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Crocodiles and Indigenous Traditions

By Teyuné **DÍAZ**

CIÉNAGA DE ZAPATA.- A trip to Ciénaga de Zapata (Zapata Swamp) can start with a tour of the Crocodile Farm and continue with a boat ride to Villa Horizonte Guamá, a place that shows the features of the Cuban indigenous people.

Living that experience prompted a group of journalists from **The Havana Reporter** to visit the place, in order to know more about the peculiarities of the area that nature tourism lovers searching for unique experiences can enjoy.

In an exclusive interview, Nadiesdha Santamaría, director of the Boca Guamá Basic Entrepreneurial Unit, an entity attached to the Cubanacán Horizonte Tourist Integral Company, explained that this tourist product is designed for visitors to enjoy the environment, the history and the unique services of each place.

According to Santamaría, the two trips national and international visitors prefer are the Crocodile Farm and the Taína Village.

A sign of that is the about 13,000 clients who annually visit the complex interested in

knowing their peculiarities and learning about the protection of the environment, which they can witness at the Crocodile Farm.

In this site, visitors can learn about the preservation of the Cuban crocodile – endemic

to the island and native of this place – and other species that are part of the Ciénaga de Zapata, such as the iguanas, turtles, hutias and manjuari.

In the meantime, a visit to the Taína Village, located in Villa Horizonte Guamá,

starts with an eight-kilometer-long boat ride that allows appreciating the natural environment, with its flora and fauna and after arriving, the traditional welcome that reproduces the Cuban indigenous people.

Some of the attractions of the village include 25 clay-and-cement sculptures made by famous artist Rita Longa, which show the main activities the indigenous people did, the specialist commented.

Hence, the importance of preserving this site and the reason why the staff works on the restoration of each piece, in coordination with the National Heritage center.

Villa Horizonte Guamá has a total of 44 rooms – rustic cabins supported by piles to recreate indigenous life – and the Indian Bar, that offers “saoco” as the house cocktail. It also includes a restaurant that serves crocodile meat as the house specialty.

Opened on July 18, 1963 on the idea of leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro, the tourist complex combines the history of the indigenous people with the natural tributes of the place.



Zapata Swamp allows to enjoy varied activities based on the environmental and preservation awareness. PHOTO: Panchito González.

Blue Tourism Fosters Protection of Cuban Ecosystem

By Fidel **MANZANAREZ**

CAMAGÜEY.- The concept of Blue Tourism to protect the Cuban ecosystem is part of the current policy of services the Marlins Nautical Base offers in Santa Lucía, in the north of the region.

This tourist destination, with a hotel infrastructure that includes the services Marlins offers, is responsible for diving proposals and sharks shows for tourists; hence, the importance of these projects.

Coastal management's main factors include the scientific will and the handling of these sites for the exploitation of tourist destinations as an industry, beyond visitors' respect and behavior.

In the case of this Nautical Base, it offers nature lovers trips to keys and beaches on the Camagüey northern coast, especially in the summer time, in addition to a safe exchange with endemic species and those in danger of extinction.

For that reason, transforming this tourist model is a must for actors and specialists involved in the Camagüey destination's tourist management, according to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment.

On the topic of Blue Tourism, the proposal foresees allowing clients to enjoy the potentials of this destination in combination with a better use of its natural resources, ecosystems and infrastructure, affirm researchers from the Camagüey province.

For the Territorial Science, Technology and Innovation, Sustainable Tourist Development Program, those actions will be managed upon the basis of sustainable

and eco-friendly environmental activities, which would contribute to transforming the image of this important tourist space, said Doctor of Economic Sciences Geiser Perera.

Playa Santa Lucía's huge wealth also include a better use of natural resources; thus, the Blue Tourism program includes proposals linked to health tourism and the use of medicinal mud.



Cuba has over 200 protected areas, important natural zones that are safeguarded. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



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U.S. Blockade, the Main Cause of Shortages



The issue of the blockade will return to the debate of the General Assembly. PHOTO: Internet.

By Ernesto **VERA**

HAVANA.- The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba is the main cause of the shortages the Cuban population suffers. In more than six decades, this policy has caused damages amounting to over 1,499,710 trillion dollars.

At the most recent presentation to the press of the updated report on the effects of the U.S. siege, minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez recalled that the Memorandum drafted in 1960 by the then deputy assistant secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Lester Mallory, is the basis of the U.S. blockade.

That document clearly states the purpose of overthrowing the country by means of hunger and hardships, in light of the impossibility of reducing support to the revolutionary Government.

The minister stated that the impact of the blockade is visible nationwide and added that it is surprising that this small island has built a huge social work and had been able to even face the pandemic of COVID-19 amidst the unprecedented strengthening of that unilateral policy.

He also stressed that in recent days, spokespersons of the United States have acknowledged the magnitude of the sanctions, the most comprehensive, complete and complicated a nation has ever faced in history.

Rodríguez mentioned that exemptions for their application do not mean a reduction of their scope and are the result of the fight sectors of the U.S. society conduct, such as that of farmers when trying to get licenses for food sale.

In that regard, he denounced that the blockade infringes international laws and avoids trade by preventing access to credits, hindering international transportation and persecuting the island's financial transactions.

The sales of food from the United States to Cuba are discriminatory and selective; they force to pay in advance the total amount of shipments; prohibit credits, even private, including the transportation of those foods in ships other than those from the United States, which are then forced to return empty, resulting in the increase of fees, he mentioned.

The minister highlighted that those supplies require authorization from the U.S. Government, the reason why that country cannot be considered a trade partner, nor the untruthful idea that those amounts are big and grow.

If the United States were to ease those sales, Cuba's purchases could be big, but that has not happened in spite of U.S. farmers and producers' requests, he said.

The minister affirmed that the arbitrary inclusion of Cuba in the Department of State's list of countries that allegedly sponsor terrorism makes difficulties deeper and considerably affects the Cuban families. Cuba is the victim of the terrorism being organized and financed from the U.S. territory, he stressed.

The resolution "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" will be debated at the United Nations General Assembly on October 29 and 30.

Quality Academic Year in Spite of Difficulties

By Ever **MELLADO**

HAVANA.- The inclusive character of the 2024-2025 academic year that started on September 2 shows the Revolution's vocation of social justice, in spite of the blockade and the economic asphyxiation policy of the United States.

The comprehensive formation of students in the face of the challenging economic scenario and the discredit and media manipulation campaigns against the efforts the country makes to increase the quality of the educational process, is the key to the success of such endeavor.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel said that Cuba needs its students to stand out for their knowledge, culture and decency.

In his podcast Desde la Presidencia (From the Presidency) on this topic, the president urged to foster students' learning, avoiding as far as possible, attitudes and behaviors that affect their potentials.

In that sense, he insisted on placing collective effort on the top; developing and promoting innovation and knowledge "as the level of the only resource they cannot be blocked, which is intelligence endorsed by study and constant upgrading."

The head of State urged to use one of the main weapons of historical leader Fidel Castro's political arsenal: "educating the people, raising critical awareness, a

critical thinking that guarantees a cultured discernment of what is worth and not."

As a society, we should recover courtesy habits that were lost, that cause unease in everyday life. There is nothing more alien to the Revolution than bad manners, he stressed.

Díaz-Canel highlighted that the present academic period is not only important because it overcomes huge material shortages, but "it is also a challenging course because of everything we are aiming to do to increase the quality of our education."

The island will generalize strategies this academic year to foster improvement of education in progress, with the purpose to increase the quality and effectiveness of the formation processes.

This III Improvement is based on theoretical studies, going from experimentation and a research system that has allowed identifying its needs.

The presence of researchers and teachers who participated in the previous processes has been a strength, general director of the Ministry of Education Pedagogical Sciences Institute, Silvia Navarro, said in the above mentioned space.

In addition to the over 1,600,000 students of the general education who went to classrooms last September 2, the universities welcomed over 59,000 new students last September 16.



The present academic period is "a challenging course because of everything we are aiming to do to increase the quality of our education", Díaz-Canel. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Another Year of Sanctions

By DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- U.S. president Joe Biden extended last September 18 the obsolete and anachronistic Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 for one more year, under which the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba was imposed in 1962.

"I hereby determine that the continuation of the exercise of those authorities with respect to Cuba for 1 year is in the national interest of the United States," Biden stated in the concise memorandum sent to the Department of the Treasury.

The text highlighted that "consistent with the authority vested in me by section 101(b) of Public Law 95-223, I continue for 1 year, until September 14, 2025, the exercise of those authorities with respect to Cuba, as implemented by the Cuban Assets Control Regulations, 31 C.F.R Part 515."

The Trading with the Enemy Act, enacted under the administration of president Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921), authorizes the government in office in Washington to restrict trade activities with any nation considered an adversary.

However, neither then nor now, there was a declaration of war from the United States on Cuba. Hence, that hostile unilateral policy is defined as an economic war that has caused damages and suffering to the Cuban people for over six decades.

Endorsed by that 1917 legislation, on February 3, 1962, Democratic president John F. Kennedy issued executive order 3447

that officially started a blockade that has outlived 11 White House administrations.

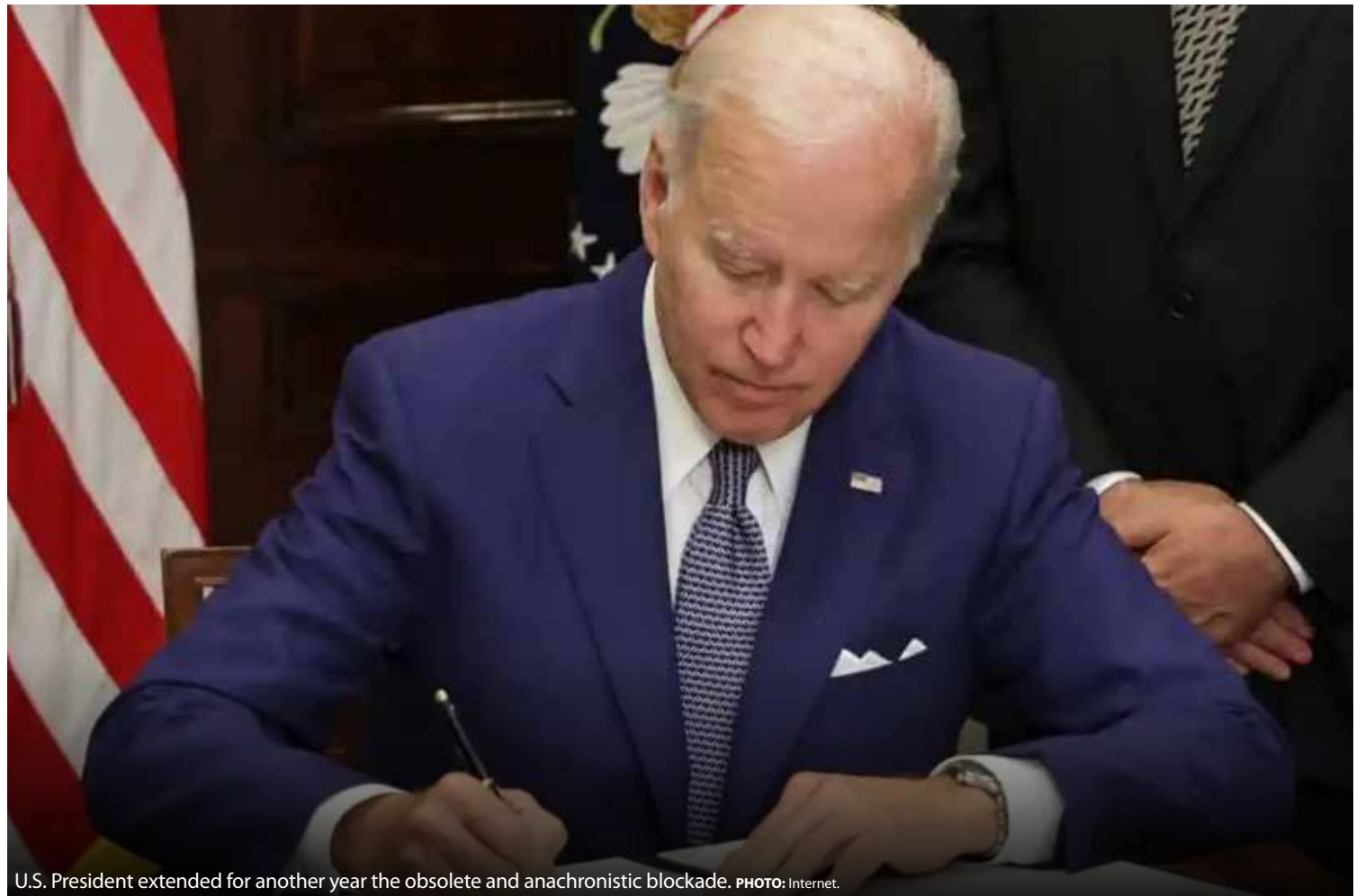
The new extension for the implementation of that law with respect to Cuba that Biden approved will expire on September 14, 2025.

Requests to lift the blockade increase in the United States and among the international

community, while the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly votes every year against that measure of asphyxiation.

Until February 24, 2024, the blockade caused material damages estimated in over five billion dollars, Cuban minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez denounced in Havana.

That figure represents an increase of 189.8 million dollars in comparison to the amount previously reported, the minister stated while presenting the report "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba" in this Caribbean capital.



U.S. President extended for another year the obsolete and anachronistic blockade. PHOTO: Internet.

Letter to President Joe Biden

By DeisyFRANCIS



Parliamentarians from 73 countries urge Biden to remove Cuba from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. PHOTO: Granma.

WASHINGTON.- In the name of dignity and decency, 600 parliamentarians from 73 countries signed an open letter of the Progressive International (PI) addressed to U.S. president Joe Biden demanding the removal of Cuba from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

The signatories urge Biden to revert that decision before the end of his presidency, on January 2025, "in the name of dignity, decency and the integrity of the UN Charter." According to the text, the inclusion of Cuba in that unilateral list "is cynical, cruel and a clear violation of international law," thus they call on their respective governments to take immediate action to advocate for the removal.

The denunciation recalled that such designation was removed in 2015 following a thorough evaluation by the Barack Obama administration (2009-2017); however, it was reapplied to Cuba on the very last days of the Donald Trump presidency (2017-2021) "as a final act of his campaign of economic warfare against the island."

"As a candidate, Joe Biden pledged to restore the diplomatic relationship fostered by his Democrat predecessor. But as president, Biden reneged," added the letter, published in the website of the Progressive International, a left organization founded in 2020 by

the Democracy in Europe Movement (DiEM25) and The Sanders Institute, from the United States.

The letter added that the designation is cynical because Cuba, far from sponsoring terrorism, served as key broker for talks that led to peace agreements in Colombia.

PI warned that the designation is "cruel because it is designed to maximize the suffering of the people of Cuba, strangling its economy, displacing its families, and even restricting the flow of humanitarian aid."

According to United Nations experts, the designation has undermined "fundamental human rights, including the right to food, right to health, right to education, economic and social rights, right to life and right to development," the letter stressed.

In addition, the designation is illegal because it undermines "the principle of sovereign equality of States, the prohibition to intervene into domestic affairs of states and the principle of peaceful settlement of international disputes," as UN legal experts affirm.

"Extraterritorial sanctions triggered by the designation thus mark a clear violation of international law," PI stressed in its letter to Biden.

"Cuba continues to suffer as a result of its cynical, cruel and illegal exclusion from the international economy," concluded the PI letter, a global initiative that has the mission of uniting, organizing and mobilizing progressive forces around the world.

Cuba Starts Immunizing Babies with Anti-Pneumococci Vaccine

By Lourdes **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba started last September a nationwide immunization campaign with the new Pneumosil-10 Valent anti-pneumococci vaccine, aimed at protecting babies against 10 pneumococcus serotypes.

Minister of Public Health (MINSAP), José Ángel Portal, stated in the X social media that the vaccine will be administered to children over the age of two and under the age of one and appreciated all those who have made this new achievement possible.

On this occasion, babies born from January 1 to June 30, of this year will be administered the vaccine, which represents about 27,500 babies, said director of the MINSAP National Immunization Program Lena López.

The official added that babies born in July who are two months old – the date established for the first dose to be administered – will also be vaccinated.

According to the vaccination scheme, two months later, a second dose will be administered and seven months later, a third one.

According to experts, the negative effects this vaccine can cause are the common ones: muscle pains, redness or inflammation on the area the vaccine was applied in, slight fever or fever and a reduced risk of allergic reactions.

This vaccine prevents 10 of the main serotypes in circulation (1, 5, 6a, 6b, 7f, 9v, 14, 19a, 19f y 23f) that cause the invasive pneumococci disease, especially serious manifestations of acute meningitis, pneumonia or sepsis.

Dr López stressed that this vaccine has no contraindications with other immunizers included in the program, such as the pentavalent and oral bivalent anti-poliomyelitis vaccines.

The acquisition of Pneumosil-10 Valent was possible thanks to the support of the Global Vaccine Alliance and the Pan-American Health Organization.



The vaccine will be administered to children over the age of two and under the age of one. PHOTO: Unicef.

Dominica Receives another Group of Cuban Doctors

By **The Havana Reporter Staff**

ROSEAU.- A group of Cuban doctors and technicians joined the health brigade that provides its services in this Caribbean island, after being welcomed by Dominica Health Minister Cassanni Laville.

According to the Government Information System, the delegation includes specialists in intensive care, general medicine, neonatology, obstetrics, radiography, laboratory, electromedicine and nursing.

In an exchange with the group, Laville recalled that Cuba and Dominica have maintained cooperation in the health sector for over 20 years and acknowledged the solidarity of the Cuban professionals

and their commitment to help other nations.

On behalf of the medical brigade, Dr Mirce Ayala ratified the will to offer a quality service and do their best in favor of the people of Dominica. She also appreciated the hospitality received, which she considered to be a sign of the friendship between both nations.

During the meeting, Cuban ambassador to Dominica, Miguel Fraga, stressed that medical collaboration in this nation started in the 1990s and since then, over 130 Dominican youngsters have graduated from Cuban universities.



The group includes among other specialists in intensive care, general medicine, neonatology and obstetrics. PHOTO: Minrex.

PAHO: More Attention to Epilepsy in the Americas

By **The Havana Reporter Staff**

WASHINGTON.- The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the International Bureau for Epilepsy presented here a set of tools directed at placing this disease at the center of public health agendas in the Americas.

The objective of such action is to help organizations of the civil society to conduct law campaigns that contribute to raise awareness, reduce stigma and improve access to medical attention.

Epilepsy, a chronic neurological disorder characterized by recurrent seizures, currently affects about five million people in the region, of which more than 50 percent lack access to adequate medical services and the treatment needed to have a normal life.

Epilepsy mortality rate in Latin America and the Caribbean is significantly higher than that of the United States and Canada, according to PAHO data.

The new "Set of Advocate's toolkit for making epilepsy a priority in the Americas region" was developed by

health experts in collaboration with people suffering from epilepsy and their families.

This kit offers a range of resources, including promotion strategies, practical examples and templates.

Even though this disease can be treated and medication is affordable, access to treatment is still a challenge.

Experts stress that two thirds of the Latin American and the Caribbean nations do not have a specific program to deal with epilepsy.

In addition to that, there is a lack of trained staff, irregular availability of medication and lack of education and awareness on the disorder.

The set of tools is in tune with the objectives of the World Health Organization, particularly the Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and Other Neurological Disorders 2022-2031, which establishes objectives to increase coverage of services to epilepsy and update legislations to protect the rights of the affected people.

Neurótica Anónima: Among Big Stars and Love to the Cuban Cinema

By: Adis**MORERA**

HAVANA.- Virtuosity and love to the seventh art gather famous Cuban acting faces in *Neurótica Anónima* (Anonymous neurotic), a film directed by National Film awardee in 2024 Jorge Perugorría, with script and performance by Mirtha Ibarra.

In an exclusive interview to **The Havana Reporter**, the leading Cuban actress, owner of an enviable filmography that includes titles such as *Adorables mentiras* (Adorable lies), from 1991 and *Fresa y chocolate* (Strawberry and chocolate), from 1993, commented that the film deals with two main topics: abuse against women and the rescue of movie theaters.

We wanted to render tribute to Juan Carlos Tabío (1943-2021), the author of *Plaff o Demasiado miedo a la vida* (Plaff or Too afraid of life), from 1988. For that reason, the film is entitled *Neurótica Anónima o Sin miedo a la vida* (Anonymous neurotic or Without fear to life), she stressed.

Based on the play with the same, written and performed by Ibarra, the new production is full of hidden film messages, with both national and international connotations.

Although she did not reveal any detail on the film, she commented that the character she plays always looks like the protagonist, as she lives out of reality, in the cinema.

Iluminada, the name of the character Mirtha Ibarra plays, is a country girl who leaves her home to go in search of her dream: being

an actress. When she realizes her ambitions are thwarted, she studies the career of Arts Instructor, but destiny finally takes her to the post of usher in an emblematic movie theater, the synopsis reads.

Her marriage with Osvaldo (Roberto Perdomo) and her daily life cause her a neurosis, Ibarra added.

Joel Angelino, who shared the stage with Ibarra in the abovementioned play and in *Fresa y Chocolate*, also plays the leading

role. The actor performs the role of the projectionist, *Iluminada's* best friend.

One of the film's best move is its cast, which includes famous figures such as Fernando Hechevarría, who plays the role of an architect; Osvaldo Doimeadiós, as the psychiatrist; Andrea Doimeadiós, in the role of young *Iluminada*, and Néstor Jiménez, as the delegate.

This exceptional cast also includes experienced Paula Alí, Mireya Chapman, Tahimi Alvariño, Bárbaro Marín, Mario Limonta, Hilario Peña, Felix Beatón and Luis Silva, among others.

Shootings ended last August and include locations in front of the sea, in Old Havana, in addition to the Sierra Maestra and Cuba movie theaters. The postproduction stage will take place in Mexico and the film will then be premiered in international festivals.

Neurótica Anónima o Sin miedo a la vida will include the music of Venezuelan record producer Andrés Levín, in addition to a piece by Mirtha Ibarra.



Iluminada is the name of the character Mirtha Ibarra plays at *Neurótica Anónima*. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Cuba va conmigo Festival to Hold Third Edition

By Alma**LABRADA**

HAVANA.- The third edition of the Cuba va conmigo Cultural Festival with the participation of Cuban residents abroad will take place from November 7 to 17, dedicated to the 505th anniversary of the San Cristóbal de La Habana Village. Organizers highlighted that the event will consolidate itself as a space for dialogue and exchange with Cubans living abroad, with the purpose to strengthen artistic and cultural ties with the country and its audience.

The event also aims to stress the value of artistic formation in the island and promote unity among all Cubans in support to the Homeland and the defense of its sovereignty, the event's summon reads.

This new edition, to be held virtually and in situ, will include all artistic expressions, with emphasis on weekends' programs, in theaters and other places of the capital.

The event's agenda also highlights exchanges with art school students, visits to community projects and the awarding of the Cuba va conmigo children and youth contest, addressed at the descendants of Cuban residents abroad.

Other attractions of the festival include business meetings, in which the main features of the Cuban cultural and recreational industries will be shown, in addition to international cooperation for projects' development.

The event, to be held in parallel to the XV Havana's Visual Arts Biennial Festival, will echo the work of personalities from the field of culture with a solid career abroad and youngsters representing our identity.



The Festival is dedicated to the 505th anniversary of the San Cristóbal de La Habana Village. PHOTO: Trabajadores.

Residents abroad and their descendants interested in participating in international cooperation projects and investment businesses linked to the development of arts and culture, will be able to exchange with entity executives and businesspeople of the sector.

They will also be provided with information on the legislation in force and could access the Portfolio of Business Opportunities and International Cooperation Projects in the field of culture. Spaces for presentations and visual arts exhibitions, artistic production of music and stage shows, will be available, as well as the logistics needed for rehearsals.

The Cuba va conmigo motto will accompany participants during the festival days, as well as the messages of writers and artists who cannot personally attend the event.

The III Cuba va conmigo Cultural Festival with Cuban residents Abroad is summoned by the Cuban Ministry of Culture, with the sponsorship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Those interested can contact the Cuban diplomatic missions in the countries they reside or the Organizing Committee through the following Email: cubavaconmigo@cubarte.cult.cu.



Voces del Sur Global
Voices of the Global South



Wole Soyinka: Literature and Defense of Peace Go Hand in Hand

By Daimarelys **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- Nigerian intellectual Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize for Literature, not only lives the passion of writing but also assumes through his work a commitment in defense of peace. He reaffirmed the above statement in his recent visit to Cuba, where he attended the International Conference for the 30th anniversary of the UNESCO "Route of enslaved peoples" program, held in this capital.

As a dear friend of this Caribbean island, Soyinka exchanged his views on the present world and his stance in relation to the new methods of domination and slavery with **The Havana Reporter**.

On racism and hegemony in this 21st century, the writer stressed that what happens today with other forms of power is regrettable and depressing.

It seems we are going backward, for example, with the Gaza situation, or between Russia and Ukraine; the instincts of dominations are coming back and it worries me a lot, he said.

After a period of liberation movements, both in northern Europe and Africa, we have moved back several steps, affirmed the writer, the first African to receive the Nobel Prize, in 1986.



Nigerian intellectual Wole Soyinka attended an International Conference of the UNESCO in Havana. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

A wise man, simple in his statements, at his 90, Soyinka is very eloquent and friendly and keeps up to date with the challenges imposed by modern age.

Akinwande Oluwole Babatunde Soyinka, his full name, was born in the bosom of a Yoruba family, went to the Government College of Ibadan – Nigeria's second largest city, after Lagos, and the capital of the Oyo State. He later on studied at the University College Ibadan and the University of Leeds, in the United Kingdom.

After studying in Nigeria and the UK, he worked at the Royal Court Theatre of London and during that period, he wrote works that were produced in both countries in theaters and the radio.

Soyinka actively engaged in Nigeria's political history and its campaign for independence from the British colonial domination. In relation to how he sees today's world and where he thinks so many conflicts can take the planet to, the intellectual answered with skepticism.

I ask myself the same question. We are at a stage in which the world, it is not that it is oppressed, but the people start looking, exploring other possibilities and that calls my attention a lot, because we are in the middle of a spirit of discovery and discovery is equivalent to liberation, he affirmed.

However, that state of emancipation has not been translated, I do not see it in our societies at present; then, instead of exploration, domination persists, he said.

The author of novels such as *The Interpreters* (1964) or *Chronicles from the Land of the Happiest People on Earth* (2021) and plays such as *The Lion and the Jewel* (1959), Soyinka spoke about *The Strong Breed* (1964).

In that text, he talks about humanism, the African continent's black religions. I do not know any African religion that preaches a violent crusade or promotes a Yihad (Islam concept that represent a religious obligation), he affirmed.



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Popular Assemblies Under Way

By **The Havana Reporter Staff**

HAVANA.- Assemblies for the rendering of accounts of delegates of the People's Power in Cuba started nationwide and will be extended until next November.

These meetings with the population are highly important in the complex socio-economic scenario Cuba faces and according to parliamentarians, show the Revolution's democratic vocation and the value the participation of the citizens has in solving the problems of their communities. President of the People's Power National Assembly (Parliament) of Cuba, Esteban Lazo, described the process as a new sign of the real popular power.

In his opinion, solution to the accumulated problems, which have a direct influence on the population's daily life, not only depends on delegate's management but also has an objective character amidst the warfare economy situation the country faces.

On this topic, secretary of Organization of the Cuban Communist Party, Roberto Morales, a parliamentarian from the Cienfuegos municipality, emphasized in that territory the importance of accompanying

representatives of the people in their work, from the administrative structures, political and social organizations.

In spite of the difficult scenario in which this process is conducted, this democratic, popular exchange is

necessary; from this, solutions must be found, because popular wisdom is huge, said the party leader.

The process for the rendering of accounts of delegates to their electors happens in one of the most difficult moments in the history

of Cuba, due to shortages and distortions of its economy, sieged and persecuted by the United States blockade in its attempt to subvert the country's revolutionary process.

Such policy prevents access to fuel, resources, finances and hinders socio-economic development, which come on top of the administrative management problems within the nation.



This democratic, popular exchange is necessary because popular wisdom is huge. PHOTO: Tony Hernández.

Acuanova and its Water Factory

By Victoria **ACOSTA**

HAVANA.-The Acuanova joint venture manages a sensitive sector in Cuba: quality water treatment through the use of renewable energy, thus solving two major problems, affirmed the company's assistant manager, Osmani Hernández.

Those problems are, in the one hand, water quality and in the other, the consumption of the energy needed to treat that water, Hernández told **The Havana Reporter** during the III edition of the Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency Fair recently held at the Pabexpo showground, in the capital.

The exhibition included a compact modular plant to be located in hotels or points of easy access for the population which is called "the water factory, because it turns a poor-quality water into quality water," he commented.

Until the present, Acuanova has located five equipment in Cayo Largo del Sur that allow generating their own water. "The process consists on using trench water to generate quality drinking water for hotels," added the manager.

The official explained that at present, they collaborate with the Ministry of Tourism in a project to replace plastic bottles and eliminate consumption from single-use bottles, which are environment pollutant.

The proposal foresees locating a small plant in hotels and using glass bottles that can be recycled.

This type of plants is also present in other areas and the biggest are located in the Matanzas, Havana, Santiago de Cuba and Camagüey provinces. The idea is to have 20 desalination plants to supply water to the population in different places.

For example, in the town of Girón (Matanzas), these plants benefit about four thousand workers and another one, in Cayo Ramona, benefits about three thousand neighbors.

The company also conducts other projects in coordination with the Electricity Union for the reverse osmosis plants used in steam boilers addressed at electricity generation, he mentioned.

Acuanova is a joint venture created in 2021 under the Foreign Investment Act with two stockholders: The Electronics Group, from the Cuban side and Grunbeck, a German entity experienced in these issues, from the foreign side.

This company deals with water treatment, including the manufacturing, projects, design, assembly and running of renewable energy-related topics, which means that no electricity is consumed from the network.



ACUANOVA
PLANTAS DE TRATAMIENTO DE AGUA

Timbalaye 2024 Festival

By Mario **MUÑOZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba cannot get rid of its African inheritance, even less its people; it carries it deep inside; the sound of the drums, the rhythm of rumba, flow through its veins. For that reason, the Timbalaye International Festival returns every year to highlight the African traditions and inheritance in the island.

On this occasion, the 16th edition of the event – entitled The Route of Rumba – was developed in different cultural scenarios of the country and was dedicated to the Nation Cabildos (town councils), the House-Temples and the 30th anniversary of the declaration of the Routes of Enslaved

People, sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Although most of the activities were held in Havana, Timbalaye toured all provinces, from western Pinar del Río to eastern Guantánamo, either virtually or in situ, through cultural exchanges, international forums, scholarship programs and solidarity events with Cuba, in an environment characterized by creativity and respect.

POGOLOTTI AND TRINIDAD

One of the Festival's most popular programs, Living in the neighborhoods, took rumba to emblematic Havana areas, including Pogolotti, in the Marianao municipality, a place

that those days became a meeting point for different activities due to its deeply-rooted support to rumba, African rhythms and sounds that are present there, with active exponents.

The Timbalaye Alley was opened there with the support of neighborhood leaders, community artists and socio-cultural projects.

The occasion was appropriate to acknowledge personalities with an outstanding work in the field, including cultural promoter Juan Cárdenas "Chan".

Participants enjoyed a visit to the Bárbara House-Temple, to then tour the community and finish the visit in the Parque del Mambí Desconocido (Unknown Rebel Park), where a wreath was laid down.

A summon was also made for a Timbalaye scholarship, which will allow knowing the names of the three Cuban "mambises" (war of independence rebels) that lived in the area.

The festival was sponsored by the Semi di Pace and the Italy-Cuba National Friendship associations. The VII Timbalaye International Forum was held last May in the Italian cities of Tarquinia, Roma, Baia Domizia and Passo Oscuro.

The city of Trinidad, in Cuba's central region, also welcomed the 16th edition of the Festival and displayed the validity of the cultural and religious traditions preserved in this Cuban zone.

Celebrations in that city started in the La Boca beach, in front of the blue waters, where artists from different folklore groups accompanied a soloist who played Yemayá (the virgin of Regla), a deity that belongs to the Yoruba pantheon.

The program also included a visit to the Yemayá and San Lázaro (Babalú Ayé) house-temples, where drums and güiros beats were heard. An anthropology lecture was likewise conducted on topics linked to both house-temples.

Conducted by researcher and museology expert José Antonio Pérez, the lecture dealt with the transculturation process in Trinidad and the country, with emphasis on the "important African presence" in the third village the Spanish founded in Cuba.



Timbalaye returns every year to highlight the African traditions and inheritance in the island. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Transcultura in Alliance with Art and Caribbean Youth

By Adis **MORERA**

HAVANA.-The Transcultura program implemented by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and financed by the European Union (EU) strengthens enriching alliances in Cuba in order to promote the creativity and talent of youth from 17 Caribbean nations.

In cooperation with the University of Arts (ISA), 72 creators and students of the region recently benefited from the fifth round of cultural formation courses, which deepened on the teaching of Cuban popular dances, serigraphy, creation of dynamic images, paintings' preservation and industrial design.

Director of the UNESCO Regional Office in Havana, Anne Lemaistre, told **The Havana Reporter** in an exclusive interview that the Caribbean Center for Cultural Formation is an innovation of the Transcultura project,

which joins six leading institutions in the field, a number that is to increase in the future.

Thanks to Transcultura and the EU, we are restoring the Santa Clara Convent which, under the name of Santa Clara College for Arts and Restoration Trades, will be turned into an epicenter for the formation of that discipline in Latin America, she said.

The courses ISA offers favor cultural exchange and knowledge between the program-member countries and the university center, vice-rector of that teaching entity, Nadia Chávez, told this publication.

It is worthwhile highlighting the important role they play at a time in which we face cultural decolonization, as they allow rescuing culture, museums, works of art, nations' autochthonous features, she added.

The official also commented that each of the topics respond to a specific formation, which contributes to enrich students' curriculum so that these acquire knowledge for future life and personal growth.

From these alliances, new agreements were reached, as the project praises ISA's life, our students' stage performance and exchanges with other cultures, she stressed. The next courses would be linked to music, dance and visual arts.

Other workshops will be conducted in coordination with the Havana City's Historian Office, focused on cultural heritage, with topics associated to documentary heritage,

moral painting preservation and historic cities' management.

Transcultura: Integrating Cuba, the Caribbean and the European Union through Culture and Creativity, hopes to help youth from the ages of 18 and 35 to become professionals and reach a solid level in sectors such as music, cinema, design, fashion, serigraphy, among others.



The Transcultura program promotes the creativity and talent of youth from 17 Caribbean nations.

PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Showcase of World Dance

By Martha **SÁNCHEZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba will become the world capital of dance from October 28 to November 10 when it will welcome representatives from over 15 countries at the 28th edition of the Alicia Alonso International Ballet Festival of Havana.

The event, created more than 60 years ago, will again gather outstanding figures of the world culture who will share a common language: dance, which does not have borders, because everyone talks the same language in halls and stages, the Festival's president, Viengsay Valdés told **The Havana Reporter**.

That is the magic of the Festival, an event that gives the opportunity of showing the audience how people dance in other parts of the world, a range of styles and emotions, affirmed prima ballerina and director of the Cuban National Ballet (BNC) company, the organizer of the event.

The venues of the 28th edition of this event include the Avellaneda and Covarrubias Halls of the Teatro Nacional; Teatro Martí and Teatro Karl Marx. The latter will host Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo with Core meu, a work by renowned French choreographer Jean-Christophe Maillot, the company's present director.

Valdés commented that the present edition will be special because it will include the presence of several guests who

have contributed to the Festival's prestige in previous year with their art.

Havana will welcome Argentinean Julio Bocca, current director of the Teatro Colón company of Buenos Aires, who will be honored with the staging of The swan lake, a classic piece he first danced in Cuba as part of a Festival and which he chose for his last performance here.

Other two dear figures, leading dancers of the BNC, will also attend the Festival: Russian Azari Plisetski and Cuban José Manuel Carreño, who will join rehearsals.

One of the peculiarities of the event's program is the season foreseen to host the world's most famous ballet: The swan lake, a piece that has not been danced in Cuba in total since 2018 and whose leading roles include Cuban and foreign figures.

The Festival's gala program includes the names of outstanding artists such as Mexican Elisa Carrillo; Spanish Lucía Lacarra and Joaquín de Luz; Brazilian Marcelo Gomes; French Mathilde Froustey; Portuguese António Casalinho, and Russians Daniil Simkin and Semyon Chundin.

Attending companies include Anajnu Veatem-Jewish Dance Company from Mexico and Colombian Incolballet, in addition to numerous Cuban groups.

The event hopes to be a showcase of dance in Cuba and the world, as since Viengsay Valdés' appointment as director, the ballerina has expressed and has fulfilled her wish of increasing the scope.

Outstanding Cuban musicians will also share the stage, including pianist Aldo López Gavilán, flutist Niurka González and pianist Marcos Madrigal, director of the Habana Clásica Festival, an event that for the first time will collaborate with the Alicia Alonso International Ballet Festival of Havana.



The magic of the Festival is that does not have borders, because everyone talks the same language. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

On the Tracks of Actress Giselle González

By Deisy **FRANCIS**

WASHINGTON.- The dimension of nostalgia is clear to Giselle González: "Every time a Cuban gets in the hall, my heart bleeds," admitted the actress, who plays the role of Wafa in Las 22 bodas de Hugo (The 22 weddings of Hugo).

The play, on showing at the GALA Theater, in the U.S. capital, is inspired by the story of Hugo, an alleged postal clerk who got married more than 20 times due to a reason that starts to be revealed as characters develop.

Wafa, Irene (Yaiza Figueroa) and Elmar (Victor Salinas) migrate into the United States for different reasons and along their journey to obtain the citizenship, they meet Hugo (Carlos Castillo), who decides to get married to them in order to help them.

Giselle González (Cienfuegos, February 5, 1984) is an actress and hostess with experience in the cinema, the theater and the television. People remember her face in popular Cuban series such as Los Tres Villalobos, Adrenalina 360° or the crime series Tras la huella, where she played the role of first lieutenant Isabel.

She also acted in the soap operas ¡Oh, La Habana! (her debut in the TV, in 2002); Tierras de fuego, and in feature films such as Leontina (2012) or Insumisas (2018). She was also the hostess of several programs, including the youth space Conexión.

How did she get to Las 22 bodas de Hugo? That was the question made to start

this dialogue. "It was a combination of perseverance and luck, hopes, attraction," she said in an exclusive interview with **The Havana Reporter**.

Since I have been in Maryland, I have attended every show the company has conducted and have enjoyed every presentation as if it were mine, thinking that I am on the stage.

Every time GALA premiered a new play, I came either to the premiere or any of the first shows and "once the show finished, I stayed to congratulate and talk to the cast," she affirmed. Thus, talking, I also made myself known among them and knew more about the company itself, its annual program, its type of repertoire and the auditions organized in the year, she commented.

I did the casting this summer (in July) and playwright Gustavo Ott was there, as head of the jury; I thank him deeply, it was from him that I got a call on a Thursday afternoon to confirm my participation, which I will never forget. "We started rehearsals five days later," she stressed.

"Hurry, I told myself, make an effort Giselle that one of the most beautiful experiences in your career has arrived. Nothing else than the GALA Theater, the National center for Latin stage arts in Washington DC," she said with a smile of satisfaction.

The play in which she acts is a traditional comedy but based on the philosophical context that tormented the author.

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Banao Hills, A Botanical Reference

Text and Photos Raúl GARCÍA

SANCTI SPÍRITUS.— About 20 kilometers from this central Cuban city, the country's most exuberant natural ecological reserves are protected: the Banao Heights, in the Escambray or Guamuhaya Mountain Range. This zone includes plains, hills and mountains of about 400 meters of height, where crags, waterfalls, springs and rivers prevail. The area is the habitat of over 1,200 species, 268 of which are endemic to Cuba.

Ninety percent of these endemic species suffer different categories of threat: critical, in danger and vulnerable. There, among the green forest bushes and the crags, the Santamaría snake; the Cuban Tocaroro (trogon), the national bird; the cotica (Cuban parrot); the hummingbird; the torcaza (pigeon) and the parakeet, are found.

The place, which covers over 1,140 hectares along three municipalities – Sancti Spíritus, Fomento and Trinidad – is a perfect spot for hiking and listening to birds' singing and small streams' murmur, in addition to enjoying the mighty Banao river's crystal-clear waters that run from the peaks of the mountains.

The wonders of the weather can also be enjoyed at the foot of the Jarico ecological lodging and the María Antonia, Sabina and Hoyo del Naranjal biological stations, among other bird and landscape watching spots.

Caja de Agua, though, is the colossal biodiversity spot where the largest number of endemic or endangered species are found, while the La Bella waterfall is the place where big trees cover the environment.

This Reserve is a national referent for its degree of preservation of biological resources and birdwatching, where charismatic species of high ecological value can be found, such as parrots and cateyes (Cuban parakeets).

The staff of the Flora and Fauna Preservation Company, Best National Center for over 30 years, is present in five protected areas, the province's main nature destinations.

Its main places include Jobo Rosado, with different recreational areas, such as the Soler farm, the Querete Ranch (Valdés and Solapas de Genaro caves) and Los Álamos agricultural-tourist farm.

The El Abanico house-estate, for its part, is located in the southern region, in Valle de los Ingenios, Trinidad – a city declared a Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This equestrian product combines its offers with visits to coffee-producing areas of the Topes de Collantes mountains.

In addition, in the Lomas de Fomento Flower Reserve, timber and ecological species are found, as well as a diversity of orchids and the Sancti Spíritus cactus (*Melocactus guittarti*), a major attraction for national and foreign visitors.



Honduras, the Voice of the Global South

By Santiago **MASETTI**

TEGUCIGALPA.- Without the media attention it would deserve, the government of Honduras has been meeting a political agenda that places that Central American nation as the Continent's reference in the face of the global challenges.

With the arrival of Xiomara Castro to the presidency, in 2021, after 15 years of resistance to the "narco-dictatorship" resulting from the bloody coup d'état against Mel Zelaya (2009), Honduras prepares, devises and plans a genuine proposal in a world in which complexity and contradiction prevail. Since the very first minute of her administration, Xiomara Castro devoted

all her efforts in changing a nation deeply affected by poverty, with plundered resources and submitted to the United States' political and economic dependence. In the last part of her term, the first woman president in the history of Honduras not only launched a merciless fight against the corruption of the previous administration, but also conducted a series of social reforms in which she gave priority to investments and improvements in the health and educational systems. At the same time, she devised an independent foreign policy, with strong Latin American vocation.

The Honduran president questions the negative effects of neoliberalism and in turn raises the flags of sovereignty and economic independence in the construction of a model she describes as "democratic socialism."

It is worthwhile noticing that Xiomara Castro is the pro-tempore president of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Central American Integration System (SICA).

At the end of June, Tegucigalpa was the scenario the left, the progressive forces and the popular movements of our continent preferred. The II CELAC Social Summit; the Sao Paulo Forum;

the Progressive International Event; the Puebla Group, held their meetings in that capital, where the 15th anniversary of the coup d'état against the then president Manuel "Mel" Zelaya was commemorated, with strong condemnation.

A few days from that "marathon" of activities, Honduras sent a large group of international observers – composed of legislators, journalists, officials, communicators and social referents, among others – to the elections held in Venezuela last July 28.

On August 13, the Chinese deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, Hua Chunying, visited Tegucigalpa and met top authorities of the Honduran Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and had a bilateral meeting with the head of State. According to reports, the Chinese representative not only visited the country to strengthen the bilateral friendship bonds and deal with the CELAC-China agenda, but also to finalize details about a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that aims to benefit Honduran producers at all levels.

A significant progress in this area is the implementation of the early-harvest agreement, which allows the export of products such as the Honduran shrimp to China duty-free.



With the arrival of Xiomara Castro to the presidency in 2021, Honduras prepares, devises and plans a genuine proposal. PHOTO: Internet.

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New Norms for Vehicles' Sale

By Mima**GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- Minister of Transportation Eduardo Rodríguez affirmed that the policy to update the buying and selling of vehicles in Cuba shows the government's will to revise the procedures established in accordance with national interests.

At the Mesa Redonda television program, the head of the transportation sector explained that they are currently drafting the legal norms to rule the new proposals and guarantee their coherence, a process that should end the present month of October.

He recalled that the measures include authorization to import only one car – economic or medium – with no more than 10 years of exploitation to people involved in official missions abroad (for two consecutive years) and airplane and ship crew members; regulations will be based on the conditions established by their respective bodies.

In these cases, the duty for electric motor vehicles is 100 dollars; for hybrids, 200 dollars and for combustion vehicles, 300 dollars. Special taxes in foreign currencies is eliminated to those who decide to buy the car in the country, Rodríguez stressed. At the same time, authorization is granted for the direct import of mopeds and motorcycles with internal combustion engines or hybrids with small engines, with or without sidecars, either through the passenger or shipment way, as well as the direct purchase of electric



The updating of the policy maintains the import and sale of vehicles in convertible foreign currencies. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

tricycles with a capacity of more than two seats or with load capacity.

The updating of the policy maintains the import and sale of vehicles in convertible foreign currencies, although it adjusts sale prices, in order that these are equal for both legal entities and individuals.

For the latter, he mentioned that prices will be lower than those implemented at present, and duties, customs services and taxes will be in convertible foreign currencies.

Authorization is likewise granted to property transfer between individuals and

legal entities, except foreign diplomatic entities, which have a special regime. In addition, for state legal entities, an authorization of the Council of Ministers will be required in order to transfer the property to a non-state entity.

Rodríguez stressed that the tax and duty amount resulting from the money collected through this policy will go to a fund to be managed by Ministry of Transportation and to be directed to the recovery and development of public transportation and its infrastructure.

Other measures establish that vehicles in good technical state that are available in the Cuban market could also be commercialized, including those whose exploitation in the tourism sector finish, according to different priorities in the context of the Economic Plan, the minister added.

On the special taxes for the sale of vehicles, he explained that these will be adjusted and generalized, with a variation starting from a 35 percent of the total sale value in convertible foreign currencies in the case of high range vehicles; such taxes, though, will not be applied in the case of electric vehicles assembled in Cuba.

Progressive tax in convertible foreign currencies will also be adjusted and generalized in relation to the number of vehicles acquired by one individual or legal entity as of the third vehicle purchased when these fall within the motorcycle, car and rural car categories.

FAO Offers Resources to Farmers

By María**MAYORAL**



The supply of resources promotes sustainable practices. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

HAVANA.- Farmers from seven Cuban municipalities highly vulnerable to climate change continue receiving agricultural technologies and tools, FAO indicated in this capital.

The new supplies include substrate mixers, to guarantee seedlings development and plants' constant growth, as well as the quality of crops and the promotion of sustainable practices, added the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).

The supply of resources is the result of a project conducted by the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture with FAO technical assistance and the financing of the Green Climate Fund, the source stated.

The territories to benefit from the project include Los Arabos, in the Matanzas province (west); Santo Domingo, Quemado de Güines and Corralillo, in Villa Clara (center), and Jobabo, Amancio Rodríguez and Colombia, in Las Tunas (east).

Under the motto of Climate Resilience in the Cuban Agricultural Ecosystems, the initiative aims to strengthen the capacities of those rural communities by promoting the use of techniques that reduce their productive systems' vulnerability in the face of adverse climate phenomena, recalled the United Nations body.

Works in progress include the sowing of forest, fruit, fodder and pasture species, in addition to different crops, shade trees and other elements that foster the production of food, meat and milk, to contribute to this Caribbean nation's food security, the body stressed. According to FAO, the project aims to endorse the 2030 Agenda through a change to more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable food and agricultural systems.

Strategy to Strengthen the Electricity System

By Raquel **DÍAZ**



Cuban minister of Energy and Mines, Vicente de la O. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

HAVANA.- Cuban minister of Energy and Mines, Vicente de la O, affirmed that the strategy to solve the difficulties the electricity system faces includes, among others, maintenances, efficient use and energy efficiency, in addition to renewable energies. The execution of maintenances will be done with the purpose to avoid power plants' total deterioration; for this reason, we will include the concept of taking units out of service for a year to conduct such works, De la O said recently at the Mesa Redonda television program.

The head of the Energy and Mines sector also spoke about the need of eliminating the import of fuels, a path that leads to the use of national crude oil, gas and also to reducing consumption through clean sources of energy.

In relation to the short-term growth with the use of gas, he said that this semester that fuel will be added, which will also force to conduct maintenances to recover ENER GAS' power.

Our policy is to use national fuels, he stressed. The minister explained that the strategy also includes the efficient use of electricity and energy efficiency; thus, they consider that there are still capacities of reserve.

We sacrifice the economy to less affect the population, but agriculture, the sugarcane harvest and transportation have come to a standstill, he commented.

De la O recalled that Cuba will locate about 2.012 megawatts (MW) in 92 new facilities and added that resources are regularly arriving in the country in an organized way, in tune with the logistics of construction, to guarantee that materials are adequately received to avoid damages.

In that sense, director of Renewable Energy, Rosell Guerra, highlighted that Cuba is experienced in the installation and operation of photovoltaic solar parks, with the construction of 77 parks in 11 years.

Guerra stressed the magnitude of the project, which implies the installation of over four million solar panels and the drilling of 1.4 million bases, resources that are transported in about 11,000 containers. This requires organization in the transportation activity to reduce the delivery time and guarantee that resources are directly received in the investment sites, without going through warehouses.

This major renewable energy project includes 92 solar parks of 22 megawatts each. Of them, 30 are undergoing civil construction in the Havana, Pinar del Río, Mayabeque, Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo provinces.

At the same time, two projects are conducted in the Matanzas and Ciego de Ávila provinces and three in Cienfuegos and Villa Clara, Guerra mentioned.

The Flag of Nature Tourism

By Jean D'**LUX**

HAVANA.- The 14th edition of the International Nature Tourism Event (Turnat 2024), held in Cuba during the last week of September, was an indispensable support for the development of this type of vacation on the island.

Held in the eastern region, an area blessed by nature, the event gathered 130 tour operators, travel agents and specialized journalists from over 20 nations, many of them familiar with Cuban routes and repeat visitors.

TURNAT was organized by the Ecotur Travel Agency and the Cuban Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR), entities that follow world trends on nature, adventure and rural trips closely.

Ecotur General Manager Raúl Naranjo stated his satisfaction for the development of these modalities and the increase of requests to stay in Cuba by travelers from all over the world.

Participants in the event included Ana Báez, president of the Costa Rica Association of Tourism Consultants and Conservation and Cuban Telmo Ledo, who has long studied plans and places with best possibilities to hold trips and trails.

Cuba, with barely 110,000 square kilometers, treasures six Biosphere Reserves and six Ramsar Sites (with emphasis on wetlands), in addition to two World Natural Heritage Sites and 14 Natural Parks, which endorses authorities' will to protect the environmental heritage.

Cuba's south-eastern territory in particular – which includes the Granma, Guantánamo and Santiago de Cuba provinces – treasures several charms that were visited by TURNAT participants. The program included 36

communities and 85 destinations – 33 in Guantánamo, 32 in Santiago and 20 in Granma.

TURNAT again highlighted Cuba's unlimited possibilities for nature, adventure and rural trips, which MINTUR and Ecotur foster to meet the demands of those who want to be closer and closer to their environment worldwide.



Paris Paralympic Imprint

By Adrián **MENGANA**, SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PARIS.- With persistence and spirit of sacrifice, the Cuban Paralympic sport wrote a golden page in the Paris 2024 Games, by finishing in place 24 among the 168 participating delegations.

In spite of being represented by only 21 athletes in the City of Light, the Cubans rose to the challenge at the right time,

winning six gold medals, three silver and one bronze and thus improving their performance in Tokyo 2020.

Once again, star sprinter Omara Durand ratified her reign without question in 100, 200 and 400 meters in the T12 category – visually impaired – to head the island's performance.

Durand, always accompanied by her guide Yuniol Kindelán, reached the figure of 11 gold medals in Paralympic Games, a winning streak that started with two gold in London 2012

and continued with three in Río de Janeiro 2016, Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024, each.

Also winner of 14 gold medals in World Championships and 12 in ParaPan-American Games, the sprinter confirmed her retirement from active sport at the end of the French event, while announcing that she will now follow new paths, in which she showed confidence to be also successful.

"We will not run any longer, but we are leaving happy and pleased," said the runner (32) after winning her third title at the Stade de France.

Long jumper Robiel Yankiel also reached the top of the podium after revalidating the gold medal he won in Tokyo 2020 in the T47 category, as well as javelin thrower Guillermo Varona (F46) and para-table tennis player Yunier Fernández (MS1).

Sprinter Yamel Luis Vives won the delegation's first silver medal in 100 meters T44, followed by weight lifter Pablo Ramírez, in the 54 Kg division and judoka Sheyla Hernández, in over 70 kilograms.

The Cubans' only bronze medal was won by Ulicer Aguilera, who had to overcome an injury in his left leg to throw the javelin up to 62.51 meters, Pan-American record and personal best in class F13. Other athletes who had outstanding performances include javelin thrower Ever René Castro, fifth in class F-41; sprinter Raciél González, sixth in the final of the 100-meter race T47, gold and silver in 100 and 200 meters in Río de Janeiro 2016, and para-swimmer Lorenzo Pérez, eighth in 400 meters, class S6.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, first Vice-President of the National Institute of Sports, Raúl Fornés, said that Cuba's results were very outstanding. The first purpose was to equal the delegation's performance in Tokyo and we went beyond that by winning more golds and more medals in total, he affirmed.

The executive also praised the Cuban athlete's attitude, their dedication and hard work and the wish to better themselves in each of the events in which they participated.



Omara Durand was elected as a member of the Paralympic Athletes Committee. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Coach Raúl Trujillo and Mijaín López

By Odette **DÍAZ**

MOSCOW.- Cuban Greco-Roman coach Raúl Trujillo supports in his small height the honor and the responsibility of having taken Mijaín López to the Olympic podium on five occasions, turning him into the best of the world.

As part of a visit to this Russian capital, after attending the Aksenov In Memoriam International Tournament – held in the city of Novosibirsk, in the Russian Siberia – the maestro of throws to the mat agreed to talk to **The Havana Reporter** about the role of those who are on the other side of the bout. "I have not actually waken up from assuming Mijaín's fifth medal; it is a pretty difficult dream that shows years of effort and sacrifice, of defeating younger athletes from developed countries, amidst a complex physical situation, as he has four slipped disks among other injuries."

There are many people behind those medals, an unconditional technical and medical staff, his family and children, which are his reason to work hard, but for the 'Giant of Herradura,' his people is especially important, those who have not doubted his capacity and conditions to place Cuba's name on the top," Trujillo stressed.

According to the coach, the five-time Olympic champion's main features include the power over his mind, of feeling a winner and

champion at all times; when he sets himself a goal, even though he is in pain because of injuries or any inconvenience, he goes for that purpose until he gets it.

"Mijaín is a person I compare to the universe, because he has a lot of stars", he said.

In statements to THR, Trujillo commented that the visit to the giant Eurasian nation marks a before and an after in the life of all the wrestlers who participated in the tournament, but especially important was the meeting

between Mijaín and Russian three-time Olympic champion Alexandr Karelín, which he described as a unique moment in his life.

"That match has a great historical importance, because two geniuses have shaken hands, each from their own times. They were huge in their times, with different moments and experiences that do not allow making comparisons", he affirmed.

Mijaín López's mentor praised the value of the Russian Greco-Roman school and how

this gets to the present day involved in the formation of younger athletes, who consider Karelín and so many other wrestlers, including coach Vasily Ivanov, a beacon to continue growing up in this discipline worldwide.

In that sense, Trujillo rejected the stance the International Olympic Committee assumed by sanctioning Russian and Belorussian athletes and thus preventing them from attending foreign tournaments, including the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.



Raúl Trujillo supports in his small height the honor and the responsibility of having taken Mijaín López to the Olympic podium. PHOTO: Cuba SI.

Retirees, the Victims of Adjustment in Argentina

By Glenda **ARCIA**

BUENOS AIRES.- In recent weeks, the images of retirees being beaten, affected by tear gas or crying because of an unsustainable economic situation, flooded the social media and Argentina's front-page news.

As it has happened since the last couple of months on Wednesdays, seniors who contributed to this country with their work gathered on September 11 in front of the Congress to demand a response from the Government and the legislators, some of which turned their backs.

Although on this occasion they were accompanied by thousands of trade union and social organization members, the Federal Police, the Gendarmerie and the Naval Command's responded by charging at them with hydrant trucks, sticks, rubber bullets and gasses.

On September 2, president Javier Milei vetoed a retirement mobility law approved by the Congress and the norm had to be analyzed again by the Chamber of Representatives.

In spite of receiving 153 votes in favor, the opposition headed by Unión por la Patria did not receive the 172 votes needed to



"We are tired. For once, defend the homeland," shouted an adult woman during the protest.

PHOTO: Internet.

revoke the appeal filed by the head of State, which was ratified by the support of 87 legislators, with eight abstentions.

The norm established a monthly updating of incomes upon the basis of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and included an extra compensation of 8.1 percent so that people

could balance their incomes with the 20.6 percent inflation registered in January, when the Executive only granted a 12.5 increase.

It also established that the minimum pension should not be lower than the value of a basic family basket for senior adults,

and that the formula could not only be tied to the CPI, but to consider salaries too.

When the invalidation of the law was known, tension grew in the streets near the Congress and over 50 people – including senior adults, a girl, press staff and human rights advocates – were injured or affected by chemical gasses and rubber bullet shots, stated the Provincial Commission for Memory.

"We are tired. For once, defend the homeland," shouted an adult woman lying on the floor in front of a truck and police officers during the protest.

In statements to the press, representative of the Retired Workers Plenary, Nora Biaggio, affirmed that a violation of the human rights is taking place and the intention is to impose adjustment through repression.

Governor of the Buenos Aires province, Axel Kicillof, stated that "what Milei vetoed is equivalent to the taxes he canceled to Argentina's rich people when he changed personal assets' taxes."

CTA-A general secretary, Hugo Godoy, said that "once again, they turned the back on the people and gave in to the will of a president that wants to rule by decree" and denounced that "this is Milei government's clear character: using the State resources to suppress and buy those who oppose him."



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