Upcoming Interviews with Cubans

Faith will be filming in Cuba May 2016 for our sequel to *The Power of Community* (2006). The film's working title is *Earth Island: Cuba, Community, and Climate Change*. Interviews done while making *Earth Island* will be posted on the Plan Curtail website as funding allows.

Below are excerpts from interviews Faith did in 2012 at Cuba Solar's International Renewable Energy conference in Santiago de Cuba.

Julio Martinez, on the threat global warming poses to low lying coastal towns and cities: "Our Meteorological Institute is studying that situation. We have been preparing our risk evaluation… Our main problem with climate change as a country is the increase in sea level. We have estimated that the increasing of sea level, I think about 50 centimeters, could take more than 10% of our surface and this surface is in the places where we have our main cities or places on the coast, places in our base. An increase of 50 centimeters, it can be very difficult to us. We would need to take many measures for protecting our coast, protecting our cities mainly. To the last part of our century, it is estimated that sea level could be more than one meter above the current sea level. This would be more than 20% of our country covered by the sea and this would be very difficult. If we are able to produce electricity to our gain we could increase our mitigation measures much more."

Bruno Perez, about a new energy culture: "We need a new energy culture. Oil is the most complex substance, organic, not alive, that exists in our planet. We can extract from it everything we want; cloths, plastics, medicines, food, and we put all this carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and it is very bad. When we burn renewable sources, like biomass, we are also burning a structure that is complex and was alive but this carbon dioxide was fixed in the plant the past year and I put it into the atmosphere this year. Next year it will be fixed into more biomass again – it's a short cycle. When I burn oil I am putting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere that was fixed 60 or 100 million yeas ago."

Pastora Duran, scientist on the special role of women: "The sensitivity that women naturally have by being mothers has allowed us to help and try to foster participation by women workers and farmers in all of these movements dealing with preservation and nature and the natural environment. It is a complicated environment since Cuba is an island and logically we have impacts of all kinds and we're prone to cyclones and those types of atmospheric phenomenon. We work therefore not to confront climatic changes but to be able to adapt to it. And that's why our project is called Adaptation to Climate Change because it doesn't seem we have any other alternative."

"I think the most beautiful thing this country has is its people, and more precisely, the human intelligence, this human resource, is what has allowed us to overcome so many difficulties, because it tests our collective human intelligence. For this logically there has to a sense of belonging, a feeling of ownership, to love what one does. The fact that a scientist says "I discovered this vaccine but I'm not going to patent this and get rich. I want this vaccine to be used so that Cuban children get vaccinated and don't have colds, don't have measles, don't have polio," that in a country so small, so poor and with so few natural resources, this demonstrates that human beings are what this revolution values most. Human intelligence. And that's why Fidel said in the year 1960, the future of our country has to be the future men of science, thinking men, who always remember to protect the value of humans. What we've been able to share with others is based on our intelligence. We can't share resources, we don't give what isn't surplus, because we don't have extra of anything, to the contrary, what we offer is what we have – our intelligence and our experience."

Ricardo López, **describing why Cuba had no choice but to develop renewable sources: "**At the beginning, back in the early 90's, because of the situation the country was in, we saw ourselves in need of utilizing a lot of renewable energy. For example, we had food production systems in all types of schools spread all over the country. Of course the students, as well as the workers, had to have breakfast, lunch and dinner, and in the cooking, 60 liters of fuel were consumed as an average in each school. During the school year to keep these centers running we needed 14,000 tons of petroleum, which was not feasible because we did not have it. So we had to start cooking with firewood. For this reason we got to the task of creating and applying renewable energy. If it was not efficient then it was not renewable. We researched the alternative of using efficient ovens in all 1,600 schools. They were then designed and built by us and schools were provided with these efficient firewood ovens.

Then we had the issue of water. In order to have food there is a need of irrigating crops. And the schools need water as a resource, for their functioning. Therefore we had to learn how to take better advantage of subterranean water, and we had to dig wells and build the facilities. Once they were done we had to look for alternatives to pump the water. We started to create windmills, hand pumps. All this helped to create a culture."

Mario Arrastia Avia, **energy education specialist on one of the steps taken by the Cuban Energy Revolution:** "Cuba is the first country in the world to phase out incandescent light bulbs. It took just five or six months, the second half of 2005…we took out more than 9.4 million incandescent bulbs. And the country decided not to import any more of this kind of bulb."

Project Funding: Once funding is available, interviews will be edited and posted to Plan Curtail. Editing costs per interview is approximately $3,000.

Contact Faith Morgan, postmaster@plancurtail.org if you are interested in supporting our *Earth Island* film project.