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# Important tourism event will return in November.

By Benjamín **MICERINOS**

HAVANA.- The second edition of the Motivos Cubanacán event will return next November as part of Cuba's efforts to recover the travel industry.

The information is being echoed by both national and international news media, including Travel Trade Caribbean (TTC), from Italy, which frequently addresses tourism issues from this archipelago.

This second gathering, organized by the Cubanacán Hotel Group, will be held next November. It is dedicated to exploring and promoting travel opportunities in eastern Cuba, media sources indicated.

When making the announcement, in the presence of partners and collaborators, vice-president of the hotel company Yaima Suárez said that it would be an opportunity to celebrate the company's 38th anniversary.

The official explained that the meeting would allow rediscovering a region with a rich culture, history, music, and nature, in addition to strengthening the company's offers in an increasingly competitive market.

Cubanacán is working on an improvement plan for the 2025-2026 winter season, to showcase a renewed hotel product with a better image, to meet the expectations of potential clients and operators.



The Comodoro Hotel, in Havana, is part of the Cubanacán group. PHOTO: Cubanacán.

To this end, they are reviewing food and beverage standards, as well as corporate menus. In addition, the All-Inclusive Service will again be included in the Playa Girón hotel, in the Peninsula de Zapata Natural Park, she added.

Cubanacán has 118 hotels with over 17,000 rooms, located both in natural settings and in cities in the country's main tourist destinations. The official emphasized that they have

developed various brands, integrating sun and beach products, nature, culture, and tradition, with the vision of offering high-quality, sustainable, safe, and unique tourism services.

The vice-president of the Cubanacán Hotel Group also informed of the company's innovative approach and its international alliances with prestigious hotel chains such

as Meliá, Iberostar, Blue Diamond, Blau, Muthu, and others.

Such partnerships show confidence in the company's management model and Cuba's potential as a tourist destination, Suárez commented.

The Cubanacán Hotel Group was founded by the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro (1926-2016), on August 5, 1987.



Cuba will host next year the first World Women Bartenders Championship. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

## Queens of Bartending

By Francisco **MENÉNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Tour operators and travel agents working with the Cuban destination were pleased to know that next year the country will host the first World Women Bartenders Championship.

The major travel operators based on the island welcomed the possibility that this information would stimulate professional visits from all over the world.

According to the organizers, from March 7th to 10th, Cuba will host the first World Women Bartenders Championship, endorsed by the International Bartenders Association (IBA). The Queens of Bartending: The Global Female Championship has generated significant interest; according to the President of the Cuban Bartenders Association (ACC), Eddis Naranjo, this competition will take place at the Meliá Cohiba hotel in Havana.

The selection of this venue was based on the experience of the Cuban bartenders and the organization of different events of this type, including the IBA World Cup, held in Havana in 2022.

Naranjo announced that a call for applications had already been sent to all 67 IBA member countries to reach a final selection of 30 participants.

IBA annually organizes the World Bartenders Cup in a different location and is now seeking to add this important competition in coordination with the ACC.

Another factor that influenced the selection of Cuba as the venue of the event was the long-standing existence of its Bartenders Club, created in 1924 and continued since 1998 through the ACC.

The Queens of Bartending: The Global Female Championship is a groundbreaking event aimed at attracting professional travelers connected to the hospitality, gastronomy, beverage, and liquor industries, as well as other related sectors.

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# Guardians of the Revolution



By Rafael **ARZUAGA**

HAVANA.- The spirit of dignity and the pursuit of justice born in Cuba on January 1st, 1959, inspired millions around the world and fundamentally altered the island's relationship with its powerful neighbor, the United States.

It particularly infuriated U.S. authorities and many exiled Cubans who had sought refuge there, all waiting and hoping for the Revolution's collapse to facilitate their return. Ever since, interfering with the social and economic transformation unfolding just 90 miles from its shores has become a persistent feature of the White House's foreign policy. This longstanding hostility has escalated beyond economic pressure to include the promotion of subversive actions and the provision of safe haven for both their instigators and perpetrators.

Facing immense pressure and isolation, the revolutionary process required a deeply rooted, massive, and fervent organization—one convinced that the path embarked upon was so arduous that it demanded vigilant protection of every advancement achieved by the guerrilla fighters who had overthrown the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

It was precisely for this reason that the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) were founded on September 28th, 1960, in direct response to an act of sabotage—the detonation of an explosive device while leader Fidel Castro was addressing a crowd outside the former Presidential Palace, detailing his recent trip to the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The circumstances led many to perceive the idea as a direct inspiration of the Commander in Chief. His powerful articulation of the CDR's essence and purpose in that very moment

—forged in response to violence— marked the definitive birth of an organization to simultaneously defend and advance the Revolution.

Indeed, sixty-five years have passed since that foundational moment, and the Republic now bears little resemblance to the nation that witnessed the CDRs' emergence. Yet the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution endure and their core nature have not changed, owing to Washington's persistent efforts to subvert the island's political order and overthrow its government.

To observe, safeguard, confront, correct and combat any negative or counter-revolutionary tendency, and to mobilize the people against anti-Cuba campaigns, external harassment, acts of sabotage and foreign military invasions has defined their mandate from the beginning.

While community watch remains the foundational and essential objective of the organization —adapted to the specific characteristics of each locality— a vast array of other tasks have been added, each responding to the nation's realities.

These include instilling values in new generations, actively promoting gender equality and confronting all forms of discrimination, as well as vector control measures, coordinating blood donation campaigns and collecting raw materials.

The CDRs, which encompass the vast majority of Cuba's population over the age of 14, will celebrate their 65th anniversary with several actions across the country. Furthermore, the organization will launch a special program to honor its founder, leader Fidel Castro, in anticipation of his centennial in August 2026.

# School Year Begins Amid Ongoing Economic Challenges

By Melissa **KING**

HAVANA.- Cuba inaugurated the 2025-2026 academic year on September 1st, reaffirming its pledge to deliver equitable, quality education to all students nationwide.

Minister of Education Naima Trujillo has underscored that a central priority is developing innovative alternatives to overcome limitations, while safeguarding the high standards of Cuba's educational system. Minister Trujillo emphasized that the fundamental challenge for educators is to transcend material limitations through "willpower, common sense and unity."

During her preparatory tours across the island's provinces, she identified the teaching of History as a key priority, as students must move beyond passive memorization toward critically engaging with the "why" behind historical events, so as to meaningfully interpret both the past and their present realities.

The Minister underscored the critical need to establish "authentic, objective and dialogical communication" between schools and families toward achieving a coherent education and addressing challenges through shared effort.

In the capital alone, approximately 274,000 students have enrolled for the new school year across 170 educational institutions. However, local authorities have acknowledged ongoing challenges in achieving full teacher coverage in several municipalities.

To address this challenge, they are working on strategies aimed at guaranteeing full teacher coverage, particularly at secondary education, which is ranked as the stage with the highest teacher shortages.

Similarly, Cuba's higher education system has also commenced the new academic year, with enrollment ongoing across the country's 50 universities and additional institutions offering specialized academic programs.

Cuba's higher education system offers a total of 178 accredited training programs. These include 65 associate degree programs and 113 university degree programs.

Education in Cuba is universal and free at every level—from early childhood education through postgraduate university studies.

Recognized as a fundamental human right, enshrined in the nation's Constitution, it is steadfastly maintained despite profound economic challenges, reflecting the state's enduring commitment to the comprehensive formation of its citizens—a pillar of national development.



Back to school. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



# Winds of Change for Cuba in the U.S. South

By DeisyFRANCIS

WASHINGTON.- United across creeds by a shared goal, "ending the blockade," the Jacksonville branch of the U.S. Hands Off Cuba Committee was born, marking the first such chapter in Florida's most populous city.

"This isn't just a one-time gathering, it's the birth of a sustained solidarity movement in the Deep South," Hakim Jihad, the group's coordinator, told **The Havana Reporter**. "Jacksonville is mobilizing to break the blockade and stand with Cuba at the beginning of a new solidarity chapter," he added.

The inaugural meeting, held at Jacksonville's Yellow House Art Gallery, buzzed with energy as attendees heard firsthand accounts from a delegation that recently attended May Day celebrations in Havana.

"The room was electric, full of curiosity, enthusiasm, and a hunger for the truth about Cuba, beyond U.S. propaganda," Jihad noted.

Florida, often considered a hostile territory for solidarity with Cuba, witnessed something different, he noted. "In a state dominated by some of the toughest anti-Cuban policies in the United States, this event demonstrated that the situation is changing," Jihad warned.

The delegation at Jacksonville's Yellow House Art Gallery showcased tangible support, delivering \$200,000 worth of medical supplies to Havana's Calixto García Hospital. Earlier this year, the Committee

also facilitated a \$517,000 shipment—including 500,000 painkillers—through partnerships with "Not Just Tourists," the "Pan-American Medical Group," the "Los Angeles Hands Off Cuba Committee," and "Global Health Partners".

Attendees also learned about the growing national movement, including significant support from the California AFL-CIO, which represents 2.3 million workers, and the International Longshoremen's Union.

The formation of a northeast Florida chapter of "Hands Off Cuba" is already underway, building an organized base of resistance in one of the most strategically important states for the fight against the blockade.

But this is just the beginning of a major effort to extend the initiative of the Los Angeles Committee Hands Off Cuba, founded in 2019, to the rest of the United States, said activist Brenda López from California.

"The New Orleans chapter is in the process of being formed," said fellow activist Mark Friedman, noting that there are many people here who would like to see improved relations with Cuba and the lifting of sanctions against the island.

For López, a member of the Los Angeles Committee like Friedman, the Jacksonville chapter "comes at a time when our fundamental rights are being seriously attacked by the current administration."

She emphasized that this is the reality of a system that prioritizes profits over people, while Cuba has demonstrated nationally and internationally a humanistic and preventive approach to fundamental rights.



Cheryl LaBash is co-president of the U.S. National Network on Cuba. PHOTO: Vladimir Molina.

## Slander of Cuban Medical Missions

Text and photo by DeisyFRANCIS



WASHINGTON.-While a small group of detractors in high-ranking US officials slander Cuba's internationalism, its organized contribution to the needs of humanity is an example for all, said activist Cheryl LaBash.

LaBash, co-president of the U.S. National Network on Cuba, told **The Havana Reporter** that amid ongoing attacks on Cuba's medical missions, it's important to remember how the Caribbean nation was the first to offer aid to the American people after a devastating hurricane 20 years ago.

She reminded that it was the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, who called for volunteers to assist the victims affected by Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans and the US Gulf Coast in August 2005.

"More than 1,500 fully equipped medical professionals stood ready to help, awaiting U.S. approval—which never came," LaBash noted. "This selfless gesture speaks volumes about Cuba's humanitarian spirit."

She added that while Cuban medical internationalism began in the early years of the Revolution, it was in 2005 that Fidel formally established the Henry Reeve Brigade, named after the American soldier who fought for Cuba's independence from Spanish rule.

Despite economic hardships and the US blockade, Cuba continues to provide, contribute, and save millions of lives worldwide, she stated.

Samira Addrey, a board member of the U.S. organization IFCO-Pastors for Peace and a graduate of Havana's Latin American School of Medical Sciences, echoed this sentiment in a recent interview.

"Cuba's healthcare collaboration is a monumental achievement and a beacon of hope for countless people," she said. "The world should recognize Cuba not only for its medical excellence but for its profound humanity."

The U.S. State Department recently announced visa restrictions for officials from African countries, Brazil, and Grenada linked to Cuban international health cooperation programs.

The measure targets them for hiring Cuban medical missions, which the US administration baselessly describes as forced labor in its smear campaign against a program with which Cuba, for decades, has helped save millions of lives around the world.

The announcement, made by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, includes former members of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), whom he accuses of "complicity in the medical mission's plan."

The Cuban government assured that it will not halt its medical missions. Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez stated on his social media account that his country "will continue providing services."



# Alert for the Atlantic and Caribbean Hurricane Season



By Ana Laura **ARBESÚ**

HAVANA.- Cuban meteorologists have reaffirmed their forecasts regarding the possible impact of tropical storms on the island during the current Atlantic and Caribbean hurricane season, which runs until November 30.

Although the start of the season on June 1st was atypical compared to previous years, specialists expect the formation of 11 tropical storms (TS) for the remainder of the season, seven of which could reach hurricane status.

Of these 11 predicted storms, seven are expected to form in the Atlantic, one in the Gulf of Mexico, and three in the Caribbean Sea, the forecast specified.

The probability that Cuba will be affected by at least one hurricane is 50 percent, higher than the country's climatological risk level of 35 percent. In the case of at least one tropical storm impacting the island, the probability rises to 70 percent.

Meteorologist Ailyn Justiz explained to the press that the fundamental oceanic and atmospheric conditions that regulate cyclonic activity in the region continue to favor the formation and development of these systems.

Compared to the previous two months, August sees a significant increase in the emergence of tropical cyclones, with this behavior becoming more pronounced during the latter half of the month. This period, along with the first half of September, marks the peak of activity within the season, the specialist added.

Just a few days ago, global meteorological institutions in the United States and Europe agreed that the winds in the upper levels of the atmosphere over the tropical Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea showed a notable weakening by mid-August.

This decrease in wind shear—one of the factors that typically inhibits hurricane formation—will significantly increase the chances of tropical storm development.

Another warning sign is provided by the Accumulated Cyclone Energy (ACE) index, which measures the strength and duration of tropical storms and hurricanes.

The Ecmwf model suggests that this metric will begin to rise significantly during the second half of August, representing yet another indication of the likely increase in cyclonic activity.

This projection aligns with historical observations: August usually marks the beginning of the most active period of the Atlantic hurricane season. Although factors such as Saharan dust and hostile high-level winds limited storm development in the early days of the season, specialists emphasize that this does not imply a quiet season. On the contrary, they warn, the initial calm could give way to a much more turbulent second half.

## An Alternative to Boost Food Production

By Lourdes **PÉREZ**

HAVANA.- Given the current state of agriculture in Cuba, impacted by resource shortages, soil quality degradation, and climate change, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) represent a necessary alternative to increase food production.

The term refers to plants, animals, and microorganisms whose genetic material is altered to give them specific improved characteristics, making them behave differently.

This was explained to the press by Dr. Mario Pablo Estrada García, Director of Agricultural Research at the Center for

Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB), the leading institution in this field in the country.

He recalled that the push for agricultural biotechnology development on the island since the late 1980s led to CIGB specialists obtaining the first transgenic plants at the laboratory level in 1996.

"From these initial results, we managed to pave the way for gene manipulation, enabling these crops to acquire certain properties, such as increased tolerance to pests and diseases, and improved yields," the expert stated.

"Considering the urgent need for high production of corn and soybeans, which are important sources of energy and protein for animal feed, and their increasingly

high costs on the international market, our scientists prioritized the development of these genetically modified crops," he said.

Estrada noted that after nearly five decades of research, the work is transitioning to a larger scale, and currently, "we are immersed in the commercial release phase, under the strictest safety standards, supported by the legal framework in force in Cuba for the development and use of GMOs."

He specified that currently, 5,608 hectares of transgenic soybeans for animal consumption and 300 hectares for seed production have been planted. As for the transgenic corn developed at CIGB, 150 hectares are planted for seed production and eight hectares for pure line multiplication.

Immediate projections aim to reach 25,000 hectares of transgenic corn planted for grain production by 2026, with an estimated yield of 125,000 tons for animal feed.

Regarding soybeans—with a potential yield of three tons per hectare—the goal is to consolidate production to 4,500 hectares in each province, expanding the capacity for certified seed generation.

These objectives are based on the use of high technology and the contracting of specialized services for seed benefit and classification, he asserted.

The scientist affirmed that the transgenic seed production program represents an essential pillar for food security in Cuba, promoting sustainable and efficient agriculture.



# Latin American Tour: A Beacon of Hope in Troubled Times

By Mario MUÑOZ

HAVANA.- In a world gripped by crisis, war, and despair, the announcement of legendary Cuban troubadour Silvio Rodríguez's upcoming tour has emerged like a ray of light for fans across Latin America.

The iconic singer-songwriter, whose music has sound tracked revolutions and soothed souls for over half a century, will kick off his tour on September 19 at 7 pm. local time, with a historic free concert on the steps of the University of Havana, a landmark site for large gatherings and concerts among Cuban youth. For this performance, celebrating his 55-year artistic career, the 78-year-old musician promised to play classics and songs from his most recent album, *Quiero Saber*, recorded at Ojalá Studios and released on digital platforms in June 2024.

After the recital on the university he will begin a tour that will take him and his musicians to Chile (September 29, October 1, 5, and 6), Argentina (October 11, 12, and 21), Uruguay (October 17 and 18), Peru (October 25), and Colombia (October 31 and November 2).

Silvio will travel accompanied by talented instrumentalists: Jorge Aragón on piano;

Oliver Valdés on drums, congas, and percussion; Emilio Vega on keyboards; the experienced Jorge Reyes on double bass; Maykel Elizalde on tres; Rachid López on second guitar; and Niurka González on flute, clarinet, and backing vocals.

The work of the author of *Ojalá*, *La maza*, *Unicornio*, and *Óleo de mujer con sombrero*, among other songs, has influenced generations of Cubans and Latin Americans over more than five decades, both in concerts in plazas, theaters, and on stages, and through his albums.

Born in San Antonio de los Baños, a small city southwest of Havana, from his first paces in the Nueva Trova movement until now, the artist has become the quintessential chronicler of the Revolution, which began on January 1, 1959, according to many Cubans.

His music and songs have delved into national realities, highlighting the values of social processes experienced in the country and criticizing negative attitudes and mistakes made over the years.

His works in defense of national liberation movements in Latin America, distributed stealthily in the 1970s, sometimes on cassettes, also had an impact on young leftists in Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina during the

dictatorships that ravaged the southern cone of the continent.

The tour comes amid tensions in some countries in the region, and the concerts, in which he will inevitably play some of his emblematic songs of great social commitment, will once again become a room for reflection and hope, both for young people who have not seen him live and for his longtime fans.

In a time of booming empty music and trashy lyrics, media headlines in the countries hosting the performances announce that tickets are selling out fast.

According to some experts, Silvio Rodríguez's upcoming tour promises to be a tribute to his legacy and an act of respect for that intelligent, committed singer-songwriter, which Latin America and the world so desperately need.



Silvio Rodríguez will kick off his tour on September 19 with a historic free concert on the steps of the University of Havana. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

## The Danced Theater of the Antillean Cocolos

By Mariela PÉREZ

SANTO DOMINGO.- The Dominican Republic is, as said by specialists, a melting pot of nationalities where the Cocolos, free black people from the former British colonies who moved to this country with their culture, customs, and traditions, play a prominent role.

And among those cultural expressions, one still captures attention within Dominican identity a century later: the danced theater, unique in the Americas, brought by English-speaking men and women who never abandoned their African roots.

Like every human group, they spread their tangible and spiritual culture and their ways of dressing, dancing, and singing, in addition to their cuisine, values, customs, and beliefs.

Although the Cocolos neighborhoods in various regions of this country had structures more aligned with those of the former colonizers, they preserved

unique cultural expressions, such as the annual dance theater that attracted citizens from other backgrounds. Several community groups gave theater performances during specific festivals, like Christmas, Saint Peter's Day, and the Carnival season.

Experts believe that these stages were an occasion to unveil the soul, as they combined aspects from their inner world – formed in a British and sometimes French or Danish environment – with the music, dances, and performances of their native lands.

A characteristic of this cultural interconnection is seen in this type of theater, where body movements replace words. Although the music that accompanies the staging is purely African, the plots reflect works based on biblical and medieval European literature.

In each performance, the audience enjoyed original creativity, as European foundations were intertwined with legends, heroes, and liberation struggles, taken from their homelands and passed down to different generations.

Christmas carols, string ensembles, drum beats, dances dedicated to African deities, and masked dances are all an integral part of the culture of this Caribbean nation.

The Cocola orchestral ensemble accompanying them features a bass drum, a snare drum (modeled after adapted British military drums), and occasionally a flute. This stage performance was declared a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization in 2005.

Currently, the dancing theater only survives in San Pedro de Macorís and La Romana. Previously limited to Christmas holidays or Saint Peter's Day, it is now performed at other times, like national and patron saint holidays, due to the integration of this Caribbean community with the rest of the country.

It is difficult to distinguish the Cocolos within the Dominican social spectrum. However, they can be differentiated because – like other migrant groups – they still defend their original culture, in which the dancing theater undoubtedly shines.





# Unique Beings, Camila Guevara's Mysticism

By Fauto**TRIANA**

MADRID.- We are all unique beings, Camila Guevara affirms with surprising maturity at her 24 years and a recent past filled with sadness, which today, from Spain, she manages to leave behind.

That, however, does not mean a breakdown. She is the granddaughter of Pablo Milanés, the daughter of Suylen Milanés (...), Cuban through and through, and has an Argentinean root of which she is proud.

Her father, Camilo Guevara, also deceased, is the son of Ernesto Che Guevara. All these personalities somehow travel around her life.

Certainly! Here's the English translation of your paragraph: Perhaps because of all this and something more innate—talent—her answers to **The Havana Reporter** are very authentic.

In a world where Artificial Intelligence (AI), avatars, and computer sciences seem to have everything covered, how can anyone make music that goes beyond imagination?

"I think the key is to continue to be yourself. We are all unique beings, and artists are the result of our own experiences and particular illusions. There is something about humanity, about the possibility of error, about the construction of the human being and feelings, which I consider to be irreplaceable and inimitable by a machine or technology.

"For the time being, I think AI is a good tool, but I don't deny that sometimes I am frightened by the speed at which this phenomenon is growing."

I was lucky to see her in a concert at Casa de América in Madrid. Her voice faded as she recounted the most difficult year of her life (2023), when she lost her mother, grandfather and father.

She wept briefly and only her several-register voice restored her artistic spirit. At 24, she is one of the young artists the Rolling Stones magazine recommends.

So young, from a country of musicians and the Milanés label as a challenge. Do you feel too much pressure?

"The pressure, in some ways, is on me and my music. This is also a journey of self-discovery that I would like to last forever. This intention and this feeling help me keep searching."

She also shared her thoughts with the audience at Casa de América. "My songs were written in moments of relief, of sadness, healing, difficult situations; also of joy, because in the end, it is a way of channeling my feelings, my life (...)." She admits she does not have favorite genres, and while the last question THR makes might seem to point to pain, it is inevitable.

How do you handle the sadness and the memories of a year like 2023, when you lost your loved ones?

"Some mourning last forever, and when those pains come, you must feel them and not escape from them. I have

created my own tools to be stronger: I go to therapy, I meditate, I write and I read. These are things that help me navigate life in general."



At 24, Camila Guevara is one of the young artists the Rolling Stones magazine recommends. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



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# Women's Organization Celebrates Its 65th Anniversary

By PedroRIOSECO

HAVANA.- The pivotal role of Cuban women in the country's independence war and revolutionary process was formally institutionalized 65 years ago with the founding of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) on August 23rd, 1960.

This monumental achievement would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment of the Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, and Vilma Espín Guillois –a heroine of both the clandestine movement and the Rebel Army.

From the earliest days of the revolutionary movement, they championed the leading role of women in building a new society and conceived and promoted comprehensive policies and programs aimed at achieving full gender equality across all spheres.

Following the triumph of the Revolution, one of the critical tasks was to consolidate and unify the various progressive women's organizations that had emerged across different sectors of society.

With the consensus and support of the leaderships of various revolutionary and social organizations of the time, the FMC was established to consolidate the role of Cuban women within society, and in major international forums.

From its foundation, the FMC was presided over by Vilma Espín Guillois (April 7, 1930

– June 18, 2007), whose leadership was forged in struggle. She also held a seat on the Council of State and served as the head of the Parliamentary Commission for the Attention of Women, Childhood and Youth.

Within the Cuban Parliament, Vilma and the FMC were instrumental in the drafting, debate and passage of laws affecting women, including the 1975 Family Code.

The women's organization operates at the national, provincial, municipal, and grassroots levels. Its National Leadership is composed

of a National Committee and an executive Secretariat.

The General Secretary of the FMC holds a seat on the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), its Central Committee and the Council of State, and leads the Parliamentary Commission for the Attention of Women, Childhood, and Youth. Membership in the Federation requires only that a woman be at least 14 years of age and make a voluntary choice to join. The organization has about four million members, structured into more than 13,000 contingents

and nearly 80,000 local groups across the island.

In Cuba, women account for over 46% of state sector employees. Also, over 65% of professionals and technicians, and 39% of managers are women.

The FMC established Counseling Centers for Women and the Family, staffed by multidisciplinary teams: psychologists, psychiatrists, educators, social workers and legal advisors. These centers provide vital services tailored to the needs of Cuban women and families.



Cuban women account for over 65% of professionals and technicians. PHOTO: TV Artemisa

# Technical Assistance Agreement with Vietnam

By The Havana Reporter Staff

HAVANA.-The Cuban and Vietnamese Justice ministers signed a Technical Assistance Agreement to strengthen the island's capacity for lawmaking and enforcement.

The document, signed by Ministers Oscar Manuel Silveira (Cuba) and Nguyen Hai Ninh (Vietnam), will enhance

the Justice Ministry's institutional capacities, thereby improving the services provided to the population.

At the ceremony, held in this capital, Silveiro said that the legislative process Cuba is facing following the approval of the new Constitution of the Republic, in 2019, has been intense and unique.

In this sense, he added that having "an instrument that allows interaction with the experience of sister

nations will enrich the practice of project designs in our country."

For the Asian minister, this exchange among experts can foster investment interest from Vietnamese companies and expand relations with those already operating in this nation. This is the first time both countries have signed an agreement of this type, which the Cuban minister defined as a priority to continue fostering cooperation ties with Vietnam.



The Technical Assistance Agreement was signed by the Ministers of Justice of Cuba and Vietnam. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



# Playing with the Future, Art with the Vivid Colors of a People

By Adriana **ARAÚJO**

HAVANA.- Cuban visual artist Diana Balboa is the author of the exhibition *Playing with the Future*, an anthological personal show that these days unveils the history of her nation with vivid colors.

The exhibition contains Balboa's most recent pictorial production, celebrating with it her 80 years of life and the 63rd anniversary of the founding of the Taller Experimental de Gráfica de La Habana (TEGH – Havana Experimental Graphics Workshop), the place that saw her grow as a creator and a human being for over four decades.

The showcase features prints and paintings made with striking tones that, through her brushes, glorify real events from the life of the Cuban people and their heroes.

For Balboa, art enthusiasts like herself are aware that they play with what they love, and from this idea comes this exhibition.

"Human beings come into life playing, and they learn to live by playing," expressed this artist, who was born in the Cuban province of Cienfuegos, to the press.

With the exhibition *Playing with the Future*, which contains a group of pieces and prints, the creator is bidding farewell to the world of plastic arts, though not to its sphere, as she confirmed. "Any other exhibition mounted will be from my own collection of completed works," she stated.

"I am very happy today because I am turning eight decades old with the best thing an artist can do, which is to show their work," she expressed.

This exhibition will travel to Madrid, Spain, after remaining for one month at the TEGH.

A prominent painter, illustrator, printmaker, and ceramist, self-taught by training, she has presented more than 60 personal and 200 collective exhibitions, both in Cuba and abroad.

Some of her works are on display in prestigious galleries in different countries and are also part of the collection at La Capilla del Hombre (The Chapel of Man) in Ecuador.

With this show, the celebrations for the anniversary of the TEGH, founded on July 31, 1962, came to a close. It was there that Balboa began (in 1967) to make prints.

"The Experimental Graphics Workshop is where I have been happiest in my life," she confessed to the press.



The exhibition celebrates 80 years of life of artista Diana Balboa. PHOTO: Granma.

## Cuba Shares Knowledge on Animation in Nicaragua

By Verónica **NÚÑEZ**

HAVANA.- Cuban creators are sharing knowledge on animation with their Nicaraguan counterparts, announced Alexis Triana, president of the Cuban Institute of Cinematic Art and Industry (Icaic), at a press conference in Havana.

The executive emphasized that this is about giving continuity to and strengthening the relations between the Cuban cultural institution and the National Cinematheque of Nicaragua.

"The ideal is to build capabilities in the students so they learn the vast scope of animation, beyond just the commercial aspect," said animator Ivette Ávila via video conference. She is teaching an animation workshop in Nicaragua alongside filmmakers Aramis Acosta and Guillermo Ochoa.

Filmmaker Aramis Acosta explained that Ivette Ávila will instruct on the stop motion technique, while Guillermo Ochoa will teach 2D animation. He added that there is great enthusiasm in Nicaragua about what can be applied in the world of animation.

"Last year we faced a group of students in these specialization workshops, and there are high expectations because the main interest in this type of relationship is to try and create a space, a group of advanced students who can continue the productions and the portfolios when the professors are gone," he highlighted.

Ávila added that the goal is to set a precedent and leave behind knowledge

that can be expanded after they return to Cuba, as learning about animation requires training and discovery, and the duration of these workshops is short.

Likewise, Ochoa confessed that transferring his experiences from Cuba to his Nicaraguan students, who have not had direct exposure to animation, is a magnificent moment.

"Some have been familiar with the medium, but not specifically with animation, and

that's why these workshops start from the basics, which would be traditional animation," he pointed out.

"A year and a half ago we decided to bring them their heritage, delivering the films from Cuba's archives about that country's liberating struggles and signing an agreement that allowed us to carry out this second edition of the workshops," he further expanded.



President of Icaic explained that the project strengthens relations with its counterpart in Nicaragua. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



# Fidel's Humanism and Greatness Under the Lens of Alex Castro

By AlmayLABRADA

HAVANA.- A sea of people bends toward history, drawn into the orbit of a man whose warmth and greatness feel as intimate as they are monumental.

This is the power of "All the Glory of the World," photographer Alex Castro's evocative exhibition now on display at Havana's José Martí Memorial.

In 50 snapshots, the exhibition, available to the public at the José Martí Memorial in Havana, depicts with profound sensitivity the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, sometimes amid smiles and crowds, other times with the complicity of his hands and thoughts.

"I try to convey his life and his personality as a leader and statesman, and also the person behind that leader," the renowned photographer, son of the Commander in Chief, stated in an interview with **The Havana Reporter**.

"It seeks to capture a simple and natural man, one who always went to meet with his people and sought to solve every problem, who spoke with people naturally."

He communicated with people to feed on information that did not reach him, and that is what I am trying and meant to show.

The exhibition perpetuates the desire of those who retain the guidance of a father and the many encounters Fidel had with figures from the political, artistic, and cultural spheres.

This represents all the glory of the world, his greatness, and his way of thinking. He is not an unattainable person; he is someone who is there, among the people, he emphasized.

Amid the commemorations of the Commander in Chief's 99th birthday, last August 13, thousands of memories and emotions come flooding back. Which one does Alex Castro retain?

Demandingness teaches you to navigate life with much more ease, he opined.

At one end of the room, 100 images are displayed, another visual gift from which emanates the imprint of someone who is perceived as eternal.

– Fidel's work and thought are of unquestionable stature; however, opposing views persist among a minority. What would you say to them?

Those people make him even bigger because they could never overcome him, not even after so many years have passed since his physical departure. They are crushed by his work, which remains and is indisputable.

Those who criticize us like that make us stronger," he asserted. "All the glory in the world" reflects how deeply Fidel impacted diverse people through a continuous dialogue with his immensity and humanity.



## Million-Dollar Support Campaign for Cuba in Vietnam

By GabrielANTÚNEZ

HANOI.- By mid-August, the national campaign in support of Cuba, launched here by the Vietnamese Red Cross, had received over 1,820,000 contributions totaling more than 14 million dollars.

According to the organization, as of August 22, they had raised 360 101 billion dong (approximately 14 million 60 000 dollars), a figure higher than the initial goal of 65 billion VND.

Among the most recent donations received by the humanitarian social organization is that made by the Vietnam-Cuba Friendship Hospital, one of five facilities donated by the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, during his visit to this Indochinese nation in 1973.

The hospital, inaugurated in 1981 in Đồng Hới, formerly part of Quảng Bình Province, was at the time one of the most modern in Vietnam. As recalled in an article by former Vice Foreign Minister Nguyễn Đình Bìn, it was intended to "treat soldiers from the South

and populations in areas most affected by the atrocious war."

The Vietnam News Agency (VNA) also called on its staff, reporters, editors, and other personnel to join the "65 Years of Vietnam-Cuba Solidarity" campaign, launched by the

Red Cross as part of the commemorative activities for the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Referring to the special ties between the two countries, VNA Director General Vũ Việt Trang emphasized that "this alliance has become an

exemplary symbol of international solidarity, which has withstood the test of time and difficulties."

She affirmed that the well-known declaration by leader Fidel Castro—"For Vietnam, Cuba is willing to give even its own blood!"—embodies this unshakable loyalty, deeply rooted in the hearts of the Vietnamese people.

Việt Trang noted that the VNA maintains a close and long-standing relationship with two news agencies from the island: the Latin American Information Agency Prensa Latina and the Cuban News Agency (ACN).

The Director General also urged all units of the VNA to widely disseminate the messages: "Vietnam-Cuba: Always united in difficult times, solidarity in the face of challenges," and "Vietnam is still there."

Launched on August 13 to mark the 99th birthday of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro and within the context of the Vietnam-Cuba Friendship Year and the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations, the campaign in support of the island will continue until October 16.





# Cayo Largo, a Perfect Tourist Destination

Text and Photos Roberto F. CAMPOS

HAVANA.- Nature, solitude, and sea lovers will find in Cayo Largo del Sur, in the southern part of Cuba, a perfect setting for such pleasures. The website TripAdvisor ranked Playa Paraíso, located on that islet visited by thousands, among the 25 most popular beaches in the world.

Situated in Cuba's southwestern region, the area is rich in history, magic and holds a promising future for activities like underwater photography and scuba diving.

Cayo Largo, whose name comes from its elongated geographical shape, is part of the Canarreos archipelago's eastern end, and is the largest of a group of Jardines and

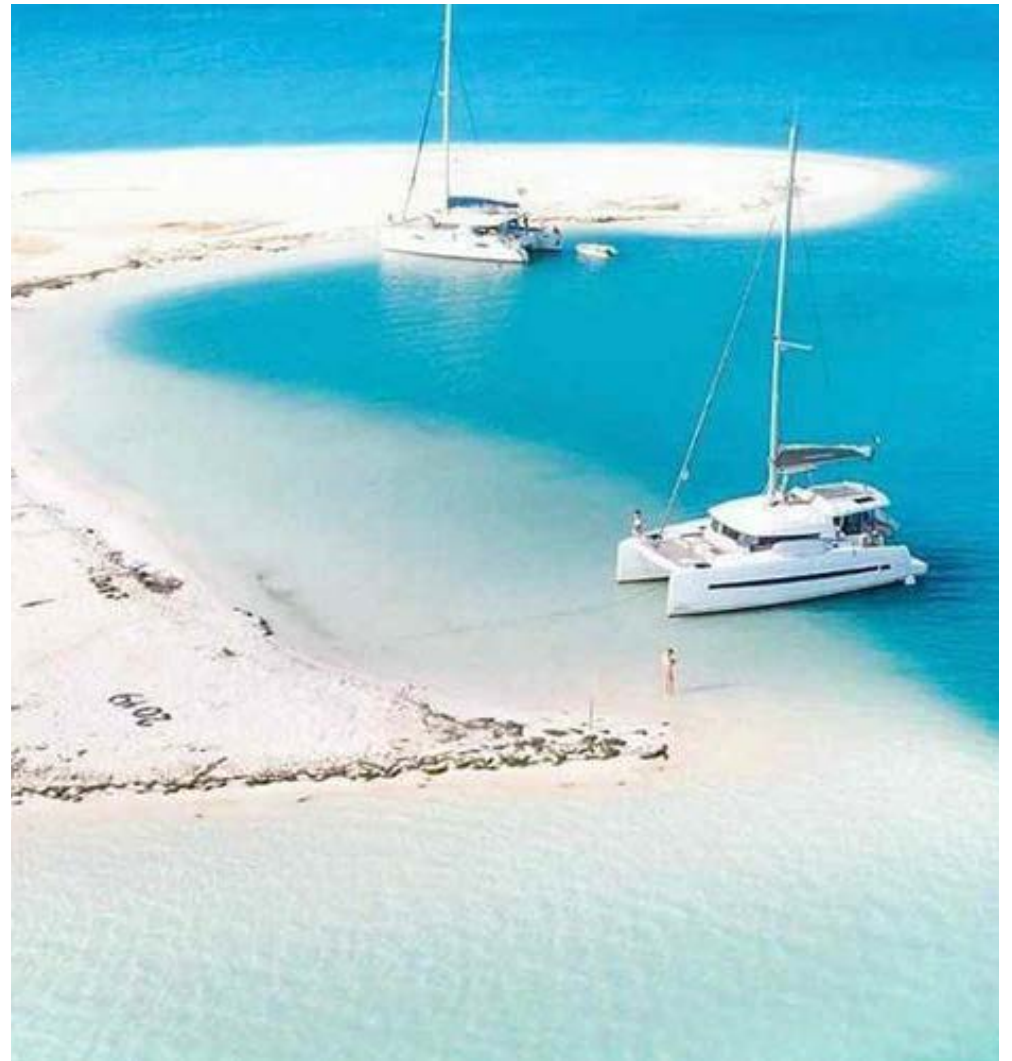
Jardinillos, known at the time by Spanish explorers.

It has a very flat surface, with no notable heights, and is barely about 50 feet above sea level. It covers an area of 38 square kilometers, with 27 kilometers at its longest point.

The Cuban Marlin Nautical and Marina Business Group is planning to expand its maritime recreational activities.

Its development as a tourist destination started in 1982, at the Isla del Sur Hotel, although it took off at the 5th International Underwater Photography Event (Fotosub 2014).

Cayo Largo has a sea turtle and manatee protection project – the latter, at the Colony – which involves tourists and students interested in diving, and in scientific and environmental activities.





# The Plurinational State in Danger

By Jorge **PETINAUD**

LA PAZ.- With 95.41% of the voting records scrutinized by the Preliminary Electoral Results System (Sirepre) of Bolivia's Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), it is confirmed that the national popular bloc has been excluded from the 36 Senate seats in dispute.

The four main right-wing forces in Bolivia now hold over 85% of the seats in the Plurinational Legislative Assembly (ALP), a figure that could allow them to eliminate the Plurinational State and restore a racist and neoliberal republic.

This objective has been repeatedly stated by prominent spokespersons of this bloc, which aligns with the neoliberal policies promoted by the United States and the International Monetary Fund. It could materialize after the presidential and legislative inauguration on November 8.

The ticket of Rodrigo Paz and Edman Lara surprised many in Bolivia's general elections on August 17 by securing first place with 32.14% of the votes, according to preliminary official data.

Based on figures released by Sirepre, the son of former President Jaime Paz and the former police captain (discharged) who gained

popularity for denouncing corruption within the armed force accumulated 1.5 million ballots.

In second place was the far-right former president Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga, alongside businessman Juan Pablo Velazco, representing the Free Alliance, with 26.88% of the votes.

These two forces will compete in a runoff on October 19 to determine the president and vice president, as the Constitution stipulates that to win the presidency and control of the ALP, a candidate must secure more than 50% of the votes or achieve 40% with a 10-point lead over the second-place contender.

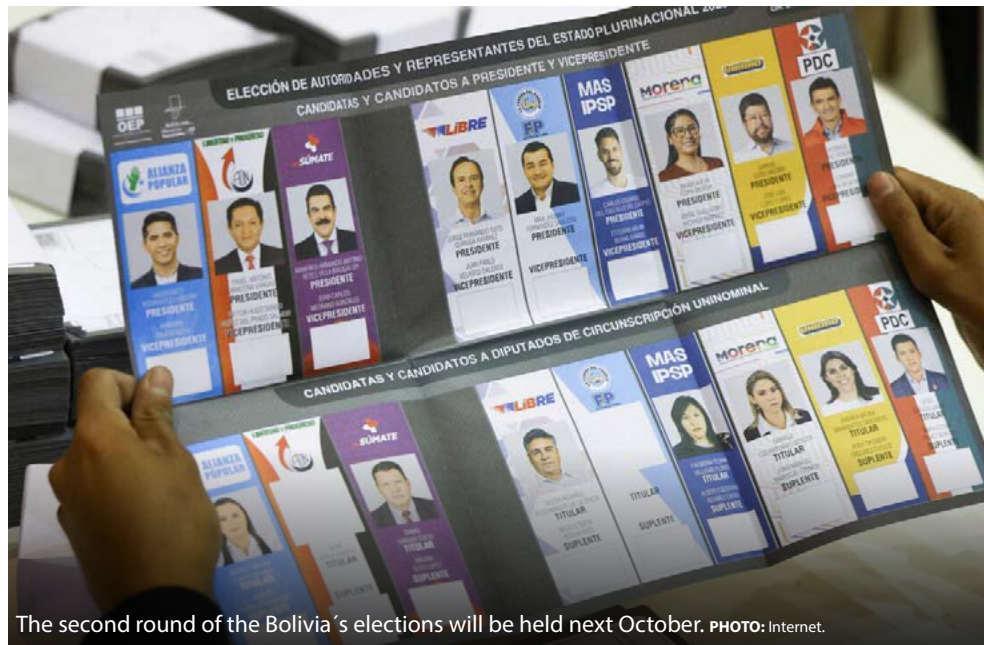
The biggest loser was the ticket of Samuel Doria Medina and José Luis Lupo, whom most polls had placed in the lead for months. They managed to secure only 20% of the votes.

In fourth place was Andrónico Rodríguez, representative of the Popular Alliance, with just 8.1%—a result negatively influenced by former President Evo Morales' call for left-wing forces to cast null votes.

Null votes and blank ballots together accounted for 21.74% of the total votes cast, surpassing the share received by Doria Medina. Another major loser was the mayor of Cochabamba, Manfred Reyes Villa, with only 6.62% of the valid ballots.

A bittersweet outcome was felt by the largest political party in Bolivia's history, the Movement for Socialism-Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (MAS-IPSP), which has over a million members. Pre-election polls had suggested it would fall below the 3% threshold required to maintain its legal status.

The ticket representing MAS-IPSP, Eduardo del Castillo and Milán Berna, secured 3.1% support, providing the consolation of preserving the divided MAS-IPSP as a political force.



The second round of the Bolivia's elections will be held next October. PHOTO: Internet.

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# International Cooperation Marks Energy Transition

By MirnaGONZÁLEZ

HAVANA.-The simultaneous presence in Cuba of two important international organizations linked to renewable energy and the signing of two cooperation documents mark a turning point in the island's energy transition strategy.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, First Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM), Argelio Abad, described the presence of the top leaders of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) as transcendental, as it complements the joint efforts conducted by the business and academic sectors and the National Electricity Union.

According to Abad, OLADE's contributions in the field of training and the Alliance's support to assimilate technology and know-how in solar technology play an essential role in the country's energy transition program.

Actions developed because of the energy transition date years back and are conducted in coordination with universities and specialists from the Ministry, he said. In this regard, he mentioned that they had the support of university researchers and professors in the drafting of Cuba's solar map, a study that determined local photovoltaic potentials.

In the framework of the Energy Transitions in Central America and the Caribbean Workshop, held at the University of Havana, OLADE Executive Secretary, Andrés Rebollo

and Rector of the University of Havana, PhD Miriam Nicado signed a memorandum of understanding on energy training and academic collaboration.

Rebollo highlighted that one of the organization's pillars is supporting countries' energy development, including capacity building. Hence, the importance OLADE attaches to the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the University of Havana.

After a workshop with government agencies and business leaders, Director of Renewable Energies at the Ministry of Energy and Mines, Rosell Guerra, informed about other actions

taken, such as the signing of the Country Framework Agreement between Cuba and the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

The contract, which focuses on seven key projects, foresees reviewing the participation of different business sectors in the economy and expanding collaboration in the development of priority projects to ensure significant production of food, medicine, and electricity in rural communities, Guerra stated.

The director referred to a project to install 60 megawatts (MW) of photovoltaic power in biopharmaceutical industries to ensure energy for medicine research, production,

and marketing, for both the population and the generation of exportable goods and services.

It also includes the installation of solar pumps to supply water to the population, livestock, and agricultural irrigation, so as to increase food production.

. There is also a project for achieving energy autonomy for refrigerated tanks used to collect milk from dairy farms.

The agreement also includes the installation of photovoltaic systems in the field of aquaculture, for fish farming, and progress in the rural communities' electrification program, the official concluded.



OLADE Executive Secretary, and Rector of the University of Havana signed a memorandum on energy training and academic collaboration.  
PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

## Uncertain Prospects

By FrankGONZÁLEZ



UNCTAD informed that the FDI fell by more than 10 percent in 2023 and 11 percent the following year. PHOTO: Internet.

HAVANA.- Following the decline recorded in the last two years, the outlook for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) remains uncertain, threatened by poor economic growth forecasts and persistent geopolitical and trade tensions.

According to reports from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the FDI nominal amount in 2023 was two percent lower than in 2022, and four percent higher in 2024 compared to the previous calendar year.

However, those sources indicated that FDI fell by more than 10 percent in 2023 and 11 percent the following year, taking into account, in both cases, the deceptive effect of financial flows channeled through European conduit economies.

The Netherlands, Switzerland, Ireland, and Singapore are among the group of nations considered offshore financial conduit centers, according to a study conducted by the University of Amsterdam in 2017.

These states act as intermediaries, with low or no taxes for the transfer of capital to various destinations, such as investments and tax havens. Thus, the profits of one nation can be diverted to others with low or no taxes, according to the report entitled 'Uncovering Offshore Financial Centers:

Conduits and Sinks in the Global Corporate Ownership Network.'

FDI essentially consists of the transfer of capital to a different country for replication in activities—goods or services—established through long-term contractual relationships.

The investment decision is generally influenced by factors such as the estimated profitability of the business, the legal framework, and the political, economic and social circumstances of the destination country.

While FDI in developing countries generally goes to the extractive sector, in developed countries it is concentrated in manufacturing, the automotive industry, IT, telecommunications, the digital economy and high added-value technologies, among others.

Regarding FDI directed toward emerging and developing economies (EDE), an article co-authored by World Bank Working Group researchers and published in the latest edition of the Global Economic Outlook shows a decline relative to gross domestic product (GDP) starting in 2008.

Since then, it has declined to an annual average of around two percent of GDP, after reaching eight percent in previous years.

Global FDI fell again in 2024, partly due to a 27% drop in international project financing deals (from 2,713 to 1,988). Developed nations saw a 22% decline, driven by a steep 58% plunge in Europe—impacting 18 of the 27 EU countries.



# Challenges in the energy transition

By TeyunéDÍAZ

HAVANA.- Institutionalization and internal differences in the Caribbean represent a challenge for energy transition in the subregion; however, cooperation and a common vision are essential to move forward, said OLADE Executive Secretary Andrés Rebolledo.

In statements to **The Havana Reporter**, the Executive Secretary of the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) explained that for the past years, they have assessed the subregion's common features to identify its relationship with the current reality in terms of energy development.

The Caribbean is different from the rest of the Latin America region and needs to address its challenges, such as the effects of climate change on energy infrastructure, Rebolledo commented. Other challenges the subregion faces are related to energy integration, because, as it comprises islands, it requires greater innovation when finding solutions. These can be infrastructure-based, but having common regulations is a way to move forward, he added.

We could consider making joint energy purchases, at some point, not only in terms of electricity but also in terms of natural gas; it could even be a virtual gas pipeline, given Trinidad and Tobago's importance as a supplier, he stressed.

Rebolledo emphasized that OLADE's collective effort is focused on a common vision and

diagnosis, solutions that could be adapted to the energy transitions going on in the region, which are particularly diverse in the Caribbean.

## NECESSARY TRANSITIONS

The official stated that Latin America and the Caribbean represent 8 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, with the peculiarity that half of these come from the energy sector, while the rest of the world emits almost 70 percent. The region contributes to the climate change solution through the high penetration of clean energy. "We are part of the solution. Not only because we have this cleaner matrix, but also because we have critical minerals," he affirmed.

Twenty-five percent of the global production of these critical minerals is in Latin America, and we are also major producers of biofuels – the region accounts for 27 percent of the world's production. Energy transition is essential and is linked to the climate agenda effort and the competitiveness of our countries, he said.

Being greener, in terms of the energy matrix, is today part of the solution to being more competitive; to having a better share in international markets; to being more attractive to foreign investment and ensuring that our export products have a smaller footprint and, therefore, are better received in global markets.

It is about sustainability, but also competitiveness, Rebolledo highlighted.



OLADE Executive Secretary, Andrés Rebolledo. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

## Steps to Boost the Chocolate Industry

By The Havana Reporter Staff

HAVANA.- Companies from Cuba and Slovakia have signed an agreement to boost Cuba's chocolate industry, aiming to meet domestic consumption demands and expand exports.

According to reports, the document establishing the joint venture Baracoa S.A. was endorsed by representatives of the Cuban trading company Alimentos y Bebidas S.A. (Alimcor S.A.) and Slovakia's Proxenta A.S.

Javier Francisco Aguiar, First Deputy Minister of the Food Industry, emphasized that this new entity will combine international expertise, advanced technology, and access to global markets with deep knowledge of the Cuban market, its production and distribution network, and an understanding of consumer preferences.

Baracoa S.A. aims to process, produce, and market a full range of chocolates, as well as cocoa and chocolate derivatives, mixes and pre-mixes, pastes, and fats associated with pastry and confectionery.

The town of Baracoa, in Cuba's Guantánamo province, was the first settlement



Baracoa S.A. aims to process, produce, and market a full range of chocolates and cocoa derivatives. PHOTO: Venceremos.

established by Spanish colonizers on the island (August 15, 1511) and once produced 85% of the nation's cocoa. However,

this figure has declined in recent years due to supply shortages and outdated technologies.

Paul Kozik, President of the Proxenta Group, and Dariel Lamadrid Martin, Executive of Alimcor, who signed the corresponding documents, highlighted their commitment to ensuring the success of this joint venture.

They stated that the fruits of Baracoa S.A. will impact both the development of the Cuban economy and the well-being of its population, while also incentivizing cocoa producers to achieve higher production levels.

Aguiar noted that the establishment of this venture is not only a business achievement but also a bridge connecting cultures, knowledge, and markets between the two countries.

Thanking the President of the Proxenta Group for his decision to invest and join forces with Alimcor S.A., Aguiar stated that the agreement reflects a commitment to innovation and quality in food products, meeting the demands of an increasingly discerning consumer, and a bet on mutual and sustainable growth.

This alliance, added the First Deputy Minister of the Food Industry, will generate economic opportunities, boost primary cocoa production in Baracoa, and create high-value employment, benefiting both parties and the communities linked to the new joint venture.



# The Leap That Shook the World

By Boris **CABRERA**

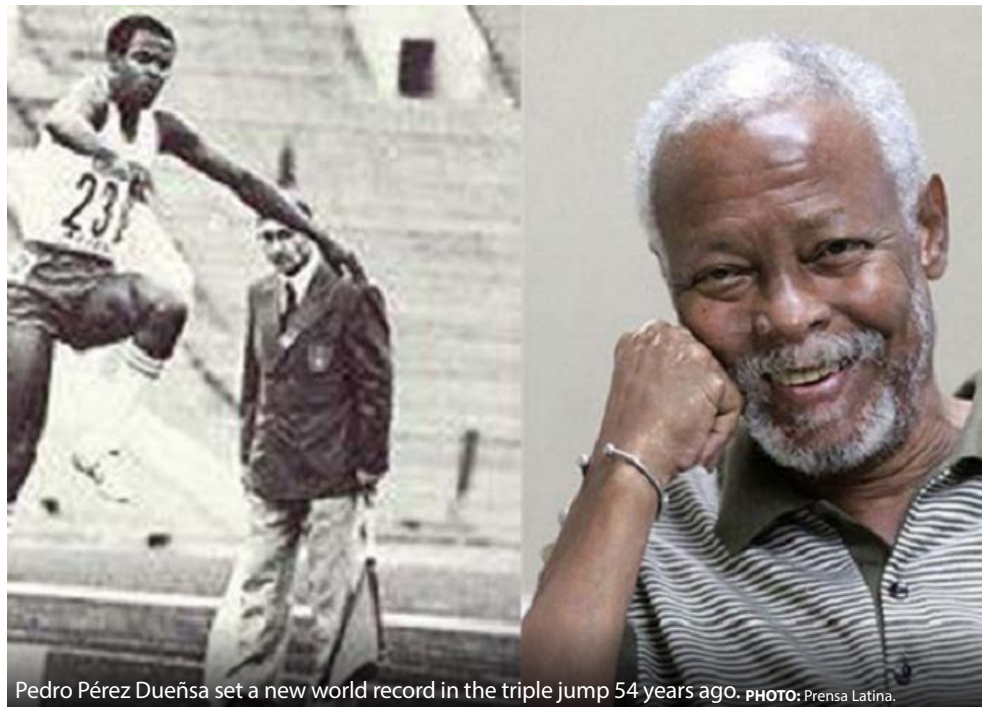
HAVANA.- Fifty-four years ago, spectators at the Pascual Guerrero Stadium in the Colombian city of Cali witnessed an extraordinary feat by Pedro Pérez Dueñas: the then 19-year-old Cuban who flew beyond the known limits of the world and set a new world record in the triple jump. It was 1971. The recently renovated stadium, restructured by the famous Colombian engineer Guillermo González Zuleta and adapted to the Olympic standards of the time, was hosting the VI Pan American Games.

The stadium, also known as the San Fernando Olympic Stadium, buzzed under the Colombian sun and the tension of continental athletics. Pérez Dueñas, with a calm gaze and tense muscles, stood at the takeoff board with the determination of someone who had nothing to lose but everything to prove. It was his second attempt.

The judges fell silent. The audience held its breath. And then... it happened: 17 meters and 40 centimeters.

The scoreboard took a few seconds to light up, but the shock was instantaneous.

The young man from Havana, with the four letters "CUBA" on his chest, had just shattered the world record. By one centimeter, he surpassed the legendary Soviet athlete Viktor Saneyev. On the track, surprise turned into a roaring ovation. In Cuba, it became legend.



Pedro Pérez Dueñas set a new world record in the triple jump 54 years ago. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

The images of that moment may lack sound, but if they had any, it would be the heartbeat of an entire nation. Pérez Dueñas turned his name into a banner and his feat into a symbol. He was the first Cuban to hold an absolute world record in athletics. And he did it against renowned competitors,

such as Brazil's Nelson Prudêncio, in a final that seemed written for others.

But it was he who made the stadium explode with that impossible flight. And he didn't stop there. Even though he was already champion, he kept flying: 17.04m, 17.12m, 17.19m... Jumps that would have been enough on their own to crown him.

Yet, glory was not eternal. Injuries plagued him, and his passion for medicine—which led him to graduate as a doctor in 1980—ultimately guided his path. He never stood on an Olympic podium, though he came close to bronze at Montreal 1976. But his greatness was not measured in duration—it was measured in impact.

Pedro Pérez Dueñas passed away in 2018 at the age of 66. He was mourned by the world of sports and honored by history. He was chosen Latin America's Best Athlete in 1971, received the Olympic Order, and his name is enshrined in the Central American and Caribbean Athletics Hall of Fame.

Today, more than half a century later, his achievement still resonates like the electric buzz that precedes the jump. That suspended instant in mid-air forever changed the history of Cuban sports. Because some records are broken. And others, like this one, are eternalized.

## Golden Art in Kicks and Dives

By Norland **GONZÁLEZ**

HAVANA.- In any ranking of Cuba's standout moments at the 2025 Asunción Junior Pan American Games, the titles won by

taekwondo athlete Yoikel Goicochea and diver Frank Abel Rosales are undoubtedly among the top highlights.

Weighing over 80 kilograms, Goicochea carved out his place at the forefront of his division kick by kick, displaying

confidence and delivering precise strikes to his opponents' bodies.

Watching Goicochea dominate each match—including the final for the gold medal against Colombia's César Silva, whom he had already defeated earlier this year despite Silva's intimidating "Buffalo" nickname—it is clear that Cuba has found a worthy successor to two-

time Olympic bronze medalist Rafael Alba.

The young athlete from Havana leveraged his strengths against heavier but shorter opponents: he controlled the distance and struck first in close combat, always self-assured.

Another Cuban who reached the podium in Asunción was Frank Abel Rosales.

He made his international debut on the springboard in 2023, surprising everyone with a fourth-place finish at the Santiago de Chile Pan American Games. Two years later, he repeated this placement at the Youth World Championships.

With such achievements, he would have stolen the spotlight at the Olympic Aquatic Center, if not for the presence of competitors like Colombia's Miguel Tovar, a two-time junior world silver medalist, and Mexico's David Vázquez, a multi-medalist in Asunción. But Frank Abel was determined to crown his efforts, displaying synchronization, elegance, and precision in his executions, with impeccable entries into the water. Even his nerves couldn't prevent the excellent scores that earned him the gold medal in the one-meter springboard event. The young athlete from Matanzas scored 384.80 points—a personal best in official competitions—leaving the duo of Vázquez and Tovar with silver and bronze, respectively.

Both Cuban athletes not only contributed to their country's medal count but also secured direct qualification for the next Pan American Games in Lima 2026.



Taekwondo athlete Yoikel Goicochea won gold medal at the 2025 Asunción Junior Pan American Games. PHOTO: Internet.



# Con Dao's Transformation

By MoisésPÉREZ

HANOI.- One of the most important transformations Vietnam has undergone in the last 50 years is perhaps the one seen in the small island of Con Dao, the former “hell on earth” that has now become a “green pearl in the middle of the ocean.” Located off the country’s southeastern coast, with an extension of 52 square kilometers, Con Dao is part of an archipelago comprising 15 other islands and islets, some of which are covered by an extensive tropical rainforest and an excellent ecological environment, like Bay Canh. During the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of Con Dao’s liberation – on May 1, 1975 – Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh described this island as “a peaceful and quiet place, a green pearl in the middle of the ocean, glowing with hopes and future, and with a strong vitality.” The head of government recalled that for more than a century, colonialists and imperialists transformed it from an island with beautiful nature into a hell on earth, where Vietnamese patriots and revolutionaries were detained and brutally tortured. First, the French colonialists in 1862, and later the authorities of the pro-American



The island of Con Dao has become a peaceful and quiet place. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

puppet government of South Vietnam, built in Con Dao 127 common cells and more than 500 isolated cells known as tiger cages.

According to known statistics, over 20,000 prisoners died there behind the bars, unable to withstand the terrible conditions, forced labor, tropical diseases, lack of

hygiene, food shortages, and the constant torture they were subjected to.

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

According to Minh Chinh, Con Dao’s role and potential are huge. Looking ahead, the view is to attain a rapid, green, sustainable, bright, civilized, modern, and world-class development, based on the rational and effective exploitation of its marine resources, ecology, and special historical relics, he said. Con Dao should focus on the creation of a modern strategic infrastructure, in addition to strengthening connections with the mainland and the international arena, developing smart urban areas and promoting the application of science, technology and digital transformation, he added. The island is considered one of Vietnam’s most important marine turtle conservation areas and a prime nesting site, especially for two rare species: the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and the hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). According to the Con Dao National Park Management Board, one of Vietnam’s first two globally recognized marine protected areas, managed to successfully rescue and relocate 553 turtle nests – with a total of 54,212 eggs – in the first half of 2025.



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