

# *Cuban women in the vanguard*

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By María Josefina Arce.

With too many debts, the world arrives at International Women's Day. Poverty, illiteracy, sexual exploitation, gender violence and discrimination continue to lacerate the daily lives of millions of women worldwide.

International organizations estimate that by 2030 more than 340 million women and girls will continue to live in extreme poverty, while at present almost 70% of illiterate people belong to this sector of the population.

This day, which in the world is a day of struggle and vindication of women's rights, is a cause for celebration in Cuba, because although there are still many challenges, much progress has been made in more than six decades in the incorporation of Cuban women into society.

Today they play a leading role in the political, economic and social life of the nation. For example, they represent more than 55% of the deputies in the National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba.

In the bodies of the People's Power at the grassroots level there is also an outstanding presence of women. They constitute 44% of the delegates of the communities, and 50% of the presidencies of the municipal assemblies.

They have been described as the soul of health in Cuba, since they represent 70% of the workers in this vital sector. They were in the places of greatest epidemiological complexity during the COVID 19 pandemic.

But there are also many who, with their sensitivity, dedication, humanism and high professionalism, save lives in other latitudes, far away from their children and other loved ones.

They are also at the forefront of Cuban science. They make up about 54% of the country's labor force dedicated to scientific and technological activities.

In education at all levels, food production, culture and sports, Cuban women are an essential force that makes a difference.

And the FMC, the Federation of Cuban Women, has played a fundamental role in this progress since its inception in 1960. Today in Havana, the FMC concludes its Eleventh Congress, committed to revitalizing this civil society organization to consolidate its achievements and confront the attitudes still present in our society that hinder the advancement of women.

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