

The Board of Directors of ASCE unanimously agreed to the following statement in its meeting of June 10, 2003:

The Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (ASCE) is a private, independent, nonpolitical academic organization dedicated to the production and dissemination of information, knowledge, and understanding about all aspects of the Cuban economy. This mission is accomplished by the free and independent contribution of researchers and other professionals interested in the welfare of the Cuban people. ASCE is an institutional member of the American Economic Association and the US Allied Social Sciences Association.

Despite its nonpolitical nature, the Board of Directors of ASCE cannot remain indifferent to or silent in the face of the recent imprisonment and mistreatment of a number of its colleagues by the Government of Cuba. Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, Oscar Espinosa Chepe, and Arnaldo Ramos Lauzarique, as well as many other independent professionals have been condemned to long prison terms in facilities far away from their homes solely for trying to exercise their profession as economists and news analysts with independence from the government. These individuals did not have a proper defense and are currently enduring inhumane prison conditions. Ms. Roque Cabello and Mr. Espinosa Chepe are also reported to be suffering from life-threatening health conditions without access to proper medical treatment.

Accepting such actions by the Government of Cuba against the freedom of individual expression is inconsistent with the charter of this organization, the principles that inspired its foundation. Therefore, we condemn such actions by the Government of Cuba while making an appeal to the international community to pressure the Cuban authorities to reverse their decisions and allow these individuals to return to their families.

Rolando H. Castañeda
Secretary of ASCE