

# *Cuba's International Book Fair 2014: the youngest readers at the center of attention*

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The largest Cuban literary festival- the International Book Fair 2014 has opened its doors to the public in what has now become its customary venue: the multidentenary fortresses of El Morro and La Cabaña, overlooking from the East the beautiful skyline of Havana across the maritime entrance to the ample bay.

Havana's International Book Fair brings the Island's avid readers the latest in national and international educational and left-wing publications.

And, as usual, the bookfair Book Fairs has as a primary goal the promotion of reading among younger citizens and of fostering their knowledge of diverse subjects. It is always children and young people who are privileged with reserve spaces in every year's Fair. Many events are geared to children and young people with the objective of promoting their relationship with literature and with the arts.

Since the inception of the fair prestigious authors from Cuba and many other countries have come together to present their books and enrich the cultural awareness of booklovers of all ages.

But literature is not the sole element in Cuba's International Book Fairs. There are theatrical presentations, exhibitions of paintings and sculptures, presentations by authors, poetry readings and concerts: all prominently included in the daily programmes.

The annual Cuban Book Fairs are conceived of as multicultural, enabling the nation's young people an access both to national and foreign cultures.

Every year, one country is invited to display some of its cultural attributes at the Fair. Beginning in 1998, such guests of honour have included Mexico, Chile, Italy, France, Venezuela, Brazil, and Russia. This year, Ecuador is the guest nation, providing the opportunity for Cubans especially to gain more knowledge about a South American country that takes its name from the imaginary geographical line that divides the northern half of our planet from the southern portion. A nation that has become a fast friend of Cuba in recent years, the Ecuadoran delegation is headed by Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño. On behalf of president Correa, Foreign Minister Ricardo Patiño presented the president's book From banana republic to now republic. Indeed, the 2014 Cuban Book Fair includes, with this book, a first hand account of Ecuador's concerted efforts to become a truly free nation.

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