

Cuban Construction Union Leaders and Management Call for Greater Efficiency

HAVANA, Cuba, Feb 21 (acn) Cuban construction union leaders and managers agreed in this city to achieve greater business efficiency, although the first argued it must be done on the basis of better pay and productive capacity.

Agreement in this case and others took place at a meeting at the Ministry of Construction (MICONS by its Spanish acronym) between representatives of the sector to the final session of the 20th Congress of CTC (Spanish acronym for Cuban Workers Federation) and the administrative direction of the body.

The fact that payment systems improvement is essential was argued by Roberto Pupo Verdecia, who belongs to the Engineering Services Company from Holguin province.

Lázaro Martínez Conill , from Pinar del Río province, agreed with Pupo Verdecia but added his colleagues claim for more equipments and personnel to achieve better quality in their work.

In this regard, Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and president of the Organizing Committee of the event, clarified that means of production are acquired by each entity, so the buyer will demand quality and cost term.

The National Union of Construction Workers (SNTC by its Spanish acronym) must demand contracts strict compliance, because the employer is not required to pay deficiencies, Guilarte said.

In turn, Carlos de Dios Oquendo, SNTC general secretary, noted they must keep on working on the field of work organization, discipline and use of working time, technical preparation of works, supplies, yield, quality and training.

Angel Vilaragut Montes de Oca, MICONS First Deputy Minister, explained that in compliance with the Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and the Revolution, it was approved the proposal of improvement, functions, structure and composition of the body.

He added that its implementation will involve the strengthening of state work, because policies must have a financial backing, both for MICONS and Provincial Administration Councils of People's Power entities, although the latter have their corresponding allocations.

Millions of Cubans Participate in Cuban Workers Congress

Havana, Feb 21 (Prensa Latina) Some three million workers have participated in the assemblies of the 20th Congress of the Cuban Workers Federation (CTC), whose final plenary sessions are beginning here today.

The final phase of the Cuban Labor Union, bringing together 17 national workers' unions, is being held at the Havana's Conference Center through Feb. 22.

Intense activity in the CTC structures was developed starting in October 2012, among these the result and renewal of mandates in union organizations, the analysis of the new Labor Code, the basic document of the Congress, and statutes of the organization.

They included almost 66,000 assemblies to debate the basic document resulting from this forum, in which more than 2,851,000 workers participated and 192,500 proposals were submitted.

Around 1,200 delegates participating in this event are set to discuss today the functions of unions, economic efficiency, representation and unions' care for their members, as well as issues related to the support for the defense and unity of the Cuban Revolution.

The event will also deliberate on union work in the new forms of economic management accompanying the updating of the socio-economic model, particularly self-employment, and production and service cooperatives.

The meeting, according to organizers, should strengthen the role of the trade union movement, and changes underway for achieving a prosperous and sustainable socialism.

Cuba and Venezuela Sign 56 Collaboration Accords

HAVANA, Cuba, Feb 21 (acn) The governments of Cuba and Venezuela signed 56

collaboration agreements on Thursday in the areas of health, agriculture, construction, education and culture.

The accords, which were signed following the 14th Bilateral Intergovernmental Commission, in Caracas, will provide Venezuela with pharmaceuticals for the people, said Venezuelan vice-president Rafael Ramirez, who headed the delegation to the Commission.

The two governments also approved a plan to upgrade and give maintenance to over 1 thousand 600 medical equipment in 28 Venezuelan hospitals, along with the training of specialized personnel.

Other accords include technical assistance for urban gardening in what is known as family agriculture; the construction in Cuba of eight container ships for Venezuela; the improvement of education quality; the setting up of sports clubs; and community recreation centers.

The Cuban delegation to the Commission was headed by Foreign Trade and Investment minister Rodrigo Malmierca, who expressed his country's full support of the Bolivarian Revolution amidst counterrevolutionary actions by the US-back Venezuelan rightist circles against the Bolivarian government.

Mexico, Cuba Hold Inter-Parliamentary Meeting

Mexico, Feb 21 (Prensa Latina) The 14th Mexico-Cuba Inter-Parliamentary Meeting is taking place today in this capital to strengthen ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries, legislators attending the event said.

According to Mexican Chamber of Deputies president Ricardo Anaya, during the meeting, participants will approve actions of solidarity and friendship with representatives of the Caribbean action, as well as discuss issues linked to investment, trade, immigration, and culture.

The event will result in the normalization of ties between both governments, stated the legislator, after commenting that diplomatic relations between those Latin American nations are only the framework, but not the limit of friendly ties among these peoples, united for culture, tradition, and history.

Anaya said the meeting will also give continuity to information permanently exchanged by the parliaments in economy, productive sectors, environment, and social development.

During the opening ceremony, in which Esteban Lazo, President of the Cuban National Assembly of People's Power, and Mexican Senate president Raul Cervantes will attend, participants will clearly establish the interest of our Congress to contribute that both nations reach full development, he noted.

Lazo arrived in yesterday to the Benito Juarez International Airport in the Federal District, leading his country's delegation to attend the meeting.

In statements to Prensa Latina, the Cuban Parliament president expressed happiness of being in Mexico, a country that has maintained a historic relation with the Caribbean island.

Community Reference Hospital in Haiti Reopens

HAVANA, Cuba - (acn) As part of the cooperation program between Cuba, Venezuela, UNASUR-Argentina and Haiti, the Community Reference Hospital of Ennery, in the Department of Artibonite, Haiti, was reopened.

Present in the ceremony were the ambassadors of Cuba and Venezuela, Ricardo Garcia and Pedro Antonio Canino, respectively; Florance Duperval Guillaume, Haiti's Minister of Public Health; and Rodolfo Mattarollo, representative of the Office of UNASUR to that nation, the Cuban Foreign Ministry's Web site reported on Thursday.

The hospital was rebuilt and expanded in 144 days, and it was worth 571,926.00 U.S. dollars donated by UNASUR-Argentina.

During her speech, Minister Duperval praised the work of Cuban voluntary workers, describing it as the most important aid received from abroad, and underlined the role of preventive medicine.

Mattarollo extolled the work carried out by Cuban cooperation and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity of having been part of that project.

Venezuela Condemns Obama's Statements

Caracas, Feb 20 (Prensa Latina) Venezuela condemned U.S. president Barack Obama's declarations saying they represent a new interference in Venezuela's internal affairs and are based on false information without any foundation.

In a statement, President Nicolás Maduro condemned Obama's statements in Mexico and said the fact that Obama keeps attacking a free and sovereign country in Latin America, is an offense to the heroic land of the Aztecs, Villa and Zapata, and the noble Mexican people.

Maduro stressed that what sovereign governments worldwide are really expecting is an explanation of why the White House finances, encourages and defends opposition forces that promote violence in Venezuela.

He added that Deputy Assistant Secretary Alex Lee has no right to condition or threaten the Venezuelan government because of its decision to prosecute those responsible for the recent violent acts.

The Venezuelan government repeats that it will continue to monitor and take all necessary actions to prevent U.S. agents from spreading violence and destabilization, and keep the world informed of President Obama's interventionist policy against our country, he added.

Pacifist Intention Prevails in Fighting Venezuelan Subversion

Caracas.- (Prensa Latina) The Venezuelan government combines its iron will with peace through dialogue, tuning its mechanisms to face subversion still prevailing here in several states.

In addressing the nation yesterday, President Nicolas Maduro called on the people again to reflect and choose dialogue to work on the Coexistence and Peace Plan presented to the nation on February 14.

Violent groups keep control of several places in the capital and in the states of Carabobo, Nueva Esparta, Zulia, Lara, Merida and Tachira.

According to Minister for Interior Relations, Justice and Peace, Miguel Rodriguez, terror and fear abound with the verified presence of Colombian paramilitaries that worsen the conflict, mainly in Tachira.

In this regard, Maduro said he was decided to resolve with firm hand the big problem in Tachira, one of the states involved in smuggling Venezuelan goods through the border with Colombia.

Rodriguez ordered to create a border checkpoint to restore order, sending additional forces, as well as a ban on carrying weapons and other gradual actions in line with the Constitution of the Republic.

Meanwhile, Governor of Merida, Alexis Ramirez, announced today the criminal presence of the

Colombian paramilitaries among reactionary sectors that acted against security forces and the people called to violence by the opposition.

As the National Bolivarian Armed Force (Fanb), the National Guard (GHB) and all the peace loving population respond to state interests, the Venezuelan Government strongly repudiated today remarks made by US President Barack Obama on Feb.19 based on false information.

Through an official communiqué, the Government urges Washington to explain why it funds and defends opponents who are promoting violence in Venezuela.

The document ratifies that the National Executive of Venezuela will continue implementing the necessary actions to prevent US agents from destabilizing the country.

Venezuelan Government Denounces Media Manipulation

Caracas, Feb 21 (Prensa Latina) Executive Vice President of Venezuela, Jorge Arreaza, denounced today the manipulation of the media which distort the position of Government regarding exchanges with the opposition.

Through the Twitter social network, Arreaza said that "the distortion of domestic and foreign media is unbelievable.

According to them, the President of the Republic Nicolas Maduro, is the one who is not willing to hold talks."

In that regard, he reminded that Maduro had "opened the dialog on December 18th and invited opposition leaders to launch the Plan for Peace and they did not attend".

"Maduro called opposition governors and majors to the Federal Governing Council (CFG) this week and they did not attend either," he said.

"Maduro also invited leaders of the opposition student movement to hold a meeting with him and they did not give any answer," said Arreaza.

Nicaragua's President Denounces U.S. Intentions Against Venezuela

Managua, Feb 21 (Prensa Latina) Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said the United States is trying to concentrate forces to destroy the revolutionary process in Venezuela, and thus cause a collapse of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ortega, who met on Thursday with those attending the Working Group of the Forum of Sao Paulo, which began in this capital last Wednesday, said that the peoples of the region are integrating and uniting.

"The United States wants to launch its offensive on the key points that are the ideological support for integration and unity of Latin America and the Caribbean," he said.

Ortega warned that as long as the forces of global capitalism exist, there will be no social justice, despite the progress with the rise of other political poles. "We have made progress defying the law of gravity. Gravity in the plain meaning of the word, when we face the force that still surrounds our planet," he denounced.

Book on Writer Stella Calloni Prefaced by Fidel Castro at Havana Fair

HAVANA, Cuba, Feb 20 (acn) A book on the life and work of Argentinean journalist and writer Stella Calloni, with a prolog by Fidel Castro, is a main event Thursday at Havana's International

Book Fair.

The book tells about Calloni's childhood up to the days when she was involved as a professional in the Nicaraguan Sandinista Revolution and US invasion in this part of the world.

Calloni's interviews with the Cuban Revolution leader, with Hugo Chavez, Evo Morales, Muammar Gaddafi, Omar Torrijos and many other personalities are also included in the book, which will be launched by Argentinean authors Julio Ferrer and Hector Bernardo.

Sri Lanka Highlights Its Harmony with Cuba in International Forums

Colombo, Feb 21 (Prensa Latina) Sri Lankan media highlighted today the level of its relations with Cuba and the harmony between the two countries in the international arena, after a visit from environment minister Susil Premajayantha to Cuba.

Newspapers, radio and TV stations, and websites are reporting Premajayantha's meeting with Cuba's deputy minister, Miguel Diaz Canel, where bilateral ties were discussed, with a high level of agreement on regional and international issues.

By coordinating stances at multilateral forums, Cuba reiterated its support for Sri Lanka, reported the website Colombo Page.

Sri Lanka is waging an intense diplomatic campaign as it deals with US attempts to make the UN Human Rights Council recommend an international investigation in Sri Lanka for alleged war crimes at the end of the war against the extremist movement Tamil Eelam Liberation Tigers (May 2009).

Premajayantha is one of the special envoys of President Mahinda Rajapaksa to the 47 countries member of the HRC at this moment, charged with refuting those accusations and

presenting the advance of the reconciliation and reconstruction process in the small South Asian nation.

Some of the HRC member states, like China, Russia and Vietnam, have already expressed their opposition to the US motion.

According to sources from the Sri Lankan foreign ministry, nations like Pakistan, Iran, United Emirates and Indonesia have also stated serious reservations over the bill, should it be approved by the United Kingdom and the European Union.

Cuba Denounces Threats against World Peace

HAVANA, Cuba, Feb 20 (acn) Cuba denounced at the United Nations Security Council the danger posed on peace and the development of the world by unilateral policies, interference with other countries' domestic affairs and the proliferation of doctrines, such as the so-called change of regime.

During a debate on the state of the law and its relationship to peace, Cuba's first deputy foreign minister Marcelino Medina alerted that it is difficult to conceive the existence of that concept under foreign agendas aimed at supremacy, according to PL news agency.

The current State of Law at the world level is the full observance of the goals and principles stated by the UN Charter and International Law. Beyond any terms, the respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, the rejection to use or threaten to use force, self determination and no interference with internal affairs, are all the foundations of international law and a pre-requisite for peaceful coexistence, said the diplomat.

A major component of the state of law is the reformation of the United Nations so that the entity becomes an example of transparency, democracy and participation by the international community in solving the pressing problems pending on the planet, the Cuban representative noted.

Cuba to Host Events Dedicated to Special Education

Havana, Feb 21 (Prensa Latina) Cuba will host several international events linked to special education, based on inclusion and recognition of diversity, said organizers.

In a press conference, they announced that the 12th World Meeting on Special Education and Attention to Diversity will be held at the Havana Convention Center on June 11-13.

Also on that date, the Sixth International Congress on Education and Special Pedagogy, the Third Symposium on Elementary Education and the Sixth International Workshop on Educational Inclusion and Attention to Diversity will be held.

Santiago Borges, Director of the Center of Latin American Reference for Special Education, said that experts from Mexico, Venezuela, Chile, Ecuador, Panama and Colombia have confirmed their attendance.

He said that these events will focus on commonality in the concepts of inclusion and accessibility.

Doctors, psychologists and other health professionals with specialties related to teaching people with special needs are invited to attend.

President of the International Association of Special Education, Orlando Terre, said the holding of this meeting in Havana is in recognition of advances in this type of education in Cuba.

He said that unlike many countries worldwide, access to special education is a right in Cuba, where family and the community are also involved.

