

**Special Press Release**  
***Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy***  
***P.O.Box 0567***  
***McLean, Virginia 22101-0567***

**The Board of Directors of ASCE unanimously agreed to the following statement in the meeting of April 8, 2003:**

During the last two weeks, the Cuban Government has significantly increased its repression of independent and dissident economists and journalists. Among the 78 individuals imprisoned, some distinguished and respected members of ASCE were included. Marta Beatriz Roque-Cabello, co-author of "The Fatherland Belongs to All" and President of the Cuban Institute of Independent Economists," and her deputy Arnaldo Ramos-Lauzarique, were arrested and all of their possessions confiscated. Ms. Roque-Cabello has been sentenced to twenty years in prison. The government is seeking 18 years for Mr. Ramos-Lauzarique. In addition, Mr. Oscar Espinosa-Chepe, a respected independent economist who has also participated in several of our annual Meetings, was sentenced to twenty years in prison.

The Board of Directors of ASCE calls on the Cuban Government for an immediate release of the unjustly arrested and sentenced victims. It reiterates that there cannot be economic justice or economic development in the face of economic and political repression and that there cannot be economic wellbeing for the Cuban people when bodies and minds are impeded in their unalienable right to freedom of thought, expression, and association.

To all those suffering the injustice of persecution in Cuba, we pledge our respect and our support. To our friends and members, we pledge that they will not be abandoned in this terrible hour.

Rolando H. Castañeda  
Secretary of ASCE