

# *Foreign Investment Plays Key Role in Cuban Tourism*

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Havana, June 23 (RHC-Xinhua) -- Foreign investment is playing an important role in the development of Cuba's tourism industry, a senior Ministry of Tourism official said Monday.

Tourism authorities hope to have 85,000 hotel rooms available by the year 2020, and 110,000 rooms by 2030, with most of the new investment centered in the areas of Cienfuegos-Trinidad, Camagüey, Las Tunas and Holguín, said Jose Daniel Alonso, the ministry's business director.

As many as 18 international hotel chains are currently operating more than half of the rooms available in Cuba.

Thirteen more resort projects are in the works through the year 2020, including one with 463 million U.S. dollars of Chinese investment and a golf course with 360 million dollars of British investment, Alonso said.

In the first half of the year, the number of foreign travelers to Cuba grew 15 percent. More tourists are expected beginning in September, as China launches direct flights to Havana.

In addition to its famed Caribbean beach resort of Varadero, Cuba also offers visitors eco-tourism, with 103 natural reserves and historic and cultural sites of interest.

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