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**Cuban Civil Society Support Program
(CCSSP)**

Contract Number DOT-I-00-03-00009-00 TO 4

Monthly Report

January 2012

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1. Country Situation Update

First National Conference of the Communist Party of Cuba

On January 28 and 29, 2012, Cuba's Communist Party (*Partido Comunista de Cuba* – PCC) held its first-ever National Conference. The Conference established diversity and recruitment objectives for long-term reform of PCC's Central Committee, and continued discussions to implement economic reforms approved during the VI Party Congress in April 2011. During his closing address and throughout the Conference, President Raúl Castro urged “openness” among PCC members and State-controlled mass media, and greater anti-corruption measures.

Following calls to diversify the aging PCC leadership, and more inclusively incorporate women, youth, and minorities into all levels of government, Conference delegates unanimously approved replacing up to 20% of the 115 Central Committee members over the next five years. Vice President José Ramón Machado Ventura noted progress towards this objective, in that nearly 43% of Conference delegates were women and 37.5% were Afro-Cuban or “*mestizo*,” with greater representation than in the PCC's 800,000 membership. The delegates confirmed Castro's proposition to limit PCC and government officials to two five-year terms, but gave no indication if the Presidency would be subject to the same limits.

Throughout the Conference, Castro repeatedly referred to corruption at all levels of Cuban society noting that it continues to undermine efforts toward economic and social reforms. Castro declared that “the Party will definitively assume the fight against corruption,” and stated that corruption is “one of the principal enemies of the revolution, much more prejudicial than the subversive and meddling programs of the U.S. government.” Castro did not provide further practical details on how the PCC would counter corruption.

Castro urged PCC members to become more “democratic,” in debating the country's problems and possible interventions. However, only democratic practices within the existing structure of the PCC would be tolerated, limiting the perspectives on Cuba's problems to those already involved in the process. Castro defended the Communist one-party system, stating, “Giving up the principle of one party would simply amount to allowing the party or parties of imperialism on national soil.” Additionally, Castro called for Cuba's State-controlled media outlets to objectively report on the internal PCC debate “with responsibility and strict veracity,” avoiding “the bourgeois style, full of sensationalism and lies, and without useless secretiveness.” These appeals to Party members and the media were associated with consistent themes of hard work, discipline and ethics throughout the Communist system that marked Castro's recent discourse on the slow pace of economic reforms against corruption and entrenched bureaucracy.

Repression & Dissident Rights

Cuban human rights activist Wilman Villar Mendoza, 31, died January 19, 2012 after a 50 day hunger-strike protesting his incarceration. Villar Mendoza was arrested on November 2, 2011 after participating in a peaceful public march to call attention to human rights abuses in Cuba, and was sentenced to four years in prison. Villar Mendoza was the second political prisoner known to die of a hunger strike. These acts of protest highlight recent contradictions in the Cuban model: cautious moves toward a more open economy and greater economic freedoms, as demonstrated by the rhetoric of the National Conference, coupled with continued and heightened repression of dissidents, further limiting freedoms of speech, press and assembly.

Cuba denies holding political prisoners and in a statement the day after Villar Mendoza's death, claimed he "was not a dissident nor was he on a hunger strike," and that he died of multi-organ failure and sepsis after being hospitalized. Reports from his widow Maritza Pelegrino accuse the Cuban State of manipulating his trial, torture, and abuse, including forced dehydration that caused his death. Pelegrino implored the governments of Latin America to take on more active roles in the protection of human rights in Cuba, and officially registered her accusations with the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation (*Comisión Cubana de Derechos Humanos y Reconciliación Nacional* – CCDHRN). The same day, the State released three antigovernment protesters — Ivonne Malleza Galano, Ignacio Martínez Montejo and Isabel Haydee Álvarez — detained at the same time as Villar Mendoza and held without charge for 52 days.

The freed dissidents were designated as prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International hours before their release, a designation consistently denied by the Cuban government. Villar Mendoza's death and the continued denial of the existence of political prisoners by the Cuban authorities brought renewed international condemnation of human rights abuses on the island. According to advocates, it remains impossible to know how many government opponents remain imprisoned as independent investigators cannot visit and verify reports. Some progress has been visible through the efforts of the Catholic Church for the 2010 release of the 52 remaining prisoners detained in the 2003 Black Spring, and Castro's recent goodwill gesture to free 2,900 inmates at the end of December 2011. However, human rights activists both on and off the island confirm that dissidents were not included in this latest release list, and that State repression of dissidents, activists and their relatives continues at ever-increasing levels, despite the releases.

Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff arrived to the island on January 30, 2012, with an official agenda focused on trade, economics and strengthening business relations between Brazil and Cuba. However, she is expected to raise human rights concerns privately in meetings with Castro.

2. Programmatic Highlights and Major Activities

Programmatic Activities:

Key Programmatic Accomplishments:

- **Sector CP** - *This innovative sector seeks to counter apathy and stimulate civic engagement by supporting media projects that communicate positive, unbiased messages through different aspects of everyday life and humor. In previous activities under this sector, the CCSSP created a variety of media products and was able to shape the social content of the items produced to promote civic analysis and a sense of duty for the targeted audience.*
 - [SJO101]: This grant is a follow-on to SJO074 and SJO092 and supports the production of four additional deliverables within this initiative. The fourth deliverable was released and distributed in January. The fifth deliverable was submitted for approval, and is scheduled for release in February.
 - [SJO102]: This grant is a continuation to grants SJO070 and SJO079. A third set of deliverables was approved and distributed in January, following a revised distribution strategy. The strategy has continued successfully with indications for a growing target audience.
 - [SJO103]: As a follow-on activity to SJO076, this grant supports additional products for distribution. The dissemination strategy continued to be revised in January, and the grantee has proposed a new strategy to increase the target audience base, to increase product approval among the target audience.
 - [SJO104]: This grant launched a new product for distribution across several platforms targeted toward a new audience. Using the draft deliverable approved in December, the grantee has advanced production of the final deliverable and is on schedule to complete grant objectives by the end of February.
 - [SJO105]: This grant will launch a new product influenced by activities under SJO104. The draft deliverable was approved in January, and the grantee has started final production. The technical and project management team held a strategic meeting in January with Creative staff to confirm details of the final product development plan.
 - [SJO106]: Follow-on activities to SJO083 are pending review of the current funding mechanism and may be adjusted for implementation. If activities cannot be adjusted, this initiative may be cancelled.
 - [SJO107]: This grant will support a tool developed under SJO084. Following a launch of the tool in December, a dissemination plan was carried out in January to increase user participation.
- **Sector CP (2)** - *This sector has exponentially exceeded expectations, and has demonstrated a true desire for freedom of expression and a need for increased networking capacity on the island. Therefore, the CCSSP has allocated significant resources toward achieving further success in this sector.*
 - [SJO098]: The grantee submitted the revised deliverable in mid-January, which is currently under review by OTI/Creative. Upon approval, the deliverable will be implemented under follow-on grant SJO100, and this grant will move into administrative closeout.
 - [SJO100]: This grant was amended to allow a no-cost extension through February 29, 2012, to support further activities and the implementation of the SJO098 deliverable. The grantee

continues to monitor platform function and will be submitting revised sustainability and transition plans to OTI/Creative for review.

- **Sector US** – *In this sector, CCSSP explored the reality of this population group and discovered significant potential for civic initiatives. With Latin American NGOs whose experience and characteristics are similar to the target population, civic activities are conducted to influence independent action.*
 - [SJO075]: The grant is in administrative closeout and the Final Evaluation is in development.
- **Other Activities**
 - [SJO082]: This grant is in the process of closing. All reports have been presented and approved by OTI/Creative. Grantee staff held a debrief meeting with Creative to detail field activities. Based on lessons learned, the grantee and Creative agreed on future activities.
 - [SJO090]: This grant provided additional support and resources to the initiative under SJO082. The grantee submitted all final documentation, and expressed during the debrief meeting, the benefits of having a parallel grant in support of the activities under SJO082. All future actions derived from this grant will be included in the follow-on grant for SJO082.
 - [SJO096]: The beneficiaries have presented programmatic and financial reports for the first set of activities. Future activities will take place during the first quarter of 2012. A progress report on activities to date is expected the second week of February.
 - [SJO097]: Final expense reports are under review, and final payments will be made upon approval. The final evaluation is in process.
 - [SJO099]: This grant is currently in administrative closeout. The grantee submitted documentation for final payments, which are currently under review. The final evaluation will be written upon approval of all activity reports.
 - [SJO108:] This initiative was cancelled due to the inability of potential partners to fully commit to future phases and implementation requirements. Grant activities have been completed and a final evaluation is in process.

Program Operations

- Grants cleared to date: **106** (14 in process, 14 completed, 66 closed, 7 cancelled, 5 rejected after clearance)

Status Count				
Pending	Cleared	Completed	Closed	Cancelled / Rejected
0	14	14	66	7 / 10* <i>*5 had been cleared</i>

CLEARED		
1	SJO075	\$69,655.00
2	SJO090	\$45,418.00
3	SJO096	\$50,425.00
4	SJO097	\$49,482.00
5	SJO098	\$70,000.00
6	SJO099	\$61,952.00
7	SJO100	\$175,400.00
8	SJO101	\$157,290.00
9	SJO102	\$81,301.00
10	SJO103	\$13,164.00
11	SJO104	\$66,158.00
12	SJO105	\$99,323.00
13	SJO106	\$29,266.00
14	SJO107	\$127,492.00
Subtotal:		\$1,096,326.00

COMPLETED		
1	SJO061	\$26,671.00
2	SJO076	\$71,104.00
3	SJO078	\$40,251.00
4	SJO079	\$63,136.00
5	SJO082	\$185,409.00
6	SJO083	\$35,491.00
7	SJO084	\$91,254.00
8	SJO085	\$42,903.00
9	SJO087	\$90,000.00
10	SJO092	\$80,549.00
11	SJO093	\$90,000.00
12	SJO094	\$144,922.00
13	SJO095	\$36,760.00
14	SJO108	\$15,231.00
Subtotal:		\$1,013,681.00

CLOSED		
1	SJO001	\$95,420.00
2	SJO003	\$17,157.00
3	SJO006	\$81,421.00
4	SJO007	\$123,098.00
5	SJO008	\$34,332.00
6	SJO009	\$24,256.00
7	SJO010	\$30,359.00

8	SJO011	\$19,601.00
9	SJO012	\$14,204.00
10	SJO014	\$47,453.00
11	SJO015	\$7,328.00
12	SJO016	\$72,709.00
13	SJO017	\$2,345.00
14	SJO018	\$12,759.00
15	SJO019	\$89,059.00
16	SJO020	\$11,430.00
17	SJO022	\$72,098.00
18	SJO024	\$12,784.00
19	SJO025	\$86,994.00
20	SJO026	\$4,655.00
21	SJO027	\$4,743.00
22	SJO028	\$63,655.00
23	SJO029	\$57,625.00
24	SJO030	\$17,830.00
25	SJO031	\$5,876.00
26	SJO032	\$78,769.00
27	SJO033	\$74,390.00
28	SJO034	\$65,522.00
29	SJO035	\$19,429.00
30	SJO036	\$14,525.00
31	SJO037	\$36,210.00
32	SJO038	\$99,163.00
33	SJO039	\$38,510.00
34	SJO040	\$141,427.00
35	SJO041	\$4,947.00
36	SJO042	\$21,551.00
37	SJO044	\$86,900.00
38	SJO046	\$21,940.00
39	SJO047	\$29,152.00
40	SJO048	\$4,542.00
41	SJO049	\$89,900.00
42	SJO050	\$129,050.00
43	SJO052	\$53,161.00
44	SJO053	\$12,248.00
45	SJO054	\$30,309.00
46	SJO055	\$55,503.00
47	SJO056	\$69,091.00
48	SJO057	\$4,538.00

49	SJO058	\$125,571.00
50	SJO062	\$54,802.00
51	SJO063	\$8,819.00
52	SJO064	\$4,284.00
53	SJO065	\$25,886.00
54	SJO066	\$17,316.00
55	SJO067	\$86,732.00
56	SJO068	\$49,059.00
57	SJO069	\$19,149.00
58	SJO070	\$28,838.00
59	SJO071	\$55,674.00
60	SJO072	\$213,130.00
61	SJO073	\$24,155.00
62	SJO074	\$36,328.00
63	SJO077	\$176,206.00
64	SJO080	\$6,918.00
65	SJO081	\$12,245.00
66	SJO086	\$11,225.00
		\$3,146,305.00

CANCELLED		
1	SJO013	\$9,825.00
2	SJO043	\$5,687.00
3	SJO045	\$16,707.00
4	SJO059	\$3,325.00
5	SJO088	\$14,808.00
6	SJO089	\$17,654.00
7	SJO091	\$3,929.00
Subtotal:		\$71,935.00

REJECTED		
1	iSJO001	
2	iSJO010	
3	iSJO011	
4	SJO002	<i>Rejected After Clearance</i>
5	SJO004	
6	SJO005	
7	SJO021	
8	SJO023	<i>Never Approved</i>
9	SJO051	
10	SJO060	

Administration and Operations

- **Activity Database (ADa):** Creative staff continue to update the Activity Database with information from the field. In addition, the DC-based team is working closely with the Implementation team in the field to ensure weekly tracking of grant expenditures and maintain adequate grant / operations funds control.
- **Finance:** All financial transactions continue to be managed from Washington, D.C. with support from a field finance assistant, working closely with grantees to ensure timely grant implementation. Projections for the last six months of the program are being developed to ensure obligated funds are fully committed and disbursed by the end of the implementation period.
- **Close Out:** Creative submitted a revised Contract Completion Plan to OTI for approval of planned close out activities to take place beginning March 2012. In preparation for close out and to ensure grant file completion, the Creative's Field Finance Manager conducted an internal review. Preliminary findings are positive, and DC-based staff will use the same methodology to complete a full internal review of project files.

3. Budget Information

CLIN	Description	Total	Obligated	Disbursed December 2011	Cumulative Amount
001	Operations	\$ 4,887,599		\$ 51,924.75	\$ 4,604,168.55
002	Fixed Fee Operations	\$ 244,380		\$ 2,596.32	\$ 230,208.26
003	Grants	\$ 10,200,000		\$ 126,523.53	\$ 4,618,898.75
004	Fixed Fee on Grants	\$ 204,000		\$ 2,530.55	\$ 92,378.05
	TOTAL	\$ 15,535,979	\$ 11,170,671	\$ 183,575.16	\$ 9,545,653.60

4. Problems Encountered: Issues and Proposed Actions

- There were no issues to report in this period.

5. Upcoming Activities

Creative has the following activities planned for February 2012:

- Creative's Field Finance Manager will present internal and due diligence review findings conducted in January and February to OTI/Creative staff, including recommendations for close out preparation.
- SJO090: In early February, OTI/Creative staff will conduct an on-site due diligence audit of previous grants, and will receive the final M&E deliverable under this grant.
- SJO082: The Field Finance Manager will complete a due diligence audit of the SJO082/SJO090 grantee during the first week of February. Continuation grants for activities under SJO082 will signed early February.
- SJO099: A continuation grant for activities under SJO099 will be signed early February.
- SJO101: The final deliverable will be produced for release the third week of February. The approved distribution campaign will continue through the remainder of the grant period in order to increase local audiences.

- SJO102: In February, Creative staff will meet with the grantee to discuss results of the distribution strategy to adapt the approach for future deliverables.
- SJO105: The grantee will have a final deliverable ready for the end of March.
- SJO107: The grantee will focus efforts on project sustainability.