

Cuba and U.S. Define Bilateral Agenda Towards Normalization of Relations



Havana, September 12 (RHC)-- At the end of the first meeting of the Cuba-U.S. Steering Committee, held Friday in Havana, the head of the island's delegation, Josefina Vidal, said that they defined a bilateral agenda that will begin to be implemented very soon.

In statements to reporters, the director general for the United States at Cuba's Foreign Ministry stressed the professional and constructive environment of the meeting and added "we have a lot of work to do beginning next week."

Vidal split the issues on the agenda into three groups: one including bilateral cooperation issues related to the environment, natural disaster prevention, health, civil aviation, drug trafficking, transnational crime and others.

A second group encompasses bilateral and multilateral issues for which both countries can open avenues for dialog, in case they may have different views, such as human rights, and human trafficking.

And a third group with pending issues, which "we have decided to include on the agenda for the next months the issue of compensations. Cuba has claims related to compensations for human and economic damage and there are claims by the U.S. related to the properties nationalized at the time of the triumph of the Revolution."

Another issue which will not be immediately on the agenda but that was addressed at the meeting is what concerns to the reciprocal protection of trademarks and patents.

Josefina Vidal recalled that Cuba has always respected the rights of U.S. companies, while there are thousands of U.S. trademarks registered in the country even when there is not bilateral trade. This is an issue requiring consideration since it is of economic interest to both sides, she noted.

The Cuba-U.S. Steering Committee will meet again in November, in Washington, although the date is yet to be proposed and approved by the two parties.

The Cuban delegation reiterated those issues considered essential for the island to say that relations between the two countries are normal, such as the lifting of the U.S. blockade, the return to Cuba of the territory illegally occupied by the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo; the end of radio and TV transmissions to Cuba; the end of regime-change oriented programs.

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