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Something important happened on October 5, 2009. Some might see it as a small step, but all who were there realized that it was an important and necessary first step.

What happened on the 5th? In Cuba, leaders and members of six anti-racist organizations came together to address the racial disparity that grips its majority citizenry. They discussed issues that plague their community and country; such as Afro-Cubans' lack of representation in Cuba's political, economic, social, and cultural arenas. During a conference call with *ISLAS*, these multiracial organizations shared with each other, and with us, their specific concerns, issues, and problems. Some spoke about:

*the importance of racial integration in Cuba.* The organizations made it clear that their struggle does not aim to create or amplify divisions among Cuba's different racial groups. Instead, they want to foster unity among these groups. The integration effort would address the challenges faced not only by blacks and mulattoes but also other groups and people with alternative lifestyles (e.g., gays and lesbians).

*the creation of cultural projects,* such as developing a cultural center for Afro-Cuban girls so that they would have the opportunity to attend art schools and participate in live dance performances. Another person discussed creating a cultural center that promoted African religions that are not well known by many of the people.

*the importance of educating the national community* about the false image of Cuba as a race-blind society, when in actuality it is predominately racist.

At this meeting, these organizations vowed to work together to make their community aware of these and other issues, and outlined actions that they will each take to address their concerns.

*Awareness, unity, and action* are critical for Afro-Cubans to begin taking action to fix the problems they face. **The ultimate goal is that Cubans of color will have a seat at the table and be a part of the process in the making of important decisions.** The joint meeting these organizations initiated is a wonderful first step towards addressing critical issues, and *ISLAS* is dedicated to helping facilitate more of these types of discussions.