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FITCuba 2026 Will Boost Tourism

By Francisco **MENÉNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Holding the 44th edition of the International Tourism Fair of Cuba (FITCuba 2026), even electronically, is a commitment to supporting the travel industry.

This view is shared by the event's organizers and a large number of professionals, representatives of travel agencies, and tour operators working with Cuba.

The aim is to reactivate Cuban tourism amidst the economic crisis, a commendable effort, they noted.

The Fair will be held on May 7, 8 and 9 in a primarily electronic format, a decision that reflects both the country's current limitations and the government's determination not to abandon one of the strategic sectors for economic recovery.

The occasion, one of the most important on the Caribbean tourism calendar, will be held in a hybrid format.

May 7 and 8 will be dedicated to virtual business meetings via a specialized platform, while on May 9, the happenings



will be showcased to the general public at the Josone Park in Varadero, a resort town that has established itself as the fair's venue. Canada will be the guest of honor of this edition, while the central theme will be the sun and beach product.

The decision to embrace a predominantly electronic format is not merely a logistical adjustment. In Cuba's current context, marked by severe economic limitations – affecting sectors such as energy, agriculture and food – tourism stands as one of the

pillars upon which the government places much of its hopes for a solution.

Maintaining the fair, even virtually, sends a clear message to the world: the Cuban tourism sector is open to business and willing to innovate to overcome obstacles. From an analytical perspective, holding FITCuba 2026 in an electronic format reveals several meaning layers.

On the one hand, it represents a response to the resource crisis, since organizing an in-person international event of this magnitude

requires millions of dollars in investment in infrastructure, transportation and logistics.

By moving the business sessions to a virtual environment, the Cuban Ministry of Tourism (MINTUR) shows its ability to adapt to the reality of limited resources, prioritizing efficiency over spectacle staging.

On the other hand, it is about the continuity of the commercial message, since for tour operators, travel agencies and international hotel chains, the fair continues to be an irreplaceable platform to close contracts and plan the season.

The decision to hold the event, even virtually, prevents Cuba from being left out of the global tourism commercial circuit.

Finally, it sets a precedent for the future, because although the format responds to current needs, it also establishes an interesting precedent.

The digitization of business meetings can lower participation costs for small international operators who previously could not afford a trip to the island.

In this sense, necessity becomes an opportunity for modernization, something Cuba has already begun to explore with the implementation of the electronic visa and renewable energy in its tourist destinations.

Smart Sales Stand out Among Tourism Business Models

By Bernjamín **MICERINOS**

HAVANA.- Business models based on smart sales are elements that travel agencies and tour operators should consider, said Cuban professor and researcher José Luis Perelló.

In an article published in the Italian online magazine Travel Trade Caribbean (TTC), Perelló pointed out that in recent years, the hotel and restaurant sector has been experiencing a constant tension that is not a transitory crisis.

According to the specialist, it is a structural readjustment stemming from many fronts: increasing competition, war prices, the need to maximize revenue per occupancy and an ever-growing dependence on intermediaries who take their commissions.

He believes that the lack of structured sale systems within operational teams is limiting the sector's ability to increase revenue without compromising customers' satisfaction.

One of the main solutions would be to make better use of interaction with customers, with a more sale-oriented approach, but without neglecting satisfaction. The idea is not new, but putting it into practice remains one of the industry's biggest headaches.

The balance between increasing sales and prioritizing customers' experience is at the heart of the problem. And it is not that no one wants to achieve it; the problem is that it is incredibly difficult to do it well.

With barriers such as cultural differences and profiles focused solely on immediate results, the problem worsens daily.

On the other hand, there is a lack of commercial leadership, as many operational managers have not been trained to identify sale opportunities, develop their teams

in that direction, or track key performance indicators, he affirmed.

The other problem Perelló highlighted is the absence of systems, as many companies operate without an interactive approach, without clear metrics, and without processes that allow them to learn, adjust and scale.

In that commercial landscape of tourism, he expressed, a solid orientation toward seeing beyond the immediate question requires curiosity, attention, and the ability to understand what the client is really trying to achieve.



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Cuba Thanks Russia's Support Amidst U.S. Blockade



Cuban President described as "highly significant and symbolic" the fuel shipment from the Russian Federation during the meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov. PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.

By **The Havana Reporter Staff**

HAVANA.- President Miguel Díaz-Canel expressed his gratitude for the support of the Russian Federation amidst the difficult situation Cuba is experiencing due to the intensification of U.S.'s economic, commercial and financial blockade, in addition to the energy siege.

These remarks were made by the president during a meeting in this capital with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov, according to social media reports.

In the gathering, Díaz-Canel, on behalf of the Cuban Communist Party, government and people, stated his appreciation for the fuel shipment from the Russian Federation, an act he described as "highly significant and symbolic."

The head of State also reaffirmed his government's commitment to further strengthening the historic and strategic relationship with Russia and held exchanges with Ryabkov about the current international context.

He also mentioned the special political, economic and commercial ties that join Havana and Moscow.

The Russian deputy foreign minister traveled to Cuba to participate in a meeting between the foreign ministries of both countries, an encounter he considered very useful for thoroughly reviewing various topics on the bilateral agenda.

Russia "is one hundred percent in solidarity with Cuba, despite the

complexities the country is facing; we stand by you," the visitor said.

This meeting between the Deputy Foreign Minister and Díaz-Canel was preceded by the sessions of the 23 Russia-Cuba Intergovernmental Commission meeting for Economic, Trade and Scientific-Technical Cooperation, held in St. Petersburg in early April.

On that occasion, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Chernyshenko emphasized that his country intends to strengthen its relations with Cuba in all spheres, adding that Russia is ready to maintain a closest cooperation to achieve the best possible results together.

The high-ranking official described Cuba as "a reliable partner and ally of Russia in the Latin American region and the world in general," and affirmed that bilateral ties are based on profound historical experience, mutual respect, trust and close bonds of friendship.

Cuban Deputy Prime Minister Óscar Pérez-Oliva Fraga also attended the meeting held in St. Petersburg.

Chernyshenko stated that as soon as the fuel situation in Cuba stabilizes, Russia expects to fully resume flights to the island and reach previous levels of tourism.

Spokeswoman of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Maria Zakharova, commented that the recent arrival in Cuba of the Russian oil tanker Anatoly Kolodkin (carrying 100,000 tons of crude oil) showed once again that Moscow has always supported the island in the face of United States' blockade.

Extraordinary Global Support Against the Blockade

By **The Havana Reporter Staff**

HAVANA.- Growing displays of support for Cuba are spreading worldwide in the face of intensified punitive measures by the Donald Trump administration, which last January were increased with an energy blockade decree against the island."

Expressions of this solidarity have included demonstrations in European and Latin American cities, government statements, shipment of humanitarian aid, the arrival of a fuel tanker from Russia and food shipments from Mexico and China, among others.

The Mexican government and people's continued support stands out in the Latin America region. President Claudia Sheinbaum expressed her pride in aiding the people of the Caribbean nation, while sending several ships with food and other essential supplies.

Other signs of help from Mexico come from local governments, solidarity movements, social organizations, unions and political parties.

In this regard, a donation collection center for Cuba was established in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, which operated throughout April. The governor of this state, Salomón Jara, highlighted the humane and solidary nature of the Oaxacan people.

In a statement, the Cuban Embassy in Mexico indicated that this initiative is part of a broader agenda of activities organized in various parts of the country, where social organizations, local authorities and Mexican citizens demonstrates their sustained support for the island..

Other actions included a caravan against the U.S. blockade, organized by the Martí

Association of Cuban Residents in Panama, and a bicycle ride through northern Brasilia with slogans like "Long live Cuba!", "Down with the blockade!", and "Out with Trump!"

In the Brazilian capital, activists also expressed their support in an event considered "another necessary sign of solidarity," while in Ecuador, a national gathering was organized under the slogan "Cuba is not alone."

Meanwhile, Italy, France and Spain, among other nations, stood out in Europe with demonstrations, activities and other manifestations.

In Rome, the Italian people showed their support with a demonstration of more than 10,000 participants, who walked along several of the city's main avenues. The march was organized by the National Italy-Cuba Friendship Association, while La Villetta per Cuba prepared a container of medicine and essential supplies to alleviate the consequences of United States' blockade..

In France, some 30 cities organized rallies demanding the lifting of U.S. punitive measures against Cuba, and denounced the ongoing escalation with the energy siege. Paris and its Eiffel Tower witnessed a crowd of nearly 300 people, an event decorated with Cuban flags.

Support events were also organized in Spain by the Madrid State Coordinator of Solidarity with Cuba (CESC), which, in a statement, emphasized the heroic resistance of the Cuban Revolution and described the blockade on hydrocarbons, issued by the Donald Trump administration as an "attempted genocide."



Solidarity expressions have included shipment of humanitarian aid. PHOTO: Minrex.

Díaz-Canel Denounces Impact of Energy Blockade

By Melissa **KING** and Deisy **FRANCIS**

HAVANA.-Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel denounced that the United States energy blockade is a collective punishment that asphyxiates the island, violates human rights and leaves 96,000 people waiting for surgeries.

The president sent a message to the II International Conference against Coercive Measures held in Geneva, and said that the recent arrival of a Russian tanker with 100,000 tons of fuel became an extraordinary event due to the U.S. threat to sanction any country that trades hydrocarbons with Cuba.

In his speech, Díaz-Canel emphasized that the suffocation policy also affects 16,000 patients who require radiotherapy and 2,888 on hemodialysis, whose lives are at risk due to the halt of these services because of the lack of energy stability. He added that the prolonged power outages affect the supply of water and gas, paralyze transportation and food production, and forced schools and universities to adopt hybrid learning modalities.

The Cuban president questioned whether the international community will allow a return to "times of servitude and savagery," and demanded the United Nations to create a working group in the Human Rights Council and adopt a binding legal instrument compelling the lifting of the blockade and the rendering of accountability.

Finally, he thanked the solidarity of the UN High Commissioner and experts, and affirmed that the Cuban people will defend "every inch of the national soil" against the "voracious appetite of the empire."

On the other hand, the head of the Cuban State gave an interview in Havana to the American network NBC, during

which he emphasized that Cuba is not subject to the United States wishes.

"We have a free and sovereign State... we enjoy self-determination and independence, and we are not subject to the United States wishes," Díaz-Canel told Kristen Welker, moderator of the NBC News Meet the Press program.

In what is his first interview with a U.S. broadcast television network, the Cuban leader made it clear that "resigning is not part of our vocabulary."

"In Cuba, the people who hold leadership positions are not elected by the United States government, nor do they have a mandate from the United States government," he said

according to the excerpts published from the interview, the extended version of which was broadcast on April 12.

The President also recently gave an interview to the Newsweek magazine, in which he said that the peoples of the United States and Cuba deserve to have the opportunity to work in a climate of peace, friendship and cooperation.

He also reaffirmed the policy of the Cuban Revolution regarding the fact that there can be dialogue between the two countries, and that it is possible to maintain a civilized relationship between neighbors, regardless of ideological differences.



Díaz-Canel told Kristen Welker, moderator of the NBC News Meet the Press program that "resigning is not part of our vocabulary." PHOTO: Estudios Revolución.

Cuba Defends its Right to Trade Fuel with Any Country

By **The Havana Reporter Staff**

HAVANA.- Cuba defended its right to trade fuel "without obstacles or questions," in response to threats from U.S. President Donald Trump against those who supply crude oil to the island.

In this regard, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez expressed that his country has the full right to trade fuel without obstacles or challenges contrary to the freedom of international commerce. Any country has the right to export fuel to Cuba and develop trade relations, without the interference of a foreign power," the Minister said.

"The energy siege imposed by the United States government against our country turns the blockade into an international issue and demonstrates its extraterritorial nature; it intimidates, pressures and extorts those who sovereignly trade with Cuba," Rodríguez wrote on the X social media.

"The U.S. government's recent contradictory statements on this matter

try to create confusion in order to continue preventing the entry of fuel into Cuban territory," he concluded. Trump's measure, which intensifies this blockade in place for

more than 60 years, sparked protests all over the world.

Recent acts of solidarity included the Media Marathon organized by the Europe for

Cuba solidarity channel on April 17 and 18, on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the Victory at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs).

The objective of this event was to break the information blockade against Cuba and denounce the United States' criminal policy toward the island to millions of people worldwide, the organizers indicated.

The intention was to "confront the global context in which certain narratives dominate the headlines and show that solidarity knows no borders or schedules," they added.

The initiative launched by the Europe for Cuba channel included more than 60 radio and television stations, newspapers from all corners of the world, political analysts, academics and journalists, among others.

Other international media outlets pointed out that Trump's action against Cuba targets the island's energy core, with the intention of paralyzing hospitals, schools, transportation services and strategic industries.

This situation turns the daily lives of Cubans into an endurance race, they affirmed.



Successful Progress on Oncological Clinical Trials

By Joel Michel**VARONA**

HAVANA.- Cuba is showing tangible results after the implementation of a program to conduct oncological clinical trials in Primary Health Care (PHC) centers following the creation of a new plan with key elements for its application and sustainability.

In view of its effectiveness, the proposal includes evaluation indicators, data collection instruments and standardized operating procedures adapted to this level of care.

The program was carried out in three stages using a methodological procedure based on a longitudinal, prospective, and analytical study from January 2010 to August 2023. During that period, two Phase IV clinical trials were conducted, which were open-label, uncontrolled, non-randomized, and multicenter

According to a press release, these trials, intended at evaluating the CIMAvax-EGF[®] therapeutic vaccine in PHC centers, were registered in the National Public Registry of Clinical Trials.

The work was validated by experts during its three phases of implementation: pilot, replication and generalization.

In each phase, indicators were compared with both accepted standards and secondary care record. The pilot phase



Cuba implemented oncological clinical trials of CIMAvax-EGF[®] therapeutic vaccine in Primary Health Care.

demonstrated feasibility, while replication allowed for adjustments.

The results were implemented in 119 polyclinics, where the infrastructure was upgraded and the staff trained according to Good Clinical Practices.

Electronic data management, biomarker determination and the distribution of research products were also organized.

At the end of the implementation phase, all indicators improved, being either equal or higher to the proposed standards and historical records from secondary care.

The program proved its effectiveness and positive impact on survival, quality of life and satisfaction in relation to patients' care with advanced lung cancer, validating

primary care as a viable setting for high-quality oncological research.

The study also assessed the actual impact on patients' well-being, based on the concept of Quality-Adjusted Life Years (QALYs).

This unit of measurement summarizes the program's two main outcomes: survival and quality of life.

Technology for Treating Severe Traumatic Brain Injury

By Michelle**MAUREEN**

HAVANA.- Cuba is advancing in technology for the comprehensive treatment of severe traumatic brain injury, an achievement recognized with the 2025 Technological Innovation Award.

Severe traumatic brain injury is one of the leading causes of mortality and disability among young people, hence the effort made by experts from the Roberto Rodríguez General Teaching Hospital and the Faculty of Medical Sciences in the province of Ciego de Ávila.

Over 29 years, treatment algorithms have been refined and new neuromonitoring methods have been introduced

for adults and children care, adapted to the institution's technological resources and with the potential for application in other centers of the country.

The innovation lies in the application of novel invasive and non-invasive neuromonitoring methods to guide the treatment of patients with severe trauma.

These algorithms, which underwent rigorous external and internal validation from the methodological point of view, show advantages over the conventional treatment used in the country.

Scientific and social benefits include the design and application of treatment algorithms for patients with severe traumatic brain injury undergoing invasive neuromonitoring and for those undergoing non-invasive neuromonitoring.

These protocols can be adapted to the technological resources and training levels of the specialists in different Cuban hospitals providing neurosurgery services.

Intracranial hypertension was considered part of a complex brain-thorax-abdomen pathophysiological phenomenon, not as an isolated element.

The inclusion of clinical criteria for intracranial hypertension and neurodeterioration proved beneficial for patients.

The use of primary decompressive craniectomy as the first-line treatment for intracranial pressure significantly contributed to reducing mortality in these patients.

According to the statement, a considerable number of national and international scientific publications were generated and used as bibliographic sources.

In addition, the technological package was applied to both Cuban and foreign patients.



Traumatic brain injury is one of the leading causes of mortality and disability among young people. PHOTO: Granma.

Amaury Pérez Receives 2025 National Music Award

By Verónica **NUÑEZ**

HAVANA.- In a moving ceremony, singer and songwriter Amaury Pérez Vidal was granted the 2025 National Music Award in recognition of his extensive career as a composer, performer and essential figure of the Cuban culture.

The event, held on April 4 at the Cuban Art Building of the National Fine Arts Museum, was attended by the President of the Republic, Miguel Díaz-Canel, who previously toured the institution with its director, Jorge Antonio Fernández.

During the ceremony, maestra and president of the jury, Digna Guerra, highlighted the versatility of the founding member of the

Nueva Trova movement, whose songs range from jazz and pop to rock and romantic ballads, in addition to his work as a producer, writer and host of cultural programs.

He is one of the most important Cuban composers of the second half of the 20th century, Guerra affirmed on behalf of the jury. Visibly moved, Pérez Vidal recalled his beginnings in 1969, when at just 15 years of age, he set poems by Fayad Jamis and Otto Fernández to music, without believing that this would become an indispensable part of his life.

"I never dreamed of decorations or honors, and although I have received many not expecting them, I never thought that my friends and colleagues would award me the National Music Prize," he said.

Attendees included Culture Minister Alpidio Alonso; Deputy Head of the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, Elier Ramírez

President of Casa de las Américas, Abel Prieto, emphasized that the award is an act of justice toward "one of our essential creators."

Also in attendance from the music community were singer and songwriter Silvio Rodríguez; pianists Frank Fernández and José María Vitier; tres player Pancho Amat, and music critic Guille Vilar, among other personalities.

Abel Prieto also highlighted the contribution of the television program *Con dos que se quieran*, directed and hosted by the new National Music Prize winner, to the country's cultural heritage.

Today we are honoring a great artist and a great revolutionary, the Cuban intellectual affirmed.

At the closing, Amaury Pérez delighted the audience with several performances, accompanied by other troubadours and thanked the jury for their unanimous decision. "Gratitude and uncertainty mix together at this moment, undoubtedly the most important of my career," the composer expressed.



The Minister Alpidio Alonso presented this recognition to the outstanding composer, performer and essential figure of Cuban culture. PHOTO: ACN.

Havana to Host Forum 'Art and Recycling for Sustainability'

By Victoria **MARIÑO**

HAVANA.-The José Antonio Díaz Peláez Experimental Visual Arts Center announced the academic forum "Art and Recycling for Sustainability," which will take place on June 5 in this capital.

The event, to celebrate the National Ephemeral Art Festival, initiated in 2003 at Mariana Grajales Park, is sponsored by the Department of Culture of the Plaza de la Revolución municipality. The forum's objective is to promote collaborative discussions on public art installations using recycled materials, fostering sustainable practices in a non-competitive environment.

According to the call, presentations should address topics like theories of sustainable art, creative recycling in performance art, ecological impact of contemporary Cuban art, and the role of artistic education in community development.

The fair associated with the event will feature sculptures made from recycled materials, collaborative installations, children's workshops on upcycling, and performances exploring material transformation, all of which will be open to students, enthusiasts, and families

Those interested in participating should submit their proposals via email by May 20, including a 300-word abstract, a brief curriculum vitae, and visual documentation of previous work, the call for entries added.

The organizing committee will announce the selected candidates on May 31. The academic forum and the art fair will take place at the Center's facilities, in the Vedado neighborhood, in Havana.



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Isaac Delgado, Elegance Turned into Music

By Adis**MARLÉN**

HAVANA.- When a popular dance music band reaches its 35 anniversary, not only it celebrates a career but also acknowledges something much more difficult to achieve: the creation of an elegant and unique style.

This is the case of the orchestra directed by outstanding Cuban musician Isaac Delgado, which is honored by the Cuban Institute of Music in its magazine La Corchea.

Delgado emerges in the musical scene like an architect of a sound capable of fusing tradition with the avant-garde and romantic lyricism, with the frenzied energy of the dance floor.

Popularly known as El Chévere de la Salsa, the performer has displayed virtuosity in compositions that speak of heartbreak, the everyday life of Cubans, irony and wit, all seasoned with the sound of a great artist.

From his first album, Dando la Hora (1991), he made it clear that he was there to set the pace. The performer can make a stadium dance and right after, silence the crowd with a sensitive and profound interpretation.

Time has borne witness to his dedication and versatility on stage. Alongside his orchestra, he became an ambassador of Cuban music to the world, which has led him to collaborate with prominent international figures.

When Isaac Delgado decided to form his own band, few imagined he would lay the foundation for one of the most influential projects in Cuban popular dance music.

After three and a half decades, El Chévere de la Salsa looks pleased and celebrates a musical journey that has evolved over time without losing its essence.

Thirty-five years after the start of this adventure, full of music and heart, Delgado expressed his gratitude "to all those who have been part of this journey: the musicians, engineers, collaborators and above all, to you, my beloved audience, who have always been there."

Born in Havana in 1962, the artist embarked on a path alongside iconic bands that later contributed experience, rhythm and musical complexity to his own project.

The vocalist, orchestra director and composer found his own style and became one of the essential voices of his time.

Over the years, his group has been a breeding ground for hits. Songs like La vida es un carnaval (Life is a carnival), Qué pasa loco" (What's up, madman), La mujer que más te duele (The woman who hurts you the most), No me mires a los ojos (Don't look me in the eyes), and Necesito una amiga (I need a friend) resonated deeply with their fans, both in Cuba and abroad.

These more than three decades also show a band that has cultivated talent by incorporating some of the most outstanding instrumentalists on the scene, contributing to the solid sound that defines each live performance.

One of the joys the artist shares with his audience recently, arrived in the form of an album: Mira como vengo (Look how I come), a recording dedicated to celebrating life, experiences and feelings. "Made with love, with truth, with the salsa rhythm I have always played."



Delgado created a sound capable of fusing tradition with the avant-garde and romantic lyricism. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.



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Fidel and the Victory at Playa Girón

By Kimani **HERNÁNDEZ**

HAVANA.- Cuba commemorated the 65th anniversary of the victory at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) with a conference at the Fidel Castro Center in this capital, among others activities.

The event focused on the leadership of the Commander-in-Chief and the heroism of the Cuban people facing that mercenary invasion.

Held at the institution dedicated to the historical leader of the Cuban Revolution, the Center's director, René González, spoke about the planning and participation of the United States armed forces and the role of the Guantánamo Naval Base, with its substantial movement of air, naval and troop forces in support of the aggression, which was defeated on April 19, 1961.

González recalled that on the 25th anniversary of the Playa Girón invasion, Fidel emphasized that "the significance of Girón lies in the price we would have had to pay for

our revolution, the price we would have had to pay for socialism, if the Yankees' plan had succeeded and established a beachhead."

Girón meant that those who fell there preserved the lives of millions of Cubans; we would have achieved victory anyway, but at a terrible cost and also at the price of the total destruction of the country.

That is one of the lessons we must learn from Girón; it is one of the things younger generations must understand and always know, said the director of the Fidel Castro Center.

Retired Major General Fabián Escalante highlighted the work of the emerging State Security bodies and the role of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, created during those years, which helped identify and control dissidents and prevent them from forming a fifth column.

The statements of combatants Andrés Castillo (16 years old at the time) and Ramón R. González (Suco), the first to engage in combat, were particular significant.

Suco, with experience fighting bandits in the Escambray Mountain Range (in the central region), repelled an enemy speedboat's attempt to enter the area along with four comrades and three teachers, who were the only ones stationed at Playa Larga. He was also the one who gave the first warning of the attack.

Following the alert, the general combat mobilization began on the sands of Playa Girón.

Suco recalled that after the victory, during the parade in Havana, many were ashamed of their torn, dirty and worn-out clothing, while others wore their nearly new uniforms; but "as they passed by, they were recognized as the combatants and everyone began paying tribute to them."

During the event, journalists Tubal Páez, honorary president of the Union of Cuban Journalists (UPEC) and Katuska Blanco highlighted the role of the war correspondents in that epic battle.

The occasion included the launch of the book *Playa Girón: A 65 años de aquel abril socialista* (Playa Girón. 65 years after that socialist April), compiled by Elier Ramírez and published by Ocean Sur.



Fidel emphasized in 1961 that "the significance of Girón lies in the price we would have to pay for our revolution..." PHOTO: Archives.

Authorities Stress Commitment to Fight Racial Discrimination

By Rafael **ARZUAGA**

HAVANA- The Cuban government reaffirmed its policy of zero tolerance of racial discrimination at a dialogue on racism between the State and the civil society.

The meeting was promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Commission of the Cuban Color Program, in collaboration with the Cuban Association of the United Nations.

Speaking at the meeting, held last April, Deputy Prime Minister Inés María Chapman assured that the government's objective is to eradicate racism from society, and for which various actions are being taken.

Chapman observed that a range of measures, including various laws, management training, an Observatory, regional workshops, and different community projects, help combat that and other forms of discrimination.

That shows the State's political will, Chapman noted, highlighting that the government has the duty to create policies and be accountable. "Every step we take brings us closer to the Cuba we deserve," she said.

According to a report published by the Granma newspaper, this dialogue is part

of Cuba's preparation for its hearing before the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which will take place in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Caribbean nation has already undergone similar hearings (2011 and 2018) and this time is participating "in better conditions, since a program and a commission at the

highest political level have been created since then, and the legal and institutional framework has been strengthened, which has a positive impact on human rights."



Chico Buarque and Silvio Rodríguez Record a song in Havana

By Mario **MÚÑOZ**

HAVANA.- "He came to record a song with us," posted Zurrón del Aprendiz, in the Facebook page of Cuban singer and songwriter Silvio Rodríguez, who announced the visit to this capital of Brazilian Chico Buarque, another giant of the Ibero-American music.

Thirty-four years after his last tour to Cuba, Chico Buarque landed in Havana to record *Sueño con serpientes* (Dream with Snakes), reads the text on that social network.

The recording of the Cuban troubadour's legendary song also included Niurka Gonzales on the flute, Jorge Reyes on the double bass, Malva Rodríguez on the piano, Oliver Valdés on the drums and Jorge Aragón with the arrangements.

Loyal representatives of a generation of great Latin American singers and songwriters committed to their people and their struggles for sovereignty and social justice, Chico Buarque accompanies with his voice a classic piece of the Cuban musician, which the Brazilian had previously sung in Portuguese.

Originally sung on his album *Días y flores* (Days and Flowers), the song is rich in symbolism and metaphors in which snakes appear as challenges, representing either oppressive forces, vices or the internal struggle against one's own fears or the evils of a society.



Silvio Rodríguez and Chico Buarque recorded "Sueño con Serpientes" (Dream with Snakes), a song by the Cuban author. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

The snake, which symbolizes both evil and temptation, appears in the song as obstacles that, even when overcome, continue to emerge in more complex and challenging forms.

Silvio's optimism, however, is shown in his resilience, his determination to move forward: "But it is destroyed/

When I reach its stomach/And I pose, with a verse, a truth."

According to the blog *Segunda Cita*, the artists began this new adventure together, a testament to a friendship of more than 50 years, at the Ojalá Studios in Havana.

Jazz Vilá Premieres "Instant," a Tribute and Love Letter to Theater

By Alma **LABRADA**

HAVANA.-Beyond celebrating the twelfth anniversary of the Cuban company Jazz Vilá Projects, the play "Instant" arouses that deep-seated passion for theater that sets apart those who shared details of the production during a gathering in this capital.

The production ran throughout April at the Adolfo Llauro Theater with performances every Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 5:00 p.m. local time.

Directed by playwright, actor and founder of the group, Jazz Vilá, the actors presented a production that paid tribute to twelve years of effort filled with challenges, creativity,

success and a belief in an art expression in which the audience can always find enjoyment.

That was the opinion the artist shared with the press at the company's headquarters in the Vedado neighborhood, where he talked about the conflicts and dreams of each character and the motivations behind a premiere that refers to emblematic titles from his catalog.

With a distinctive touch, *Instante* inherits characters from *Farándula* (Show business), *Rascacielos* (Skyscrapers), *Eclipse* and *Candela* (Fire), in a show that addresses heartbreak in romantic relationships.

The play emerged in a moment of inspiration while I was in Madrid, said Jazz Vilá, who also emphasized the idea of innovating

on the Cuban stage with this new theater production.

Set on Havana's Malecón (seafront), the story "proposes an ensemble structure that reflects on love, loss and the impact of those life-changing moments that happen without prior notice."

The cast includes established and young artists like Raquel Rey, Jorge Molina, Javier Quesada, Dayron Villalón, Day Quintana, Saylie Álvarez, Olivis Páez, and Luis Miguel Acevedo.

At the press conference, the actors spoke about their characters and expressed their gratitude for being able to work with Jazz Vilá, who is recognized in Cuba and abroad for his peculiar way of bringing realities, passions and desires to the stage.

Celebrating the anniversary of Conjunto magazine

By Dylan **LASTRE**

HAVANA.-The Cuban Casa de las Américas cultural center held a conference on the 60th anniversary of *Conjunto* magazine, a publication that has shaped the development of Latin American theater and its resistance facing cultural colonization.

The institution's Theater Director, Vivian Martínez, offered a journey through the magazine's history, which in six decades has compiled thousands of critiques, reviews, dramatic texts, photographs and contributions from prominent collaborators from the region.

She also emphasized that *Conjunto* has remained loyal to a critical and rebellious theater, opposed to tyrannical powers, and highlighted that "the magazine is a poetic and living weapon of cultural decolonization."

In her remarks, Martínez stressed the publication's commitment to disseminating Latin American theater's latest events, validating in its pages works born from the will for independence, freedom of expression and equal rights.

Casa de las Américas thanked the participants in this event and recalled that the conference is available on its YouTube channel, a commitment to broadening the reach of these cultural debates.



Jazz Vilá talked about the conflicts and dreams of each character and the motivations behind the play "Instant". PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

V Patria International Colloquium Closes in Cuba

By Brenda **BARRANCO**

HAVANA.- The 5th Patria International Colloquium concluded after three intense days of thought, debate and collective construction with a ceremony presided over by Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel.

The event's organizer, Rosa Miriam Elizalde, reaffirmed the political, historical and strategic nature of this gathering, which paid tribute to the Victory at Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) and to historical leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz.

"We condemn the use of algorithmic architectures, blockades, psychological warfare campaigns, restrictions and information strategies of domination," she said.

Yuniasky Crespo, head of the Ideological Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, affirmed that what began a few years ago as a small communication space has become a reference "for those of us who see communication as a battleground of political resistance."

For three days, Havana became a meeting point for those fighting against media manipulation and symbolic colonization. The colloquium reaffirmed the need to articulate a sovereign, critical and organized voice for the Global South. Today, a platform, a network and a workagenda that transcend these three days are being consolidated.

Officials from the Ministry of Culture highlighted the impact of the audiovisual production space from the Multimedia Center of the Patria International Colloquium, which fostered a pluralistic and intellectual exchange on contemporary communication challenges, they said.

That venue hosted interviews with prominent figures from the cultural and political spheres, like poet and Minister of Culture, Alpidio Alonso; narrator and ethnologist Miguel Barnet, and composer Beatriz Corona.

Other personalities who also attended that exchange included Gabriela Cultelli, member of the Network of Intellectuals and Artists in Defense of Humanity, and

Argentine journalist Graciela Ramírez, head of the Resumen Latinoamericano correspondents' office in Havana.

Mirko Casale, director of the political mockery program Ahí les va of the Russia Today channel, told **The Havana Reporter** that attending this meeting was an honor and a source of pride.

He said he had heard about the Colloquium and its prestige for some time and "we felt we had to come and share our experiences." He also highlighted the attendance of very important and highly-qualified people.

In his remarks, he spoke about the work on the social media and the importance of being different from other creators in regards to a unique style in content, and also about the fake news and its most dangerous variant: narratives.

"Narratives are what most affect public opinion. Taking the Cuban reality as an example, the hook would be the difficulties the people face, which are true, but the narrative relies on saying that it is Cuba's own fault, that the blockade is not important," he explained.



Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel attended the 5th Patria International Colloquium. PHOTO: Endrys Correa.

Successful heritage tour organized by UNESCO

By Verónica **NUÑEZ**

HAVANA.- Cubans of different generations toured 13 heritage buildings in Havana's Vedado neighborhood, an initiative organized by the Regional Office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The Havana Reporter visited four of the buildings on the itinerary: the Ministry of Culture, the Servando Cabrera Museum and Library, the British Ambassador's residence, and the headquarters of the Pan American Health Organization, where some of the attendees were interviewed.

"I like architecture and learning a bit about the history of Vedado, so whenever the tour is announced, I join," said Daiyor Castro, who is attending for the third time.

Students and graduates of Art History and Architecture presented details about the history, architectural characteristics, curiosities and distinctive elements of each building in a 30-minute sessions, accompanied by UNESCO specialists.

Among all the areas of relevance the UNESCO conducts, this open-door proposal provides an opportunity to visit spaces often closed to the public, fostering a connection with a past that, to a certain extent, has not

been revisited by our history, commented Irena Gastell, one of the guides and an art historian.

The program was part of the International Day for Monuments and Sites; the selected

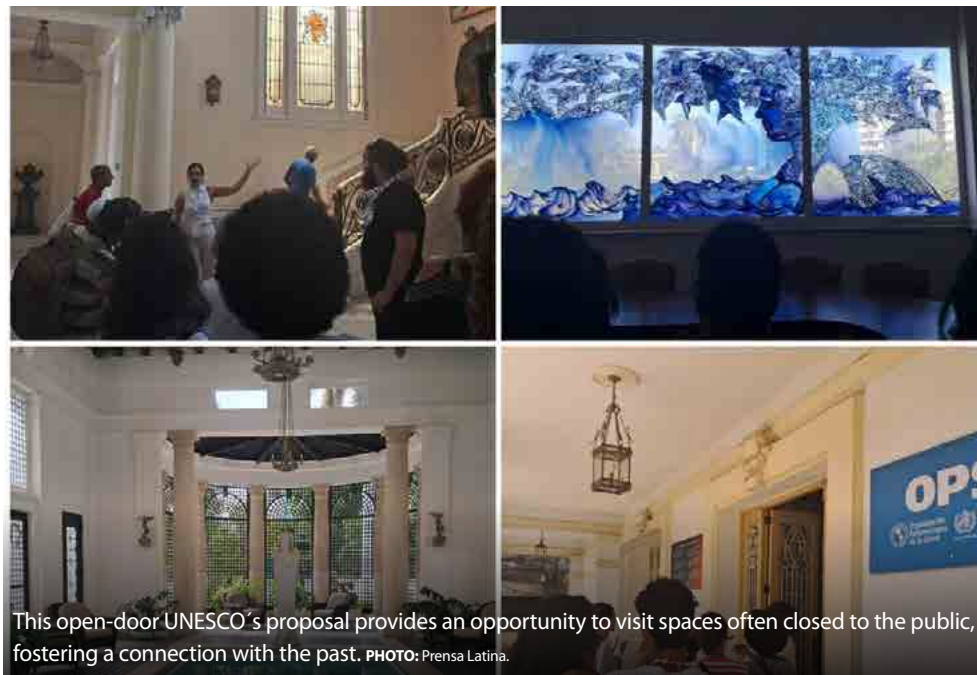
institutions opened their doors all day, and a large percentage of the attendees were young people.

It goes beyond being a cultural space of interest; it's a time to have fun and learn. I think it was a pleasure not only for the Ministry of Culture but also for the other participating institutions to host them, emphasized Jean Carlos Osorio, an official from the Ministry's Department of International Relations.

The program also included the buildings of the UNESCO Regional Office in Havana, the Union of Cuban Journalists, the Fidel Castro Ruz Center, the Embassy of India, the Cuban Association of the United Nations, the Federation of Cuban Women, the Student House of the University of Havana, and two private residences.

Osorio praised UNESCO's work in promoting access to and knowledge of buildings of high heritage value.

In a press release, director of the Regional Office in Cuba, Anne Lemaistre, stated that this initiative, held for the fourth consecutive year, shows the organization's commitment to safeguarding Havana's cultural heritage.



This open-door UNESCO's proposal provides an opportunity to visit spaces often closed to the public, fostering a connection with the past. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Trinidad's Everlasting Magic

Text and Photos Roberto **CAMPOS**

SANCTISPIRITUS.- One of Cuba's most visited cities is Trinidad, located in this south-central province of the island and praised for having the best-preserved colonial architecture in this Caribbean nation.

The Villa de la Santísima Trinidad, the third town founded in Cuba by the Spanish colonizers, presumably in early 1514, maintains its original appearance and river and quarry-stone work, in addition to traditions preserved for centuries.

These features turn the city into a major attraction for Cuban and foreign visitors eager to experience its history, culture and vibrant atmosphere.

For those interested, Trip Advisory recommends visiting the Plaza Mayor (main square), the Ancón Beach, the Caburní

Waterfall, the Main Parish Church of the Holy Spirit, the Valle de los Ingenios (Sugar Mill Valley), the San Francisco de Asís Convent, the Romantic Museum, the Iznaga Tower and the Céspedes Central Park, as well as nightclubs and dance halls.

Other important sites include the Municipal History Museum, El Cubano Park, the Trinidad Architecture Museum and the Palenque de los Congos Reales, in addition to the Yudit Vidal Faife Art Gallery, the Casa de la Trova (Trova music center), the Ayala Disco and the Floridita Trinidad bar.

According to history, the origin of Trinidad dates back to December 23, 1413, when Diego Velázquez de Cuellar arrived in these lands on his journey to the Jagua Bay.

There, accompanied by 20 of his men, Velázquez attended the first mass celebrated in the area, officiated by Friar Juan de Tesin, his chaplain.



ECLAC Warns of Poor SDG Compliance in the Region

By Edgar **MORALES**

SANTIAGO DE CHILE.- With four years left for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda, ECLAC warned that the region's trend in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is unfavorable and urged to redouble efforts to reach them.

A statement from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) indicates that at the current rate, only 19 percent of the goals would be met; 42 out of 100 are progressing in the right direction, but at a slow pace, and 39 are in a standstill or declining.

This contrasts sharply with estimates made last year, which projected a 23 percent success rate in this endeavor.

The report was published on the occasion of the 9th Forum of Latin America and Caribbean countries on Sustainable Development, held from April 13 to 16 in this capital, with the attendance of government representatives, academics, United Nations experts and civil society organizations.

During the meeting, ECLAC Executive Secretary José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs explained that the assessment of the SDGs is influenced by both external and internal factors.

The former includes the instability of the global geopolitical and economic context, armed conflicts, climate change, poverty traps, low growth and weak governance.

Internal factors encompass the deterioration of institutional capacities, financing and fiscal system limitations, the burden of debt and the lack of priority given to some goals and targets. Regarding the report's figures, SDG achievement will reach 13 percent in the

Caribbean; 18 in Central America and Mexico, and 19 in South America.

As stated, 39 out of 100 targets remain in standstill in Central America and Mexico, 41 in South America, and 45 in the Caribbean.

In addition, in 2025 and early 2026, conditions are more challenging due to a new era of uncertainty and geopolitical fragmentation.

According to reports, participants at the 9th Forum analyzed in depth the progress of

five goals of the 2030 Agenda: Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6); Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7); Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9); Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

They also reviewed the implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States through South-South cooperation.



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Megawatts in the form of solar energy

By TeyunéDÍAZ

HAVANA.- Cuba's energy transition aims to solve the electricity generation problem as quickly as possible, while avoiding dependency on fuel imports, said Director of National Energy Policy and Strategy at the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM) Ramsés Montes.

"Energy transition in Cuba is not a fashion; it is not because the world is doing it; it is a national security issue," the MINEM official told **The Havana Reporter** in an interview. To this end, the country has a National Strategy for Energy Transition (September 2024) that updates the Policy for the Development of Renewable Energy Sources (approved in 2014) and, in turn, precedes the future Energy Transition Law, the first of its kind in the island.

One of the Strategy's objectives is to change the energy matrix for electricity generation, designed in three stages.

The first aims for renewable energy sources (RES) to reach 24 percent of generation by 2030, the second aspires to 40 percent by 2035.

The third stage, more ambitious, would be achieving 100 percent electricity generation using Cuban fossil fuels and RES by 2050.

The official commented that at present, the country has achieved about 20 percent of Solar Photovoltaic Energy (SPVE) during the day, and up to 50 percent by noon.

Montes added that there is also a program to increase domestic oil production for power plants, which includes the maintenance and repair of these facilities.

At the same time, accompanying gas obtained from these oil fields is used for electricity generation at the Energas Company.

SOLAR ENERGY ADVANCES

When discussing renewable energy sources, Montes highlighted that although this technology requires an initial investment, later stages does not involve operational expenses nor fuel. In addition, maintenance is minimal and installation and electricity generation is faster.

On the contrary, building a power plant can take between four and five years and operation only begins once the plant is completed.

The official also explained that Cuba has a program for the installation of solar photovoltaic parks (SPVPs) that, from the electrical system point of view, is progressing rapidly after the completion of two major deals in 2025.

Forty-five of these SPVPs, which account for 21.8 megawatts (MW) each, have already been installed and are generating approximately

984 MW. This figure is in addition to the 265 MW already being generated, along with the construction of seven other parks of five MW each, donated by China.

In total, the country has 1,284 MW of installed capacity, he concluded.

According to statistics, Cuba was the nation that made greatest progress worldwide in the field of transition to solar photovoltaic energy considering the size of its electrical system, he affirmed.

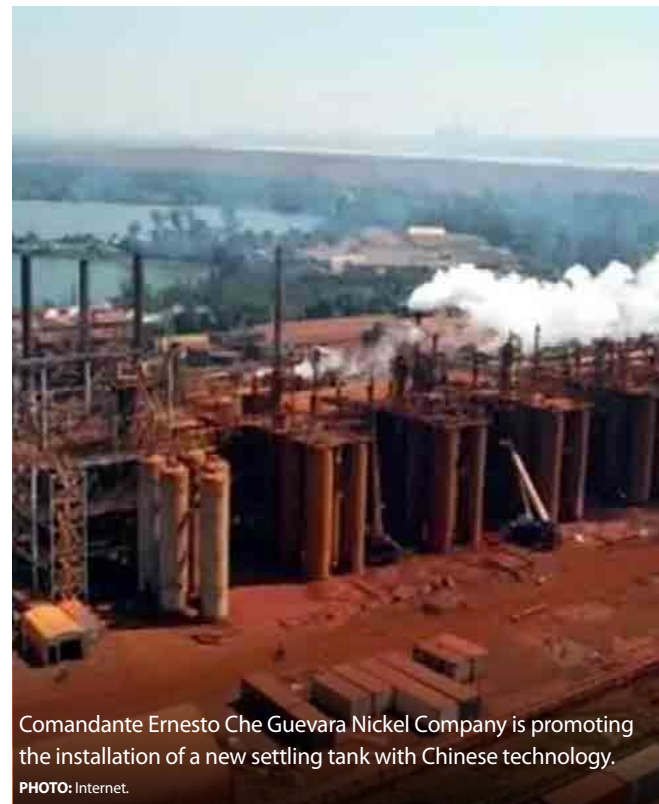
However, the population does not perceive it that way because of the prevailing energy deficit resulting from the fuel shortage – more than 50 percent – for distributed generation, a consequence of the intensified U.S. blockade.



Cuba has a National Strategy for Energy Transition (2014) that, precedes the future Energy Transition Law, the first of its kind in the island. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Nickel industry and Transport improvements

By DaimyPEÑA



Comandante Ernesto Che Guevara Nickel Company is promoting the installation of a new settling tank with Chinese technology.

PHOTO: Internet.

HOLGUÍN.- Authorities in this eastern Cuban province announced a new medical transportation service and the modernization of the nickel industry with Chinese technology.

The transportation measures ensure the transfer of healthcare personnel to their institutions and the mobility of patients with serious illnesses, the sector authorities indicated.

Wilmer García, director of the Provincial Transportation Company, explained that despite the energy crisis, the entity is prioritizing the sector by acquiring three electric vehicles and one combustion engine bus.

This action is part of a national program to strengthen healthcare logistics, including a minibus for the Provincial Psychiatric Hospital, which is intended to guarantee the transfer of workers during morning and afternoon shifts, according to the demands coordinated with that institution. They are also supporting the Maternal and Child Health Program (PAMI) in the provincial capital and the transfer of patients who do not require ambulances to attend specialized examinations and CT scans at the main medical units in this territory.

To ensure efficiency, the company created a unit that assigns vehicles on a daily basis according to the demands of high social value organizations, the official emphasized. The service is free for workers and operates on a 12-hour system, with nighttime hours reserved for recharging the equipment's batteries.

According to the source, the fleet also includes two electrical panels used for logistical support in healthcare facilities and for the distribution of goods.

It was also reported that the Comandante Ernesto Che Guevara Nickel Company is promoting the installation of a new settling tank with Chinese technology to modernize the technological flow of the Holguín mining industry.

The factory's general manager, Alexander Garcés, during a tour through the entity, checked the work on equipment 109 of the B series, belonging to the leaching and washing unit.

Accompanied by production and plant managers, Garcés affirmed that this investment is vital for implementing technical improvements in mineral processing.

The implementation of Asian technology at the mining company aims to increase operational efficiency and optimize resources in one of the key areas for the national economy.

This project is part of the Cuban industry development program, aimed at updating its infrastructure through international cooperation and the efforts of its specialists.



The ACTAF is promoting projects focused on organic agriculture through participatory schemes that integrate farms and cooperatives. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Camagüey makes Food Security a priority

By Fidel Alejandro **MANZANARES**

CAMAGÜEY.- The province of Camagüey is consolidating agroecological initiatives by involving productive and scientific actors in addressing and strengthening food security, and also climate resilience in a sector considered strategic for Cuba. According to local reports, the Camagüey branch of the Cuban Association of Agricultural and Forestry Technicians (ACTAF) is promoting projects focused on organic agriculture through participatory schemes that integrate farms and cooperatives.

The strategy gives priority to knowledge management, with workshops on soil improvement, climate change

and watershed protection, in line with global agendas promoting sustainable agri-food systems and environmental adaptation.

In this context, the State Forestry Service (SEF) manages more than 25,000 hectares of forest areas and promotes natural reforestation, while wood pasture models that integrate livestock farming and conservation are expanding, a practice endorsed by international organizations for their ecological efficiency.

Species such as moringa, mulberry, tintonia, guásima and carob provide environmental protection and nutritional value for livestock, optimizing productivity without compromising natural resources.

The ACTAF-SEF joint approach underscores the importance of agriculture as an economic pillar in Cuba, especially in the case of external pressures and climate events, while reinforcing sustainable standards observed in other regions worldwide.

Experts emphasize that constant evaluation and cooperation among producers, technicians and institutions are crucial for advancing toward resilient systems, with impacts that transcend the local level and become part of the international agricultural debate.

The initiative, open to rural communities, aims to guarantee food security, preserve biodiversity and consolidate a long-term sustainable production model, sources added.

Brewery Promotes Circular Economy

By Alfredo **BOADA**

HAVANA.- The Cervecería Cubana S.A. (CCSA) company announced the launch of its online platform, Puntos Monedero (Wallet Points), designed to encourage the recycling of plastic containers used by its brands: "Parranda Beer" and "Guajira Malt". The initiative strengthens the company's commitment to sustainability and circular production, while offering an incentive to consumers and customers.

The company's recent studies have confirmed that more than 84 percent of Parranda and Guajira consumers are active users of the entity's recycling program.

Based on this impact, CCSA decided to explore areas for improvement to facilitate the process for the public, thereby generating greater benefits for both recyclers and the company, while simultaneously expanding the reach of its retail outlets nationwide.

The new version of the strategy introduces a digital wallet system where points are accumulated by recycling empty bottles from the Guajira and Parranda brands, which can then be exchanged for new

products from these brands through official distributors connected to the platform.

Each accumulated point is valued at one dollar, thus implementing a 'full for empty' concept.

Through the website www.puntosmonedero.com, users can easily create a free account to access their digital wallet, where they can view their balance, transaction history and available options in real time.

Creating an account is easy. It simply requires registering on the website and confirming the email address to start using the platform.

With this account, users can recycle bottles at authorized collection points shown on the platform's map.

Depending on the number of bottles delivered, users earn virtual recycling points that can be exchanged for new products at the numerous retail outlets connected to the system, which are also visible on the platform's map.

Other new features of the online platform include the possibility of transferring points between registered users, as well as the option to review transaction history and account activity from any device.

In addition, users will have access to an updated list of addresses and phone numbers where they can purchase products or place orders for home or business delivery. The functioning of the point system is simple: users deliver their empty bottles

in a collection place and receive points based on the size of the recycled container. These points are then accumulated in their digital wallet and can later be exchanged for new bottles of Parranda Beer and Guajira Malt.

Users can easily locate the nearest collection points and sale outlets using interactive maps available on the website.



Wallet Points strengthens the company's commitment to sustainability and circular production. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Pan American Judo Championship in Panama

By Mario Hubert **GARRIDO**

PANAMA CITY.- Cuba finished second in the mixed teams tournament, reaffirming its prominence at the Pan American Judo Championship held in this city, on route towards Santo Domingo 2026 Central American and Caribbean Games.

Brazil dominated this competition, held at the Vasco Núñez Convention Center of the Hotel El Panamá, while the bronze medals went to the Dominican Republic and Peru.

The final phase of the event featured mixed team matches in the 73, 90 and +90 kg weight divisions for men, and 57, 70 and +70 kg divisions for women.

According to the Pan American Judo Confederation, 10 countries registered for the mixed team event, divided into two groups: Venezuela, the United States, Chile, Peru and Brazil in one of them, and Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba in the other. The team from the biggest Caribbean island competed for the title, with victories in the quarterfinals and semifinals against Colombia and the Dominican Republic, respectively, which in turn defeated Argentina and Mexico, in that order.

Meanwhile, the Brazilians topped their preliminary group without difficulty, which included Venezuela, the United States, Chile and Peru.

The Cuban disciples, coached by Julio Alderete and Antonio Becali (men's) and Boennys Chang (women's), repeated

the second place won in the individual competition, winning two gold medals and one silver. They finished behind Brazil (6-2-6) and ahead of the United States (1-4-3), the Dominican Republic (1-3-3), Canada (1-1-4), Chile (1-1-0), Colombia (1-0-2) and Venezuela (1-0-1) – the eight nations that shared the 14 available medals.

In the men's competition, the island was represented by Orlando Polanco (66 kg), Marlón Herrera (73 kg), Rubén Romero (81 kg), Amado Montes (90 kg), Iván Felipe Silva (100 kg) and Andy Granda (+100 kg). The women's team included Daili Sentmanat (52 kg), Lian Benavides (57 kg), Maylín del Toro (63 kg), Anisleidy Ur Lopez (70 kg), Lianet Cardona (78 kg) and Dayanara Curbelo (+78 kg).

The Cuban performance was led by the men, who contributed two gold medals to the tally through Jonathan Charon (60 kg) and Orlando Polanco (66 kg), who totaled 800 points toward the ranking for the Lima 2027 Pan American Games.

On the second and final day of the individual tournament, Iván Silva (100 kg) and Andy Granda (+100 kg) won silver and bronze medals, respectively, securing 560 and 400 points.

The other medal went to Dayanaña Curbelo (+78 kg), who finished third in her division, defeating Brazilian Beatriz Souza, 2024 Paris Olympic champion and three-time world champion.

Her teammates Maylín del Toro (63 kg) and Lianet Cardona (78 kg) finished in the fifth place, having fallen in the semifinals and the repechage round, respectively, after dominating their matches.



The Cuban fighters repeated the second place won in the individual competition, winning two gold medals and one silver. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Stepping firmly toward Santo Domingo 2026

By Mariela **PÉREZ**

SANTO DOMINGO.- Cuba's participation in the karate and taekwondo qualifying tournaments for the Santo Domingo 2026 Central American and Caribbean

Games (CAC Games) clearly showcases its competitive capacity and adaptability within an increasingly demanding regional landscape.

The karate qualifier, held at the Juan Pablo Duarte Olympic Center in this capital city, with the participation of 20 countries,

Awarded 144, qualification spots, reaffirming the dynamism of this sport discipline.

In this event, the Cuban delegation secured its place in team kata, both women's and men's, together with a group of nations that is part of the region's elite.

The island's inclusion in this group, along with Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Costa Rica, confirms the strength of the Cuban school in a discipline requiring high technical precision, while also demonstrating that the gap with its rivals is narrowing.

In kumite, qualifying in several divisions confirms that Cuba maintains a high level in a more balanced context, where each fight demands maximum performance

TAEKWONDO, SOLID RESULTS

The taekwondo preliminary rounds also presented a highly demanding landscape, showcasing both the dominance of traditional powers and the sustained growth of new nations in the region.

Mexico and Colombia ratified their positions as leading contenders, topping

the list of athletes at the Games with 16 and 15, respectively. Both nations have high-performance structures, guaranteeing their presence in the final stages.

A second group comprises Puerto Rico and Venezuela, with 11 spots each, while Cuba (8) maintains its status as historical power with key athletes in important matches.

The fact that more than 15 countries have secured at least one spot anticipates a close competition at Santo Domingo 2026, where each category will feature eight contenders, increasing the level of competition from the early rounds.

In Cuba's case, securing eight spots in individual combat, along with qualifying in the mixed team event (TK4), reflects a solid result, especially considering the lack of participation in previous competitions.

Added to this result is their performance at the Dominican Open, where the team won one gold, five silver and two bronze medals, a sign of their consistent competitiveness. More than dominance, this overall result points to a position of resilience and adaptation in a region where the competition for the podium will be increasingly open at Santo Domingo 2026, starting on July 24.



Karate and taekwondo qualifying tournaments awarded 144 spots for the Santo Domingo 2026 Central American and Caribbean Games. PHOTO: Prensa Latina.

Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion: A Demand in Africa

By Nara**ROMERO**

ADDIS ABABA.- Africa urgently needs to adopt more forceful measures to accelerate the financial and economic inclusion of women, as it is noted that slow progress limits opportunities for this population group and hinders continental growth.

That was the outcome of the Dialogue on the African Women Decade for Financial and Economic Inclusion, organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Centre for Economic Transformation.

The high-level meeting was held as part of the 2026 Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in Tangier, Morocco.

Discussions focused on how governments can raise women's financial inclusion to a top economic priority category, with data obtained in Africa to support the policy decisions of finance ministers.

In the debates, participants used key tools developed in the continent, like the indexes on African Gender and Development,

Gender and Women's Inclusion, to validate with statistics the political commitments, progress and economic realities women experience.

A GOVERNANCE PROBLEM

Morocco's Minister of Economy and Finances, Nadia Alaoui, described women's financial and economic exclusion not only as a problem for them, but also as a governance issue.

"We face a reality that we must acknowledge. Women receive training, but they are not hired. They are hired, but they are not promoted; they are present, but they do not make decisions. This is not a problem of lack of talent, it is a governance problem," she stated.

Alaoui emphasized that progress depends on who makes the decisions and how resources are allocated. "We will not transform our economies by including women in numbers, but by excluding them from power," she added.

ECA Executive Deputy Secretary and Chief Economist, Hanan Morsy, affirmed that progress in women's economic empowerment remains insufficient, despite recent advances.



Experts believe that African economies will not be transformed as long as women are disregarded and excluded from power. PHOTO: Internet.

The official revealed that 89 percent of women in Africa work in the informal sector, with limited access to social protection or financial services, while the digital economy exacerbates exclusion.

"Reducing gender gaps can boost economic growth, but our ability to measure these losses remains limited by serious data gaps. The less we measure,

the more we underestimate both the cost of exclusion and the benefits of reform," she stressed.

Morsy called on policymakers to lift women's inclusion to a top economic priority category, invest in addressing information gaps, and ensure that financial and digital systems are designed to take this population group into account.



FOREIGN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CUBAN HEALTH SECTOR

