

**Gobierno de Reconciliación y Unidad Nacional
Unida Nicaragua Triunfa**



**NICARAGUA COMMEMORATES THE INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM**

March 21, 2021

On March 21, the Peoples of the World commemorate the International Day of the Fight Against Racism, a terrible scourge that has caused enormous suffering throughout human history, destroying entire civilizations and hindering the development of others.

From the transatlantic African slave trade to the genocide committed against the Jewish People, Racism and Discrimination in its multiple and nefarious manifestations has been the excuse for the most cruel and hateful ideologies and practices.

In the face of this terrible enemy, Powerful Heroes, both Men and Women, have emerged, whom without hesitation have fought for Equality, Equity, Peace, Solidarity and Fraternity between all Peoples.

On this important date, as we do every day of the year, Nicaragua celebrates the legacy of the Titans of Humanity such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Simón Bolívar, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Malcolm X, among many others, in addition to our own Beacons of Freedom: Benjamín Zeledón, Augusto Calderón Sandino, Rigoberto López Pérez, Carlos Fonseca Amador and many others, who made the greatest sacrifice so that all Nicaraguans may live with dignity in a free, and more equitable country.

In Nicaragua, the Sandinista Popular Revolution of 1979 represented a break with the racist policies of the Somoza era, as well as with those of the

conservative and liberal governments, allowing for a greater visibility of the Afro-descendant and indigenous Peoples.

The Sandinista Popular Revolution 1979 and the Political Constitution of the Republic of Nicaragua of 1987, recognized for the first time the multiethnic and multicultural nature of the Nicaraguan nation, laying the foundations for the approval of the Statute of Autonomy of the Autonomous Regions (Law 28) in that very same year. The Magna Carta, Law 28 and other laws referring to the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants are based on the principle of free self-determination and non-discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, culture, religion or spiritual belief, language, among others.

Even though the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants were fully recognized within the national legal framework, the Neoliberal

Governments that governed between 1990 and 2006 did not prioritize the development of the Caribbean Coast, the improvement of the conditions of life of these peoples, nor the effective exercise of their rights.

It was not until 2007, with the Government of Reconciliation and National Unity, that the Human Development Strategy of the Caribbean Coast was launched, with the aim of promoting economic growth with macroeconomic stability and aimed at orienting specific objectives related to employment, poverty reduction, equality, nutrition, access to health and education, citizen security, productivity, investment promotion and trade, among others.

The right to self-determination is understood as the right of a people to decide their own forms of government, achieve their economic, social and

cultural development, and organize themselves freely without external interference.

23 Indigenous and Afro-descendants territories were demarcated and titled between 2007 and 2016, made up by more than 301 communities that cover a territorial extension of more than 37,252.91 km², with more than 205,315 inhabitants, representing 49% of the national territory, 52% of the territory of the Autonomous Regions and the Special Regime Zone of the Upper Wangki, Wihta and Bukawas. This area will increase upon completion of the demarcation and titling process of the two complementary areas of the Upper Wangki and Bocay Special Regime Zone.

Through the Zero Hunger Program, which has been implemented since 2007, the recovery of the ancestral knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants, their self-esteem and food sovereignty has been prioritized. This program is

executed by the Ministry of Family, Community, Cooperative and Associative Economy (MEFCCA), delivering tens of thousands of bonds to indigenous and Afro-descendant communities on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. Almost half of the protagonists are integrated into cooperatives and receive technical assistance from MEFCCA in order to multiply and commercialize their production.

In the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast, it is estimated that the potable water projects, currently in execution, will allow potable water coverage to exceed 70%, guaranteeing continuous access to quality water throughout the year.

The Regional Autonomous Education Sub-system (SEAR) included in the General Education Law (Law 582), promotes decentralized and autonomous management of Education in the Autonomous Regions and responds to the realities, needs, desires and priorities. This subsystem is oriented towards the

integral formation of boys and girls, youth and adults, men and women at all levels of the education system, as well as respecting, rescuing and strengthening their diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic identities.

Education is taught in the mother tongues of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples in more than 70% of schools in indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. There is also a Septuagenal Education Plan 2014-2021 for the Caribbean Coast, approved by resolution of the Regional Autonomous Councils, in order to continue improving the quality and relevance of Monolingual and Bi-lingual Intercultural Education at all levels.

Primary education is strengthened with the emblematic school meals program that promotes child nutrition, school retention and good academic performance.

The General Health Law (Law 423), establishes in its article 11, that the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast may define a health care model in accordance with their traditions, cultures, uses and customs within the framework of the policies, plans, programs and projects of the Ministry of Health, in close coordination with the Regional, Territorial and Communal Governments. In this sense, the Regional Governments have created Health Secretariats to help improve administrative practices, health policies, standards and procedures in the Autonomous Regions and particularly in indigenous and Afro-descendant communities.

The health model of the Autonomous Regions, in accordance with the provisions of Article 60 of Law 423, has the following principles: (i) integration; (ii) social participation, particularly of indigenous peoples and Afro-

descendants; (iii) cultural revitalization; (iv) reciprocity and social solidarity of the different actors and social subjects involved and (v) equity in care.

In accordance with Law 759, Law of Traditional-Ancestral Medicine and its Regulations, approved in 2012, the National Institute of Natural, Traditional and Complementary Therapies (IMTC) of the Ministry of Health was created, which has allowed the health system on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua to access a vast cultural heritage of traditional practices of the Afro-descendant and indigenous peoples of Nicaragua, that use plants, seeds, fruits, insects and animals to treat different ailments.

Investments in Health in the Autonomous Regions have increased from US\$32 per capita in 2006 to US\$70 in 2018. Malnutrition was reduced by 50%,

infant mortality by two thirds and maternal mortality from 118 to 50.6 per 100,000.

In terms of Health, significant investments have been made in the Ernesto Sequeira Bluefields School Hospital, RACCS, which currently has a modern Oncology department. The facilities of the Primary Hospitals of Kukra Hill and Pearl Lagoon in the RACCS were improved. In Corn Island the Ethel Kandler Primary Hospital was built and the construction of the Bilwi Regional Hospital was been announced in the year 2020. We have invested in a Modern Health Center in the Municipality of Siuna and the Maternity Homes have been improved in the entire territory of the Caribbean Coast, allowing adequate care in a period of less than 24 hours for pregnant women or women in labor, contributing to the reduction of maternal mortality and infant mortality.

Likewise, the strengthening of Primary Health Care (PHC) has contributed to the prevention of infectious-contagious diseases, as well as to the early detection of pregnancy. Similarly, care for patients with special needs, elderly patients and patients with chronic non-communicable diseases has been improved.

The Government of Reconciliation and National Unity also understands that racism and discrimination has multiple and complex manifestations, being particularly harmful for girls, boys, women, LGBT people and people with disabilities who belong to a certain ethnic or racial group.

In this regard, the State of Nicaragua has established laws and policies to guarantee the protection and effective participation of the most vulnerable groups. Nicaragua is currently the most equitable country in the American hemisphere in

terms of women's political, social, and economic participation.

This year, the International Day to Combat Racism is celebrated under the slogan "Racism and Sports", denouncing racism against brave athletes who have been victims of this scourge, but also recognizing that sports constitutes a fundamental instrument to contribute to tolerance, empathy and understanding.

Sports in Nicaragua celebrates and is honored with the valuable contributions of so many indigenous, Afro-descendant and mestizo athletes who make Nicaragua proud with their great talent.

The People and Government of Reconciliation and National Unity of the Republic of Nicaragua extends its fraternal embrace and absolute solidarity with the victims of racism and discrimination, assuming the unwavering commitment

to continue working for a more just and equitable world, in which all Peoples and all People, without distinction, can live in Peace and Harmony.