

Cuba and the US can Work Together despite Big Differences

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 22 (acn) The delegations of Cuba and the United States agreed that the round of talks for the process of restoration of diplomatic relations, held today at the International Conference Center, is an important step on the road to the decision announced by Presidents Barack Obama and Raúl Castro last December 17.

Josefina Vidal, director general of the US Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, head of the Cuban delegation, told reporters that the dialogue was held in a "respectful, professional and constructive" climate, while the head of the US delegation, Roberta Jacobson, called it "positive and productive".

The Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs said in a brief statement that they had discussed in concrete and real terms the measures to be taken to restore diplomatic relations and the opening of embassies.

Jacobson added that actions have been taken to implement the commitments of the President of the United States relating to this subject, and acknowledged it will be a very long process, because it is not limited to the restoration of diplomatic relations and the opening of embassies in each country, and she said that "today we have taken new steps in this direction."

Both diplomatic agreed that this process must be guided by the principles of international Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Relations.

Vidal said the Cuban side reiterated the readiness of the Government of Cuba to continue to hold a respectful dialogue, based on sovereign equality and reciprocity, without prejudice to national independence and self-determination of peoples.

She also said it would be difficult to explain how they are going to restore diplomatic relations if the US doesn't remove Cuba from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism, and voiced her

concern for the lack of a bank the Cuban interest section in Washington has had for over a year to conduct its business.

Cuba willing to maintain Respectful and Constructive Dialog with Washington

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 22 (acn) Cuba reiterated its willingness to keep holding respectful talks with the United States, based on sovereign equality and reciprocity, with no undermining of its national independence and self-determination, said the general director of the United States Office at the Cuban Foreign Ministry Josefina Vidal in statements to reporters during talks on the reestablishment of bilateral diplomatic relations between Washington and Havana.

Vidal, who heads the Cuban delegation to the talks, ratified the Cuban government's commitment to the improvement of bilateral relations and its will to keep advancing towards their normalization.

She said that bilateral diplomatic relations and the opening of embassies must be based on the principles of international law as established by the UN Charter and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic and Consular Relations. For Cuba this stands for mutual respect for the political, economic and social systems of the two countries and for the avoidance of any form of interference with the internal affairs or threats to the political, economic and cultural foundations of both states, the official added.

Nobody can expect that Cuba will ever renounce its principles, Vidal stressed and added that these efforts aim at establishing a civilized relationship between two countries with profound differences and different conceptions on many issues, but that can get along in a civilized and peaceful manner, by recognizing and respecting such differences and at the same time, and as neighbors identify areas of common interest to develop cooperation in the benefit of the two nations, the region and the world, the official noted.

Josefina Vidal said that the two parties agreed on the steps forward to formalize the reestablishment of diplomatic relations through the exchange of notes in an upcoming date. However, she said that it would be difficult to explain that such reestablishment of relations has taken place while Cuba continues to unfairly be on the US black list of states sponsors of

international terrorism.

Vidal added that they told the US delegation that in order to open embassies the current financial situation facing the Cuban Interest Section in Washington must be resolved. She referred to the impossibility for the US office to find a bank that provides its financial functions due to the US blockade.

This will be a long and complex process that will require work from the two parties, who will have to solve pending problems on the bilateral agenda, she noted and stressed that in order to normalize bilateral relations the lifting of the US blockade is crucial.

We recognize the willingness of the President of the United States to sustain responsible and honest debate at the US Congress to achieve the end of the blockade, said Josefina Vidal.

Cuba and the US Discuss Diplomatic Relations

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 22 (acn) The round of talks at the highest level in the past decades between Cuba and the United States to restore diplomatic relations will start in less than two hours in Havana city.

Josefina Vidal, director-general of the US department at the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, leads the Cuban delegation, while Roberta Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs heads the US delegation.

During this meeting the two countries will address the principles and steps to be taken to restore diplomatic relations and the opening of their respective embassies in each country.

They will also tackle their cooperation to fight epidemics, terrorism, drug trafficking and other issues of mutual interest and benefit.

A Cuban diplomatic source told the press that is covering the historic meeting that "we cannot expect to solve all problems in just one meeting" and added that Cuba and the US are taking steps to reestablish ties that were broken over 50 years ago, but "the normalization of relations is a much longer and complex process when we have to discuss issues of interest for both parties"

The Cuban delegation announced that the opening of embassies and restoration of diplomatic relations must be based on the UN Charter and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic and Consular Relations

Cuba Issues Statement on Migratory talks with the US

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 21 (acn) At the end of the 28th round of US-Cuba migratory talks, the Cuban delegation issued a press release that ACN news agency now reproduces:

PRESS RELEASE OF THE CUBAN DELEGATION TO THE ROUND OF MIGRATION TALKS BETWEEN CUBA AND THE UNITED STATES. HAVANA, JANUARY 21, 2015.

On January 21, 2015, a new round of migration talks was held between US and Cuban delegations, which were headed by Edward Alex Lee, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, and Josefina Vidal Ferreiro, Director-General of the US Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, respectively.

During the meeting, which was held amidst a constructive environment, different aspects related to the migration relations were evaluated, including the compliance with the accords in force, the issuance of visas for immigrants and temporary visits, as well as the results of the actions carried out by both parties to combat illegal migration, human smuggling and document fraud. The Cuban delegation expressed its satisfaction over the recent celebration of a technical meeting between the US Coast Guard Service and Cuba's Border Patrol Guard with the purpose of discussing measures aimed at a more efficient implementation of the Migration

Accords and the Search and Rescue Procedures adopted by both countries.

In view of the continued implementation of the “wet foot/dry foot” policy and of the Cuban Adjustment Act, the Cuban delegation reiterated its concern about the validity of these policies, which are contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Migration Accords and continue to be the main encouragement to illegal migration, alien smuggling and the irregular entry into the US territory from third countries of Cuban citizens who have traveled abroad by legal means.

The Cuban representatives ratified their deep concern about the situation faced by the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, particularly its Consular Office, which, as a result of the implementation of the blockade, has been deprived from all banking services for almost one year now, which seriously hampers the provision of the consular services that are offered to Cuban citizens residing in the United States as well as to US citizens who are interested in visiting Cuba.

The Cuban delegation reaffirmed its willingness to continue holding these talks.

Cuba-USA Talks Advance in a Respectful and Constructive Manner

HAVANA, Cuba, Jan 21 (acn) The talks between the delegations of Cuba and the United States on migration issues are taking place in respectful and constructive manner, Gustavo Machin, deputy director of the United States Department at the Foreign Affairs Ministry, declared to the press

He said that the round that began at nine o'clock today at the Conventions Palace in Havana, is attended by all members of delegations, headed by Josefina Vidal Ferreiro, director general of United States Department at the Foreign Ministry, and assistant secretary Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs, State Department, Edward Alex Lee.

At this point, he said, we are talking about migration trends between Cuba and the United States, how migration flows between the two countries are behaving, and "we agreed to

disagree on some issues," specifically, as we have said, we have serious concerns about the permanence of the Cuban Adjustment Act and the policy of "dry foot-wet foot", the main stimulus for illegal emigration from Cuba.

He said that the persistence of these measures violate the spirit and letter of the migration agreements, whose compliance is being revised, "... we talked fluently, with openness and constructive approach although we have some differences in approaches to certain migratory phenomena ... "and stressed that" ... it has been a profitable tomorrow ... ".

The first of three rounds of talks between delegations of Cuba and the United States to address migration issues and the process of restoration of diplomatic relations, and other bilateral issues is taking place behind closed doors this morning.

The talks began this Wednesday with the twenty-eighth meeting on migration issues, to evaluate the progress of the agreements in this respect and the actions taken by both parties to tackle illegal migration and human trafficking, among other aspects of interest.