

# *French President Francois Hollande Concludes Historic Visit to Cuba*

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Havana, May 12 (RHC) -- French President Francois Hollande wound up what was considered an historic visit to Cuba, where he held meetings with Cuban Revolution leader Fidel Castro and with President Raul Castro.

During his visit with the French head of state, Fidel Castro thanked him for his visit to the Caribbean nation as the two of them addressed world affairs.

After the meeting on Monday, President Raul Castro officially welcomed Hollande at the Revolution Palace and spoke about the positive bilateral relations between Paris and Havana, with the aim of further developing such links in different sectors.

Francois Holland also laid a wreath at the monument of Cuban National Independence Hero Jose Marti at the Plaza de la Revolución and delivered a key-note lecture at the University of Havana. Holland stressed the ongoing process towards the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba and the need to put an end to the U.S. economic blockade of the island.

The French president also presided over the signing of collaboration agreements between Cuban and French universities and scientific institutions and he inaugurated the new premises of the French Alliance Language and Cultural institution in Havana.

A central piece on the French president's agenda was encouraging economic and trade relations and he closed an business forum held by entrepreneurs from the two countries.

Francois Holland was accompanied by a large official delegation during his historic visit to Havana, which is part of a Caribbean tour that took him to the French Antilles and winds up with a visit to Haiti on

Tuesday.

Upon leaving for Haiti, the French head of state was seen off by Cuban President, Raul Castro.

The Cuban leader said his presence there, besides being a part of diplomatic protocol, was a sign of Cuba's satisfaction with Hollande's visit.

The Cuban president also spoke to reporters there about the progress in the reestablishment of relations between Cuba and the United States, saying it was developing positively.

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