

# *Raul Castro expresses full confidence in Miguel Diaz Canel*

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Havana, April 19 (RHC)--Raúl Castro today expressed confidence in the newly elected president of the Councils of State and Ministers of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel, by highlighting his loyalty to the Revolution and political solidity.

In the closing remarks to the historic installment of the 9<sup>th</sup> Legislature of the Cuban parliament in Havana, Raul Castro, who will remain as 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of the Cuban Communist Party, affirmed that the election of Diaz-Canel was not mere chance.

“We do not doubt that due to his virtues, experience and dedication to work he will succeed in the task entrusted to him by the supreme organ of state power”, the party leader stressed.

In summarizing the road that the new president followed before accessing the highest executive office of the country, the Army General spoke about Diaz Canel’s previous performances as party leader in the provinces of Villa Clara and Holguin, and later as Minister of Higher Education and first vice-president of the Council of State.

Speaking about the process that led to his election, Raul Castro stressed the need for the island’s authorities to pay more attention to the preparation of young people so that when they reach higher positions they have a greater grasp and command of the island’s realities.

In his remarks, the Cuban Communist party leader made reference to the pending constitutional reform, a task to be undertaken by the new legislature.

He added that in the new Magna Carta, the Cuban Communist Party must prevail as the leading force of the Cuban society. Likewise, he made the proposal that the figure of Prime Minister be established in the new Constitution, so that the President, as head of state, also holds the responsibility of leader of the Communist Party.

Raúl Castro noted that the draft of the new constitution will be submitted to popular referendum.

Similarly, he pointed out that he will remain the first secretary of the Party until 2021, as it was ratified in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the organization held in 2016, and he mentioned the possibility that Diaz-Canel also occupy that position from 2021 on.

The outgoing Cuban president praised the election process that ended Thursday with the installment of the State Council, which counted on the massive participation of citizens in support of the Revolution and socialist democracy.

He recalled that this session of the 9<sup>th</sup> Legislature was taking place on the 57th anniversary of the victory achieved in Playa Girón under the command of the historic leader of the Revolution, Fidel Castro, over the mercenary invasion organized, trained, and financed by the United States.

In another moment of his speech before the parliament, Raúl Castro rejected the reinforcement of the U.S. economic, commercial and financial blockade on Cuba, which generates serious limitations on country's economic and social progress.

He also thanked the international solidarity and the support of the peoples of the world in the call for the end of the blockade against Cuba.

Other subjects covered by Raul Castro in his remarks to the newly appointed lawmakers included the island's commitment to serve its foreign debt, the current dual currency system that exists on the island, and the problems it generates.

The Cuban leader, who culminated on Thursday his role as president of the Councils of State and Ministers, stressed the need to improve social communication mechanisms, so that every citizen of the island receives clear and understandable explanations of the national realities and its most complex issues.

Regarding self-employment (as they call the private sector in Cuba), he pointed out that it will not be discarded as a source of jobs on the island but he reiterated that the Revolution rules out any scenario that implies neoliberal privatizations.

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