

# *Cuba and U.S. Take New Step Toward Normalized Migration*

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Havana, January 13 (RHC)-- The governments of Cuba and the United States agreed on Thursday to take what they described as a major step toward the normalization of their migration relations, seeking to reach a regular, safe and orderly flow of migrants.

The two governments signed a new migration agreement, moved by the stated common interest of normalization their bilateral relations.

Under the new accord, which entered into force on the same day of its signing, January 12th, the United States commits itself to ending the so-called “wet foot-dry foot policy” for Cuban nationals reaching U.S. territory, as well as a parole program especially designed to lure into migrating Cuban health care professionals working abroad.

As per the new agreement, also coming under the name of Joint Statement, the United States will start applying to Cuban nationals the same migration procedures and standards they apply to other countries' nationals.

The accord stipulates that Cuban nationals found trying to irregularly enter or remain in the U.S. will be returned to Cuba.

In the joint statement, both the United States and Cuba express their intention to promote changes in their respective migration laws, to enable fully normalized migratory relations to take place between the two.

It states also that the joint communiqués on the issue, dated December 14, 1984 and September 9, 1994 and the joint statement of May 2, 1995 remain in effect. In this regard, the U.S. and Cuba shall apply their migration and asylum laws to nationals of the other Party avoiding selective and/or discriminatory criteria and consistent with their international obligations.

The two governments also commit themselves to cooperate in preventing and prosecuting alien smuggling and other related crimes that threaten their national security, including the hijacking of aircraft and vessels.

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