



# Prensa Latina and Masetti's Legacy

Pág. 3

## Cuba-U.S.A

Hebertprot-P in United States Pág. 4



## Culture

Poet Nancy Morejón

Pág. 6



## Cuba

Blockage resistance

Pág. 10



## Economy

Agenda 2030

Pág. 14



# UN Tourism, Latin America's Potentials

By TeyunéDÍAZ

VARADERO.- The 69th UN Tourism Regional Commission Meeting focused on new criteria directed at finding a common solution among nations and companies, with emphasis on Cuba's experiences, experts affirmed.



UN Tourism Regional Director for the Americas Gustavo Santos described as positive the Cuban travel industry. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Several UN senior officials who attended the event, recently held at the Meliá Varadero Hotel, also participated in the 42nd edition of the Cuban International Tourism Fair, held at Jardines del Rey, in the country's eastern-central region, an example of sustainability and environment protection.

In an interview with **The Havana Reporter**, UN Tourism Regional Director for the Americas Gustavo Santos praised the reality of the Cuban travel industry and described it as positive.

The official referred to topics such as connectivity, competitiveness, digitization and education, in addition to the need of common work among countries and companies. He added that such issues are essential for the development of tourism in Latin America and the Caribbean, where Cuba plays a relevant role in the recovery of the sector.

In Santos' opinion, Cuba undertakes hard work on both, those lines of action and innovation projects. For that reason,

sharing experiences and good practices among countries and destinations, both in the public and private sectors, is a must, he said.

In relation to connectivity, he stressed the importance of the event held in Chile, where they were able to talk to air companies' responsible people, executive officials and tourism leaders, an event in which Cuba was represented by Tourism minister Juan Carlos García.

In the event, actions were made for companies to fly to the Latin American region, taking into consideration the importance of inter-connectivity.

"The more connectivity we have, the highest number of tourists will come to Latin America and the Caribbean," he said.

Another topic Santos spoke about was rural and community tourism and its development, in order to generate new offers, in addition to the ones Cuba traditionally implements – the Sun and Beach offer.

During his visit to the island, the UN Tourism Regional Director for the Americas toured several places in Havana and stated his optimism for the city's constant process of recovery and areas of outstanding patrimonial value in the Latin American region.

In spite of weaknesses and difficulties, opportunities are huge in Latin America and the Caribbean, said the official after recalling that the region includes 15 percent of the world territory and 40 percent of its biodiversity, an example of sustainability.

He stated his conviction that the region represents the tourism of the future, as the Latin American and Caribbean countries have it all; he also stressed the topic of connectivity to guarantee multiple destinations.

In Santos' opinion, one of the most important topics of the exchange was the need of working together and finding common solutions.

## Air China returns with a new look

By RaquelDÍAZ

HAVANA.- The resumption of Air China airline's operations in Cuba, last May, with two weekly frequencies, caused immediate international stir after its announcement at the 42nd edition of the International Tourism Fair, FITCuba 2024.

On the above topic, Cuban minister of Tourism Juan Carlos García made two important announcements at the closing of the Fair: first, the visa exemption to Chinese citizens with ordinary passports; second, that the giant Asian nation would be the invited as guest of the next edition of the Fair, to be held in 2025.

The effect of this news was immediate and according to the Chinese journal The Paper, the Ctrip platform reported a 40 percent increase in the search of air tickets and hotels in Cuba, in comparison to the previous day, being the residents of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Tianjin, Shandong and Fujian, those who showed higher interest.

On this topic, Ctrip Group Deputy Chairman Qin Jing stated that the visa exemption and the restart of direct flights to the island will significantly reduce tourists' time

and money costs, which could lead to more Chinese visitors exploring the Cuban destinations.

A sign of the impact is that the Qunar travel platform already has available the Beijing-Havana direct flight route, operated by Air China, with the tourist cities of Havana and Varadero as the places searched the most. In the meantime, the 14-day travel option through four Caribbean countries – Mexico, Cuba, Costa Rica and Panama – is the most requested route.

The announcement also reached Madrid, where Air China executives and officials of the Cuban Bureau of Tourism explained to tour operators the characteristics of the routes.

On that occasion, Air China Sales director Oscar Huo told **The Havana Reporter** that the company bets for giving a special boost to Chinese citizens' visiting Cuba and Latin America, in addition to consolidating projection from China to Europe and offering the Caribbean attraction, with Cuba at the top, with the hope of extending their reach to Latin America.

In the meantime, Cuban tourism counselor to Spain and Portugal, Niurka Pérez, commented that the visa exemption to Chinese citizens will increase perspectives of turning the island into a relevant destination for the Asian giant.



The resumption of Air China flights coincided with the announcement of visa exemptions for travel to Cuba.

PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Pérez stressed that the Beijing-Madrid-Havana itinerary fosters the tourist sector by allowing the possibility of multiple destination.

Chairman of the Cuban Civil Aviation, Joel Beltrán, told THR that at present, 56 airlines flight to Cuba, to which Air China and Avianca, from Colombia, will join, to reach 58 in total. On occasions, up to 62 companies fly to the island, because some only fly in certain times of the year.

The truth is that the resumption of the Air China flights to Cuba opens a new chapter in the island's connectivity with the world, because the Beijing-Madrid-Havana route offers attractions both in its connection with that nation and the rest of Latin America, thus boosting multiple destination.

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# Prensa Latina and Jorge Ricardo Masetti's Legacy



Masetti with the Guatemalan writer and journalist Miguel Ángel Asturias at the Prensa Latina headquarters. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

By Gilda **SOCORRO**

BUENOS AIRES.- The Prensa Latina Latin American News Agency will celebrate its 65th anniversary next June 16, a perfect occasion to render tribute to its first director, Argentinean journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti.

Masetti was born in 1929 in the city of Avellaneda, in the province of Buenos Aires. In addition to being one of the aforementioned news agency's founders, he left an important imprint not only in his country but in Cuba and Latin America too. Also known as Comandante Segundo (Second Commander), the rebel went deep into the Oran forest to continue the guerrilla fight in that area, in the border of Bolivia, on April 21, 1964, when nothing else was heard of him.

In spite of his early disappearance, at the age of 35 – only five years after the creation of Prensa Latina – his life and legacy are kept in every piece of information and effort made by the Latin American agency, which he founded together with his fellow countryman Ernesto Che Guevara.

According to the information researcher María Seoane (1948-2023) published in her book *Che, Masetti, Walsh, Prensa Latina*, he was "a restless soul, prone to mysticism, preferably a self-taught person. At the age of 15, he discovered journalism as an adventure and, although he did not know it, as a destiny."

In writer and teacher Hernán Vaca's opinion, for his professional career, work and communicational praxis results, Masetti should be placed in a privileged position in the region's political communication historiography.

Masetti was a war correspondent who became a protagonist of a Revolution

that marked the continent's history with blood, sweat and tears. He stood out for his capacity as founder of Latin America's only international news agency that competed with the major information monopolies in its own ground, he said.

In 1958, the young journalist became the first Argentinean to arrive to the Sierra Maestra mountain range to interview Ernesto Guevara (1928-1967) and Fidel Castro (1926-2016) as special correspondent of the Radio El Mundo station.

Since then, his life was linked to Cuba and a year later, after the rebels' triumph, he summoned Rodolfo Walsh (1927-1977) to create, together with Che, a news agency at the service of truth, of which he was its first director.

Then, on June 16, 1959, Prensa Latina was born, a communicational project with an international reach and an alternative vision of the region's reality.

According to renowned writer and analyst Stella Calloni, Prensa Latina "is an example of journalistic ethics, because it respects the right the peoples have to receive truthful information, in a world where hegemonic power seizes most of the communication mass media and technologies, sowing lie and hatred.

Sixty-five years after its founding, Prensa Latina has correspondents in nearly 40 countries and maintains the daily production and transmission of some 400 dispatches, produces some twenty radio programs, works for television and social networks, as well as print publications. In addition, it fosters cooperation with media from all over the world, especially from the global south.

# Authorities Alert to the Increase of Electricity Demand

By Rafael **ARZUAGA**

HAVANA.- Cuban minister of Energy and Mines warned of an increase of electricity demand in the national territory, which in May had exceeded estimates for 2024 "due to a combination of high temperatures and other phenomena."

The above was stated by Electricity Union (UNE) director Alfredo López during his participation in the program *Desde la presidencia* (From the Presidency), which is produced in Youtube and is hosted by Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel.

The official commented that estimates of the 2024 demand was 3.5 percent higher than that of last year and as an example of such a substantial increase, he mentioned that the second Sunday of May (Mothers' Day), the demand exceeded 20 percent in comparison to the same day in 2023.

López made reference to the oil deficit, the unforeseen breakdowns and the maintenance processes in several power plants, which affect national electricity distribution. He also noted that current conditions are different to those of 2018, because Cuban then "had 500 megawatts in reserve and a stable oil supply."

Now, it is totally different. Since 2018, we have not conducted general maintenance in energy units, which total 16 in the country.

The director explained that "Felton II (in the country's east) has a permanent breakdown and of the remaining 15, 13 are out of the maintenance system, while

distributed generation is not working at hundred percent of its capacity either."

Maintenance was conducted in some units in the last months, but that is not enough and electricity transmission networks also have difficulties, he stressed.

The UNE director explained that "we cannot expect to have a similar demand to that of Mothers' Day in July and August, but it will not be 3.5 percent either, it could be higher."

According to estimates, we could have 1,200 megawatts on average in thermal generation and over 300 in natural gas in July and August; however, he said, "it is not possible to avoid blackouts those months."

In his speech, López explained that there are two major solar energy projects: one, of 1,006 megawatts, to be executed from the present year to 2025; the other one, of 1,000 megawatts, whose installation will last seven years."

He added that "both projects require the use of the electricity system base energy;" that is, the power plants, and it is thus necessary that they "receive general maintenance in the coming years."

We are facing a serious situation but with all the repair actions in several units, tendency to improvement should happen in the medium term, he predicted, while urging to consume the electricity needed.



Oil deficit, breakdowns and the maintenance in several power plants, affect national electricity distribution. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

# Hope for Millions of People in the United States

Text and Photo: DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- The only of its type in the world, Heberprot-P, a medication Cuba developed to fight diabetic foot ulcer, could reach the U.S. market in 2028, an encouraging news for over 38 million people living with diabetes in this country.

Dr Lee Weingart, President of the U.S. biotechnological company Discovery Therapeutics Caribe (DTC), settled in

Cleveland (Ohio), told **The Havana Reporter** that they received the approval of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to start phase 3 of these clinical studies.

"We have been able to operate under an exemption to the embargo (blockade), which allows to conduct joint medical research projects in which we and the Cuban organizations participate; so, we have used this provision to carry on with this project," he said.

The doctor commented that the study will include about "180 patients in about 25 centers" of the country and

"we think that it will take us about 18 months to finish it. We hope to reach the market with this FDA-approved medication at the middle of 2028."

Weingart affirmed that "38.4 million U.S. people suffer from diabetes, of which 1.6 million annually develop a diabetic foot ulcer."

Of that figure, "160,000 will suffer an amputation and 80,000 of them will die in the next five years; thus, if the cycle continues, 80,000 people will die every year because of diabetic foot ulcer complications, the eighth cause of death in the United States, more deadly than certain types of cancer," he warned.

The expert attended an event sponsored by the Cuban embassy in the United States, in which bilateral collaboration possibilities in the fields of biomedicine and biotechnological research were analyzed.

Presentations at the said event were conducted by Dr Mitchell Valdés, director of the Cuban Neurosciences Center and member of the Cuban Academy of Sciences, and distinguished professors Mark M. Rasenick and Weingart.

The auditorium included Democrat congresswoman Jan Schakowsky; Chemistry Nobel awardee in 2003, Dr Peter Agre, among other personalities.

Schakowsky and Congressional Representative Barbara Lee circulated a letter among their colleagues in 2013 asking the Department of the Treasury to issue a licence to a group that wanted to conduct an Heberprot-P clinical trial in the United States, he explained.

Six years later, congresswoman Lee asked FDA commissioner why Heberprot-P was not available yet in the country, "so I feel that we are making what was thought should have happened in 2013 and 2019 a reality," he said.

The Cuban medication, which helps healing difficult wounds in diabetic patients, was developed 20 years ago and its use was already authorized in 26 countries.



Dr Lee Weingart, resident of the U.S. biotechnological company Discovery Therapeutics Caribe (DTC), settled in Cleveland (Ohio).

## Discontent of Biden's Policies

By DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- A group of Cuban-Americans from different U.S. organizations submitted a letter to president Joe Biden requesting the removal of Cuba from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism.

The message also requested the president to lift the sanctions that affect the Cuban family and have made the life of the population more difficult, after being subjected to over 60 years of a strong economic, commercial and financial blockade that has been kept in place by Democrat and Republican governments.

The group also joins calls for the resumption of the non-immigrant visa process at the U.S. embassy in Havana; the easing of travel restrictions, in order to facilitate people-to-people exchanges, and the family reunification process, in addition to retaking the path towards the normalization of relations.

The Alliance for Cuba Engagement and Respect (ACERE), the promoter of the initiative, stated that over 200 Cuban-Americans who support president Biden and 30 organizations, in addition to U.S. people and civil society groups, signed the letter.

According to surveys, the path to rapprochement is highly endorsed by a large majority of Cuban-American Democrats in Florida and an overwhelming majority of U.S. people, ACERE said in a communiqué.

The letter's signatories included former federal, state and local officials; academicians and university managers; business owners, executives and investors; lawyers; architects; doctors; scientists; teachers; artists; musicians and filmmakers; managers; social workers; veterans, among others.

The group members attended a meeting with State Department officials in "which

we stated our disappointment and discontent with the economic asphyxiation policies of the Biden administration toward the Cuban people," activist Carlos Lazo said.

"The meeting, which lasted about two hours, was held in an environment of respect and different topics were discussed in relation to that policy toward Cuba and the way this punishes and asphyxiates the Cuban people," noted the professor, a resident in the city of Seattle who heads the Bridges of Love movement.

The initiative joins other related actions that try to call Biden's attention, who in his electoral campaign in 2020, promised to change the failed policies of his predecessor, Republican Donald Trump – and that is how he won the vote of many Cuban-Americans.

Trump included Cuba again in Washington's unilateral list of countries that sponsor terrorism on January 12, 2021 – the last of his actions days before the end of his term of office, which was characterized by maximum pressure and the strengthening of the blockade through 243 additional coercive measures against the island.

However, Biden still has not kept his promise and has not left that path after taking charge of the Oval Office.



The letter requested the removal of Cuba from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism and to lift the sanctions. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

# Sixty-One Years spreading humanism throughout the world

By Cira **RODRÍGUEZ**

HAVANA.- More than 600,000 health collaborators have provided their services in all latitudes with sensitivity, heroism, dedication and professionalism in beautiful pages of love and solidarity with the only reward being the gratitude of the beneficiaries.

On occasion of the 61st anniversary of the start of the Cuban internationalist medical cooperation, minister of Public Health José Ángel Portal stressed the acknowledgment the talented and dedicated white-coats specialists have received worldwide.

On May 23, 1963, an aircraft transported 29 doctors, four dentists, 14 nurses and seven health technicians to Algeria, starting a new era of solidarity and internationalism that would amaze the world.

Saving lives in Cuba and the world was and has been the premise of the health

staff for over 60 years, as proven in difficult circumstances, said director of the Central Medical Cooperation Unit, Dr Michael Cabrera, on the occasion of the date.

An example of such cooperation was the internationalist collaboration offered in the 1960s, '70s and '80s in sister nations that needed Cuba's support, such as Ethiopia, Mozambique, Laos and Cambodia – the two latter, at war at the time.

The Cuban medical brigades also offered their assistance after the damages hurricanes George and Mitch caused in Central America in 2003, when the Venezuela Special Mission, the Barrio Adentro Program and the Operation Milagro were created.

Then, in April 2005, the Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Situations of Disaster and Serious Epidemics was created, whose important health actions were taken



Cuban doctor have provides their services in all corners of the world. PHOTO: Minrex.

to countries such as Pakistan and more recently, to Turkey and Syria, after the 2023 earthquakes.

COVID-19 was another rough test, as only five days after the start of the pandemic, the first Cuban specialists departed to Venezuela and Nicaragua as advisors and a third brigade went to Lombardy, Italy, the epicenter of the disease.

At present, 22,861 Cuban health professionals and technicians render

their services in the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, with outstanding results in 54 countries.

The Cuban collaborators offer care to the most poor population; have attended about two billion people; have conducted more than 16 million surgeries and over five million births, just to mention a few examples that show the love, ethics and values of the Cuban collaborators.

## Protection to HIV/AIDS People

By Lourdes **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- In Cuba, 28,643 people are currently living with HIV/AIDS, 96.8 percent of whom are receiving treatment, while 89.3 percent of those receiving treatment have a suppressed viral load of the disease. In 2015, Cuba was certified as the first country in the world to eliminate mother-to-child HIV/AIDS and congenital syphilis

transmission, a condition that was revalidated in 2017, 2019 and 2022.

Cuban minister of Public Health (MINSAP), José Ángel Portal, recently ratified the government's will to protect the population of the island living with HIV/AIDS, in addition to cooperating with other nations. "Cuba ratifies its commitment and will to

protect and attend people living with the virus in our country, as well as to cooperate with other nations that can benefit from our experiences and from the achievements reached in the field of prevention, diagnosis, treatment and control," he said.

The minister recalled that Cuba's cooperation with the UN Joint Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) started over 30 years ago and several joint programs and actions have been implemented since then to protect and attend people living with this disease.

He added that in order to evaluate the progress made in that field, and to continue looking for other ways to strengthen those results for the benefit of health and

life, UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima visited Cuba last May.

Portal described the work exchange with the expert as fruitful and said that important ideas were shared on the development of the National HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Program, which is implemented since 1986 and whose basis is social prevention, with a community, cross-sectorial and multi-sectorial approach.

These results have been obtained thanks to the State's political commitment with attention to people living with the virus and the investments made in this field, among other things, the minister stressed. Those achievements are the results of the particularities of the Cuban Health System, whose basis is Primary Attention and a projection toward prevention, an element in which the multi-sectorial approach used is essential, he added.

All this work counts on a large legal endorsement in different Cuban norms, such as the Constitution of the Republic, the Family Code and the Public Health Law, recently approved.

In addition to those elements, it is important to highlight the contribution Cuba has received in its fight against HIV/AIDS by the World Fund, an international organization whose objective is to end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as soon as possible.

Also important has been the contribution UNAIDS has made through consultancies, the acquisition of medication and the creation of capacities to strengthen the Cuban Program to face the pandemic, said the MINSAP minister.



UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima visited Cuba last May. PHOTO: Panchito González.

# Nancy Morejón Prepares her Memoirs

Text and Photo: DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- Nearing her "first 80 years", Cuban poet and writer Nancy Morejón told **The Havana Reporter** that she is writing her memoirs in two parts, entitled *Alambre dulce* and *Gallo pinto*.



The poet, journalist, literary, theater critic and translator is writing her memoirs.

PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Close to celebrate her "first 80 years," Cuban poet and writer Nancy Morejón told **The Havana Reporter** that she is writing her memoirs in two volumes.

During a recent visit to the United States, Morejón (Havana, August 7, 1944) told THR that her neurons will not rest after her return to Cuba because "I am working on my memoirs... and I am the one to finish them." The writer commented that those memoirs will cover about 500 pages and that she chose the title *Alambre dulce* "because of a Cuban music theme by Félix Chappottín (1907-1983), which was on air in the neighborhood where I grew up: Los Sitios, and that is the essence."

Then, other things happen, when I started studying at the University of Havana in the intellectual world of the '60s and many other details of our civil life which are interesting, said the 2001 National Literature awardee.

The second volume would fairly go beyond by roots, all my university life and the world

of literary learning of the French language, my specialization in the French language and how Cuba enters into what is known today as the Afro-Asian balcony, she commented.

The journalist, literary and theater critic and translator, whose work has been translated into English, French, German, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Polish and Dutch, commented that the title of this volume is related to "our Gallo Pinto and the Nicaraguan dish, a Cuban version of the *congrí* (rice and beans) that was born in Alicante and then became a part of our identity."

"This is a real scoop; I have never talked about it neither in Havana nor anywhere else, neither in San Francisco nor in Chicago, only now, here," the poet told this publication when stressing that her memoirs will only be compiled in two volumes, because "those are Nancy Morejón's main worlds."

A bachelor of French Language and Literature at the University of Havana

in 1966 and full member of the Cuban Academy of Language since 1999, Morejón traveled to the United States on an invitation to attend an academic event at the Missouri University and a poetry festival in Chicago, Illinois.

When talking about the links between the United States and Cuban cultures, she referred to great novelists, going from Ernest Hemingway to Truman Capote, and to many poets whose works were published in Cuba.

In her opinion, those links' lesson is that culture was always saved and the Cuban people always distinguished between the horrors of the U.S. administrations and the real values of the U.S. culture.

She added that "we cannot erase the links between Langston Hughes, a great New Yorker, a great black poet of the Americas, of all continents and our Nicolás Guillén (1902-1989); that is really a school and something we have to go back to again and again."

## Series ADN Cuba: Path and Life Stories

By AdisMORERA

HAVANA.- A new path to express signs that define the society; that was the way renowned Cuban filmmaker Alejandro Gil described the documentary series ADN Cuba (DNA Cuba), a work that explores the origins of six famous figures of the Cuban civil society.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, the filmmaker highlighted that the audiovisual has six chapters, which are hosted by Dr Beatriz Manchego, director of the Cuban National Medical Genetics Center.

The documentary stars singer and songwriter Silvio Rodríguez; former volleyball player Mireya Luis; writer and researcher Zuleica Romay; actor Osvaldo

Doimeadiós; researcher and writer Nelson Aboy, and painter Roberto Diago.

The series, which will soon start the editing stage and is produced by the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC), offers a dialogue with the DNA of such figures, through which the different paths of the national identity, from the ancestors, are identified, Gil commented.

The experienced filmmaker is responsible for the staging of the cinematographic discourse of each of the ADN Cuba chapters, a series whose premiere has not been announced yet.

With an outstanding career in the Cuban seventh art industry, Alejandro Gil has directed films such as *La emboscada* (The ambush) (2015), *Inocencia* (Innocence) (2018) and *AM-PM* (2023).



In six chapters ADN Cuba explores the origins of six famous figures of the Cuban civil society. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



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# Challenges of Latin America's Migratory Policy

By Luis **BEATÓN**

SAN SALVADOR.- For about two centuries, the United States, "the good neighbor," considered the countries south of the Bravo River, the Latin Americans, as their backyard, where they invested, exploited and plundered the young Republics.

That excessive exploitation of resources and the unequal relation turned the region into a provider of raw materials, cheap labor and a factory of a "time bomb," immigration, which blew to pieces and today is like an earthquake thread that frightens Washington's policymakers.

A recent survey by the Fundación Doctor Guillermo Manuel Ungo (Fundaugo) revealed that 23 percent of the Salvadorian people has the intention of migrating in the next three years, an important figure to be added to the about two million legally present in the northern nation.

Most of the interviewees from March 11 to April 16 referred to the economic topic as the main motivation and more men than women stated their hope of leaving the country. The main reason behind migration, according to those



A recent survey revealed that 23 percent of the Salvadorian people has the intention of migrating in the next three years.  
PHOTO: Internet.

who stated their intention to do so, is to find a job – six in ten, approximately, for a 58.2 percent – followed by family reunification (30.9%) and problems with the democracy (5.3%), while strangely enough, barely 0.8 percent mentioned violence as the main cause.

Although authorities speak about a reduction in immigration to the main destination, the United States, in April alone, 4,316 Salvadorians were detained in the U.S. southern border, without including those who were able to avoid controls and joined the army of undocumented people who are exploited and live in the shadow in that nation.

Seven months after the start of the 2024 fiscal year in the United States – which started on October 2023 – 36,925 Salvadorians were detained in the border, according to the border patrol's most recent update in its website.

The Salvadorians are just one of the cases in which the migratory "bomb" threatens to eliminate the wall that Democrat and Republican governments alike try to build to get away from a problem they particularly created during years of exploitation, unequal free trade agreements and other abusive practices, experts on the topic affirm.

In the last months, attempts to fight the problem go beyond the southern border; it is not only the wall, whose construction was promoted by former president Donald Trump (2017-2021) against those he called "rapists and murderers," efforts now go further.

Mexican Foreign Affairs minister Alicia Bárcena affirmed that her country, in coordination with the United States and Guatemala, will try to improve border security conditions. Countries such as Honduras (37,323), Ecuador (36,956), Guatemala (36,934), Colombia (21,534), Nicaragua (18,711), El Salvador (17,720), Haiti (16,791) and Cuba (10,464) are included among the main nations from where more illegal and legal immigrants enter the U.S. soil.



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# Demographic Tensions

By Kamila **CRUZATA**

HAVANA.- The aging of the population and a decrease in birthrate are the distinctive features of the demographic dynamics in Cuba, a country in which public policies are set to face visible challenges resulting from interrelations between the population and the socioeconomic and cultural development.

In 2023, there were barely 90.300 births in the island, the lowest in the last six decades, the Government stated on February 2024 when stressing the need of "a deep and comprehensive approach to topics linked to a decrease in the global fertility rate and attention to senior adults," the only age group that continues to grow, the local press indicated.

According to authorities, demographic indicators' inert behavior poses several challenges to territorial governments, organizations, academic institutions and social actors at large.

"In light of this scenario, understanding, attending and controlling the demographic situation requires a change of mind," said Prime Minister Manuel Marrero at the most recent meeting of the Governmental Commission responsible for this topic.

Since the 1970s, different researches have warned about the complexity of the issue here, particularly the analysis conducted by the then National Statistics Office, as well as the Center for Demographic Studies (CEDEM) of the University of Havana.

"The demographic scenarios of the Cuban population, in 2025, indicated a marked, absolute decrease since the end of the first decade of the 21st century, with a visible process of aging of the population," recalled doctor of Sciences Antonio Aja in an article published in the

Novedades en Población (Latest News on the Population) magazine.

During the 20th century, the behavior of the demographic dynamics showed that fertility was the variable that had a higher incidence on the population growth, basically as of the 1970s.

"As fertility's decreasing tendency was materialized, mortality had a higher prominence. However, since the middle of the 1990s, the migratory component started to become a key variable in the balance of the population, either by speeding up or delaying demographic processes," Aja said.

This scenario is accompanied by the population's high educational levels, in addition to its protection by the

social assistance and security regimes, of universal nature. In this context, "including the population-development relation approach to the economic and social strategies requires a particular treatment from the territorial and local sectors, in addition to strengthening governmental, institutional and academic capacities at the national, territorial and local level" in order to understand the situation and try to transform it, stated the professor.

According to CEDEM, the increase in the number of elderly people and their aging per se go hand in hand with the Cuban family tendencies, including a reduction in their size, the increasing participation of women in the work activity and the growth of women's leading role at homes. When dealing with the problem in 2024, the Prime Minister urged to search for solutions upon the basis of local resources and to follow up those indicators that show progresses and deficiencies.



Demographic indicators' inert behavior poses several challenges. PHOTO: Granma.

## A Tribute to Havana

By Adis **MORERA**

HAVANA.- Tributes for the 505 anniversary of the founding of the city of Havana to be celebrated next November 16th, started under the motto La Habana vive en mí (Havana lives in me).

At a press conference, coordinator of the Provincial Government Objectives and Programs Tatiana Viera commented that the campaign is divided into three stages: the first, started on April 9 and will be extended until July 26; the second, from July 27 to November 16, and the third, from November 17 to January 8, 2025.

To pay homage to the former San Cristóbal de La Habana Villa, music, sports, stage arts, dance, history and literature events will be conducted in different scenarios, in addition to tributes to relevant figures, such as historical leader of the Revolution Fidel Castro and historians Emilio Roig and Eusebio Leal.

The main events held by the end of April for the city's 505 years included the Video Danza Habana (Havana Dance Video) and the Danza en Paisajes Urbanos Habana (Havana Dance in Urban Landscapes) festivals. Other events conducted last month were the El Trompo Children Fair, the National Baseball Series at the Latin American Stadium and activities for all ages at Lenin Park's recreational area.

From May 6 to 18, the International Museum Day will be celebrated at the patrimonial network of

the Havana City's Historian Office, with exhibitions, lectures, hall openings, small fairs and guided visits.

The inhabitants of the Wonder City will be able to tour its streets in July and August as part of the Rutas y Andares (Routes and Walks) Project, which proposes guided visits to museums and public spaces, thematic and virtual tours and workshops.

The program will also celebrate the births of historical leader of the Cuban Revolution (August 13), Emilio Roig (August 23) and Eusebio Leal (September 11) – the latter, from September 2 to 14).

National Culture Day will be celebrated from October 9 to 20, while classical music will seize the capital with the Mozart Habana Festival. The Cuban Book Institute will also join the celebrations with the holding of the traditional Sábado del Libro (Saturday for Books) space, once a month.

The agenda of celebrations include the Arte para Mamá and Arte para Papá (Art for Mothers and Art for Fathers) fairs; the Cubadisco International Fair; the Boleros de Oro International Fair; the 12th edition of the Un Puente hacia La Habana (A bridge to Havana) International Festival, and the large "rueda de casino" dance, with which Cuba hopes to set the record in the Guinness Book.

A large program of activities in museums and cultural centers will likewise take place from November 2 to 17, in addition to the traditional turn around the Ceiba tree. The opening of construction works of social interest will also be held in November.



The homage includes music, sports, stage arts, dance, history and literature events in different scenarios. PHOTO: Cuba Travel.



# Culture, Music and Cuban Identity

By AlmaLABRADA

HAVANA.- Culture, music and Cuban identity could define the Cubadisco International Musical Industry Fair, whose 27th edition was celebrated this year with the participation of outstanding exponents of the sound universe in Cuba and other regions of the world.

Dedicated to the rural music and Colombia as the guest country of honor, the event, held from May 12 to 29, was enhanced by the most autochthonous rhythms of both cultures and exceeded last year's number of participants thanks to the attendance of artists from nine nations, including Germany, France, Portugal, Brazil, Hungary, Spain, Argentina and Mexico.

A large variety of sounds, tributes and meetings that promoted thought and the search for new horizons in music, turned the Cuban capital into a large party.

Places such as the National Theater, the National Fine Arts Museum, the Martí Theater and the Pabellón Cuba – the latter, the stage of daily concerts and dialogues with famous singers – opened their doors to this record celebration.

Those spaces were decked with the presence of bands such as the Failde Orchestra; Toques del Río; Tony Ávila

and his band; the National Concert Band; the Original de Manzanillo Orchestra and the National Symphonic Orchestra, among others.

International exponents included the bands Qué Tengo (France), Davide Lo Surdo (Italy) and Las Guaracheras (Colombia), just to mention some.

The event's main attractions included the Cuba de guateque y punto initiative, held all over the country on May 17 to render tribute to the 65th anniversary of the signing of the First Agrarian Reform Act, as well as the launch of the album Cuban Gospel Music Vol 1 and the performance of

the Hungarian Royal Ballet with the participation of the Cuban Contemporary Dance Company.

Under the slogan 'Sound, identities and regions,' the Pabellón Cuba hosted the Cubadisco 2024 International Symposium, which was also dedicated to the rural music, the South American nation and the 80th birthday of musicologist Danilo Orozco.

Pianist and composer Frank Fernández won the Cubadisco Grand Prix for his work Beethoven. Conciertos para piano (Beethoven. Piano concerts), with the collaboration of the Cuban National Symphonic Orchestra, directed by maestro Enrique Pérez Mesa.



Pianist and composer Frank Fernández won the Cubadisco Grand Prix. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

## Children and Adolescents Enjoyed Educational Cinema

By MarioLOZANO

HAVANA.-President of the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC) Alexis Triana stressed the high number of boys, girls and adolescents who enjoyed the 4th International Educational Cinema Festival (MICE), held in the country's movie theaters from May 7 to 12.

"The invasion of children and adolescents to the 190 movie theaters in operation in Cuba on occasion of the 4th International Educational Cinema Festival shows us that links with the school and the use of new technologies in the mass media are more than essential in cultural program planning," said the journalist in his Facebook social account.

Triana highlighted that one of the most relevant features of the event is that a new generation has returned to the movie theaters to watch the Elpidio Valdés animated film, a classic of the national filmmaking, when 50 years have passed since its creation.

"This transcendental event, by itself, would be more than enough," he stressed, given the importance of that work by filmmaker Juan Padrón (1947-2020), National Cinema awardee.

According to Triana, who is also a cultural promoter, Educational Cinema, with a long presence in our film industry and with national projects that even emerged within Cubacine Icaic, should again have its natural place within the national screening network.

This year, the festival was dedicated to France; the 50 years of the two first short animated films on the Elpidio Valdés character; filmmaker Juan Padrón, and the ICAIC's 65th anniversary.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, MICE Cuba director Ivonne Sánchez highlighted that festival directors, filmmakers, actors, Spanish and Cuban workshop lecturers, attended this year's event. "Thanks to them, we had a large variety of important films on screening during the event," she said.

Each edition is dedicated to a different country and this year, France was chosen, with emphasis on animation; for this reason, it was logic for us to honor Michel Ocelot, who has a very interesting history in animation art, with several awards, Sánchez added.

Hayao Miyazaki's work, another outstanding animator in the world, was also acknowledged this year, she said.

The director also stressed the presence of 12 foreign guests, including founder and president of the MICE Network, Josep Arbiol.

MICE Cuba is becoming, in my opinion, one of the festivals with the highest number of spectators in the world, and in relation to the number of screenings, in Cuba, we might have reached the highest in Latin America, Josep Arbiol said in statements to THR.



Mice 2024 was dedicated to the 50 years of the two first short animated films on the Elpidio Valdés character and filmmaker Juan Padrón, among others.

# Progress and Resistance despite US Hostile Policy

By The Havana Reporter **EDITORIAL STAFF**

HAVANA.- Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel reiterated the will to make progress in the economic and social development of the island in spite of the strengthening of the U.S. blockade, and affirmed that Cuba will always defend Latin America's sovereignty.

In an interview with Spanish journalist and writer Ignacio Ramonet, the Cuban president said that in the face of Washington's aggressions, his country has not remained arms crossed but develops its capacity of resistance.

He stated that Cuba has suffered the limitations and difficulties resulting from the blockade for more than 60 years, a policy he described as illegal, unfair, anachronistic and especially arrogant on the part of the U.S. government.

Díaz-Canel explained that the strengthening of that policy, since 2019, under the

Republican administration of Donald Trump, cut off at once all sources of foreign currency incomes to Cuba, and added that since the very first time Title III of the Helms-Burton Act was applied, this has also put pressure on foreign investors.

In addition to this, he referred to a huge energy and financial persecution and added that 92 international banks or financial entities have been sanctioned or under pressure by the Government of the United States, which has forced them to stop their financial exchange relations with Cuba.

As part of those actions, tourism notably decreased, because the Government of the United States denies the U.S. people the right to come to Cuba as tourists, while the arrival of cruise ships, an important way of tourists' flow, was stopped.

During his talk to Ramonet, Díaz-Canel commented that his country will always defend respect to Latin America and the Caribbean's sovereignty and independence, in addition to respect to self-determination on the sociopolitical system they assume. Cuba maintains its will to continue having solidarity and cooperation relations with those nations, regardless of systems and ideologies.

He stressed that the island never breaks relations with Latin American countries, but tries to solve any issue on which there might be differences or differing stances through dialogue.

Cuba's signs of solidarity with Latin America and the Caribbean endorse that principle, which has had different expressions, such as the sending of doctors, teachers and

internationalist collaborators to several countries of the region, he added.

In this regard, he spoke about the presence of a medical brigade in Haiti that provides services to that people in spite of the situation that neighboring country undergoes and "when many are thinking on intervention or interference in their domestic issues."

The head of the Cuban State highlighted the island's links with the Caribbean Community countries and said that in the case of these, just like in the case of the rest of the countries of the region, relations are based on respect, solidarity, friendship and dialogue to solve any situation.

Díaz-Canel stated his hope that integration in the Latin American continent be an example to the rest of the world.



Cuba develops its capacity of resistance, said presidente Díaz-Canel. PHOTO: Raúl García.

## Clinical Trial on Poliomyelitis at WHO Request

By Alfredo **BOADA**

HAVANA.- A new clinical trial on poliomyelitis started in Cuba at the request of the World Health Organization (WHO) taking into account that no polio case has been reported in the island since its eradication in the 1960s. The new clinical trial on this disease is conducted in eastern Camagüey province, which was chosen for its experienced health staff and its renowned clinical practices, the local press indicated.

Cuba was the first Latin American country to eradicate this highly contagious child disease, in 1962.

The objective of this trial is to do research with the purpose to find out if a 0.1 mL dose of the Inactive Vaccine against Poliovirus is more effective than the 0.5mL dose used in other countries.

The research on the percentage of children that release poliovirus after being vaccinated started in all nine health areas of the Camagüey municipality.

The study includes 39 babies born from June to August 2023 and is divided into two phases: the first started in March and the second is scheduled to begin either in April or May, the local Radio Cadena Agramonte station indicated.

Leader of the clinical trial, Belkis Hernández García, told the media that since March, work is conducted on the selection of participants, with parents' consent and after informing them about the trial's objectives.

Every year, Cuba conducts an anti-poliomyelitis vaccination campaign to immunize babies since they are one month old and until they are two years, 11 months and 29 days old, in addition to those who are nine years, 11 months and 29 days old.

The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) admitted in 1995 that thanks to the coordination of resources, scientific-technological progress, political will, conception of the State and popular participation, the First National Vaccination Day against this evil started in 1962.



Cuba was the first Latin American country to eradicate this highly contagious child disease, in 1962. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

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# Creation of Third Geopark under Consideration

By Raúl **GARCÍA**

SANCTI SPIRITUS.- Cuba considers the creation of its third geopark in the Guamuhaia mountain range, in the country's central region, whose geological-geomorphological study is to conclude early 2025.

A geopark is a territory that includes a network of places with geological importance, as well as sites of ethnographic, ecological, cultural or special importance.

According to official reports, Empresa Geominera del Centro is preparing a file on this massif, also called the Escambray, whose highest point is Pico San Juan, which reaches an elevation of 1,140 meters and at its feet is the colonial city of Trinidad.

The territory is administered by the Villa Clara, Cienfuegos and Sancti Spíritus provinces and its elevation includes sites of biological, historical and tourist importance, such as the Topes de Collantes Natural Protected Landscape, affirmed PhD Enrique Castellanos, Geology director of the abovementioned entity.

Castellanos told the press that the site also has metamorphic rocks whose grains are a mosaic of rather equidimensional minerals, which are the result of contact or regional metamorphism due to the increase of their temperatures.

The Guamuhaia mountain range also includes the Lomas de Banao Ecological Reserve, the Hanabanilla lake, El Nicho and the Caballete de Casa and Caverna Martín national monuments, in addition to the Tuerto Peak (919 meters above sea level), which forms the Hanabanilla Natural Protected Landscape.

The Empresa Geominera Camagüey, for its part, examines the geological-geomorphological documentation of the Cubitas Mountain Range, north of that Cuban province and with an area of 822 square kilometers, in view of its study as an additional geopark.

Endorsed by the Cuban Council of Ministers, the island already has two geoparks: the Grand Piedra, in Santiago de Cuba (east) and Viñales, in Pinar del Río (west).



# Strikes and Demonstrations against Milei in Argentina

By Glenda **ARCIA**

BUENOS AIRES.- A strong adjustment, the loss of the purchasing power and thousands of dismissals, characterized president Javier Milei's first months in power in Argentina, where workers staged general strikes and mass demonstrations against him.

Since the arrival of the La Libertad Avanza movement leader to the Casa Rosada, the demonstrations against a Government program characterized by the strong defense of free market and private property, the reduction of the State to its minimal expression and the neglect of vulnerable sectors, have not stopped.

On January 24, just 45 days after the start of Milei's term, thousands of citizens flooded the Congress Square, in the capital and other cities in different provinces, as part of the first strike held by the General Labor Confederation (CGT) and other trade union sectors against the Executive's measures.

Shortly after, on May 9, the second action of the type was organized, with the involvement of the transportation trade union, which led to a standstill in the capital's subway, as well as the train and

bus sectors, while hundreds of flights were cancelled.

CGT described such strikes as strong and historic, while denouncing the existence of "a government that promotes the elimination of rights, redefines the State role, closes and reduces important departments and institutions and causes thousands of dismissals."



Since Milei's arrival at the Casa Rosada, workers have staged strikes and demonstrations against his government's measure. PHOTO: Internet.

It also denounced privatizations, the granting of natural resources, the stop of public works, the implementation of an anti-strike protocol, the reduction of funds to social security, health, education, science and culture.

CGT likewise condemned constant hikes in food, medication and essential services.

Thirty-one percent of the real fall in the retirement and pension budgeted items; 87 percent of the fall in the works; 39 percent in the transportation subsidies; 76 percent in the provinces' transfer; 18 percent in the university cuts, and 13 percent in the social programs, are some of the indicators that show that the adjustment is not paid by the caste but by the most vulnerable, says a document of that and other groups.

Workers also participated in a demonstration held on the Memory Day for Truth and Justice, on March 24 and in a mass demonstration in defense of public education, on April 23.

In those protests, the citizens opposed the Need and Urgency Decree 70/23 and a project known as 'Omnibus' Law, through which hundreds of norms are reformed, a period of emergency is declared and legislative powers are granted to Milei, among other provisions.

They also denounced the closing of the Télam news agency, the stances that do not defend Argentina's sovereign right over the Malvinas Islands and denial of the crimes committed during the last civic-military dictatorship in this nation (1976-1983).

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# Agricultural Practices Undergo a Change with FAO Assistance

By Ángela **GALIDO**

HAVANA.- The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) endorsed the introduction in Cuba of sustainable forestry, agroforestry and silvipastoral practices in the face of climate challenges. With the financing of the Green Climate Fund and FAO technical assistance, the Cuban

Ministry of Agriculture implements the Climate Resilience in Cuba's Agricultural Ecosystems project, the international body indicated.

In light of this initiative, a workshop was conducted with the participation of farmers, ranchers and technicians to share experiences on the implementation of varied crops, forestry, fruit, fodder and shade tree plantations in areas that were previously covered with marabou.

FAO experts explained that the meeting focused on the presentation of the results linked to the transformations underway to increase the production of food, meat and milk in seven municipalities of the country that are highly vulnerable to climate change.

The United Nations body also announced that Cuba created a digital series composed of 20 thematic modules to foster good practices in agroecology.

The compilation, entitled Formador de Formadores en Agroecología (Shaper of shapers in Agroecology), is the result of the project Modelos pilotos, horizontales de gestión del conocimiento y transferencia de tecnologías en Agroecología (Horizontal pilot models of knowledge management and technology transfer in Agroecology) (MAS-Desira), the international body indicated.

The initiative's objective is to establish innovative knowledge management systems nationwide in order to foster food production.

Implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, it counts on FAO technical assistance and the European Union financing through the Development Smart Innovation through

Research in Agriculture (Desira) plan, the UN body explained.

The lectures, conducted by the Alejandro de Humboldt Fundamental Research Institute (INIFAT), dealt with basic agroecology concepts, good practices in plague and disease control, land and water management, production of seeds and certifications, resilient and circular agriculture, among other topics.

Renowned specialists in the field of agroecology in Cuba participated in the digital thematic modules, in which they shared their knowledge through recorded videoconferences.

INIFAT experts, specialists of the national Urban, Suburban and Family Agriculture department, the National Agricultural Sciences Institute, the Indio Hatuey Experimental Pasture and Fodder Station and the Cuban Agricultural and Forestry Technicians Association, also participated.

Approved in 2020, the project is addressed at the restoration of impoverished ecosystems and areas mostly covered with marabou in about 36 thousand hectares, in which forestry, agroforestry and silvipastoral systems are implemented, the source indicated.



With the financing of the Green Climate Fund and FAO technical assistance, Cuba implements the Climate Resilience Agricultural Ecosystems. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

# U.S.A. Farmers Suffer Losses because of the Blockade

By María **MAYORAL**

HAVANA.- U.S. business executives and politicians linked to the agricultural sector visited Havana again to explore potential business with Cuba, knowing that they are losing a market and money because of Washington's unilateral restrictions.

Hosted at the National Hotel, the 5th Cuba-USA Agricultural Conference fostered talks on commercial interests, relations between producers and the ongoing dialogue, said the U.S. delegation at the end of the meeting.

As Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture Michael Strain affirmed, the conference helped strengthen bilateral ties on a road in which progress will have to be made "step by step."

In this regard, the commissioner again appreciated president Miguel Díaz-Canel for welcoming, last February, a delegation organized by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA).

The agricultural sector is still interested in doing business: Cuba spends about two billion dollars each year in respect to food import and barely 300 million of that total are related to U.S. sales, he added.

We have the potential to multiply by four the export levels to the island through different items, such as rice, wheat, soy, corn, poultry products, meat, milk, fertilizers, fuel, animal fodder grains, seeds, pesticides and herbicides, Strain commented.

USA Rice Federation official, Sarah Moran, ratified commercial interest and recalled that before 1960 – prior to the enforcement of the blockade – Cuba was U.S. rice growers' first export destination, something obvious because of the geographical proximity of both nations, which reduces transportation costs and other logistics expenses.

Just two years ago, shipment started again, but we are looking to expand exports, said Moran, who praised the mutual benefits of increasing transactions, as at present, a good part of the rice the Cuban population consumes comes from distant Asian markets.

In the face of the obstacles, Strain commented that honest and open dialogue is the path, in addition to the actions conducted by the different organizations that, within the U.S. territory, call for the normalization of bilateral ties, as well as visits to foster positive talks.

At the conference's opening session, Arkansas Republican congressman Rick Crawford affirmed that maintaining this type of meetings is a step forward, although "we are not where we would like to be" yet.

Chairman of Focus Cuba Consulting, Paul Johnson, considered that the conference should serve to listen, learn and return with concrete and necessary actions, either a commercial treaty or the commitment to continue with these exchanges. Cuban authorities stated that farmers' activism was essential for the U.S. Congress to pass the Sanctions Reform Act in 2000 and increase exports, which allowed Cuba buying food, although in conditions of disadvantage.



The 5th Cuba-USA Agricultural Conference fostered talks on commercial interests, relations between producers and the ongoing dialogue. PHOTO: Xinhua.

# Key Aspects to Make Progress in 2030 Agenda

By Luis María **GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- Financing for development and comprehensive attention to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are key aspects to make progress in the 2030 Agenda, stressed UNDP director for Latin America and the Caribbean Michelle Muschett.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, the executive of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) stated that these are essential issues in view of the commitment made by all the United Nations member countries.

In relation to financing for development, she noted that "you can have plans, strategies, commitment, will, but if resources are not channeled to financing that sustainable development agenda, we definitely won't be able to do it, neither in the due time nor on a later date."

A second element she considered an important principle in the 2030 Agenda is its comprehensiveness, as all SDGs are interrelated.

"It is about generating important approaches, a set of public policies that can influence more than one objective at the same time, and can have positive effects on others," she said. In that sense, she mentioned that the Cuban government has included among its priorities a transition to renewable energies, which has an impact on other fields.

That transition has several dimensions and is linked, of course, to renewable energy, which implies a series of environmental commitments, but also social commitments, which are related to productivity, infrastructure and resilience, the official indicated.

Muschett visited Cuba on the occasion of a Conference on Financing for Development, which gathered senior representatives of different international entities in this capital.

During the interview, she also referred to the Human Development Report recently published and stressed the important value this comprehensive document has, which the UNDP periodically releases to the international community.

On Latin America and the Caribbean, she explained that the Report indicated that the region has built its development without making it sufficiently resilient to the shocks faced, and added that inequalities between the countries remain in place and increase.

The text shows that "the Index, at the world level, has had important improvements after the impact of the pandemic (of COVID-19), but not enough. In the Latin American

context, 12 countries have returned to their pre-pandemic levels, but 21 continue under their levels," she mentioned. The director recalled that the region was the world's most affected by the consequences of the scourge and is one of the areas that shows better improvements in the Index, without reaching the previous standards yet.

In the particular case of Cuba, she recalled that since 1990, the country showed a constant improvement of its human development indicators, but like the rest of the countries of the world, was affected because of the pandemic.

"At present, even though the pre-COVID-19 levels have not been recovered, it is very close. It is important to acknowledge that," she affirmed.



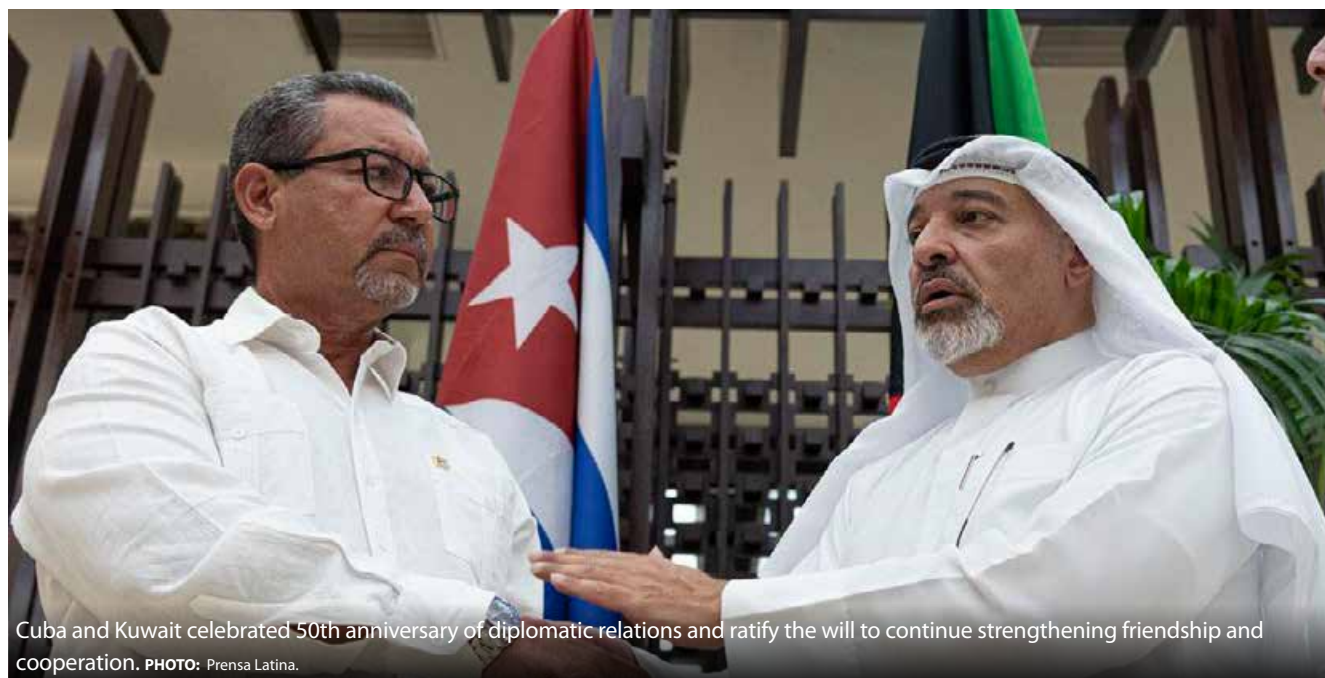
UNDP director for Latin America and the Caribbean Michelle Muschett. PHOTO: Boris Atienzar.

## Kuwait and Cuba Conduct Cooperation Projects

By Oscar **BRAVO**

HAVANA.- Kuwaiti ambassador to Cuba Adel Mubarak Farjan Al-Adgham highlighted the strengthening of relations between his country and the island on occasion of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

In a ceremony conducted in this capital on the abovementioned anniversary, the diplomat talked about the cooperation projects with Cuba in different fields, while president of the Cuban National Hydraulic Resources Institute Antonio Rodríguez acknowledged the support the Arab country has given to the hydraulic sector.



Cuba and Kuwait celebrated 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations and ratify the will to continue strengthening friendship and cooperation. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Rodríguez commented that cooperation with the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) started in 2003 with the conduction of works in this sector in the Santiago de Cuba, Holguín and Havana provinces.

The official explained that through that important mechanism, five loans were granted for a total of over 102 million dollars, of which over 86 million have already been executed – about 84.7 percent.

With KFAED contribution, a study is successfully implemented to provide a comprehensive solution to flooding in the Havana Malecón (seawall), Rodríguez affirmed.

The official also highlighted that through soft loans, projects related to the restoration of the water supply systems in the Santiago de Cuba province and the city of Holguín were already executed.

With the contribution of financial loans, aqueduct and sewer networks were also restored in Havana, as part of phase one, among other works that will benefit the population with water supply, he added.

KFAED's present and future collaboration is also extended to the construction of more water deposits and the renovation of water supply networks and waterworks plants.

Cuba and Kuwait foster collaboration projects in sectors such as health, biotechnology, hydraulic resources, environment, investments' protection and culture.

The meeting, on the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Cuba and Kuwait, was a perfect occasion to ratify both countries' will to continue strengthening friendship and cooperation relations.

Cuban Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Josefina Vidal attended the event, in addition to other people.

# Mijaín López and his Feat for the Fifth Olympic Gold

By Waldo **MENDILUZA**

PARIS.- Undefeatable under the five rings after his debut in Athens 2004, Cuban wrestler Mijaín López reiterated his intentions of winning his fifth title in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, to elevate his status as a living legend.

My purpose is to win the fifth gold medal in my last Olympic Games and I am confident I will be able to do it, because my training is going well and I have no injuries, the charismatic wrestler (41 years) – an Olympic champion in Beijing 2008, London 2012, Río de Janeiro 2016 and Tokyo 2020 – told **The Havana Reporter**.

The 130 Kg Greco-Roman style wrestler, who is affectionately known as the 'Idol' or the 'Giant of Herradura,' his natal town, in the western province of Pinar del Río, also wants to "thrill the Cuban people, my family and my fans all over the world" with his victory in the City of Light.

I also want to give myself that gold medal, as a present for the sacrifices made; do

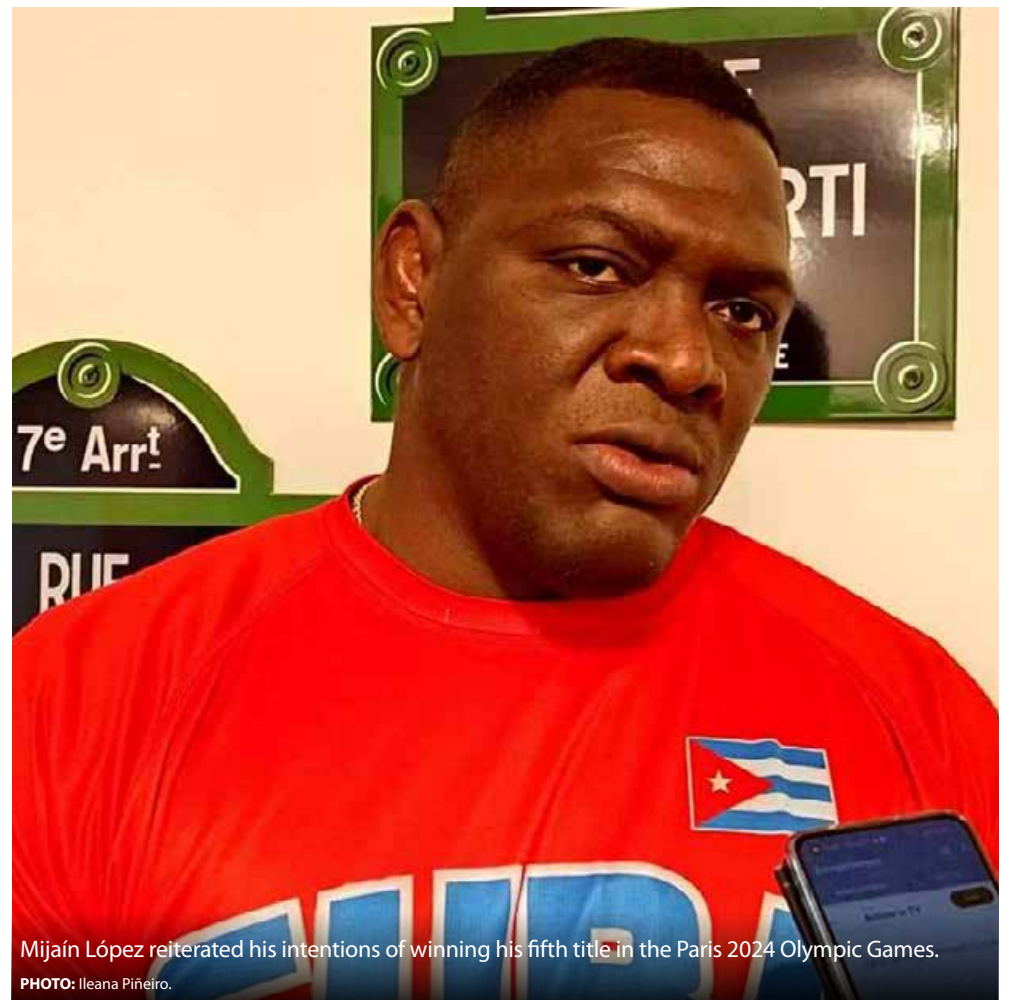
not forget that in August I will be 42, although I actually feel as if I were 20, said the athlete, who visited Paris as part of an invitation extended by sportswear giant Adidas to other legends, active and retired, to attend a promotional event in the framework of the Paris 2024 games.

According to Lopez, his expectations have been met in preparation for the sports festival scheduled for July 26 to August 11, with the fight announced from July 5 to 11 at the Great Ephemeral Palace of the Champs de Mars.

We will finish a cycle in Cuba and will do some training camps in Europe, where we will shape our competitive condition, commented the five-time world and Pan-American champion.

With more than 20 years on the tatamis, at the highest world level, and with a full list of achievements, Cuba's usual flag-bearer in the Olympic games affirmed that his motivation remains the same.

I think about my people, the persons who are always watching my performance and the coaches and teammates who give me their support, he stressed.



Mijaín López reiterated his intentions of winning his fifth title in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

PHOTO: Ileana Piñeiro.

On his sixth participation in the Olympics – in Athens 2004, at the age of 22, he made his debut but won no medal – he referred to the particular importance these games have, which gather the best of the best and can be enjoyed as part of a world sport family.

López affirmed that Cuban wrestling will get to Paris 2024 with a good preparation

and with the hope of reaching the expected results.

All athletes are doing great, are motivated and are eager to compete in the Olympic Games, to do what we do the best, he said. Until the present, a dozen of Cuban wrestlers are qualified for the City of Light – five in Greco-Roman, three in Freestyle and two in the women's category.

## Sport Activities for the Summer

By Ángel **SANTA CRUZ**



All municipalities of Matanzas province are planning activities that will include sports events. PHOTO: Cubadebate.

MATANZAS.- The Cuban province of Matanzas is getting ready to host sports activities and events during the summer, to officially begin next June 29.

According to official spokespersons, all municipalities of the province are planning a program of activities that will include sports events addressed to all sectors of the population.

Provincial physical recreational and leisure time methodology specialist, Israel Mederos, commented that the traditional aquatic carnival, to be held on July 26 at the San Juan River (Matanzas city) with the presence of Fishing Federation boats, is included among the events that will have a major impact on the territory during the summertime.

He added that a large sport movement is foreseen to take place in August in

the communities and on August 13, on occasion of the birthday of historical leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, swimmers from all over the country will be able to participate in the crossing of the Matanzas bay, an event that hopes to count on foreign participation.

Mederos said that in spite of the complex energy situation the country faces, efforts are made to organize events in different municipalities and foster their success by supporting people's transportation.

On August 31, the city of Matanzas will host the closing of the summer, an event that will include both recreational and sport festivals for the enjoyment of the population, particularly children and adolescents, he stressed.

# Challenges of Dominican Republic's Reelected President

By Mariela PÉREZ

SANTO DOMINGO.- Dominican Republic's reelected president, Luis Abinader, will assume government for other four years, in which, according to predictions, he will follow the policy adopted during his first term in some fronts and will give priority to issues of major importance for the population. But, although the national economy is growing, the country shows an unequal redistribution of its wealth.

A member of the Partido Revolucionario Moderno (PRM), Abinader (56 years) comes from a wealthy family of Lebanese origin, is an economist – with several titles reached in the United States – and has entrepreneurial experience.

The economic issue is to play a key role in the president's agenda. A report published last March by the Inter-American Development Bank indicated that about one percent of the largest local fortunes controls about 42 percent of the nation's total wealth.

In Quisqueya, an indigenous name that originally comes from this country – which shares the territory of the La Española island with Haiti – there are about 11 million inhabitants. High migration shows that the



The reelected president, Luis Abinader, faces the unequal redistribution of the country's wealth.

PHOTO: Internet.

economic situation has forced an important part of the population to go to other countries. Although the Dominican Republic experienced in the last years an important economic growth, Abinader said that he will try to implement new foreign investments that foster more jobs, without forgetting that he turned the fight against corruption into one of his promises when he took power in 2020, under the scourges caused by the pandemic of COVID-19.

Official data indicate that in 2023, tourism contributed to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with 10 billion dollars, while remittances from abroad amounted to about 11 billion dollars and direct foreign investment had a record of 4.3 billion dollars, especially in hotel construction.

However, in spite of those high indexes, job generation in the last years does not cover

expectations and the unemployment rate rose to 5.0 percent in the last three months of 2023, while half of the economically-active population has informal jobs, in many cases, in precarious situations.

Poverty affected about a quarter of the population in the last four years, while abject poverty affected a three percent.

Information provided by the Abinader administration acknowledges that most of the low-income families live in urban areas and 63 percent are run by women.

Abinader has a debt with local women and will have to make an effort to reach gender equality, which is inexistent now.

Dominican women's position of disadvantage was evident in the recent elections, where only two of the nine candidates to assume the post in the National Palace were women, a similar situation to the municipal elections held last February, especially for senior positions. According to analysts, the social policies implemented in the last four-year period have just been a palliative measure in the bloody social scenario in which most of the population live.

Hence, the president should solve the structural problems of a service economy.



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