

# *Raul Castro Confirms Participation in Summit of the Americas*

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Havana, December 22 (RHC-Xinhua) -- Cuban leader Raul Castro confirmed in Havana his participation in the Seventh Summit of the Americas, scheduled for April 10th and 11th next year in Panama.

"I confirm that I will participate to express our positions with sincerity and respect for the heads of state and government, without exception," said the Cuban leader in his speech closing the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Eighth Legislature of the National Assembly of People's Power.

He thanked Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela for the invitation and stressed that Cuba's participation in that summit is the result of a solid and unanimous consent of Latin America and the Caribbean, a region living in new times and united in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

The Summits of the Americas originated in 1994 in Miami, launched by then U.S. President Bill Clinton and organized by the Organization for the American States, a continental body from which Cuba was suspended in 1962, due to U.S. pressures

against the young revolution headed by Fidel Castro.

This will be the first time Cuba participates in the summit, which will be held months after Havana and Washington are taking the first steps to restore their diplomatic relations broken since January 1961.

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