

Economic Update September 18



XXXII International Fair of Havana

To foreign investment and promotion in current priority sectors of Cuba, will be dedicated the *XXXII International Fair of Havana*, the Caribbean's largest trading fair, to be held from November 2nd to 8th in the Cuban capital, with the announcement of more than 4 thousand exhibitors from 60 countries, according to the *Prensa Latina* news agency.

US Business Organization Asks Obama to Losen Anti-Cuba Trade Restrictions

Members of the Illinois-Cuba working Group (ICWG) urged the US Congress and its administration to loosen trade restrictions on Cuba so that agricultural entities can sell their products to the island.

The ICWG delegates made their request in Washington DC last week, saying that "We have already seen a decline in our market share due to non-competitive U.S. policies," says Yon Luque, *Koch Foods* export area manager cited in an article published on the web page of the *Aledo Times Record* newspaper.

The article dated September 11th in Wilmette, Illinois, explains that the ICWG delegates represented companies such as the *Illinois Soybean Growers*, *Cargill*, *Chicago Foods International*, *Huron Commodities*, *Illinois Farm Bureau* and *Koch Foods*, among many others.

In April this year, the working group addressed U.S. president Barack Obama a letter requesting "bi-partisan efforts at the national level to bring US-Cuba relationship forward," the article reads.

"Change is happening in Cuba and will continue. We are at a pivotal moment in history. Decisions made in the next couple of years will affect future generations, and we need to be at the table," says Duane Dahlman, *Illinois Soybean Growers* marketing committee chair and soybean farmer from Marengo, Ill., who added that "...it's important for farmers to have access to a market that is so close to us with potential growth."

The *Illinois-Cuba Working Group* was created at the request of the *Illinois General Assembly* and its members include business and commodity groups such as the *Illinois Farm Bureau*, *Illinois Soybean Growers*, *Illinois Corn Growers Association* and *Illinois Chamber of Commerce*.

Copa Airlines Announced New Flight to Cuba

Copa Airlines recently announced a new flight to Cuba, which will fly to the central city of Santa Clara to benefit tourist trips to Santa Maria Cay.

An official communique of the airlines adds that these trips will begin on December 9th by way of an opening flight to Santa Clara to expand possibilities of connectivity from Panama City, *Cubadebate* Web site reported.

The statement notes that this will be the first regular flight of an international airline to a city in the interior of the island.

Founded in 1947, *Copa Airlines*, based in Panama City, flies to 71 destinations in 30 countries of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. The new flight is scheduled twice a week, on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Cuba Denounces at UN Decision to Extend Economic Blockade

Cuba recently denounced to the United Nations President Barack Obama's decision to extend the economic, commercial and financial blockade to Cuba for another year, a genocidal act that has been a routine practice by U.S. presidents over the last several years.

A statement issued by the *Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations* recalled that the main goal of the blockade imposed to Cuba since the 1960s is to cause damages and suffering to the Cuban people.

The Cuban diplomatic representation reported that President Obama had sent a memo to U.S. Treasury Secretary, Jack Lew, and Secretary of State, John Kerry, stating his decision to maintain the unilateral measure, considering it of national interest to the United States. The blockade also forbids U.S. citizens to visit the island, except for trips authorized by Washington. It has kept an extraterritorial dimension and has been reinforced by the *Torricelli (1992)* and the *Helms Burton (1996) Acts*.

The Cuban Mission added that the White House continues to enforce the blockade despite global condemnation by the UN General Assembly on 22 consecutive occasions since 1992.

Next October 28th, a new draft resolution entitled *On the need to end the US blockade against Cuba* will be discussed at the UN General Assembly, which was previously presented in Havana by Cuba's Deputy Foreign Minister, Abelardo Moreno.

The report stresses the blockade has been described as a genocidal policy by the international community since it prevents the island from acquiring medicines, reagents, spare parts for medical equipments and other inputs and by-products, forcing it to trade with distant markets, thus increasing the costs.

According to the text, the Cuban Health Minister estimates that the losses in that sector were worth 66.5 million US dollars just between April 2013 and June 2014; however, those figures do not include the intangible costs to society, given the impossibility to access cutting-edge technology, knowledge and other vital resources in that sensitive area.

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