**Cuba announces new migratory regulations**

New regulations announced October 28 incorporate suggestions made by Cubans residing in the United States and other countries As part of the continuous, irreversible process of updating the country's migratory policies, the Cuban government has approved the following measures, which will take effect January 1, 2018:

• Eliminate the “Habilitación” (authorization) of passports previously required of Cuban émigrés traveling to the country

• Authorize the entrance and departure, to and from Cuba, of Cuban citizens residing abroad on recreational vessels, via the international tourist marinas Hemingway and Gaviota-Varadero. Once conditions have been created, this option will be gradually expanded to other marinas.

• Permit entrance to the country of Cuban citizens who left illegally, with the exception of those who did so via the United States Naval Base in Guantánamo.

• Eliminate the requirement of "avecindamiento" (residence in Cuba for 90 days) for children of Cubans residing abroad, who were born outside the country, to obtain Cuban citizenship and identification documents.

With these decisions, continuity is given to regulations adopted in January of 2013, as part of an effort by the country to further strengthen relations with our émigré community, a process which was begun in 1978 by Comandante en Jefe de la Revolución Fidel Castro Ruz.

In the meantime, the U.S. government has decided to drastically reduce personnel at its embassy in Havana and suspend the granting of visas at its consulate. Cuban citizens must now travel to Colombia to apply for an immigrant visa, and to other countries for other types of U.S. visas, without any guarantee that they will be granted, thus making the process considerably more expensive and practically impossible. This will directly affect Cuban families, who, in the future, will not be able to obtain visas in Havana, thus facing greater obstacles to visiting relatives, as well as those who wish to emigrate.

The unjustified, arbitrary decision to expel from the United States 17 officials working at the Cuban embassy in Washington, including a significant portion of the staff at the consulate, will have a negative impact on consular services and make trips to our country by Cubans residing there difficult.

The Cuban government will continue to study new measures to update our migratory policy.

Shortly, various legal norms, which will allow for the implementation of these measures, will be published in the Official Gazette, and the population will be provided additional information on the procedures that will enter into effect.

This information will also be available at the Interior Ministry's 189 processing centers, in all of the country's municipalities; at the Public Attention Office of the Identification, Immigration, and Foreigners' Affairs Directorate, via the telephone number 18808; as well as the website http://www.nacionyemigracion.cu; and on the web pages of Cuban embassies and consulates around the world.

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