

# *Brazil Welcomes Obama's Renewed Pledge to End Blockade against Cuba*

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Rio de Janeiro, January 22 (RHC-Xinhua) -- The Brazilian government on Wednesday welcomed U.S. President Barack Obama's statement on the necessity to end the blockade against Cuba in his annual State of the Union speech on Tuesday night.

In an official statement, Brazil's Foreign Ministry said it "took note with satisfaction" of President Obama's words regarding the need to end the blockade.

"Brazil welcomes this positive step toward the desired normalization of both the hemispheric relations and the relationship between the United States of America and Cuba, two countries with which Brazil maintains historic bonds of friendship and partnership," the ministry said.

Obama urged Congress to further ease sanctions on Cuba in his speech on Tuesday, and highlighted the need to close the Guantanamo Bay prison, run by the U.S. but located in Cuban territory.

Last month, the governments of Cuba and the United States announced that, after more than 50 years, they would work together to resume diplomatic relations.

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