

# *Delegations from Cuba, U.S. Hold First Economic Bilateral Dialogue*

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Havana, September 13 (RHC) -- On Monday in Washington, Cuba and the United States held their first meeting on potential long-term bilateral economic cooperation.

The talks were held in spite of the continued enforcement by the U.S. of a policy of economic, financial and commercial blockade of Cuba, said the island's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A Cuban communiqué said this was the first meeting of the Bilateral Economic Dialogue, a mechanism established under the Cuba-US Bilateral Commission to discuss long-term bilateral engagement on a wide range of topics as part of the ongoing normalization process between the two countries.

The delegations discussed trade and investment, labor and employment, renewable energy and energy efficiency, small business, intellectual property rights, economic policy, regulatory and banking matters, and telecommunications and Internet access.

Officials from both governments agreed to create working groups to continue technical discussions on issues of bilateral interests. The working groups will meet periodically in the coming months on alternate

venues.

The Cuban delegation reaffirmed that lifting the U.S. blockade was essential to advance in economic, commercial and financial relations and toward the normalization of bilateral ties.

In 2015, alone, the U.S. blockade caused Cuba financial losses that surpass 4.6 billion U.S. dollars, as expressed in the Cuban annual report against the blockade, which will be debated and voted on at the UN General Assembly in October.

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