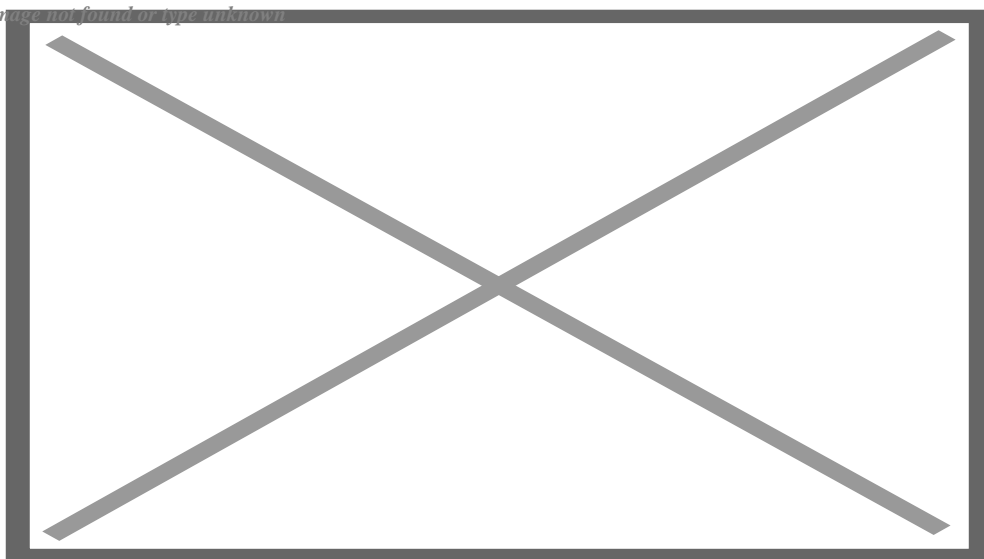


Cuba strengthens ties with its diaspora

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Ernesto Soberon, director-general of Consular Affairs and Cubans Living Abroad (DACCRE) at the Foreign Ministry. File Photo

Havana, February 3 (RHC)--Cuba is going through a moment of deepening ties with its emigrants, said Ernesto Soberon, director-general of Consular Affairs and Cubans Living Abroad (DACCRE) of the Foreign Ministry.

In an interview with *Correo de Cuba* magazine, he said that the main prospects for development, in terms of relations between Cuba and its nationals abroad, are related to participation in the changes taking place internally in the economic and social development of the country.

In this sense, he cited the processes taking place in foreign investment, in terms of business with Cubans living abroad, and in cooperation projects between Cuban and foreign institutions.

He assured that the interest of Cuban nationals in requests of this nature has increased, 'it also opens a field of opportunities in the field of local development because they seek to contribute to the localities where they were born, where they grew up, and where their relatives live.'

Regarding the return of nationals stranded in other regions of the world since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 90 flights were organized during 2020.

Around five thousand Cubans were able to return and we advanced exceptional measures, such as declaring -for the time being- a moratorium on the 24 months that Cuban citizens can stay abroad, an extension that was automatically extended free of charge', he added.

Soberon pointed out that the largest Cuban community abroad is the one in the United States. According to the 2013 census carried out in that country, there were close to two million, one million 200 thousand natives and 800 thousand descendants of those citizens.

He said that, despite the multiple campaigns and the aggressiveness of the policies adverse to the island nation adopted during the last four years by the Trump administration, the reality is that the elections the republican President lost in 2020 failed to expand the favor of the Cuban community living in the United States beyond the votes he obtained in 2016.

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