

EMBASSIES OF CUBA IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC NEWSLETTER



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ABSTRACT

Cuban President Raul Castro hosted Namibian Prime Minister, validating strong ties among both countries and of the Caribbean nation with the African continent. In Latin America, Cuba rejects the exclusion of Venezuela from Summit of the Americas, meanwhile Members of the European Parliament restated their condemnation of the U.S. Blockade. First Vicepresident Díaz Canel voiced once again support for the Palestinian cause in a meeting held in Havana with the Minister for Education of the Arab State.

Washington hosted a bilateral meeting on Human Trafficking, confirming zero tolerance from Cuba on this issue.

The 11th International Congress of Higher Education: Universidad 2018 began on Monday in Havana. On the side-lines of this event Cuba Signed cooperation agreements with Ecuador and Syria.

The National Ballet of Cuba (BNC) has announced that will perform classics Giselle and Don Quixote in a tour through the United States. The Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) endorses the first hotels with four stars' category in Camagüey while Yurisbel Gracial Signs a contract with the Japanese Softbank Baseball Team.

DIPLOMACY

Raúl receives Namibian Prime Minister



an official visit to our country.

The two leaders held a friendly conversation discussing the excellent relations shared by their peoples and governments, and reaffirmed their intention to work on strengthening these ties.

Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers, yesterday February 15, received her Excellency Saara Kuu-gongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, who is making

The two leaders held a friendly conversation discussing the excellent relations shared by their peoples and governments, and reaffirmed their intention to work

on strengthening these ties. They also addressed a variety of issues on the current international agenda.

Accompanying the distinguished guest were Peya Mushelenga, minister of Urban and Rural Development, and Namibia's ambassador in Cuba, Jerobeam Shaanika.

Also participating on the Cuban side were First Vice President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez; Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz; and First Deputy Foreign Minister Marcelino Medina González.

Granma, February 16

BILATERAL COOPERATION

Cuba rejects interference and exclusion of Venezuela from Summit of the Americas



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba energetically rejects the announcement by a group of nations in the hemisphere, released February 13 in Lima, that constitutes unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of the Bolivarian Republic de Venezuela, and at the same time categorically rejects the decision to reconsider the participation of the Venezuelan government in the 8th Summit of the Americas, to be held this coming month of April, in Peru.

A few days ago, the U.S. Secretary of State, on a tour of several countries in the region, stated that continuing in effect is the Monroe Doctrine, the most notorious interventionist policy of U.S. imperialism in our region. He called for a military coup against the constitutional government of Venezuela and advocated strengthening sanctions on the country. The decision adopted is not unrelated to these declarations and actions.

In this context, Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs recalls the arbitrary and aggressive U.S. Executive Order, renewed in January of 2017 that describes Venezuela as "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy" of the superpower, and President Donald Trump's most recent warning about utilizing "a possible military option, if necessary."

It is unprecedented and incredible that now being used as a pretext is an alleged "unconstitutional rupture of the democratic order," precisely in a country which has held, within a few months time, municipal, regional, and Constituent Assembly elections, and has just called Presidential elections, precisely as has been demanded, including via external interference and unconstitutional, violent methods.

Cuba denounces this statement and the exclusion of Venezuela from the Summit of the Americas as contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by heads of state and government of countries which are members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reaffirms Cuba's unwavering solidarity with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the military-civic union of its people, led by constitutional President Nicolás Maduro Moros.

Absolutely relevant are the words of Raúl Castro Ruz, President of the Councils of State and Ministers, on July 14, 2017, when he said, "Aggression and coup violence against Venezuela hurt all of Our America and only benefit the interests of those who attempt to divide us, in order to assert their dominance over our peoples, regardless of the incalculable consequences for the region, like those we are witnessing in different parts of the world. We warn those who today attempt to overthrow the Bolivarian Chavista revolution, using unconstitutional, violent, coup-plotting methods, that they are assuming a serious, responsibility before history."

Granma, February 14

BILATERAL COOPERATION



MEPs to Strengthen Actions against U.S. Blockade to Cuba

Havana, Feb 14 (Prensa Latina) Members of the European Parliament (MEP) reiterated today their willingness to strengthen actions and thus contribute to lift the economic, commercial and financial blockade of

the United States against Cuba.

The MEPs reiterated their stance during a meeting with vice president of the National Assembly of People's Power Ana Maria Mari Machado, at the headquarters of the Cuban Parliament.

President of the Nordic Green Left group Gabi Zimmer voiced the interest of parliamentarians to learn about the restrictions set up through the blockade on the purchase of health devices, especially for child services.

She also expressed the MEPs support for Cuba's claim to close the naval base located in the eastern province of Guantanamo, occupied by the United States Government against the will of the Cuban people and Government.

For her part, Mari Machado thanked the solidarity of the MEPs who will visit Cuba until next Friday and said that this visit will strengthen ties between this country and Europe.

'We are linked by historical ties and friendship to Europe,' said Mari Machado, while reiterating that this year will be the 30th of diplomatic ties between Cuba and the European Union.

She also encouraged cooperation, unity and peace in the world, for which solidarity and ties amid parliamentarians are key.

Mari Machado spoke to the MEPs about the updating of the Cuban economic model and about the second stage of general elections, scheduled for next March 11th in Cuba.

The MEPs, from the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left, represent parties from Spain, Italy, Portugal, Germany and Czechs Republic.

Prensa Latina, February 14

BILATERAL COOPERATION



Díaz-Canel receives Palestinian leader

Sabri Saidam is visiting our country as the special envoy of Palestine's President to convey a message to Raúl Castro Ruz, President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers.

Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, Party Central Committee Political Bureau

member and First Vice President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers, yesterday afternoon received Sabri Saidam, member of the Al Fatah movement's Central Committee and minister of Education and Higher Education in Palestine, who is visiting our country as the special envoy of President Mahmud Abbas, to convey a message to Raúl Castro Ruz, President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers.

During the fraternal meeting, the Cuban leader reiterated our country's unwavering support to the unalienable right of the Palestinian people to their own state, with its 1967 borders and capital in East Jerusalem.

He likewise reaffirmed Cuba's condemnation of the unilateral decision of the United States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Saidam, who is also participating in the Universidad 2018 conference currently underway in Havana, thanked Cuba for its historic support of the Palestinian cause, and expressed his country's desire to further consolidate the friendship and cooperation that unites the two nations.

Palestine's ambassador in Cuba, Akram Mohammad Rashid Samhan, accompanied the distinguished guest, while on the Cuban side, participating were Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, also a member of the Party Political Bureau; and the ministry's director for North Africa and the Middle East, Héctor Igarza Cabrera.

Granma, February 14

Cuba Ratifies Zero Tolerance with Human Trafficking



Havana, Feb 14 (Prensa Latina) Cuba ratified its policy of zero tolerance for human trafficking during a meeting on the issue with U.S. authorities, the island's ministry of foreign ministry stated today.

In a statement, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the two countries discussed the matter in Washington DC in a multisectoral meeting, which allowed up-

dating the advances, experiences, and challenges of prevention and confronting the scourge.

The Cuban delegation explained to the U.S. side the steps taken in the fight against the problem; among them, the establishment of the National Action Plan 2017-2020 for the Prevention and Confrontation of Human Trafficking and the Protection of Victims, and a Commission responsible for implementing it, said the text.

It also mentioned the results of the visit to Cuba of the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, María Grazia Giammarinaro.

Cuba and the United States hold meetings on issues of mutual interest, although in a more adverse scenario than the one that existed in the final two years of the administration of Democratic President Barack Obama (January 20, 2009, to January 20, 2017).

Since his arrival at the White House last year, Republican President Donald Trump has shown a hostile stance towards the island, which includes the adoption of measures to reverse the bilateral approach announced in December 2014.

Prensa Latina, February 14

BILATERAL COOPERATION

Cuba and Syria Sign Agreement on Higher Education

Havana, Feb 14 (Prensa Latina) Cuba and Syria signed a collaboration agreement on higher education in this capital Wednesday, with the objective to promote the exchange of experiences in fields such as medicine, pharmaceutical sciences and other academic areas.

The agreement was signed by Cuban Higher Education Minister Jose Ramon Sabrido and his Syrian counterpart, Atef Naddaf, in the frame of the 11th International Congress Universidad 2018 at the Havana Convention Center up to Friday.

'Our relations are historical, we are united and our enemy is common, it is the same,' said Naddaf.

'We will not forget the participation of Cuba in our war against Israel, against Zionism and imperialism,' recalled the Syrian minister.

Naddaf accused, on the other hand, the United States of leading and sponsoring international terrorism in his country so that Syria suffers a setback.



The Minister of Higher Education of Syria announced that 10 scholarships are available for young Cubans who want to study Arabic in that nation.

For his part, Saborido explained that a large number of Syrian students graduated in the Caribbean island, participate in postgraduate courses.

'Alliances in Higher Education are a great challenge, which is why this agreement that we subscribe supports our collaboration,' said Saborido.

'We have a great dissatisfaction, because we would like to do more,' Saborido said.

Prensa Latina, February 14

BILATERAL COOPERATION

Cuba and Ecuador sign agreement on Education



HAVANA, Cuba, Feb 15 (acn) Cuba and Ecuador signed an agreement of cooperation and mutual recognition of professional diplomas and homologation of Higher Education studies, as part of the activities of the 11th International Congress Universidad 2018.

Both countries were represented by Jose Ramon Saborido, Cuba's Minister of that sector; and Augusto Barreras, Secretary of Higher Education, Science and Technology in the Andean nation.

Saborido told ACN that the agreement includes all areas of higher education, will influence the development of institutions and will provide solutions to the demands and challenges that society imposes.

The agreement will enhance academic and scientific exchange, the formation of human resources, and the realization of joint projects, undergraduate and post-graduate training and will not be applied to a specific university, but will include the system of Ecuadorian universities, whether public or private, Saborido said.

Maria Augusta Calle, Ecuadoran Ambassador in Havana, told ACN that her country's interest in establishing this type of ties is not new, but is the result of the effort that has been made for 10 years.

There is a large number of Ecuadorian students who are studying or have graduated in Cuba, hence the recognition of their university degrees is essential for the validation of their studies, the diplomat noted.

Similarly, we have a lot of cooperation from Cuban professionals in Ecuador, and they also need the validation of their diplomas to better perform their activities, she added.

Ecuador is one of the foreign delegations with the highest representation in Universidad 2018, event attended by two thousand delegates from some 60 countries, with headquarters in Havana's Conventions Palace until tomorrow.

ACN, February 15

INSIDE CUBA

Universidad 2018 Congress Begins in Havana

HAVANA, Cuba, Feb 12 (ACN) The 11th International Congress of Higher Education: Universidad 2018 began on Monday in Havana with a conference by the Cuban Higher Education Minister Jose Ramon Saborido Loidi and a cultural gala at the Karl Marx Theater.



As part of the international congress, which will run until Friday, 14 workshops will be held with issues to be debated like University, Environment, Energy and Sustainable Development.

Two forums and symposiums will also be held with issues like Didactics in Basic Sciences, Engineering and Architecture and education of the arts and superior education.

The event's slogan is "University and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Centennial of the Cordoba Reform", in allusion to the student movement which began at the University Nacional in that Argentinean province, extended to other universities in the country and Latin America.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Cuban universities sponsor the event whose first edition was held 20 years ago. The event has students, professors and directives of the different institutions as guests.

According to Saborido Loidi, who is also President of the Organizing Committee, the congress will gather some two thousand representatives from 60 countries and 530 Cuban participants.

Universidad 2018 has registered so far, close to one thousand 920 papers and the nations with most representation are Nicaragua, Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina, Panama, Peru and Venezuela, said the specialist.

Saborido Loidi commented that the conditions have been created for the success of the event with space for a healthy exchange, dialog and reflection on the most pressing problems facing higher education in the world.

ACN, February 13

CULTURE

National Ballet of Cuba to Exhibit Giselle, Don Quixote in USA

Havana, Feb 14 (Prensa Latina) The National Ballet of Cuba (BNC) has announced that it will perform the classics Giselle and Don Quixote in a tour of the United States, in the coming months of May and June.



The company led by the legendary dancer Alicia Alonso will present Don Quixote in Chicago on May 18, 19 and 20, and on the 29 and 30 at the John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington.

In the same place, the Cuban group will exhibit their Giselle performance, in Alonso choreographic version, from May 31 to June 3 (double show).

To close the tour, the company will dance Giselle at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, in the city of Saratoga Springs, on June 6, 7 and 8.

Before the trip to the United States, the BNC plans to delight its regular audience of the Gran Teatro de La Habana Alicia Alonso with a season of the masterpiece of Romanticism, Giselle, during the weekends of February 23, 24 and 25, and from March 1 to 4.

Prensa Latina, February 14

Hotel Infrastructure, for a Tourism of Excellence in Camagüey



Camagüey, Cuba, Feb 13 (Prensa Latina) Given the demand of the growing number of foreign visitors to this central-eastern city, vital for the economy of the country, the Ministry of Tourism (Mintur) accredits the first hotels with the category of four stars.

The intention to get included within the main tourist destinations favours actions of this type, especially in the facilities of the Complex Camagüey City, of the chain Cubanacán, located in the Historical Center of the city, declared in 2008 Cultural Patrimony of the Humanity.

In the town, located just over 500km east of Havana, there are six facilities functioning under Hoteles Encanto (E) hotel chain, in a list that includes Camino de Hierro, Santa María, La Avellaneda and El Marqués.

The cultural potential of the former Villa de Santa María del Puerto del Principe encourages many foreigners. An example of that is the increase in operations at the Ignacio Agramonte International Airport, which received 250,000 passengers from various destinations in the world in 2017.

When the city achieves its 504th anniversary, the quality expert of the Complex, María Gema, told the Cuban News Agency, the advantages offered by the categorization to the hotels 'positioned in the first places on the TripAdvisor travel website among the accommodations in Camagüey'.

Prensa Latina, February 13

SPORTS

Yurisbel Gracial Signs Contract with the Japanese Softbank Baseball Team



The Japanese baseball team will have other Cuban players, Alfredo Despaigne, Livan Moinelo and Oscar Luis Colas, reported JIT sports website.

Gracial was part of the Cuban team (Alazanes de Granma) that recently competed in the Caribbean Baseball Series in the Mexican city of Jalisco.

His debut in international baseball was in the Can-Am League playing with the Quebec Capitals during the last two seasons.

After signing the contract, reported JIT, Gracial thanked the Japanese team for giving him the opportunity to play and expects to contribute as best he can, as did Despaigne, Moinelo and Colas.

Gracial said that he is conscious that the Japanese League has quality and will be an important personal and professional experience. I hope to obtain good results to continue opening the way for other Cuban players to also sign contracts with other teams, he said.

Regarding his performance in Canada, Gracial said it was an important step to improve and hope to contribute to his team of Matanzas and the National team.

Gracial as the other three players is expected to join, as stipulated by both sides, the national pre-selection team prior to the start of the Central American and Caribbean games scheduled for Barranquilla, Colombia July 19th to August 3rd.

The representative of the Japanese city of Fukuoka, Kenta Hagiwara declared open contracts for more Cuban athletes starting from the needs of the team for future seasons.

The legal director for the Cuban Sports Institute Ramiro Dominguez confirmed pending similar steps, but with Dragons, Pitcher from Pinar del Rio, Raidel Martinez and outfielder from Matanzas Ariel Martinez.

The President of the Cuban Baseball Federation, Higinio Velez headed the confirmation of the accord for Cuba, reported JIT.

Embassy of Cuba in New Zealand

<http://misiones.minrex.gob.cu/en/new-zealand>

