

CUBA

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Embassy of Cuba in Cambodia

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Deputies approve extension of terms in office for current members of the Provincial and National Assemblies



Taking into consideration the impact of Hurricane Irma, the 8th Legislature has made the decision with the participation of President Raúl Castro Ruz

During today's session of the National Assembly of People's Power, the 8th legislature approved a modification of the timeline for general elections this year. The Council of State proposed extending the terms in office for members of Provincial Assemblies until March 25, 2018 and those of the current National Assembly until April 19, when the Vice President and President will be elected, along with other members of the Council of State.

The proposal was made given that this past September 18, the date initially chosen for the election of Municipal Assemblies was moved to November 26, with a second round where needed on December 3, due to the serious damage caused by Hurricane Irma, as explained by Homero Acosta, Council of State secretary.

Acosta recalled that municipal commissions are now in the early stage of the nomination process to select candidates for Provincial assemblies and the national body, which requires the direct and active participation of our people, many of whom are still focused on recovery efforts.

The decision was based on the Constitution's Chapters 72 and 111, that establish term lengths and exceptional circumstances in which they may be modified.

José Luis Toledo Santander, president of the National Assembly's Constitutional and Legal Affairs Commission, noted that it would be impossible to complete the election process with the quality it merits by the original date established, February 24, 2018.

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Facts on Cuba 2018:

January 1st:

Cuba's National Day
"Anniversary 60 of Cuban Revolution"

January 4th:

Anniversary 504 of Trinidad City, Cuba.

January 5th:

Anniversary 300 of La Habana University.

January 11th:

Anniversary 200 of San Alejandro Fine Arts National School.

January 28th:

Anniversary 165th of José Martí birthday.

Cuba willing to continue working to improve relations with U.S.



A significant setback in relations between Cuba and the U.S. occurred with President Trump's return to a hostile policy, while the Cuban government reiterates its willingness to continue respectful dialogue and cooperation in areas of mutual interest, without preconditions

Director General for the United States at the Cuban Foreign Ministry, Josefina Vidal, offered the closing remarks at the Workshop on Cuba-U.S. Relations of the Center for International Policy Research (CIPI), held at the Higher Institute of International Relations (ISRI), on December 15. Among the characteristic elements of relations over the last year she highlighted:

- During the current year, a significant setback in relations between Cuba and the United States has occurred.

- The announcements of June 16 in Miami made clear that U.S. government policy henceforth would not be to normalize bilateral ties, but rather to return to the old failed policy of intensifying the blockade and subversion against Cuba.
- The state of bilateral relations worsened significantly, based on U.S. decisions to substantially reduce the personnel at its embassy in Havana and to unilaterally, unfoundedly and arbitrarily expel 17 officials of the Embassy of Cuba in Washington, under the pretext of alleged incidents that affected the health of some of its diplomats and their family members.
- The decisions of the U.S. government have negatively impacted the functioning of the Embassy of Cuba in Washington.
- The suspension of the granting of visas at the U.S. consulate, unprecedented since the opening of an office in Havana in 1977, has paralyzed the processing of the applications of Cuban citizens wishing to emigrate to or visit the United States.
- The first adverse effects are already being felt with the postponement of technical and cooperation meetings in various sectors. Many Cubans have been unable to attend cultural, sporting, scientific and academic events in the United States.
- However, the Cuban government has repeatedly reiterated its willingness to continue the respectful dialogue and cooperation with the U.S. government on matters of mutual interest, as well as the negotiation of pending bilateral issues, without impositions or preconditions.
- Cuba has taken concrete steps to maintain a civilized and mutually beneficial relationship with the United States, but it awaits the response of U.S. authorities.
- The interest and persistence of Cuban and U.S. companies have made it possible to bring to fruition some new businesses in priority sectors, such as transportation, equipment for infrastructure and agriculture, and tourism.
- Progress is being made in the negotiation of new agreements in other important sectors such as health, energy and biotechnology.

“A significant setback in relations between Cuba and the U.S. occurred with President Trump”

IN FIGURES:

- 22 agreements signed between Cuba and the United States since December 17, 2014.
- 4.305 billion dollars in losses between April 2016 and June 2017 due to the U.S. blockade policy, more than double the annual foreign investment needed to achieve economic development.
- 822.280 billion dollars of accumulated damages due to the blockade over almost six decades, according to the latest Cuban report presented to the UN.
- 579,288 U.S. citizens traveled to Cuba up until the end of November this year, representing growth of 248.7% compared to the same 11 month period of 2016.

Source: Minrex

Health: A universal right



Despite the U.S. blockade, Cuba continues to have a universal and free healthcare system.

Photo: Miguel Febles Hernández

The life of every man, woman, and child, has always been a priority for Cuba's socialist government.

The life of every man, woman, and child, has always been a priority for Cuba's socialist government, which has extended its humanist efforts abroad, defending the sacred right of every person to exist, all over the world.

One thousand, a million... no, half of the world's population lacks access to essential healthcare services, while health expenses push many others into extreme poverty.

One thousand, a million... no, half of humanity, shocking figures which could make one forget that something must change in order to guarantee all people their most basic of rights, the right to life. These alarming figures were recently published in a report by the World Bank and World Health Organization (WHO), a far cry from the 2030 Development Agenda goals.

"We must urgently scale up our efforts on universal health coverage," stated World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, however inequality and privatized healthcare paint a gray picture for the most vulnerable.

Because, as incredible as it might seem, this isn't a question of money as such, although material resources are definitely needed, it is, above all, about political will, something that Cuba has shown over all these years of Revolution, which even as an underdeveloped county, with only half of its medical professionals remaining on the island, and subjected to an unrelenting economic, commercial and financial blockade, has not only managed to establish and maintain a universal and free healthcare system, but also achieved indicators on a par with those of developed nations

The life of every man, woman, and child, has always been a priority for Cuba's socialist government, which has extended its humanist efforts abroad, defending the sacred right of every person to exist in every corner of the Planet.

Thus as one reads that half of the world's population lacks access to essential healthcare services, in addition to our commitment to continue struggling to change this situation, be it through our solidarity efforts or in international forms, it's impossible not feel a healthy sense of pride in our country's achievements.

International Conference "CUBA HEALTH 2018"

"Universal health for sustainable development"



Dear colleagues,

The Cuban Ministry of Public Health is pleased to invite you to participate in the International Conference "Cuba Health 2018", to be held at the International Conference Center of Havana, Cuba, from 16-20 April 2018.

Sponsored by renowned national and international organizations, the Conference is aimed at analyzing the status of healthcare worldwide. It will thus be a framework for committed reflection geared to discussing the most relevant topics within the international healthcare agenda.

This important scientific forum intends to facilitate the sharing of knowledge about the current and future challenges of public health worldwide, with an emphasis on the response to be given by countries to present day needs in the world, as well as on topics such as healthcare safety and quality, emerging and re-emerging diseases, efficient and sustainable health systems, international health cooperation, medical education, and universal health access and coverage, among others. Attention will also be paid to the current public policies, strategies, organization and economic bases sustaining health care, as well as the evaluation of the new renovation processes in primary healthcare and their implications for health services. The Conference will provide an opportunity to reaffirm the need to consider improvement of the health of the population as a social development determinant.

We are certain that Havana and its hospitality will be a perfect setting for participants to enjoy days of fruitful scientific exchange and recreation, and a great opportunity to strengthen our ties of friendship and cooperation.

Yours truly,

The Organizing Committee

XIV Edition of the Trade Fair “Health for All”



Announcement

Dear colleagues,

The Ministry of Public Health is pleased to invite you to participate in the “XIV Edition of the Trade Fair” Health for All 2018”, whose activities will be held from April 23 to 27, 2018 at Pabexpo fairground.

This event will be held within the Health International Convention, “Cuba Salud 2018”, and it will serve as an appropriate framework to foster trade relations, product exhibition, technologies and other materials related to the theme of the event, also presentations, conferences and business meetings.

We are sure that Havana, with its hospitality, will contribute to the participants to spend fruitful days of scientific exchange and recreation, which, in turn, will contribute to further strengthen our relations of friendship and collaboration.

[Organizing Committee](#)

China interested in Cuban biopharmaceutical industry

China expressed its interest in strengthening cooperation with Cuba's biopharmaceutical industry, Prensa Latina (PL) reported today from Beijing.

This intention constitutes recognition of the scientific results and the obtaining of effective products in the treatment of various diseases. Bi Jingquan, general director of the Food and Drug Administration (CFDA), highlighted the positive progress of relations between the two countries in this area and expressed the will to increase them. He pointed out that China is working on the reform of the review and evaluation system to register drugs, in order to approach international standards in this discipline and expedite the entry of new and better products into the national health system.

He expressed the determination to strengthen cooperation with the regulatory authority and the Cuban biopharmaceutical industry, in order to exchange on the main changes that the reform will imply. According to the PL report, Bi Jingquan made these proposals when he received the ambassador of Cuba in the Chinese capital, Miguel Ángel Ramírez, at CFDA headquarters.

At the meeting, the parties highlighted the sustained process of development of Cuban biotechnology and the consensus reached by the governments of both countries to deepen ties in this area. Cuba and China in 003 established in the northeastern province of Jilin the Changchun Heber Biological Technology joint venture, dedicated to obtaining biotechnological products.

They work together in the ChangHeber and Biotech companies, the latter responsible for developing and marketing the humanized monoclonal antibody Nimotuzumab-R3, Cuban made, to treat brain tumors.



Bi Jingquan, general director of the Food and Drug Administration (CFDA), highlighted the positive progress of relations between the two countries in this area and expressed the will to increase them. Autor: ACN Publicado: 16/12/2017 | 01:32 pm

Jardines del Rey: A renovated tourist destination



DIEGO Manzano from Spain is visiting Cuba for the first time. As part of his tour of the island, he has come to Jardines del Rey to, as he says, “enjoy this little piece of paradise.” Like him, more than 3,120 visitors are today staying in the 16 facilities across this northern string of keys. Jardines del Rey, one of the most visited sun and beach destinations in the country, now has 7,720 rooms distributed across the keys of Guillermo and Cayo Coco. Important global hotel chains such as Sol Melía, Iberostar, Pestana, Acor, Memories and Sercotel operate in the resorts, alongside Cuban hotel chains Gran Caribe, Cubanacán, Gaviota, and Islazul.

Spa and relaxation areas feature among the facilities

A DESTINATION WITH A NEW IMAGE

Following the passage of Hurricane Irma more than 70% of hotels on these keys suffered damages. However, today they are all providing services and offering a new and renovated image to visitors, explains Lesner Gómez Molina, deputy delegate of the Ministry of Tourism (Mintur) in Ciego de Ávila.



The beaches along these keys are now in better condition, with more sand.

“Hotel facilities suffered damage mainly to roofing, marquetry, and windows. The beach restaurants were almost all destroyed by the sea but today you can see a different picture,” he adds. Mintur and government entities created a steering committee to respond to the damages. Immediately, explains Gómez Molina, the clean up and collection of debris began. Two weeks after the hurricane, construction works commenced.

MORE THAN SUN AND BEACHES

“Cuba is a country that offers you many different and great things,” comments a Spanish visitor.

“Jardines del Rey is not only sun and beaches, it is also history and nature. Today the tourist destination has better conditions, improvements and a new product to face the high season. We want people to leave with fond memories,” says Gómez Molina, before continuing: “The challenge is to reinforce the quality of services, for clients to leave satisfied with the service, with the food, the variety of drinks, the entertainment, the excursions, something that will only be possible with the support of workers.”

According to the Mintur representative, December promises to be a good month for the sector. Jardines del Rey will end the year as planned, despite the hurricane, and with facilities restored, ready to host peak season holiday-makers with the expected quality. Today its main market continues to be Canada, followed by the United Kingdom, Russia, and Portugal. During the summer, second place is occupied by the national market, while in months like the present only some 300 Cuban guests visit. The province of Ciego de Ávila, including the keys of Jardines del Rey and the nearby mainland city of Morón, has a total of more than 8,024 rooms ready to welcome visitors.

In 2016, Jardines del Rey welcomed more than 450,000 visitors, and up until the end of September this year, there had been growth of more than 15% in visitor numbers. The expectations are that Jardines del Rey will continue to contribute to the tourist sector and consequently the economic development of the country.

Culture in the Revolution

With the recent inscription of the "Cuban Point" as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, there are three national elements that have reached this category, granted by Unesco.

The Tumba Francesa was the first in 2008, in response to the values of this manifestation that arrived in the east of the island with Haitian slaves, in which dance, singing and percussion are mixed and it is still palyed in the Cuban town of Sagua de Tánamo, in eastern Holguín province.

The second selected was the Cuban rumba in 2016, a festive expression that is practiced in different towns and cities and in which popular dances and music are combined with all the inherent cultural practices.

The Cuban punto has just been added to the list, which was included in the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee,

which will be held until tomorrow, Friday, in the city of Jeju, Republic of Korea.

According to a press release from the United Nations Organization for Culture, the genuine musical expression of the peasantry is one of the nine new elements approved worldwide.

In the exclusive list of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity, only forms of expression that bear witness to cultural diversity and contribute to raising awareness about its importance are included.

Punto is the poetry and music of Cuban farmers, consisting of a tune or melody over which a person sings an improvised or learned stanza of ten octameter verse lines, with a rhyming scheme.

This year, another 20 representatives were registered in the Unesco list, belonging to Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania and Cote d'Ivoire.

Iran (2) Kazakhstan, Portugal, Germany, Greece, India, Indonessia, Irlkanda, Italy, Kyrgyzstan and Malawi were also distinguished at the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee.

Previously, only 460 manifestations of 117 countries bore the status of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, since this denomination was established, aimed at promoting and preserving heritage and cultural values.



La Tumba Francesa, Inscribed in 2008 (3.COM) on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (originally proclaimed in 2003)



Rumba in Cuba: Inscribed in 2016 (11.COM) on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Cuba has three Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity representatives

"I would like to thank the Cuban Circus for this beautiful show!"

Pope Francis thanked artists of the circus of Cuba

Pope Francis thanked artists of the Circus of Cuba HAVANA, Cuba, Dec 21 (ACN) Pope Francis thanked on Wednesday the presentation of a group of artists from the Circus of Cuba in his usual General Audience on Wednesday, in the Paul VI Hall of the Vatican City.

"I would like to thank the Cuban circus for this beautiful show! Thank you!" exclaimed the Supreme Pontiff after witnessing live and applauding the performance of the young Caribbean people before some five thou-

sand people who cheered them, reported Prensa Latina (PL).

The music, the dance, the circus technique and the color of the Caribbean island left with this presentation an indelible mark on Francis, for whom the circus artists are "artisans of the party, of the wonder, of the beautiful".

Participants in the presentation made in the Vatican integrate the Havana Company, of the National Circus of Cuba, which is currently performing in Rome as part of a tour of six

Italian cities.

The PL report recalled that last year the Pope said that circus artists "enrich society around the world, with the ambition also to feed feelings of hope and confidence."

During the celebration of the Circus Jubilee, within the framework of the Year of the Jubilee of Mercy, the Bishop of Rome greeted participants in the activity, and especially mentioned "the leaders and artists of the Circus of Cuba."

2018 Cuba International Book Fair approaching



Poster for the 27th International Book Fair Cuba 2018, taking place in Havana February 1-11 and then across the country before ending May 13, in Santiago de Cuba.

A bicycle piled high with books features on the poster for the 27th International Book Fair Cuba 2018, taking place in Havana February 1-11 and then across the country before ending May 13, in Santiago de Cuba.

The image is a reference to the People's Republic of China, guest country of honor in this latest edition of the most popular cultural event on the island.

The poster also features a message announcing that the 27th edition of the Fair will be dedicated to intellectual, National Prize for Social Sciences winner and Havana City Historian, Dr. Eusebio Leal Spengler. Details of the event were presented during a press conference in the Pabellón Cuba venue's Mayo Hall by Juan Rodríguez Cabrera, president of the Cuban Book



Juan Rodríguez Cabrera, president of the Cuban Book Institute announced that the 27th International Book Fair will come to an end May 13 in Santiago de Cuba. Photo: Leysi Rubio/Cubadebate

“Some 133 expositors from 31 countries and over 100 authors will be attending the Fair in Havana.”

Institute (ICL); Sonia Almaguer, director of the National Book Chamber; Edel Morales, director of the fair's literary program; Yao Fei, political advisor and chargé d'affaires at the Chinese Embassy; and Mario Cremata, director of Boloña Publications.

Thus far, some 133 expositors from 31 countries have confirmed that they will be participating in the Fair, where they will be presenting alongside almost all of the island's publishing houses. Meanwhile, over 100 authors have assured that they will also be attending the event in Havana, a figure which is expected to rise.

In addition to the Fair's main site at the San Carlos de la Cabaña Fortress, the 2018 edition will see activities taking place across a total 22 spaces, both traditional and new, including the Fayad Jamís, Ateneo Cervantes and Alma Mater book stores, the Casa de Asia, and Chinatown.

Boloña Publications meanwhile will be responsible for printing various works by Leal, a renowned essayist and public speaker.

With the aim of strengthening cultural exchanges and cooperation between Cuba and China, an artistic delegation and the country's most important publishing houses are set to participate in the Fair, according to Yao Fei. We hope that this edition of the Fair is one of the most outstanding and magnificent yet, he stated.



Cuba on the Road to Sustainable Development

No Poverty

The distribution of wealth is guaranteed in terms of health, education and social welfare, which has contributed to the achievement of a high Human Development Index placing Cuba in the 68th place in the world ranking and eighth in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the 2016 Human Development Report, published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Zero Hunger

Cuba has earned the recognition of the United Nations for Food and Agriculture (FAO) for its achievements in the fight against hunger. In this regard, it is one of the eight countries in the region that has managed to eradicate hunger completely, which makes it a benchmark for food security in Latin America and the Caribbean. All this, thanks to the continuous application of policies aimed at guaranteeing the availability, access and correct use of food.

Good Health and Well-Being

In the first semester of 2017, the infant mortality rate was 4.1 per thousand live births, which places Cuba among the first 20 nations in the world and together with Canada at the head of the Americas in this indicator. It brought down the maternal mortality rate by 37.8 per 100 000 live births, while the survival of newborns remains at 99.2 percent, according to the Maternal and Child Program. Life expectancy is up to 79 years, as revealed by the National Statistics and Information Office (ONEI), the Public Health Ministry confirmed that more than 2 100 centenarians currently live in Cuba. In 2015, it became the first country in the world to eradicate the HIV-AIDS and congenital syphilis transmission from mother to child.

Quality Education

The Declaration of Human Rights states the universal right to education. This must be free, at least in elementary and fundamental stages. Standing at 30 out of 188 on the average. Cuba guarantees universal and free education for the population over 25 years old, at all levels, under the principles of massive character, equity, democratic involvement of the whole society in the education-related tasks of the people, the coeducation and the open school to diversity, the differentiated attention and the

school integration.

Gender Equality

Cuba was the first country to sign and the second to ratify the convention on the elimination of all types of discrimination against women and complies with the international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment agreed in the Declaration and Platform for Action of Beijing and the Declaration and Program of Action on Population and Development.

There is universal access to health services, education and others, without discrimination based on gender, which is endorsed in the Constitution.

In the labor sector, while women in the world earn between 10 and 30 percent less than a man in the same position, in Cuba there is equal pay.

Clean Water and Sanitation

Cuba defends the importance of public policies that guarantee water security and the population's access to water, as a fundamental human right. Therefore, it carries out permanent work in the sanitation and management of this important resource. Recently, with the approval of the Law of inland waters, its integrated and sustainable management was ordered, regarding the general interest of the society, and it established the steps for its protection.

Affordable, Clean Energy

The National Economic and Social Development Plan until 2030 aims to achieve a 24% share of energy renewable sources in electricity production, which today amounts to just over 4%. By the early 2017, 22 wind farms with a generating capacity of 37 MW were operating in the national territory. By the end of the year, seven more wind farms with a capacity of 15 MW will be completed, according to the Ministry of Energy and Mining. Meanwhile, the Azcuba company points out that the Cuban sugar industry currently generates 37 kilowatts / hours per each ton of sugar cane; and contributes to the country with 15 % of the electricity it produces with cane biomass.

Decent Work

The Cuban Labor Code stipulates the right of every citizen to have a

job, equality in work, training and improvement, rest, paid vacations and social security. Recently, in the Conceptualization of the Cuban Social and Economic Development Model it was established that the State guarantees these rights mainly "by promoting new and diverse sources of employment and public policies that favor their generation". At the end of September, 579,415 Cubans were self-employees.

Industry Innovation and Infrastructure

The Conceptualization ... stresses the importance of progress and the application of the results of science, technology and innovation in the achievement of a thriving and sustainable socialist society. The Cuban State promotes "science, technology and innovation in different fields" and "conducts and encourages scientific and technological results to be applied and generalized in production and services".

Reduced Inequalities

Cuba establishes the economic inclusion of everyone, regardless of gender, race or ethnicity. It also guarantees equal access to education and health services, while promoting the end of global disparities and actively takes part in global and regional forums, especially in blocks of underdeveloped or developing countries, and promotes solidarity and international cooperation.

Sustainable Cities and Communities

«Economic, social and environmental sustainability is associated with development, and requires rhythms and growth structures of the economy that ensure: prosperity with social justice and equity in tune with the environment, rational use and preservation of natural resources, as well as the safety and enrichment of the nation's heritage », as specified by the text of the Conceptualization ..

Cuba on the Road to Sustainable Development

Responsible Production and Consumption

Law 1288/75 is in force, which requires state entities to collect waste from their production and deliver it to Raw Materials.

By mid-year, the Union of Raw Material Recovery Companies had managed to recycle and sell around 200,000 tons. In addition, rational and efficient consumption of national resources is advocated and energy saving campaigns are carried out throughout the country.

Climate Action

Cuba belongs to the United Nations Convention Against Desertification, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol.

It carries out a program for the reduction of polluting gases into the atmosphere and approved the State Plan to take on climate change, called Tarea Vida, which includes risk and impact studies, comprehensive monitoring of the coastal zone, sectoral projects and the territorial ordering. In addition, the Plan foresees a greater investment in the development and use of renewable energy sources in Cuba.

Life Below Water

The sea surrounding us is an impor-

tant asset in the Cuban economy, based on the attractions of the beaches for national and international tourism. For this reason, various tasks are undertaken to rescue these ecosystems, for example the so-called footbridges of the Santa María beach, one of the actions developed for the protection of the dunes. In addition, an intensive control of marine species is carried out and six Ramsar sites have been decreed (wetlands of international importance).

Life on Land

The National System of Protected Areas covers 21.74 % of the Cuban territory in all its variants and categories, and includes the seven existing Special Sustainable Development Regions and two proposals that cover the five mountain ranges (Guaniguanico, Guamuhaya, Bamburanao, Nipe - Sagua-Baracoa and Sierra Maestra), the largest wetland in the Insular Caribbean (Ciénaga de Zapata) and the two largest systems of cayes in the country (archipelagos Sabana-Camagüey and Canarreos).

There are also six Biosphere Reserves and two Natural Heritage Sites of Humanity.

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

In the Latin American and global environment, Cuba is one of the countries with lowest incidence of violence. Likewise, legal advisory is available for the population and the political system is structured from the people through the People's Power Assemblies.

Cuba was also the scene of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace.

Partnerships for the Goals

The road to sustainable development is just beginning and Cuba remains in favor of integration and partnerships, considering them as relevant to achieve the proposed goals, thus fulfilling UNDP expectations. Among them, it is an active part of the ALBA-TCP, CE-LAC and other regional mechanisms.

(Photos: JR Digital Archives)

Translated by ESTI



Cuba expediting foreign investment

New rules to streamline the evaluation and authorization processes of projects with foreign investment are in the final phase of approval, according to a report presented to the representatives of the Economic Affairs Commission of the Cuban Parliament.

“NEW REGULATIONS TO EXPEDITE FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN CUBA ALMOST READY”

Déborah Rivas, Director General of Foreign Investment of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment (Mincex), informed that the elaboration of the rules responds to the call of the National Assembly of People's Power, in its meeting in December 2016.

According to Rivas, this is a modification of the decree complementary to Law 188 of Foreign Investment,

approved in 2014 as part of the updating of the Cuban economic model.

Rivas insisted that the rules do not solve everything, because to make more expeditious the realization of business requires, in addition, the commitment of the businessmen and organizations involved.

She acknowledged that although there are defined policies, incentives for investors and a broad portfolio of opportunities, there are still delays in the preparation of studies, compliance with procedures, and lack of preparation of entities.

The official underlined the importance of obtaining the effective support of the sponsors, including the organs of the People's Power at all levels, mainly in the projects that are carried out in their territories.

Deputy Agustín Lage, for Yaguajay, Sancti Spíritus, said that in addition to the training, there is also a need for a change of mentality, since many of the businessmen consider the issue of foreign investment as a state function.

Certainly the approval of the projects corresponds to the state organisms, but their promotion does not;

in general, national entrepreneurs do not have the habit of looking outside (external market), she argued.

The fourth version of the business portfolio of Cuba, presented at the last International Fair of Havana, includes 456 opportunities, valued at an amount of more than 10.7 billion dollars.

With the approval until October of 30 foreign investment businesses, the country achieved this year the goal of attracting foreign capital exceeding two billion dollars, Rivas said.

She said that currently 95 projects are under negotiation, with real possibilities to be completed by 2018.

In line with the Mincex directive, starting in 2018, the National Statistics and Information Office will begin to publish data related to the behavior of foreign investment in the country.



CUBA kept rising economy trend in 2017

Cuba kept a rising economic trend in 2017, despite the impact of the U.S. blockade and the tensions arisen from material, financial and climate related risks, said the Government today.



Minister of Economy and Planning (MEP) Ricardo Cabrisas presented the report during the session of one of the permanent committees of the

Parliament, the discussions of which take place at the Havana's Conference Center.

He said that 2017 was a tense and complex year, from the climatic point of view, as the country was subject to the onslaught of a severe drought and then the damage caused by the hurricane Irma, a weather phenomenon of great intensity that damaged a large area of the country.

Cabrisas, also vice president of the Council of Ministers, said that, as expected, the economy was affected by difficult conditions due to the situation of foreign currencies and the fuel performance.

He said that, for Cuba, the international context was marked by the tightened economic, financial and

commercial blockade set up by the United States and the backward step in the modest progress made in the process of normalization of bilateral relations.

In an meeting in which president of the Parliament Esteban Lazo participated, Cabrisas and various deputy ministers explained in detail the main balances with a view to assess the fulfillment of the Plan of the national economy during this year and the proposals for 2018.

According to Cabrisas, the annual production of oil (crude oil and gas) was below the forecast by about 38,000 tons, while the production made by renewable sources barely represented 4.25 percent within the national energy structure.