

Economic Update April 16



Cuba Calls for New International Economic Order at UNESCO

Cuba has called for a new economic, financial and monetary order, where the interests and needs of the countries to the south and the majorities are included as priorities.

An order in which those who impose capital concentration and neo-liberalism do not prevail is necessary, said Juan Antonio Fernandez, representative of the Caribbean island speaking at the *196th Session of the Executive Council of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)* underway in Paris to conclude on April 23rd.

The Cuban expert remarked that the people's problems have worsened as a consequence of the concomitant of the economic, social, food, energy and climatic crisis; thus, sustainable development would seem an unreachable dream, but it is at the same time, an objective that can not be waived, he said.

Peace is an indispensable condition for development, but it is under continual attack by those who dream about a new world distribution and resort to war resources, sanctions and blockades to meet their purposes, said Fernandez.

Statistics are staggering when there are only some months left to confirm what many of us had known for long: none of the *Millennium Objectives* will be globally reached, he sadly stressed.

In that context, he highlighted that the main challenge to UNESCO is showing its capacities to contribute to peace in an unsafe world, to eradicate poverty in an unequal environment and with limited resources, and encouraging social inclusion as the driving force of sustainable development.

Business Investment Offers in Cuba Presented in Vietnam

Orlando Hernandez, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Cuba, presented the portfolio of business opportunities in Cuba, during a crowded seminar by Cuban and Vietnamese businesspeople underway in Hanoi.

After presenting the advantages fostered by the new *Law of Foreign Investments* and the favorable situation in Cuba, he referred at length to the potential of 246 business projects gathered in an promising portfolio.

The projects are included in the fields of meat-processing, production of citrus and other fruits, cereals, construction, tourism and energy, sugar, metallurgic and information technology industries, as well as geological and oil prospecting, transport and wholesale commerce.

Oscar Perez Oliva, Business Manager of the Economic Development Zone of Mariel, also gave details about the favorable opportunities offered to investors in this site.

Another similar seminar, which will be also attended by Cuban ambassador Herminio Lopez and economic adviser Loida Rivera, will be held on Friday in the city of Ho Chi Minh, the main development site of Vietnam.

International Meeting on Communications to Be Held in Cuba

Making Cuba the main issue of critical debate on communication processes gestated from the South will be the target of the *8th International Meeting of Researchers and Scholars of Information and Communication, ICOM 2015*, to be held from December 7th to 11th.

Convened by the *Faculty of Communication at the University of Havana (FCOM* by its Spanish acronym), the event will meet at the *Conventions Palace* in conjunction with the *9th International Congress of Latin Union of Political Economy of Information, Communication and Culture*.

According to Dr. Raul Garces, FCOM dean and president of the organizing committee, "both spaces will allow to reflect, discuss and establish networks of cooperation on the challenges of our societies and their emancipating projects".

Leading figures from the world of information and communication have already confirmed their presence at the event as Armand and Michele Mattelart, from the University of Paris, and Enrique Sánchez Ruíz, from the University of Guadalajara, who will receive a special tribute.

According to the organizing committee, more than 350 national and foreign delegates, mainly from Venezuela, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Colombia and Chile are expected.

Information and communication from the South: political economy, culture and critical thinking will be the theme that will guide the discussions in keynote lectures, panel discussions and workshops.

Under that subject, the participants will delve into issues such as ethics and social responsibility of workers in the sector, decolonization and cultural identity.

An exhibition will be organized in parallel, which will be ideal framework for universities, specialized schools, press organs, audiovisual producers, consultants and publishers to showcase their products and services.

ICOM 2015's agenda also includes the presentation of books and magazines of interest to communication and information.

Cuban-Spanish Entrepreneur Forum Promotes Business Chances

The Cuban and Spanish Entrepreneur Forum is underway in the Cuban capital today with the presence of 45 Spanish businessmen, together with their Cuban counterparts, will promote the chances for investment in the Caribbean island.

Organized by the Chamber of Commerce of Cuba, Spanish Secretary of State for Trade Jaime Garcia Legaz, leads Cuban delegation at the event.

The forum was preceded by a preliminary meeting between Garcia Legaz and the interim president of the Chamber of Commerce of Cuba, Odalys Seijo.

Later, there will be speeches and opinions by the entrepreneurs from both countries.

The agenda includes presentation of the *Law 118 for Foreign Investment and Opportunities for Investment in Cuba*, and the use of the *Special Development Trade Zone of Mariel*, 27.9 miles west from Havana, which wants to become the main Cuban door to foreign trade and investments.

They also will announce major investment projects and future prospects of the Cuban tourism industry and in the manufacture of building materials, the possibilities of implementing public works or performing maintenance of roads, asphalt paving and non-residential construction in general.

Other topics will be investment projections on different sources of obtaining energy, policy, legal framework and requirements of the Cuban side, particularly in the sugar industry from sugar cane, forest biomass and biogas.

The visiting delegation is also integrated by the vice president of the *Spanish Confederation of Business Organizations*, Joaquim Gay Montella; Vice President and *Director of the International Chamber of Commerce in Spain*, Modesto Pineiro and Alfredo Bonet respectively, and the *CEO of International Trade and Investment*, Antonio Fernández-Martos, among others.

The companies present at the forum not only develop their activity in the field of tourism, engineering and renewable energy, but also in other aspects such as construction or the food industry.

García-Legaz will also participate in a meeting convened by the *Association of Spanish in Cuba*, which brings together some 230 partners.

Spain is the 3rd largest trading partner of Cuba, after Venezuela and China, so the possibilities of increasing the flow of investments today are even greater, by changes undertaken by the island to encourage the participation of foreign capital in key sectors.

Spain ranks first among the countries that invest most in Cuba, with a strong presence in tourism with about 60 hotel management contracts.

Cuba Presents Experiences on Population and Development at UN

Parliamentarian and sexologist, Dr. Mariela Castro Espin presented yesterday the Cuban experiences on youth development and access to sexual and reproductive rights, during the 2nd day of the forum on population and development.

Dr. Castro Espin, along with other delegates, participates in the *48th period of Sessions of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development*, a 5-day meeting within the intergovernmental negotiations to outline in next September the 2015-2030 agenda of sustainable development.

Castro Espin, also director of the *National Center for Sexual Education*, participated yesterday in a side event on youth and its role in human development, in which she supported the political willingness of the countries as the key element for the full achievement of people's rights and their prominent role in society.

The forum organized by France, Cuba and the organization *Women Deliver*, headquartered in New York, fostered the exchange of other countries' experiences, opinions, challenges and goals, Castro Espin told the Prensa Latina news agency.

According to Castro Espin, also member of the *High Level Working Group for the International Conference on Population and Development*, the forum also included the current framework of measures in view of the post-2015 agenda, which will continue the millennium goals settled 15 years ago to reduce poverty, inequalities and exclusion.

According to experts, the millennium goals deadline will be met with a long path ahead on the reduction of maternal mortality rate and the international access to reproductive health, as well as millions of people suffering hunger and poverty and thousands of children whose lives are daily claimed by preventable causes.

For Castro Espin, such a situation must be monitored by the international community, following the strategies outlined in the past.

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