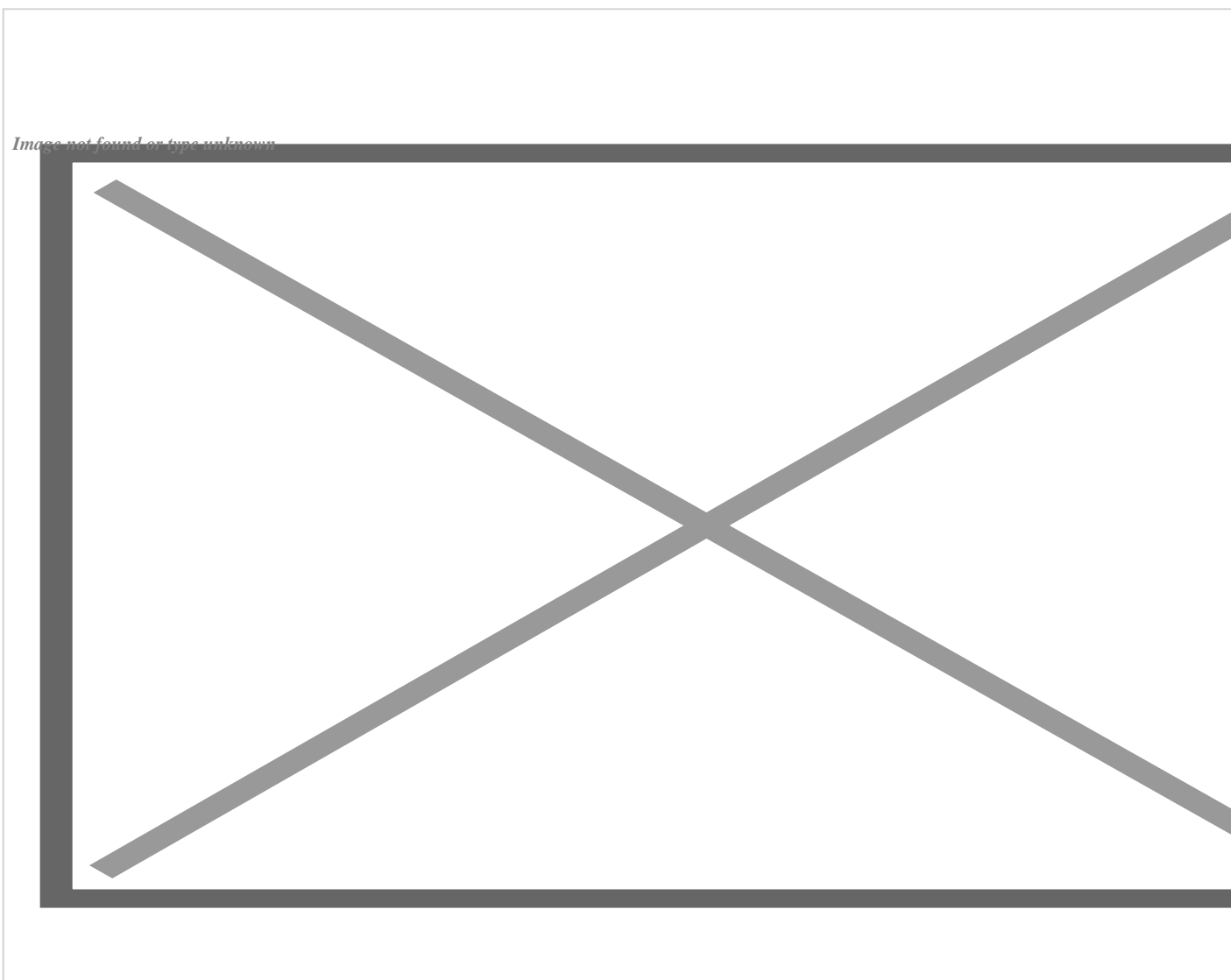


Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel meets an intense agenda in Italy



Rome, June 19 (RHC)-- Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel today fulfills an intense agenda in Italy, which will include an audience with Pope Francis and another with Italian President Sergio Mattarella.

The Cuban leader, who is traveling accompanied by his country's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez, landed on Monday at the Fiumicino Airport of this capital and was received by the plenipotentiary minister of the Italian Foreign Ministry, Umerto Vanni, and by Mirta Granda and Rene Mujica, the island's ambassadors to Italy and the Holy See, respectively.

Shortly before his arrival, the president announced in a message on Twitter that "we will visit the Vatican City State, the Italian Republic and the Republic of Serbia. For sure they will be intense days during which we will work to continue promoting and diversifying our ties in pursuit of Cuba's development," he said.

The audience with the Pope will take place tomorrow and comes just over eight years after the one held in May 2015 at the Holy See between the Bishop of Rome and the then president of the Antillean nation, Raúl Castro, which was followed by a pastoral trip of Francis to that nation in September of that year.

On July 12, 2022, the Supreme Pontiff said that "Cuba is a symbol, it has a great history", and later, last January 14, in a message on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the visit of John Paul II to the island, he sent to the Cuban people "thanks for that example of collaboration and mutual help that unites them".

The contact with Mattarella, which will also take place tomorrow, will address issues of interest to both parties, both bilateral and international, and aims to deepen the positive relations between the two nations.

The Italian head of state emphasized in a note sent to Díaz-Canel in April 2018 that "the historical and strong ties of friendship that unite our countries, constitute the foundation of particularly intense and dynamic bilateral relations."

This is demonstrated, he noted on that occasion, by "the wide range of cooperation projects" and emphasized his desire that "on these bases, in the coming years, Havana and Rome can take advantage of all the opportunities that the initiatives already underway are generating and extend the existing fruitful collaboration in all sectors of reciprocal interest."

The agenda includes a meeting with Qu Dongyu, director general of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), at the headquarters of that institution.

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