Country Profile on Disability
Republic of Cuba

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Abbreviations

ACLIFIM	Asociación Cubana de Limitados Físico-Motores	Cuban Association of Persons with Motor and Physical Disabilities
ANCI	Asociación Nacional del Ciego	National Association of Blind and Persons with Visual Impairments
ACNU	Asociación Cubana de las Naciones Unidas	Cuban United Nations Association
ANSOC	Asociación Nacional de Sordos de Cuba	National Association of Deaf and Persons with Hearing Impairments
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation	
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	
CONAPED	Consejo Nacional para la Atención a las Personas con Discapacidad	National Council for the Support of Persons with Disabilities
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	
FMC	Federación de Mujeres Cubanas	Federation of Cuban Women
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	
HI	Humanity & Inclusion	
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health	
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	
ILO	International Labour Organization	
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	
NSDRR	National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction	
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities	
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	
VNR	Voluntary National Review	
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	

1. Basic Profile

1-1. Basic Indicators[1]

Gross Domestic Product[2] per Capita	USD 9,605	2020

Government Expenditures by Sector

Healthcare (% of GDP)	11.78%	2022
Education (% of GDP)	8.4%	2022
Social Protection (% of GDP)[3]	9.0%	2020

Population

Total Population	10,979,783 people	2024
Male (% of total population)	49.3%	
Female (% of total population)	50.7%	
Urban Population (% of total population)	77.2%	
Rural Population (% of total population)	22.8%	
Life expectancy at birth (total)	78.0 years	2023
Male	75.6 years	
Female	80.5 years	

Health

Prevalence of Undernourishment (% of Population)	2.5%	2006
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	6.6	2023

Education

Education System[4]		
Primary Education	6 years	
Compulsory Education	9 years	
Literacy Rate (% of ages 15 and above)	97.6%	2019
Adult male	99.0%	
Adult female	96.3%	

[1] Based on the World Bank database (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator (Accessed: 17 January 2026)).
[2] Gross Domestic Product; hereinafter referred to as "GDP."
[3] International Labour Organization (ILO) (2024), *World Social Protection Report 2024–26*.
[4] Cuba's education system consists of primary school (6 years), middle school (3 years), and high school (3 years). Compulsory education lasts 9 years, 6 years of primary school and 3 years of junior high school. Based on the Cuban Ministry of Education website (https://www.mined.gob.cu/ (Accessed: 2 June 2026)).

School Enrollment rate		
Primary (% of gross) (total)	98.1%	2024
Male	98.5%	
Female	97.6%	
Secondary (% of gross) (total)	91.7%	2024
Boys	90.9%	
Girls	92.6%	
Tertiary (% of gross) (total)	43.1%	2024
Boys	29.2%	
Girls	57.6%	

Employment

Unemployment (total)	1.5%	2024
Men (% of male labor force)	1.4%	
Female (% of female labor force)	1.6%	

1-2. Definition of Disability and Indicators on Disability

1-2-1. Definition of Disability

The Republic of Cuba (hereinafter referred to as "Cuba") ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "CRPD") in 2007. In Cuba, disability is defined in the "Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People"[5], as adopted in 2008, "as a physical, mental or sensorial deficiency, be it permanent or temporary, which limits the ability of carrying out one or more essential activities of daily life, which may be caused or aggravated by the economic or social environment."

1-2-2. Statistics on Disabilities

According to the 2012 Cuba census[6], the population with some form of disability across all age groups totaled 556,317, accounting for 5% of the total population. Women with disabilities accounted for 50.9% and men for 49.1%, with women outnumbering men. The 2012 census recorded nine types of disabilities[7]. According to the government's responses to the advance questionnaire regarding the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[8] (2019) (hereinafter referred to as the "Reply to List of Issues"), the Government

[5] https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Brasilia-rules-vulnerable-groups.pdf. (Accessed: 17 April 2026)
[6] https://www.almendron.com/tribuna/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/publicacion-completa-color-de-la-piel.pdf. (Accessed: 17 April 2026)
[7] Permanent speech impairment, Hearing impairment, Hearing loss, Low vision, Visual impairment, Physical disability, Chronic mental illness, Intellectual disability, Chronic kidney disease.
[8] The Reply to List of Issues, CRPD/C/CUB/Q/1/Add.1

of Cuba is in the process of phasing in the "International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (hereinafter referred to as "ICF") is being phased in domestically. Although the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning was not used in the 2012 census, its use is being considered for the 2020 census.

Number of Persons with Disabilities (all age Groups)	556,317	5% of total population[9]	2012
Male	273,404		
Female	282,913		

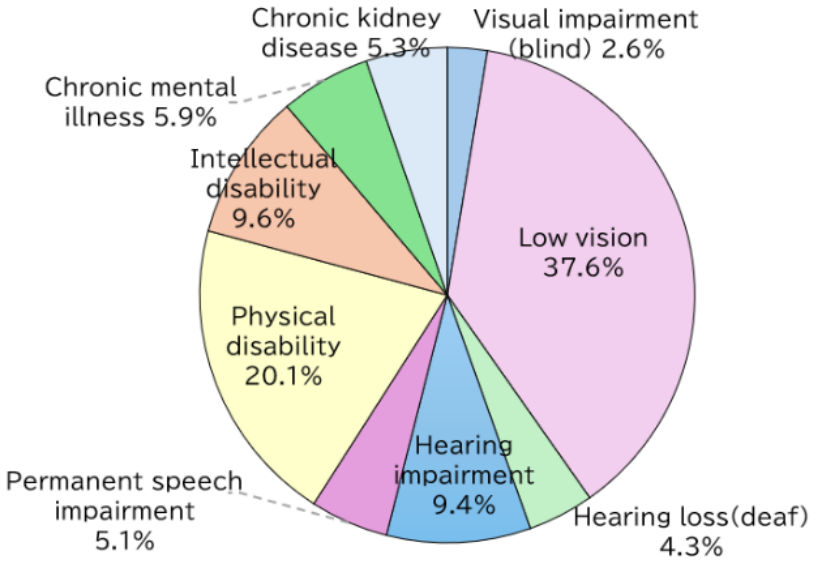


Figure 1 Percentage of Functional Limitation (all ages) (2012)

The highest percentage was for visual impairments ("low vision" (37.6%) and "visual impairment" (2.6%)), followed by "physical disabilities" (20.1%) and hearing impairments ("hearing impairment" (9.4%) and "hearing loss" (4.3%)). "Intellectual disability" accounted for 9.6%, "chronic mental illness" for 5.9%, and "chronic kidney disease" for 5.3%, while "permanent speech impairment" had the lowest proportion at 5.1%.
Source: Prepared by the study team based on the National Office of Statistics and Information (2016 edition), Census of Population and Housing Cuba 2012: Skin Color according to the Population and Housing Census

[9] Based on the State Party's Report (2014). The census was scheduled for 2020 but has been postponed. (https://world-education-blog.org/2020/12/18/education-of-students-with-disabilities-in-cuba/) (Accessed: 20 April 2026).

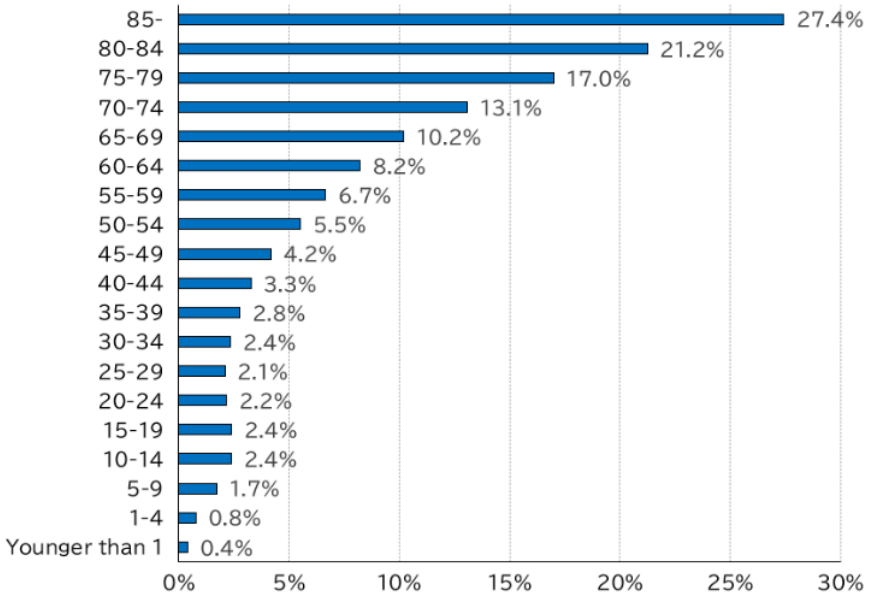


Figure 2 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities by Age Group (all ages) (2012)

The percentage was highest among those aged 85 and above at 27.4%, followed by those aged 80–84 at 21.2%, those aged 75–79 at 17.0%, and those aged 70–74 at 13.1%; the percentage decreases as the age group gets younger, down to those aged 25–29. The proportions for those aged 10–14, 15–19, and 20–24 are nearly identical at 2.4%, 2.4%, and 2.2%, respectively, while those aged 5–9 account for 1.7%, those aged 1–4 account for 0.8%, and those under 1 year of age account for 0.4%.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on the National Office of Statistics and Information (2016 edition), "Census of Population and Housing Cuba 2012: Skin Color according to the Population and Housing Census"

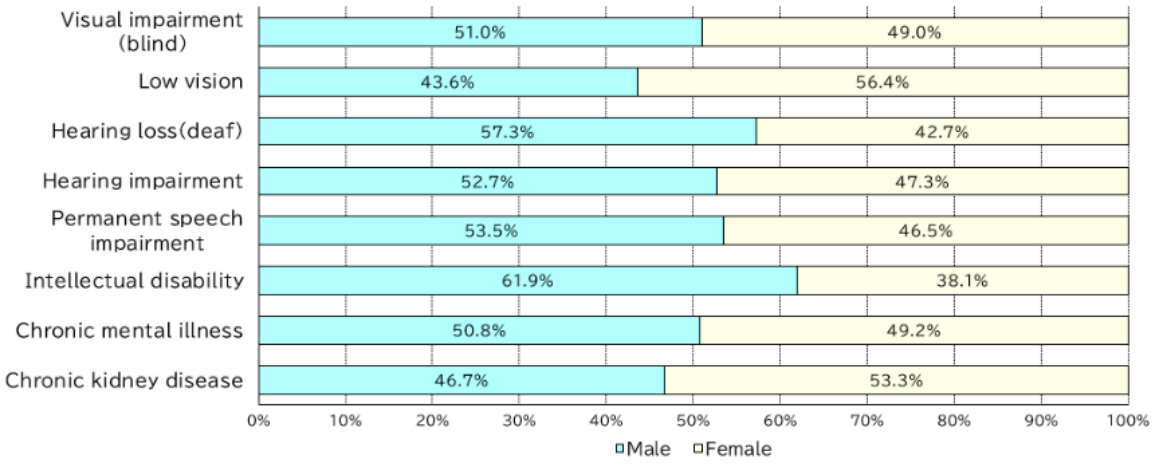


Figure 3 Percentage of Functional Limitation by Sex (all ages) (2012)

For visual impairments (total blindness), 51.0% are male, and 49.0% are female; for low vision, 56.4% are female, and 43.6% are male. For hearing impairments (total deafness), 57.3% are male, and 42.7% are female; for hearing loss, 52.7% are male, and 47.3% are female. For permanent speech and language disorders, 53.5% are male, and 46.5% are female. For intellectual disabilities, 61.9% are male, and 38.1% are female; for chronic mental disorders, 50.8% are male and 49.2% are female. For chronic renal failure, 46.7% are male and 53.3% are female.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on the National Office of Statistics and Information (2016 edition), Census of Population and Housing Cuba 2012: Skin Color according to the Population and Housing Census

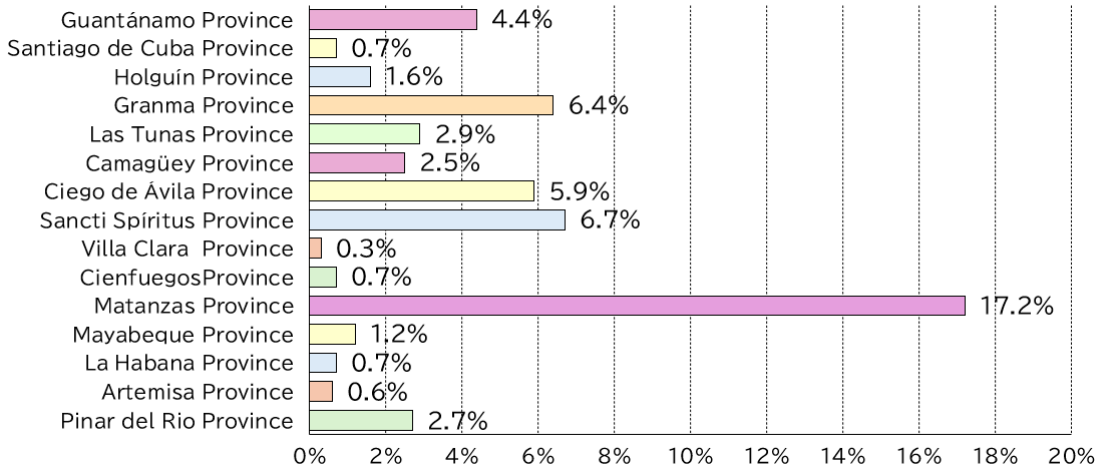


Figure 4 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities by Residential Area (Ages 18–49) (2019)

Matanzas Province has the highest proportion, at 17.2%, significantly exceeding those of other provinces. It is followed by Sancti Spíritus Province (6.7%), Granma Province (6.4%), and Ciego de Ávila Province (5.9%). Additionally, Guantánamo Province (4.4%) also shows a relatively high proportion. On the other hand, the province with the lowest proportion of persons with disabilities is Villa Clara (0.3%), followed by Artemisa (0.6%), Santiago de Cuba (0.7%), Cienfuegos (0.7%), and La Habana (0.7%). Additionally, Mayabeque Province (1.2%) and Holguín Province (1.6%) also have relatively low rates.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on UNICEF/Dirección de Registros Médicos y Estadísticas de Salud del Ministerio de Salud Pública: MINSAP (2020) Cuba: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019.

2. Administration and Policy on Disability

2-1. Administration on Disability

<Central government>

Entities responsible for disability Issues

Table 1 Entities Responsible for Disability Issues in Cuba

No.	Name	Overview
1	Ministry of Labor and Social Security (Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social)[10]	Established pursuant to a 2018 Cabinet decision. A central administrative agency tasked with formulating, directing, and supervising national policies on labor, occupational safety and health, social security, as well as prevention, support, and social welfare. It is responsible for formulating, coordinating, and monitoring policies to provide comprehensive support for persons with disabilities.
2	Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud Pública: MINSAP)[11]	A central national administrative agency that oversees all health services, education, and biomedical research. It emphasizes prevention and primary health care. It prioritizes care for the most vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, and has a social mission to provide universal health coverage to all citizens. It provides high-quality, comprehensive, and specialized medical care to persons with disabilities, ranging from primary care by family physicians to advanced rehabilitation at specialized hospitals. It also partners with the Organization of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "OPD") to provide rehabilitation services.
3	Ministry of Education (Ministerio de Educación)[12]	The Ministry oversees primary and secondary education, including special education. It places emphasis on the multifaceted, harmonious, and holistic development of all children, without distinction based on race, gender, or social background, and with consideration for children with disabilities. It provides a variety of educational services, focusing on special education for children and adolescents who require specialized support tailored to their specific disabilities. A joint resolution with the Ministry of Health stipulates that classrooms may be established within hospitals as needed. Systems for prevention, early detection, treatment, and rehabilitation are in place at special schools. For students entering the workforce after completing secondary education, the Ministry collaborates with the Ministry of Labor and Social Security to provide support for placement in workplaces where they can acquire vocational

[10] https://www.mtss.gob.cu/ (Accessed: 20 April 2026)
[11] https://www.facebook.com/MINSAPCuba/ (Accessed: 20 April 2026)
[12] https://www.mined.gob.cu (Accessed: 2 June 2026)

		skills. Support is provided to facilitate the transition of all students requiring special education into mainstream schools.
4	Ministry of Higher Education (Ministerio de Educación Superior)[13]	Responsible for higher education and vocational training. Guided by the same principles as the Ministry of Education, it aims to promote inclusive education for persons with disabilities in higher education.
5	Ministry of Transportation (Ministerio del Transporte)[14]	Responsible for formulating policies to facilitate mobility for persons with disabilities and managing the development of infrastructure. Implements programs, such as infrastructure development initiatives for public transportation, to enable persons with disabilities to participate in all social activities.

Status of Coordinating Mechanism[15]

In 2010, the Government of Cuba established a working group chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security to facilitate the preparation of the State Party's Report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The working group comprises representatives from numerous government agencies, state institutions, the legislature, non-governmental organizations (hereinafter referred to as "NGOs"), and the OPD[16]. As a permanent body, there is the National Council for the Support of Persons with Disabilities (Consejo Nacional para la Atención a las Personas con Discapacidad (hereinafter referred to as "CONAPED"), established by Resolution No. 4 of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security in 1996.

Table 2 Overview of CONAPED

Name	Overview
National Council for the Support of Persons with Disabilities (CONAPED)	A permanent inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordinating body established in 1996 by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security Resolution No. 4. Chaired by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, it is a collegial body composed of representatives from national agencies and organizations related to the field of disability, as well as the OPD. It supports the formulation of national disability policy and promotes, supports, encourages, monitors, and evaluates actions, strategies, and programs to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities. The Council deliberated on and approved the State Party's Report on the CRPD. It is also tasked with formulating the "National Action Plan for Persons with

[13] https://www.mes.gob.cu/ (Accessed: 20 April 2026)
[14] https://www.mitrans.gob.cu/ (Accessed: 20 April 2026)
[15] Based on the State Party's Report (2014).
[16] The three organizations, the Cuban Association of People with Physical Disabilities (ACLIFIM), the National Association of the Blind and Persons with Visual Impairments (ANCI), and the National Association of the Deaf and Persons with Hard of Hearing (ANSOC), are described in detail in the section on 4. Disability-related organizations and Activities.

	Disabilities," evaluating its implementation, and analyzing and examining all aspects of issues concerning persons with disabilities.

<Local government>

Cuba's administrative divisions consist of 15 provinces (Provincia) and one special local body (Isla de la Juventud).

Entities responsible for disability issues

Name	Overview
CONAPED Provincial and Municipal Branches	Responsible for implementing support programs for persons with disabilities and for formulating and implementing regional development plans to ensure the equitable allocation of resources for resolving local issues.
Regional Offices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security	The Ministry of Labor and Social Security, a central government agency, maintains regional offices in all states and cities, where it accepts applications for various social security services and administrators benefit payments.

2-2. Laws and Policies on Disability

Chapter 7 of the Cuban Constitution (1976), titled "Fundamental Rights, Duties, and Guarantees (Derechos, Deberes Y Garantias)," is essentially consistent with the rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments, and stipulates the guarantee of the principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms. While there is no law that specifically addresses persons with disabilities, provisions guaranteeing their protection are included in the Law on Children and Adolescents (Código de la niñez, adolescencias y juventudes, Law No 178/2025), the Family Law (Código de las Familias, No156/2022), the Labor Code (Ley No. 116, Código de Trabajo), and the Penal Code (Ley 151/2022 Código Penal).

Name of Law	Constitution (Constitución)
Year of enactment	2019[17]
Overview	It guarantees human rights and fundamental freedoms. Article 42: Explicitly prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including disability, and guarantees equality before the law, equal protection and treatment, and equal rights, freedoms and opportunities.

[17] https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/sites/default/files/goc-2019-ex5_0.pdf (Spanish)

Other major laws related to the rights of persons with disabilities include the following.

Title	Law on Children, Adolescents, and Youth (Código de la niñez, adolescencia y juventudes, Law No. 178/2025)[18]
Year of enactment	2026
Overview	This law positions children and adolescents aged 0 to 35 not merely as objects of protection but as holders of rights, with the aim of guaranteeing the comprehensive rights of children and young persons with disabilities, including the rights to education, protection, and participation. As a comprehensive protection system, it encompasses seven specialized areas: education, health, protection from violence, alternative care, social protection, prevention and early intervention, and juvenile criminal justice. It emphasizes moving away from institutional care, promoting family-based care, and supporting integration into general education and society. It is consistent with the 2019 Constitution and the 2022 Family Law.

Title	Family Code (Código de las Familias, No. 156/2022)[19]
Year of enactment	2022
Overview	The 1975 Family Code used terms such as "incapacitated persons (i.e., persons with disabilities)" to refer to disability. The new Family Code explicitly states that individuals have the right to freely and responsibly decide on the number of children they have, the method of childbirth, and the spacing between births. Regarding persons with disabilities, it strengthens their rights by emphasizing autonomy, voluntary support, and protection from abuse. It replaces the strict guardianship system with "supported decision-making," enabling persons with disabilities to choose their own caregivers and lifestyle.

Title	Criminal Code (Law 151/2022, Código Penal)
Year of enactment	2022[20]
Overview	The Criminal Code, in accordance with the provisions of international treaties, added protections against discriminatory acts toward persons with disabilities and strengthened the protection of socially vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities.

Title	Labor Code (Ley No. 116, Código de Trabajo)
Year of enactment	2013, amended in 2020[21]
Overview	The 2013 Labor Code guarantees equality in employment and the right of all citizens capable of working to obtain employment that

[18] https://www.minjus.gob.cu/en/publicaciones/normas_juridicas#main-content (Spanish) (Accessed: 20 April 2026)
[19] https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/sites/default/files/goc-2022-o99_0.pdf (Spanish)
[20] https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/sites/default/files/goc-2022-o93_0_0.pdf (Spanish)
[21] https://www.gacetaoficial.gob.cu/sites/default/files/codigotrabajoactualizado_20022020.pdf (Spanish)

	meets economic needs and is of their own choosing, in both the public and private sectors, without discrimination based on skin color, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, place of origin, disability, or any other factor that undermines human dignity.

Title	Social Security Act (La Ley 105 de Seguridad Social, 2009), Regulations for the Implementation of the Social Security Act (Reglamento de la Ley de Seguridad Social 2014–2015, No. 283/2009)
Year of enactment	2009
Overview	One of the objectives is to tighten eligibility requirements for various benefits in order to address the rapid aging of the population and the decline in the labor force. The retirement age was raised, and the required contribution period for old-age pension eligibility was extended. At the same time, the law establishes provisions for temporary and permanent disability benefits, guaranteeing the right to work and protection for workers with disabilities.

Title	Brasília Rules on Access to Justice for Vulnerable Persons (Reglas de Brasília sobre o Acesso à Justiça de Pessoas em Condição de Vulnerabilidade)[22]
Year of enactment	2008
Overview	International guidelines adopted primarily by countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to ensure that persons in vulnerable situations have equitable access to justice services. These rules serve as the basis for the definition of "disability" in Cuba's. In accordance with Chapter I, Section 2 (3) (7), disability is understood "as a physical, mental or sensorial deficiency, be it permanent or temporary, which limits the ability of carrying out one or more essential activities of daily life, which may be caused or aggravated by the economic or social environment."

Title	Law on the Comprehensive and Free Nationalization of Education (Ley de Nacionalización general y gratuita de la enseñanza)[23]
Year of enactment	1961
Overview	As a fundamental principle of education in Cuba, this law guarantees equal access to a free, inclusive public education system for all, without any discrimination. It is scheduled to be enacted as the "Education Act" in 2023.

Disability Policies

Title	Guidelines for the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution for the Period 2016–2021 (Lineamientos de la Política

[22] https://www.cumbrejudicial.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/Reglas%20de%20Brasilia%20en%20Ingl%C3%A9s.pdf
[23] https://siteal.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/sit_accion_files/ley_de_nacionalizacion_de_la_educacion.pdf (Spanish)

	Económica y Social del Partido y la Revolución para el período 2016–2021)[24]
Year Implemented	2017
Overview	Guidelines for maintaining social security systems for vulnerable persons, including persons with disabilities, within a framework of strengthening the social model and adapting to demographic changes such as an aging population. The guidelines focus on promoting social inclusion and providing social services.

Title	Third Plan for the Improvement of the National Education System (III Perfeccionamiento del Sistema Nacional de Educación)
Year Implemented	2011–
Overview	A reform plan was implemented to enhance the quality and effectiveness of educational processes within the national education system. The education plan for persons with disabilities under the Third Improvement Plan focuses on developing learners with special educational needs and on strengthening inclusion in education. It emphasizes individualized instruction, specialized teacher training, and integration into mainstream schools, treating diversity as a valuable asset and ensuring access and support. The scope has been expanded beyond special education schools to include support within mainstream educational settings, and improvements continue to be phased in at schools nationwide.

Title	National Action Plan for the Support of Persons with Disabilities (Acción Nacional para la Atención de Personas con Discapacidad (1995–2016))
Year Implemented	1995–
Overview	A national action plan and multisectoral strategy to support persons with disabilities, focusing on social inclusion, rehabilitation, and education. Since 1995, multiple plans have been implemented to address physical, mental, and sensory disabilities. Key initiatives include the establishment of a national commission to guarantee rights, the assurance of free medical care, and "Community-based Rehabilitation (hereinafter referred to as "CBR") to integrate individuals into their local communities.

2-3. Measures on Disability[25]

1) Healthcare

Access to health care services is a right of all Cuban citizens under the Constitution (Article

[24] https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/en/2017/lineamientos-de-la-pol%C3%ADtica-econ%C3%B3mica-y-social-del-partido-y-la-revoluci%C3%B3n-para-el-per%C3%ADodo-2016 (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[25] Based on the State Party's Report (2014) and the Reply to the List of Issues (2019), multiple parallel reports (2019), as well as policies and plans of relevant ministries and agencies and related donor reports.

50) and the Public Health Act (Law No. 45, Article 1, Paragraph 4), and they are guaranteed free, high-quality medical care. The Public Health Act[26], revised in December 2023, places emphasis on traditional preventive care, screening, and community-based care. It strengthens the state-run, free, universal healthcare system while reinforcing patients' rights, including reproductive rights and the option for a dignified death. In addition, in light of pandemics and climate change, the Act introduces the "One Health[27]" strategy and addresses the social determinants of health and the need for cross-sectoral collaboration. It also incorporates digital transformation. The law was drafted based on discussions involving numerous stakeholders, including many NGOs, healthcare professionals, lawyers, academics, and legislators, as well as those involving OPDs. In Cuba, there is no private healthcare; all healthcare services are provided by the public sector.

Health Status

Cuba has an advanced and comprehensive primary health care program, has seen an increase in life expectancy, and has achieved remarkable results in maternal and child health, infectious diseases, and nutrition. According to the State Party's Report, Cuban children receive vaccinations against 13 types of diseases, and the vaccination rate is among the highest in the world. In recent years, coupled with rapid population aging, the disease profile has shifted; in both 2013 and 2023, ischemic heart disease was the leading cause of death, followed by stroke in second place[28]. In 2023, the third leading cause of death was lower respiratory tract infections, the fourth was chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and the fifth was lung cancer; therefore, improving and strengthening the healthcare system to address non-communicable diseases is an urgent priority.

Research into the causes of disability is being promoted, and progress is being made in developing a system unique to Cuba for applying the ICF.

Availability of Medical Services

Since gaining independence, Cuba has prioritized disease prevention in the provision of healthcare services. Comprehensive primary care is provided nationwide, with family physicians managing family health records, and all local clinics, known as policlinicos, maintain registries of persons with intellectual disabilities. These registries are created and updated by primary care professionals. In recent years, Cuba has been embarking on a process of digitalization, including strengthening diagnostic imaging capabilities—such as

[26] https://p4h.world/app/uploads/2024/08/Ley_No_41.x69485.pdf (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[27] A strategy to achieve optimal health for people, animals, plants, and the environment through prevention, control, and rapid response to risks, with cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration from the local to the national level. https://www.granma.cu/cuba/2025-04-23/solo-se-puede-lograr-el-paradigma-de-una-sola-salud-trabajando-unidos-23-04-2025-00-04-13 (Accessed: 20 August 2026)

[28] https://www.healthdata.org/research-analysis/health-by-location/profiles/cuba (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

for the early detection of cancer—and providing effective healthcare services through Information and Communication Technology (hereinafter referred to as "ICT"). However, due to shortages of foreign currency and supplies resulting from long-standing U.S. economic sanctions, among other factors, medical equipment has not been adequately updated. Challenges include the vulnerability of in-hospital ICT equipment and networks, as well as inadequate management systems for medical information.

According to the Parallel Report[29], the OPD, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, has formulated strategies regarding information provision, prevention, research, education, and communication aimed at disability prevention, and is conducting awareness-raising activities for members of its affiliated organizations and the general public. Technical assistance programs for persons with disabilities are being implemented as a priority; however, they cannot fully meet the demand and do not adequately address the needs of persons with disabilities to achieve personal independence and improve their quality of life. Cuba's economic situation is cited as a cause of this, with the inability to import materials necessary for wheelchair manufacturing as a specific example.

In its Concluding Observations adopted in 2019, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities noted that access to health services for persons with disabilities remains inadequate and recommended that measures be implemented to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health information, particularly for persons with disabilities in rural areas, as well as access to health services on an equal basis with others.

Access to Healthcare Services

In Cuba, which has a comprehensive primary healthcare system, access to medical services is relatively good even in rural areas. The country ranks among the world's highest in doctors per capita and, as a leader in healthcare, has a proven track record of sending doctors abroad. The government guarantees access to medical services through policies and programs that promote equal opportunities for all and provide specialized and individualized care for persons with disabilities. According to government reports, domestic healthcare services for persons with disabilities include programs specifically targeting individuals with visual, hearing, and intellectual disabilities, as well as rehabilitation programs and family physician and nurse programs. Health centers are staffed with multidisciplinary teams that provide care for persons with hearing and visual impairments, while specialized hospitals offer care tailored to individual needs. Support programs for persons with intellectual disabilities have been in place since 1963, ensuring support for people of all ages with severe intellectual disabilities through medical specialists in learning disabilities. In addition to necessary services, these

[29] Cuban Association of Physically Disabled Persons (ACLIFIM) (2019).

specialists also provide social welfare, rehabilitation, and psychoeducational support that leads to social inclusion. Access to medical facilities via transportation has also been improved.

Rehabilitation is provided free of charge through a comprehensive network that covers all polyclinics, primary care facilities, hospitals, and highly specialized centers. Human resource development programs in the field of rehabilitation are also being implemented. According to government reports, rehabilitation services are provided at 594 specialized facilities, 420 of which are located in primary care facilities and focus on disability awareness and prevention. The remaining 90 are located in hospitals, 11 in research institutes, 24 in psycho-educational medical centers, and 45 in nursing homes. In remote areas, 1,578 television rooms for Community-Based Rehabilitation (hereinafter referred to as "CBR") have been established.

Assistive Devices

Recognizing the important role that assistive devices play in the rehabilitation process and in improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities, programs have been implemented to support the domestic production and import of orthoses, hearing aids, visual aids, and mobility aids. Technical orthotics workshops have been established in all provinces to strengthen the support network. According to the Parallel Report by the Federation of OPDs for Persons with Physical Disabilities[30], the organization collaborates with the Ministry of Health to distribute wheelchairs, crutches, forearm crutches, adult walkers, infant walkers, toilet seats, height-adjustable canes, and other items. According to the Parallel Report by the Federation of OPDs for persons with visual impairments[31], the government, through the Ministry of Health, is responsible for procuring and covering the costs of mobility-essential items. White canes provided by the government to the Federation incur import costs, but are made available to those in need at an affordable price. Access to visual aids, such as high-prescription eyeglasses, is covered by the government's subsidy program.

Health Insurance

All healthcare services in Cuba are public and free of charge. They are primarily funded by the national budget, and there is no public health insurance system.

2) Education

Status of Legislative Framework

In Cuba, the Constitution stipulates that education is a universal right enjoyed equally by all citizens and is provided free of charge as an obligation that the state cannot abdicate. The

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] National Association of the Blind (ANCI) (2019).

education system, administered by the Ministry of Education, is designed to focus on the multifaceted, harmonious, and holistic development of all children, without distinction based on race, gender, or social background, while paying close attention to the needs of children with disabilities. In addition, for children and adolescents requiring specialized support, the system ensures the principles of equity, the right to education, the right to be free from discrimination, and the best interests of the child by providing various types of education, including special needs education.

Enrollment Status

According to the 2012 census, there were approximately 41,347 registered children and adolescents with disabilities. Children with visual and intellectual disabilities accounted for 57% of the total and were more prevalent in rural areas. Cuba has 355 special schools, which enrolled 33,975 children and adolescents with disabilities during the 2017–2018 school year. Of these, 81% were children with intellectual disabilities.

Inclusive Education

The Law on Comprehensive and Free Public Education (1961) guarantees equal access to free, inclusive public education for all, without any discrimination. By providing special needs education and individualized educational models for children and adolescents who require specialized support, the law safeguards children's right to education, expands access to education and opportunities for inclusion, and protects the best interests of the child. According to the Reply to List of Issues (2019), there are 10,688 educational institutions nationwide, of which 355 are special schools (escuela especial). Not limited to special schools, all educational institutions can admit students with disabilities, and reasonable accommodations are provided based on students' needs and potential. As examples of efforts to promote the adoption of inclusive practices in mainstream education settings, the government has formulated methodological guidelines for the care of students with disabilities, designed and developed professional training courses for teachers at mainstream educational institutions, created support materials for teachers, and provided instruction to students without disabilities on sign language, Braille, and orientation and mobility training.

However, the Concluding Observations express concern that segregated forms of education still exist and that children face barriers to enjoying their right to a high-quality, inclusive education on an equal footing with others; furthermore, the lack of individualized support remains a practical challenge for children and adult learners with disabilities seeking access to higher education.

Special Schools

In Cuba, efforts have been made to enhance special needs education to guarantee the right

to education and educational opportunities for students who require specialized support. Curricula tailored to specific fields have been developed, and support systems, such as specialized classrooms and diagnostic and instructional services, have been established. Mechanisms for prevention, early detection, treatment, and rehabilitation have also been put in place at special schools, where care is provided by ophthalmologists, audiologists, otolaryngologists, and psychiatrists, depending on the specialized field. Systematic and comprehensive training is provided to special needs education teachers. According to government reports, there are 355 special schools nationwide, and approximately 85% of students with disabilities attend special education schools. In special needs education, the following reasonable accommodations are provided to facilitate the learning of students with disabilities:

- Extended exam time for students with visual or hearing impairments, and the administration of individualized oral exams as appropriate.
- Provision of additional individualized support for students wishing to pursue higher education.
- Recognition of English language learning for students with hearing impairments at educational levels other than higher education (Ministerial Ordinance).
- Exemption from certain physical education classes for students with visual impairments.
- Assignment of walking instructors to schools with students with visual impairments.
- Training of Cuban Sign Language interpreters (Ministerial Ordinance)
- Teacher training on the use of augmentative and alternative communication systems for students with physical limitations and severe communication impairments.

According to the Reply to List of Issues (2019), "Enrollment of children with disabilities in special schools is not mandatory; it is considered a temporary measure to develop the skills necessary for inclusion in mainstream education," and the efforts of special schools are "highly valued by society."

3) Gender (Women with Disabilities, etc.)

Status of Legislative Framework

In Cuba, the Constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender. The rights of women with disabilities are guaranteed under all legal frameworks adopted by the government to promote the empowerment of women in general. Cuba was the first country to sign and the second to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

(hereinafter referred to as "CEDAW"). The Federation of Cuban Women (Federation of Cuban Women; hereinafter "FMC")[32] is the national mechanism for the advancement of women in Cuba. It promotes and encourages policies to advance women from a gender perspective and coordinates activities in collaboration with state agencies and OPDs, as necessary. On the other hand, the Concluding Observations express concern that the requirement for prior consent regarding medical interventions risks exempting persons with disabilities from this requirement, and that legal guardians may authorize medical interventions, including involuntary hospitalization and sterilization, for women with disabilities; they therefore recommend the provision of support mechanisms to enable persons with disabilities to make their own decisions.

Status of Women with Disabilities

According to the State Party's Report, more than 60,000 women with disabilities are members of the OPD and hold leadership positions. At the municipal level, approximately 45% of leaders are women, at the state level, approximately 40%, and at the national level, approximately 35%. The Cuban Association of Persons with Motor and Physical Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "ACLIFIM"), the largest organization at the national level, is led by a female president. To encourage women's participation on an equal footing with men in all economic, political, social, and cultural spheres, regulations have been established to ensure access to sign language interpreters and to give priority to the children of working mothers in admissions to childcare centers. There are 175 FMC Women's and Family Counselling Centers nationwide that, with the support of multidisciplinary teams, provide free training programs focused on women with disabilities, as well as introductory sign language courses for relatives of persons with hearing impairments. Regarding employment, nearly 2,000 women with disabilities work in various specialized workshops, with care provided through collaboration between the workshops and the FMC. Additionally, in sports, female athletes have excelled at the Paralympics, winning multiple gold medals.

4) Vocational Training, Employment, and Work

Status of Legislative Framework

In Cuba, the right to work is guaranteed by the Constitution as a right of all citizens. As a fundamental principle governing the right to work, the Constitution stipulates "equality in work and the right of all citizens capable of work to obtain employment of their own choosing, in both the public and private sectors, that meets economic needs, without any discrimination

[32] https://cubaplatform.org/federation-cuban-women (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

based on skin color, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, place of origin, disability, or any other factor that undermines human dignity.", and "labor shall be remunerated without any discrimination based on the products or services provided, the quality of the work, or the actual hours worked." Employment policies also stipulate equal employment opportunities free from any discrimination, freedom of choice in employment, employment as the foundation of social security, equal pay for work of equal value, and the prohibition of child labor. Regarding the employment of persons with disabilities, access to employment is guaranteed in accordance with their functional abilities, adaptability, and willingness to work.

Status of Employment

According to the 2012 census, out of a total workforce of 5,022,303, 158,120 were persons with disabilities, accounting for approximately 3% of the total. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security works closely with the OPD on employment for persons with disabilities. According to a government report, 3,536 persons with disabilities (including 1,067 women) found employment during the five-year period from 2009 to 2013. Regulations have also been established to reduce working hours in consideration of the specific nature of workers' disabilities. Provisions include reduced working hours for persons with partial physical or motor impairments, job reassignment, training, or retraining for workers who can no longer perform their previous duties due to a certified disability, and a 20% increase in pension benefits for disabilities resulting from work-related accidents or occupational diseases.

According to the Parallel Report[33], 15,339 members with physical disabilities are employed, of whom 11,665 work full-time. The 717 members working in transitional workshops aim to transition to regular employment after acquiring skills.196 members work from home, and the remaining 2,761 are self-employed in various forms. There are 9,087 members of working age with visual impairments, of whom 4,313 are employed. Of these, 562 work in special workshops, 2,460 in general workplaces, 19 from home, and 632 are self-employed[34].

Vocational Training

As part of efforts to ensure employment for persons with disabilities, Cuba has 150 special workshops where persons with various disabilities are employed. These workshops receive government subsidies, with ACLIFIM operating 33% of them, the National Association of Deaf and Persons with Hearing Impairments (hereinafter referred to as "ANSOC") operating 31%, and the National Association of Blind and Persons with Visual Impairments (hereinafter referred to as "ANCI") operating 26%. 10% of the workers employed at these workshops have intellectual disabilities and receive individualized and specialized support. Persons with

[33] Cuban Association of Physically Disabled Persons (ACLIFIM) (2019)
[34] National Association of the Blind (ANCI) (2019)

disabilities earn income based on their performance. The work at these workshops is temporary and serves to develop vocational and social skills and prepare individuals for employment in general workplaces. Persons with disabilities employed in general workplaces receive on-the-job training (OJT) for up to 6 months, if necessary, to acquire the essential skills required for the job, taking into account the degree of disability and functional limitations in performing the duties. Remuneration during this period is stipulated to be equal to the wage associated with that position.

There are approximately 50 vocational training schools in Cuba for young people aged 13 and above, with about 2,500 students enrolled. The Parallel Report[35] points out that special schools, by sending young persons with disabilities to vocational training schools after they complete primary and secondary education, not only limit their professional development but also contribute to stigma and discrimination against children and young persons with disabilities. Generally, the curriculum ends at ages 15 or 16, and students are not given the opportunity to pursue higher education. The report criticizes the fact that the vocational qualifications obtained at these institutions correspond to the lowest-paying jobs in the labor market and are not aligned with young people's career aspirations.

5) Social Security, Social Service for Persons with Disability

Status of Legislative Framework

The Constitution explicitly stipulates the state's responsibility to guarantee an appropriate standard of living and social protection for all citizens. It also provides for the establishment of a social security system to this end, as well as protection for workers who are unable to work due to age, disability, or illness, and protection through social assistance for elderly persons living in poverty or hardship who are unable to work or have no relatives who can support them. Specifically, under the Social Security Act and its Enforcement Regulations, the social assistance system provides disability benefits based on a means test, subsidies for parents of children with disabilities, and disability pensions[36]. Job placement services are also provided through the Employment Program for Persons with Disabilities to those who wish to work. In addition, the Law on Maternity Protection for Working Women (Government Decree No. 234 of 2003) provides protection for parents of children with disabilities who require special care. Labor laws and social security regulations stipulate disability allowances, including payment of 80 % of wages for up to 6 months, and up to 1 year, as well as employment protection for temporary disabilities resulting from work-related injuries,

[35] Cultura Inclusiva-Cubalex (2019)

[36] The social security system established by the Ministry of Social Security consists of three components: the general social security system, the social assistance system, and the special system. The social assistance system is designed to protect individuals who are unable to work and have no relatives capable of supporting them.

accidents, or illnesses. Employers are obligated to either reinstate individuals who have completed rehabilitation to their original positions or employ them with adjusted job duties.

Service Provision

According to the State Party's Report, 39,582 persons with disabilities received social assistance in fiscal year 2013. In addition, under the Law on Maternity Protection for Working Women (2003), 4,200 mothers of children with severe disabilities received benefits. Persons with disabilities living alone are eligible for in-home care services, through which social workers provide basic personal care, housekeeping, and social care services at the recipients' homes. Persons with severe intellectual disabilities can receive care through residential care (institutionalization) or day services (semi-residential), provided by a nationwide network of psycho-pedagogical medical centers. These facilities are staffed by multidisciplinary teams and offer outpatient services, including case reviews and comprehensive assessments. Nationwide, there are 30 residential facilities with a total of approximately 2,400 beds, as well as day services with a capacity of 1,000 users, covering the entire country, including remote areas. Verification of compliance with admission requirements for social welfare facilities and the granting of admission permits are carried out by prefectural committees that oversee psycho-pedagogical medical centers and nursing homes.

According to the Parallel Report[37], concerns were expressed regarding the lack of sufficient reporting on the number of residents in welfare facilities, the reasons for their admission, and, in particular, the living conditions of adults with psychosocial disabilities in residential facilities. Additionally, the report highlights the need for policies and initiatives to phase out the institutionalization of adults with disabilities and ensure their full participation in society.

6) Transportation and Urban Development (including accessible urban planning)

Status of Legislative Framework

The Government of Cuba recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to live as independently as possible and to move about freely. Accessibility is one of the areas covered by the "National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities." This National Action Plan is reflected in local plans and includes initiatives by the OPD and local governments. According to the State Party's Report, the Ministry of Transportation is implementing a program to improve facilities to enable persons with disabilities to use public transportation. As part of efforts to promote accessibility, priority has been given to measures such as reserving seats for persons with disabilities on public transportation, installing wheelchair-accessible spaces,

[37] Cultura Inclusiva-Cubalex (2019)

providing fare discounts for OPD members, and installing wide aisles in public spaces that allow persons with disabilities to move freely. Accessibility in the construction sector is governed by the Technical Standard NC 391[38]. This standard establishes design and construction requirements to ensure that persons with disabilities can access physical spaces and services, and is applied in line with the new social concept of inclusion for persons with disabilities.

Accessibility Improvement

According to the State Party's Report, in 2017, construction-related accessibility standards were applied to 834 projects. Of these, 240 were in the tourism sector, 110 in the health sector, 72 in the housing construction sector, 199 in social services, and 213 were involved in other facilities. In the transportation industry, services such as a 50% fare discount, two priority seats, and alternative boarding and alighting points are offered at many facilities. In the aviation sector, airlines are required to use appropriate terminology when referring to persons with disabilities, improve airport signage, and conduct safety demonstrations using methods other than verbal explanations by flight attendants. Renovations are underway at passenger terminals, including facility improvements, the removal of architectural barriers, the installation of handrails in restrooms, and the installation of wheelchair restraints on public transportation. Comprehensive technical training courses, covering topics such as Cuban Sign Language, illustrated advertisements, and radio broadcasts, are being provided to public transportation staff who interact with persons with disabilities.

According to a parallel report[39], it is pointed out that current national laws and standards regarding building codes and road traffic safety do not meet international standards, and accessibility for persons with disabilities is not sufficiently guaranteed.

7) Information Accessibility

The current Cuban Constitution and domestic laws guarantee the exercise of rights and freedoms, as well as the enjoyment of freedom of speech and the press. Information and communication technologies are considered useful for all people, including those with disabilities, in exercising these rights, and all citizens are recognized as having the right to access these technologies. According to the State Party's Report, the government has made financial and technical efforts to ensure that citizens, including persons with disabilities, can access information through institutions such as community centers, schools, universities, libraries, and local, provincial, and national government agencies, as well as arts and cultural

[38] According to a government report, it is being systematically updated in accordance with the international standards of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
[39] Cultura Inclusiva-Cubalex (2019)

centers. To promote access by persons with disabilities, the following measures are being implemented. For persons with physical disabilities, initiatives have been implemented to identify and remove architectural barriers; for persons with visual and hearing impairments, facilities have been established and maintained to facilitate learning and using technology, and lesson plans have been developed using tools that support the learning process; computer labs called "Aulas Tiflotécnicas" (classrooms for persons with visual impairments) have been set up for persons with visual impairments[40], and to support persons with hearing impairments, sign language training programs for teachers have been implemented. Strategies to improve accessibility in telecommunications include the installation of dedicated telephones for persons with hearing impairments; the provision of internet and email access at local-level OPDs, and the introduction of closed captions on state-run public television[41]. Under an agreement between ANSOC and the Cuban Broadcasting and Television Corporation, educational programs are provided with interpretation and captioning services.

In the Concluding Observations, the Committee expressed concern regarding the insufficient provision of accessible formats, such as easy-to-read materials, plain language, subtitles, sign language, Braille, audio descriptions, tactile materials, and augmentative and alternative communication methods, as well as information and communication technologies in both public and private media, and the lack of access to information and communication technologies for persons with disabilities. Additionally, the Committee recommends strengthening sign language training and recognizing sign language as an official language.

8) Disaster risk management

In Cuba, a policy framework for responding to risks and natural disasters has been established in accordance with the Constitution, and disaster prevention plans that incorporate measures to protect persons with disabilities and ensure their safety have been formulated. Having experienced natural disasters such as major hurricanes, Cuba is a leader in disaster prevention with a robust disaster management system. The central government agency responsible for disaster prevention is the National Civil Defense General Staff (Estado Mayor Nacional de la Defensa Civil: EMNDC). At the local level, the Cuban Civil Defense Organization (Organización de Defensa Civil de Cuba) develops disaster risk reduction plans that account for the needs of persons with disabilities. The needs and characteristics of local residents are assessed in advance to ensure that personalized care can be provided to

[40] The name derives from the fact that users are equipped with headphones. These facilities have been established in every province nationwide, and 16 labs are currently in operation. They offer a variety of services, such as computer access and document printing.

[41] Subtitling of various television programs for persons with hearing impairments.

persons with disabilities during a disaster or emergency. Information from these preliminary assessments is compiled at the Risk Mitigation Management Center and serves as a tool to aid decision-making. In the event of an emergency, hospitals, health centers, polyclinics, and shelters are stocked with emergency generators, water, food, medicines, and other medical supplies to ensure that appropriate care is provided to all residents, particularly persons with disabilities who require special attention. The OPD has played an active role in developing disaster response plans. With the OPD's participation, the "Ciudades Preparadas" ("Prepared Cities") project (2015–2017) was implemented to mitigate disaster risks[42]. Disaster response tools, including documents outlining disaster response procedures, were developed for residents, including more than 3,000 persons with disabilities and their families. Organizations such as Humanity & Inclusion (hereinafter referred to as "HI") are working with local partners to ensure that persons with disabilities are fully integrated into disaster risk management.

The Concluding Observations highlighted concerns regarding a lack of awareness among persons with disabilities regarding procedures and the nature of support for them during risks and humanitarian emergencies, the limited distribution of handbooks on supporting persons with disabilities in disaster situations, and a shortage of communication tools and information in formats accessible to persons with disabilities. Recommendations included the development of risk-reduction protcols through accessible early warning systems, including sign language; the provision of information in easy-to-read formats and Braille, with a particular focus on people living in rural areas; and the continuation of training for emergency responders on responding to persons with disabilities.

[42] The program covered the municipalities of Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo, and Baracoa.

3. International Treaties and International Cooperation

3-1. Status of Implementation Following the Ratification of the CRPD[43]

The Government of Cuba signed the CRPD on April 26, 2007, and ratified it on September 6 of the same year. It has not ratified the Optional Protocol. In 2014, it submitted the State Party's Report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Following a constructive dialogue, the Committee adopted its concluding observations in 2019.

In the Concluding Observations, the Committee noted the policy measures taken to support persons with disabilities, particularly the adoption of the new Constitution (2019), the participation of persons with disabilities in politics and public office, particularly their election to positions such as the National Assembly of People's Power and city councils, the provision of subsidies for basic necessities (such as electricity, transportation, and home modifications) to persons with disabilities who meet specific criteria, efforts to expand the use of alternative information and communication technologies in schools, and policies and strategies to promote the livelihoods and employment opportunities of persons with disabilities. At the same time, the Committee recommended that the government consider ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Additionally, the Committee strongly recommended a prompt review of domestic laws to fully incorporate the Convention into national law, the adoption of domestic laws protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, the use of a human rights-based approach to disability assessment, and the mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities. Although the deadline for the government's next report was 2025, it had not been submitted as of the time of this study.

3-2. Status of Implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty

The Government of Cuba acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty on March 4, 2026. It entered into force on June 4, 2026. The State Party's Report (2014) stated that domestic preparations were underway toward ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty. The 2019 parallel report from the Council of DPOs for persons with visual impairments and the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities both recommended ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty. With the treaty's entry into force, substantive domestic efforts are expected to be promoted.

3-3. Initiatives on Disability Issues within SDG-Related Policies

According to the United Nations Statistics Division's Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as "SDGs") indicator database, the Government of Cuba has not

[43] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

reported a single indicator related to persons with disabilities[44].

In 2021, the Government of Cuba conducted a Voluntary National Review (hereinafter referred to as "VNR"), in which national governments report to the UN High-Level Political Forum on their progress toward achieving the SDGs and on policy developments. According to the first VNR report (2021), the government emphasizes integrating persons with disabilities into society through inclusive education, vocational training, and social security. This includes developing accessible public spaces, expanding inclusive employment, and aligning national policies to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities are in line with SDG Goals 4, 10, and 11.

3-4. Ratification of and Initiatives regarding Other International Treaties related to Disabilities and Development

The Government of Cuba ratified CEDAW in 1980. The most recent Concluding Observations were adopted in 2024 and recommend, with a focus on marginalized women, such as women with disabilities, rural women, and women living in poverty, the strengthening of legal remedies for the exercise of human rights and rights under the Convention; the elimination of gender discrimination; political participation; equitable access to education; access to information; inclusive employment; and the development of disability-specific data.

The government ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991. The most recent Concluding Observations were adopted in 2022 and recommend the formulation of a comprehensive strategy for collecting disaggregated data on children with disabilities, as well as the implementation of specific legislation, policies, and programs to protect children with disabilities and promote their access to inclusive education, health services, social protection, sports facilities and programs, and arts and culture.

In addition, the government has not ratified the Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (ILO Convention No. 159)[45], an international treaty that calls on countries to formulate and implement national policies to ensure that persons with disabilities receive appropriate vocational rehabilitation and have equal access to employment opportunities.

3-5. International Cooperation on Disability[46]

- The Government of Japan[47]

[44] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/cub (Accessed: 20 April 2026)
[45] Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, entered into force in 1983.
[46] Project names are listed exactly as they appear in the original text. However, this does not apply in cases where there is no English name or the English name is unknown.
[47] Based on the JICA Country-Specific Project List (https://www.jica.go.jp/oda/regions/america.html) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Country-Specific Commitment Information

< Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects>

- Project for Equipment Improvement for Special Education Schools in Camagüey City, Camagüey Province (2019)
- Project for Equipment Improvement for Social Welfare Facilities in the Havana Vieja District, Havana Province (2018)
- Project for Supporting the Employment of Persons with Disabilities through the Provision of Equipment to Special and Vocational Schools in Two Municipalities of Granma Province (2015)
- Project for the Improvement of Facilities for Persons with Physical Disabilities in Camagüey Province (2011)

- Other Donors

<International Organizations>

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

- Vocational Schools Program (2020–2024)[48]
- Strengthening the Capacities of Teachers and Principals to Provide Specialized Care to Children and Adolescents[49]
- Establishment of the Foundations for a Local Fund for Early Childhood Development (FLODI) (through 2025)
- Design and Validation of the Childhood Characterization Tool (until 2025)[50]

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- Transforming Futures (2025–)[51]
- Developing Inclusive Education Systems (2022–)[52]

ILO and Cuba

- Technical assessments and exchange visits between Zambian and Cuban experts aimed at modernizing the Vocational Rehabilitation Center and enhancing its capacity to provide high-quality vocational training.

<Bilateral Aid >

European Union

- Multi-Annual Indicative Program 2021–2027 (2021–2027)[53]

(https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/data/zyoukyou.html).

[48] https://www.unicef.org/cuba/en/adolescent-training-vocational-schools (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[49] https://www.unicef.org/cuba/en/attention-disability, https://www.unicef.org/stories/learning-without-limits-inclusive-education-gives-children-room-grow-cuba (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[50] https://www.unicef.org/cuba/en/inclusive-education-in-cuba (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[51] https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-strengthens-education-sustainable-development-cuba-through-technical-support-sector (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[52] https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/developing-inclusive-education-systems-what-we-know-and-what-we-do-improve-learning-students (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[53] https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-01/mip-2021-c2021-9130-cuba-annex_en.pdf

German Embassy / Handicap International (HI)

- Strengthening the Leadership of People with Disabilities in the Province of Pinar del Río, with a Focus on Women and Young People (2024)

Government of Canada / United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) / UNICEF[54]

- Supporting Inclusive Food Security and Nutrition in Cuba (2025–2029)

<International NGO>

Humanity & Inclusion[55]

- Community-Based Rehabilitation Project (2016–)[56]
- Inclusive Recovery of Living Conditions and Strengthening the Resilience of Families and Municipalities (2022–2024)[57]

Joni and Friends[58]

- Wheels for the World Cuba Project (2014–)[59]

(Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[54] https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2026/02/canada-provides-assistance-to-the-people-of-cuba.html (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[55] https://www.hi-us.org/en/news/cuba-improving-the-living-conditions-of-people-with-disabilities-and-their-families (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[56] https://www.hi-us.org/en/news/cuba-improving-the-living-conditions-of-people-with-disabilities-and-their-families (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[57] https://www.handicapinternational.be/sn_uploads/federation/country/pdf/2024-12-Country-Sheet-External-Long-CUBA-EN.pdf (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[58] https://www.hi-us.org/en/news/cuba-improving-the-living-conditions-of-people-with-disabilities-and-their-families (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

[59] https://www.hi-us.org/en/news/cuba-improving-the-living-conditions-of-people-with-disabilities-and-their-families (Accessed: 20 April 2026)

4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities

4-1. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

The initiatives of Cuba's OPDs cover a wide range of areas, including awareness-raising, education, skills development, and policy advocacy. Long-standing organizations, particularly the three groups ACLIFIM, ANCI, and ANSOC, work closely with the government and are heavily involved in consultations on drafting and revising disability-related laws, as well as implementing disability policies. These three organizations have submitted parallel reports on the CRPD. According to a parallel report from other OPDs[60], there are concerns that these three organizations have strongly politicized their bylaws, which may prevent individuals from receiving support from them if their ideologies do not align. Additionally, the report notes that some Cuban OPDs operate under a government budget allocation system and have large-scale organizational structures that extend to the local level, resulting in state dependency.

Name of Organization	Overview
Cuban Association of Persons with Motor and Physical Disabilities (ACLIFIM)	Established in 1980. A nationwide network spanning 1,884 grassroots organizations, 168 municipalities, and 15 states. The organization aims to defend the human rights of and promote the social inclusion of persons with physical and motor disabilities by organizing and representing them. It develops nationwide annual and five-year goals and plans and maintains a training and education system. All members who possess the necessary skills and wish to work can secure employment through the Ministry of Labor and Social Security's employment program for persons with disabilities. It submits parallel reports to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The organization comprises a headquarters, a Reference Center for Persons with Disabilities, a National Training Center, two workshops that repair wheelchairs and other mobility aids, offices in 15 states nationwide, and 130 municipal offices.
National Association of Blind and Persons with Visual Impairments (ANCI) https://www.facebook.com/ancidecuba	Established in 1975. Membership stands at 30,526 (as of 2019). It has branches in every province nationwide and representatives in each municipality. Its purpose is to organize individuals with visual Impairments nationwide, achieve the highest possible level of social inclusion, and deepen solidarity with the public and domestic institutions to realize this goal. To achieve these objectives, the association participates in rehabilitation, the creation of appropriate employment opportunities, political and social

[60] Cultura Inclusiva-Cubalex (2019)

	engagement, cultural activities, awareness campaigns, and educational initiatives, and proposes establishing support mechanisms for its members. Members of the governing body are elected at each level, with terms of two and a half years at the municipal level and five years at the provincial and national levels. The association submits parallel reports to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
National Association of Deaf and Persons with Hearing Impairments (ANSOC) http://www.laodeaf.org	Established in 1978. Its mission is to represent the community of deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, contribute to improving their quality of life for greater social integration, and serve as an intermediary with government agencies, social organizations, and civil society groups to address the needs and interests of its members. At its inception, the organization prioritized the social and labor-related issues of its members, focusing on developing communication among members and promoting their native languages. The association submitted a parallel report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

4-2. Disability Support Organizations

Organization Name	Overview
Cuban United Nations Association (ACNU)	Established in 1947. In partnership with domestic and international civil society organizations based in Cuba and with government agencies that implement social, environmental, and cultural programs, the organization brings together 109 Cuban civil society organizations under its umbrella. With the aim of promoting knowledge and understanding of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, as well as the nature, functions, and activities of the United Nations system, it encourages solidarity and international cooperation among all people worldwide, free from all forms of discrimination that undermine human dignity. It has held special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1999. It is affiliated with the United Nations Department of Public Information. It has held observer status with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification since 2003 and with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change since 2004. It submits parallel reports to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
Cuba Inclusiva (Cultura Inclusiva) https://www.facebook.com/fundacionculturainclusiva/	Established in 2016. Its mission is to raise awareness and highlight the situation of persons with disabilities in Cuban society, while promoting a society free of discrimination and inclusive and accessible to all citizens. It has submitted

	a parallel report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

5. Barriers and Needs Faced by Persons with Disabilities[61]

5-1. Barriers to and Needs regarding Healthcare Services

In Cuba, a comprehensive primary healthcare program is provided free of charge to the entire population. Registration information for persons with disabilities is managed at local polyclinics, and rehabilitation facilities are established in each region, creating a system that ensures early access to healthcare services. The parallel report raises concerns that, due to the deterioration of Cuba's economic situation, there is an insufficient supply of necessary materials, particularly imported goods, and that fiscal constraints prevent the full satisfaction of all the needs of persons with disabilities. It also notes that healthcare facilities and equipment are dilapidated and poorly maintained, failing to provide the conditions necessary for high-quality service delivery or for persons with disabilities to live with dignity[62]. In other respects, the system has generally received a favorable evaluation. On the other hand, concerns have been raised regarding whether informed consent is adequately obtained, particularly regarding admission to welfare facilities for persons with disabilities and medical interventions, including sterilization procedures for women with disabilities, and whether persons with disabilities are actually signing the necessary documents. The government has also been asked to explain the procedures for deciding on and monitoring the use of physical restraints in psychiatric care, highlighting a critical need to establish a clear system to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

5-2. Barriers to and Needs regarding Education

In Cuba, the majority of children with disabilities attend special schools. Of the children with disabilities attending special schools, 81 % have intellectual disabilities. The government views enrollment in special schools as a temporary measure until students develop the skills necessary for inclusion in mainstream education. However, according to the Parallel Report, this educational system, as implemented by the government, discriminates based on the nature and severity of disabilities, forces children with disabilities to attend special schools, and contributes to social exclusion, marginalization, and stigma. Regarding teacher training, at the time the parallel report was submitted, technical training tailored to specific disabilities was provided only to teachers engaged in special education; however, all teachers, including those in mainstream schools, are required to receive the training necessary to adapt to an inclusive learning environment. It is pointed out that it is essential to allocate the maximum possible resources to learning environments, programs, and services based on universal design and to provide the necessary reasonable accommodations; promoting inclusive

[61] Based on four parallel reports.
[62] Cultura Inclusiva-Cubalex (2019)

education is a critical need[63].

5-3. Barriers to and Needs regarding Employment

In Cuba, data on unemployment rates and average income are not categorized by disability status, making it difficult to ascertain the actual employment situation of persons with disabilities. According to the 2012 census, persons with disabilities accounted for approximately 3% of the total workforce, clearly indicating that few persons with disabilities are employed. Special workshops operated by the OPD, with government subsidies, serve as employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Work at these workshops is temporary and focuses on developing vocational and social skills and preparing individuals for employment in general workplaces. Graduates of special schools who wish to work may enroll in these special workshops, and after acquiring the necessary skills and abilities, they can apply to municipal labor offices to enter the regular labor market. According to the Parallel Report[64], although the right to work for persons with disabilities is guaranteed by the Constitution and other laws, discriminatory practices regarding working conditions, wages, and social security remain entrenched. Employment for graduates of special workshops is regulated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, which places them in positions deemed to be in the national interest with the consent of the person with a disability and their guardian or legal representative. Consequently, there is a risk that the individual's abilities and wishes are not respected, and their right to freely choose a profession is infringed upon. Additionally, the work capacity of persons with disabilities is assessed by the Occupational Medical Assessment Committee under the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, and determinations regarding their ability to perform specific duties or work, as well as the length of their working hours, have been made without taking the person's opinion into account. If a person with a disability is deemed unsuitable for their assigned job, the employer may consider retraining them for a different position or terminate their employment contract, after which the individual becomes subject to social welfare protection. Recognizing the existence of such practices, the Parallel Report strongly calls for the presentation of data on the employment of persons with disabilities, including unemployment rates, the verification of the adequacy of reasonable accommodations in the workplace, the assurance of labor inclusion for persons with disabilities, and the exercise of their right to work under conditions of equality with others.

[63] The transition from special schools to regular schools is also noted in ACLIFIM's parallel report.
[64] Cultura Inclusiva-Cubalex (2019).

5-4. Barriers to and Needs regarding Transportation

With regard to transportation, although laws and systems are in place to ensure accessible transportation for persons with disabilities, sufficient measures have not been implemented. According to the Parallel Report[65], it is difficult for persons with physical disabilities to use vehicles equipped with special features for them because a signage system displaying the symbol for persons with disabilities in accordance with international standards has not been introduced. There are also not enough designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities. Public transportation stations and vehicles also lack universal design symbols and signage, making them difficult for persons with disabilities to use. The implementation of accessibility measures in public facilities and other venues has not progressed sufficiently. In some cases, roads are unusable due to inadequate maintenance. To address these challenges, the development of accessible public transportation and the adoption of universal design across all infrastructure facilities and improvements are critical.

5-5. Barriers to and Needs regarding Information Access

In the field of information accessibility, while initiatives tailored to specific disabilities have been implemented, OPDs have raised a variety of needs. The Parallel Report by the OPD Council for Persons with Visual Impairments called for the nationwide expansion of audio description services. A request was also made to consider acceding to the Marrakesh Treaty, and accession was realized in March 2026. As the treaty will enter into force in June 2026, efforts to promote its implementation domestically are expected. The Parallel Report by the OPD Council for People with Hearing Impairments recommended that Cuban Sign Language be legally recognized as the official language of the Cuban Deaf community. Since 1994, Cuban Sign Language has been officially recognized as an educational language option in special schools for deaf children. At the time the Parallel Report was submitted, it had been incorporated into the official curriculum of these special schools. Since 2004, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, a bilingual education model for persons with hearing impairments (Cuban Sign Language and Spanish) has been implemented and is now in effect at all educational levels in Cuba. Accessibility through sign language interpreter services has also improved, and interpreter training programs have been established at the higher education and university levels. Awareness of diversity is also being promoted through access to public information via sign language and participation in cultural and social activities.

To sustain and further develop these initiatives and their effects, there is a strong call for

[65] *Ibid.*

the enactment of a special law that pursues the exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with the new Constitution.

5-6. Barriers and Needs regarding Gender

Regarding gender, women with disabilities in Cuba have achieved some success in employment, education, sports, and culture. However, laws and policies on gender equality do not address intersectional discrimination against women and girls with disabilities. In particular, women of African descent are excluded from decision-making, and women with disabilities in rural areas face limited access to services, including healthcare. There is a lack of appropriate measures to ensure compliance with employment regulations for women with disabilities in both the public and private sectors. Information and statistical data on violence against and complaints filed by women and girls with disabilities are limited. There is a shortage of accessible shelters, and access to grievance mechanisms and appropriate remedies is also limited. Clear legal frameworks, concrete institutional designs, and practical measures are needed to guarantee the rights of women with disabilities regarding the elimination of gender-based violence, the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights, equality in the workplace, and political participation.

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