

Fidel and Raul Honor Marti with Floral Tributes

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, Cuba, Feb 24 (acn) Floral tributes sent by historic leader Fidel Castro; Army General Raul Castro, President of the councils of State and Ministers; and the people of Cuba, were placed on Monday in this city, as an homage to Jose Marti.

Students, cadets, students of the Camilo Cienfuegos military schools, workers and combatants of the Revolution gathered by the Mausoleum keeping the mortal remains of the Apostle at the Santa Ifigenia Cemetery, on the occasion of the 119th anniversary of the resumption of the last war in Cuba against Spanish colonialism, organized by the National Hero.

Youngsters of the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Las Tunas province and cadets of the Granma Naval Academy took part in the ceremony held since 2002 by the Revolutionary Armed Forces at the Santiago de Cuba cemetery, a National Monument.

The actions of February 24 took place in several areas of the island. The Cry of Baire occurred in the eastern region, where local patriots, like Saturnino Lora and Florencio Salcedo, launched the slogan Independence or Death.

Cuban Working Class Congress Establishes Guidelines, Asserts Raul

HAVANA, Cuba, Feb 24 (acn) We have carried out a wonderful congress that established guidelines for the Cuban labor movement, asserted on Saturday Army General Raul Castro, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and President of the councils of State and Ministers while summarizing the 20th Congress of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC).

In the final session of the forum, Raul pointed out that matters analyzed concern the role of the CTC and its trade unions very closely, in the ideological, political and economic process of the Revolution, approved at the Sixth Congress of the Cuban Communist Party.

Raul considered that salary does not meet all the needs of workers and their families, generating lack of motivation and apathy towards work, which influences negatively on discipline and encourages the exodus of qualified workers towards better paid activities.

In this regard, he explained that a general increase of wages in the state sector would cause an inflationary spiral in prices, if it's not properly supported by an increase in the supply of goods and services.

But "we can't sow in the population false expectations in the short term," he said in the presence of the 1,200 delegates attending the working class meeting.

However, considering the contributions of medical services in exports, the Cuban President said that there will be a benefit in the health sector for its workers, a measure that will come into effect shortly.

In order to distribute wealth, pointed out Raul, you must create it first, and to do so we have to steadily increase efficiency and productivity.

The Cuban head of state informed that the process of elimination of the monetary and exchange duality is in the initial stage of preparation of conditions, which plans to use a flexible wage system, consistent with the principle of distribution in Socialism.

He recalled that the process of updating the economic and social model is aimed at creating the conditions that will allow for continuous and sustainable increase in the income of state workers, while preserving the social achievements of the Revolution.

Survey: Venezuelan President Should Stay

Caracas, Feb 24 (Prensa Latina) At least 42 percent of Venezuelans consider that President Nicolás Maduro must fulfil his presidential term through 2019, according to the latest survey carried out by Hiterlaces pollster.

Hinterlaces, which monitors the country's political and social situation, carried its poll among 1,000 Venezuelans countrywide on Feb. 8-14, as reported by journalist Jose Vicente Rangel in the segment Confidenciales of his morning television program broadcast by private Televen national television network.

The survey also found that 29 percent of the people wanted a mid-term recall referendum, as established by the Constitution, while 23 percent consider street protests as a solution.

Meanwhile, 35 percent of people polled consider that the government must keep a firm hand on speculators and hoarders, and 29 percent thinks prudent a closer alliance with the private sector.

Hinterlaces found that most people consider important their electoral participation as a tool to decide the country's fate.

Those who fail to recognize the vote as part of the Venezuelan people's culture are mistaken. Most people are for stability and hope rather than uncertainty.

Lat Am Art Exhibition in Cuba Honors Chavez

Havana, Feb 23 (Prensa Latina) Artworks from collections of renowned Cuban painter Servando Cabrera, which show the popular art from Latin American countries, are on display for the first time in his house museum, in the Havana neighborhood of El Vedado.

The exhibit, aimed at recovering the historic and human legacy of the painter, is part of

worldwide campaign to honor great Venezuelan leader Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias, one year after his death.

More than 30 artworks, studied and kept by Servando, from Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Chile, comprise the exhibit, in which traditions and customs from the Latin American peoples are highlighted, as testimonies of their cultural heritage.

The exhibition, which will be open to public until December, reaffirms the need to protect and foster the peoples' memory and roots, one of the ideas that Chavez always defended.

Financial Times: U.S Blockade of Cuba Embarrassing, Anachronistic

London, Feb 24 (Prensa Latina) The U.S. economic blockade against Cuba is shameful, anachronistic and failed, and it is time to change that more than 50 year old policy, said the Financial Times.

In an editorial on the subject, the newspaper specializing in financial issues criticized the aggressive position maintained by Washington against Cuba, adding that "there has never been a better time for a new approach."

The article argues that in the United States, the anti-Cuban bloc that defends the economic, commercial and financial embargo, organized to suffocate the Cuban revolutionary project, has failed in its goals, and is disintegrating.

A survey conducted by the Atlantic Council revealed that the majority of the U. S citizens, including those of Cuban origin, support the normalization of relations, indicates the editorial, adding that from the international point of view, the European Union has already expressed its interest in a new approach in its ties with the Caribbean Island, while Latin American countries have a completely normal relation with Cuba.

The article added that "an opening now to Cuba, will enhance the prestige of the United States in the region."

The Financial Times notes that the Obama administration has eased certain restrictions, particularly those regarding to travel and remittances, however, it is necessary to eliminate barriers in areas such as travel to the island of U.S. citizens, expanding the list of approved exports and encouraging bilateral trade.

According to estimates from Cuban authorities, the U.S. economic blockade has caused monetary losses exceeding one trillion dollars, taking into account the depreciation of the U.S. dollar.

In addition, the Financial Times is in favor of removing Cuba from the list of terrorist sponsoring countries, drafted each year by Washington.

"Havana has a key role in Colombia's peace talks; the constant inclusion of Cuba on the list, which involves difficult financial structures, makes a mockery of that list," it says.

Cuba Proposes Strategies for UN-Promoted Development

Havana.- (Prensa Latina) Cuban specialists highlighted here today the importance of international consensus in the effective implementation of UN-promoted plans for world development from year 2015.

The experts suggestions were aimed at assessing Cuba's proposals to draft the UN-promoted post-2015 Development Agenda.

According to Norma Goicochea, a Cuban Foreign Ministry official dealing with the issues on the Agenda, the plan ought to have a universal nature and stem from the best items of the

UN-Millennium Development Goals of year 2000, but it should go beyond.

Cuba is for going beyond those Goals because they deal with very important aspects, but do not constitute by themselves a comprehensive development plan, she explained.

The Cuban official added that the agenda must be grafted according to the needs of all the planet's inhabitants and not based on the political interests of any certain group.

Cuba is promoting an Agenda with emphasis on free, quality education and health systems, she stressed.

Participants in the panel agreed that the Agenda must have to be built on the pillars of peace, respect for human rights and the alliance of nations based on integration with fairness.

Book Fair Begins Tour of Cuba

Havana, Feb 24 (Prensa Latina) The great Cuban book and reading fair begins today a tour of the island, after 10 days of sales, launchings, and theoretical debates in this capital.

The International Book Fair again called hundreds of thousands readers eager to learn new titles, or at least make a bucolic getaway beyond the Havana Bay.

The San Carlos de la Cabaña Fortress, main venue of the fair, received dozens of thousands of visitors who as well as loaded with books, enjoyed a free concert.

This edition had Ecuador as a country guest of honor, and a delegation of writers came from that South American nation, among them Abdon Ubidia, president of ALBA Award jury on

Narrative Techniques.

Not only Ubidia, but also other writers consulted by Prensa Latina, agreed that the Fair is a suitable space for debate, especially as favor approaches to several narrative techniques.

According to organizers, about two and a half million copies were put on sale, and as always book for children were the most-sought for adults who, apparently, have increasingly less time to read.

The Havana edition of the Fair met 500 intellectuals, editors, translators, and artists from 30 Latin American and European countries.

The 23rd Book Fair concluded in Havana to begin its tour nationwide through March 9.