous genocide and the kidnapping and enslavement of Africans to do the oppressive, back-breaking and degrading work to build up the countries' economies. Each brought in people from China to build railroads to benefit the boom of the agricultural economies. People in Cuba and the United States also share a history that includes a fierce fight for liberty and independence from imperialist powers and against slavery.

In no way can Cuba's human rights abuses be ignored, but neither can NAME brush aside the ongoing human rights abuses and centuries of racism and discrimination in the United States against people of color. Both countries must make improvements. NAME knows that each nation can gain much from [stronger](#) ties. For example, Cuba has advances in literacy and in medical treatments that can elevate the U.S. population. [Cubans](#) also can benefit from U.S. technology and other innovations. But for these and many other gains to happen, the United States government must lift its long-standing [embargo](#) on Cuba. Cubans call it a "blockade" because not only does the United States block imports from Cuba, it also punishes other nations of the world if they do business with Cuba. Banking connections also are forbidden. The U.S. continues to make travel to Cuba unnecessarily difficult.

NAME thus insists that the U.S. must immediately cease attacking Cuba through the means of economic warfare and end the embargo and all impediments to [trade](#) with Cuba and resume regular, ongoing, humane relations that honor the spirit of multicultural inclusion.