NEWSLETTER
Amistad

Issue 46.2

Mar/Apr 2025 ★ Bi-monthly newsletter of Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto ★

★ CAFE CUBA ★

Public Meeting & Fundraiser

Help us raise money for the Che Guevara Brigade scholarship!



March 8 2:30 pm

Guest Speaker: Prof. Joe Pateman (York U) - Anti-racism campaigns in Cuba

290 DANFORTH AVE

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Cuba is bouncing back

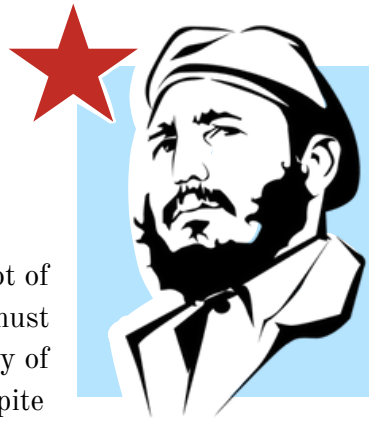
When Cuba's ancient central electrical system began failing, many backup generators throughout the island kicked in; however, they were old and were not meant to run constantly. Many broke down, and thanks to the Blockade, replacement parts were not available.

Since then, solidarity has kicked in. China has sent two large parts shipments, and a third is coming. China is also busy helping build photovoltaic parks in various key island areas. This shift towards renewable energy will ease pressure on the national grid and will also reduce the need for expensive oil imports.

The Paris Club recently rescheduled much of Cuba's debt. They believe in Cuba.

Cuba has recently become a BRICS partner. This will deal a massive blow to the Blockade. Cuba will no longer have to fear USD tyranny. Trade and banking opportunities will now be available.

Brien Young, CCFA



"Ignorance is the root of many ills. Knowledge must be the fundamental ally of nations that aspire, despite all their tragedies and problems, to become truly emancipated, to build a better world."

Fidel Castro

★ CCFA TORONTO UPDATES

Celebrating the 66th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution



Photo: officials from the Cuban Consulate in Toronto

The 66th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution was a lively event on a cold January 4th in the warmth of the Steelworkers Hall in downtown Toronto.

A hundred participants enjoyed a hot dinner, dancing to music of the Cassava Quartet, warm greetings from the Consul General of Cuba and fabulous friends of Cuba. All this MCed by Juan Carranza with his charm and wit.

A raffle of several donated Cuban treasures raised $434.00 for hurricane relief to Cuba. A big thank you to all the volunteers from the CCFA Toronto, Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Network and the Association of Cubans in Toronto.

Elizabeth Hill, CCFA

Moncada Day 72nd Anniversary

BBQ and Music

Saturday
July 26, 3-8 pm

Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil Street

Sponsored by: CCFA, LACSN, JGG

RALLY FOR CUBA

Join our monthly protests against the US Blockade!

March 30 & April 27
1-2 pm

Location: across the U.S. Consulate
361 University Ave, Toronto



SCHOLARSHIP

For the 31st Che Guevara Brigade

CCFA Toronto is offering **two** partial scholarships of **$700** to successful first-time applicants residing in the GTA to help offset the cost of the Brigade. Applicants must be willing to use their experience to help build the Cuban solidarity movement upon their return to Canada.

Apply by March 15th at TINYURL.COM/SCHOLARSHIPCCFA

Cuba and Bolivia join BRICS as partner countries: A step towards regional integration

Cuba possesses important assets within the bloc, such as its advanced biotechnological development and drug production capabilities, which allow it to offer scientific and technological cooperation to its new partners.



In an event that marks a milestone in the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean, Cuba and Bolivia have formalized their accession to the BRICS group as partner countries, effective January 1, 2025.

This announcement followed the BRICS summit in October 2024 in Kazan, Russia, where the expansion of the bloc was discussed, including Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa as founding members.

The incorporation of Cuba and Bolivia not only represents a significant step towards a multipolar economic and political order but also underlines BRICS' commitment to strengthening cooperation among countries of the Global South.

With more than 35% of the world's gross domestic product and 45% of the global population by 2025, BRICS is positioned as one of the most influential economic alliances in the world.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stressed that this new membership category will allow the associated countries to effectively integrate into BRICS cooperation formats, which could translate into substantial economic and political benefits for Cuba and Bolivia.

For Cuba, inclusion in BRICS represents a crucial opportunity to confront the long-standing economic blockade imposed by the United States.

Cuba also possesses important assets within the bloc, such as its advanced biotechnological development and drug production capabilities, which allow it to offer scientific and technological cooperation to its new partners.

The membership of Cuba and Bolivia in BRICS not only strengthens their position on the international stage but also reflects a collective effort to promote a more equitable global system where nations of the South have a voice and representation in economic and political decisions affecting the world.

Source: TeleSur English, published on January 2, 2025

Cuban government: Trump's measures seek to undermine our sovereignty

The Cuban Government on Tuesday denounced President Donald Trump's latest attacks on the island as lacking any grounds and demonstrating the US imperialism's aggressiveness against the people's sovereignty.

HAVANA, Cuba – "The decision to reestablish the iron-clad economic war measures against Cuba, which his predecessor eliminated only days before, is a demonstration of the aggressiveness of US imperialism against the sovereignty, peace and well-being of the Cuban population," stressed a statement from the island's government.

The text pointed out that the unilateral relisting of Cuba as a state sponsoring terrorism shows an absolute disregard for the truth.

"This comes as no surprise, though", the statement indicated, recalling the warning from the local Ministry of Foreign Affairs on January 14, about the possibility that his country would be put back in the arbitrary list.
Back then, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs warned "that the government of that country could reverse in the future the measures adopted today, as has happened on other occasions and as a sign of the lack of legitimacy, ethics, consistency and reason of its conduct against Cuba."

It also pointed out that "American politicians do not usually stop to find justifications" (…) "that is the way that country is ruled."

In the statement released on Tuesday, the Revolutionary Government denounced that Trump interpreted his coming to power as the crowning of an emperor, whose ambitions include the conquest of Canada, the usurpation of Greenland, the change of name of the Gulf of Mexico and the dispossession of the Panamanians of their canal.

The statement went on to notice that the new American president is associated with the groups and politicians who have made aggression against Cuba a way of life, have profited for decades from the anti-Cuban business and today

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share the intoxication of the new president.The Cuban authorities asserted that all of them shared a high responsibility for Cuba's difficult economic situation and the increase in the migratory flow from Cuba to the United States.

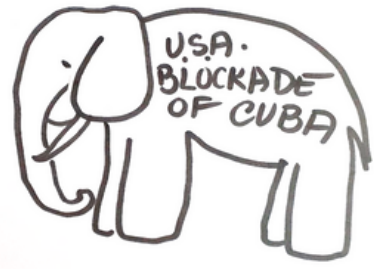
"This new act of aggression by the United States government against the Cuban people shows, once again, the true, cruel, merciless objective of these and so many other measures of siege and suffocation, which are applied against Cuba for the purpose of domination," the statement indicated. To Cuba, this is a reaction of impotence in the face of the inability to bend the will of the island and in the face of the respect, sympathy and support that the Revolution arouses among the peoples of the world.

The document ratified that Cuba will not deviate from the socialist path, "from the effort to recover the economy, to promote the greatest solidarity, creativity, talent, spirit of work, and to defend as an impregnable bastion the freedom, independence, sovereignty and the privilege of building a future without foreign interference."

The government voiced gratitude to the multiple expressions of support and solidarity received from all parts of the world; In particular, governments, Cubans living abroad, parliaments, political, religious and social organizations, and political figures from the United States and other countries.

Source: Prensa Latina, published on January 21, 2025

A blockade is a blockade



Few mainstream media journalists reported the US blockade against Cuba was the direct driver of the country-wide blackouts which began on October 18 and lasted for several days.

In other words, not accurately reporting the main cause of the island's blackout, is a perfect example of the media bias against Cuba.

The US embargo against Cuba is "the pink elephant in the room." It's the one thing looming large and destructive for the last 62 years. It should be the starting point for any discussion on Cuba when analyzing the economy, or even telling a story.

How many readers of mainstream media content realize that six decades of sanctions block the island's access to fuel, food medicines, medical supplies, normal trade and international, banking? This has had dire consequences for the economy.

One must ask how any analyst or journalist with any integrity can avoid the pink elephant in the room when writing on Cuba. And yet, many of the "specialists" continue to do so, blaming Cuba and its government for the present situation.

However, it's not that journalists never report on "blockades." Indeed they do. The word was used repeatedly in the press when Canada's borders were blocked during the Canadian truckers convey protest in 2022. In the case of Canada, we had "on time" delivery of the news and information. We immediately knew its costs and consequences.

In 2022, while the world was recovering from the economic catastrophe of the COVID pandemic, truckers from across Canada gathered to protest the restrictions affecting their work. The protests became known as the "freedom convoy protest." They gathered in Ottawa, blocked the Ambassador Bridge, an important US-Canada trade link, and other border crossings.

The immediate result was the crashing of supply chains, increased policing, safety and city cleanup costs, loss of business income, and employees' wages. Interesting also was the fact that the government invoked the Emergency Measures Act, blocked fundraising money and froze participants' bank accounts.

Journalists widely reported the event and did not hesitate to call it a "blockade." If you've noted any similarities between the blockade of Cuba and the Canada-US blockade, you would be correct. The consequences of both blockades were and are, presently, the same. Only the dollar amounts differ. Blocked supply chains and trade, loss of business, loss of wages and banking access are common impacts.

A blockade 'blocks' trade between nations. And this is exactly the Cuban experience of US sanctions. But it has not been a three-week experience for the Cubans. For some of those people, it is an entire generation of hardship.

The media, without hesitation, profusely reported on the Canada-US blockade. At the time of the truckers' protest, global economies were recovering from the effects of world-wide shutdowns. Yet in the case of Cuba, the country is still in recovery mode. Economic resuscitation is intensely difficult under the long-term effects of the sanctions. Those sanctions were increased incessantly by the Trump regime and worsened by Biden's forgetfulness of his campaign promises and further measures against the island.

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The Economic Cost of Blockades

Journalists did not hesitate to report the costs and consequences of the Canada-US blockade. In contrast, it is more difficult to find information on the costs of the US blockade against Cuba.

The United Nations and Cuba both report that US sanctions have cost $160 billion over the last six decades. On a daily basis, the blockade costs the Cuban economy an estimated $13,800,000 US dollars. Important to note here, we are comparing a developed economy with a developing economy.

During Canada's brief blockade, the Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland told CNN the truckers' protest had impacted the Canadian economy by approximately $390 million a day. She called the costs "real" and the blockades of the border crossings "… illegal blockades and illegal activity (which is) damaging the Canadian economy."

Likewise, the US blockade of Cuba is also illegal, but how many people actually know this? It is barely mentioned in the corporate media.

According to IHS Markit, a research firm, the Canada-US auto industry faced losses as high as $988 million worth of cars and auto parts moving between the two countries. Peter Nagle, an auto industry analyst from IHS Markit, told the New York Times, "It's not like you can flip a switch and get back to where we were production-wise." Likewise, neither can Cuba 'flip the switch' whilst hammered by six decades of a blockade.

Bloomberg predicted the blocking of trade routes between the US and Canada to cost the Canadian economy as much as "$500 million daily and "put the recovery in reverse." Bloomberg also reported that the Canada-US blockade affected the delivery of goods and agricultural products, exacerbating supply chain issues and causing prices increases not seen in decades.

Even Canada's governor of the Bank of Canada, Tiff Macklem, told a press conference, "a prolonged blockage of key trade routes would impact the economy. We've already got a strained global supply chain. We don't need this." Another respected economist, David Rosenberg, said the Canada-US blockade would, "cut both ways since it will mean more acute shortages and bottlenecks and that is going to be problematic for inflation."

According to Reuters, the Canada-US blockade "snarled" an estimated "$2.86 billion US worth of goods." Imagine the value of goods to and from Cuba "snarled" over the last six decades. The three-week Canada-US blockade cost tens of millions of dollars in lost business income. Imagine how much 62 years of sanctions have cost the island's economy.

According to government estimates at the time, the closure of the Ambassador Bridge between Canada and the US delayed approximately $2.34 billion in trade. Other closures at border crossings in Manitoba and Alberta halted an additional $1.3 billion.

Canada's Retail Council reported that shopping centers shut down during the protests with estimated losses of $70 million. Stores and restaurants laid-off employees. This could logically explain the stores and restaurants closures in Havana. It is a fact that a continuous supply of goods and food is necessary to support those jobs.

There are also human costs to a blockade in that workers and their families experience wage losses and its trickle-down effects. These are the hidden costs of a blockade. Sanctions hurt and affect human lives. In Canada, employees lost their jobs because of layoffs. The same can be said of Cuba. To believe an American president when they say they support the Cuban people, is to accept a bold-faced lie. \

One can logically conclude that blockades penalize an economy and its people. Although the truckers' protest lasted only several weeks, the total resulted in billions of dollars in losses for both the Canadian and US economies.

Imagine then, what a blockade of 62 years has cost the Cuban economy? Is it any surprise that Cuba's electrical system broke down from the lack of fuel and spare parts? Question why the corporate media freely reported on the Canada-US blockade. Question further, why the media fails to report the full story on Cuba. Is it the pink elephant in the room, the obvious thing that no one wants to acknowledge? Draw your own conclusions based on "facts and knowledge," not propaganda or incomplete reporting. Blockades, whether in Canada or Cuba, cost an economy.

TK Hernandez

Vietnam receives land in Cuba to produce rice

In the first months of 2025, it is intended to reach the first thousand hectares

PINAR DEL RIO, Cuba – Engineer Jorge Félix Chamizo says there are no two options: "This has to go well, no matter what."

Before us is the 308-hectare field that stretches out into the horizon, where an unprecedented experience for Cuban agriculture is taking place. For the first time, land is handed over to a foreign company for exploitation.

We are on the flat terraces of Cubanacán, the "flagship

Continued on the next page

farm" of the Los Palacios Agroindustrial Grain Company, south of Pinar del Río. Chamizo, the deputy director of the entity, explains that it is considered as such because the seed is produced there and because it has the best irrigation systems and the most significant number of areas set up with engineering systems.

However, he admits that lack of maintenance had led to many fields and canals being overgrown with weeds. So, in recent months, hard work has been required to prepare them for use.

The director claims that a Vietnamese company will be responsible for a large part of this land, which will be handed over to it for three years. Chamizo said the aim is to complete the planting of the first thousand hectares of rice in the first months of 2025. This, however, should only be the beginning, as the Vietnamese entity has expressed its intention to grow to 5,000 hectares.

This is a considerable figure, considering that for the cold season, Los Palacios proposed a plan of 3,500 hectares.

Unprecedented Experience in the Country

Although the collaboration in the rice sector between Vietnam and Cuba is not news, the new initiative, which is being implemented in Pinar del Río, goes beyond everything that has been done until now.

"The handover of land is something unprecedented in the country," says Chamizo, adding that it will be accompanied by a series of policies intended to increase foreign investment.

"One of them is that the Vietnamese company will directly hire the Cuban workforce it needs."

In addition to bringing its own specialists, the entity from the Indochinese nation will provide the fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and other resources necessary for production. Meanwhile, the Agroindustrial Grain Company will provide machinery services.

A new feature is the use of hybrid varieties obtained in Vietnam, with a high tillering capacity, with which the demand for seeds is reduced from 150 kilograms per hectare to only 30.

In the first year, the manager says, the expected yield is seven tons per hectare, and from the second year onwards, this is expected to increase to eight. This is several times higher than the yield planned by the Pinar del Río entity on its land, which would be 1.7 tons. However, he warns that it is not fair to make comparisons since, in this case, these are plantations in which no inputs will be applied due to the complex economic situation that the country is going through.

"Ours is a rice without a technological package," he says and reports that they have not used essential fertilizers in Los Palacios for four years. "So the soils, which have a low organic matter content, have been left unprotected."

Therefore, he believes that it is not an exaggeration to aim for a yield of seven or eight tons with the right inputs. In fact, he says that in Pinar del Río, it has been achieved before by some producers.

"It is certainly an ambitious, but achievable goal, provided that we have the resources, which we have not had, and also the possibility of applying them in time."

A Bridge for Increased Foreign Investment

To gradually integrate mechanisms and ways of doing things, engineer Jorge Félix Chamizo explains that, together with Vietnamese specialists, 16 hectares were planted experimentally.

Both parties have been testing what will later be carried out on a large scale. The differences between the two countries in how they produce rice are notable.

While in the Asian nation, it is based on a large number of people cultivating small plots, the areas are vast, very few people are involved, and most of the work depends on airplanes and machinery.

So, these first plantings have served to evaluate technologies, recalculate expenses, and adjust the initial ideas to the reality of the Island.

"We are adapting our techniques to Cuban conditions," explains Duong Ho Van, a senior specialist at the Vietnamese company. He also highlights the welcome and cooperation he has received in Los Palacios and says that, after intense days of work, "we feel optimistic."

Convinced of the importance of this experience being successful, not only because the rice harvested will stay in the country but also because it could increase foreign investment in the agricultural sector, Chamizo says that his company has been supporting in all necessary ways. In this regard, areas have been cleaned, and roads, irrigation and drainage systems and the airstrip located within the farm have been rehabilitated. In addition, work is being done to revive the industry, which has been inactive since Hurricane Ian, in 2022, to close the cycle in this same place.

"In a short time, we have completely changed the environment because we have every interest in the world in this being successful and in it being successful."

Source: Ronald Suarez Rivas for Granma
Published on January 7, 2025
Translated by Walter Lippmann for CubaNews

China donates 70 tons of equipment to Cuba to restore its electric system

Equipment such as radiators and engines were sent to the Caribbean island to promote energy transition and help with the recovery of its power grid.



The People's Republic of China has donated almost 70 tons of power generator parts and accessories to Cuba, aiming to contribute to the recovery of the Caribbean island's electricity system.

The materials arrived in the country on Sunday, December 29, and were received by China's ambassador to Cuba, Hua Xin, and Cuba's deputy ministers of Foreign Trade and Investment, Déborah Rivas, and Energy and Mining, Tatiana Amarán.

According to Ambassador Xin, the shipment is part of China's second assistance package in 2024 to help restore Cuba's electricity generation capacity to around 400 megawatts (MW). As part of an "emergency project list," the donations were included to provide Cuba with effective and rapid aid according to what the Chinese government calls "convenience for the most urgent."

"The next batches are expected to arrive soon by freight, commercial flights or container transportation," he said.

During the brief ceremony to receive the donations, Deputy Minister Déborah Rivas said that it "reflects the high sensitivity of the Chinese government authorities [to Cuban's needs] and their firm support for Cuba under all circumstances, joining, in a true expression of fraternity, the Cuban government's efforts to achieve energy sustainability."The deputy minister also stated that the island government estimates that this donation will benefit about 53,200 homes in the country.

The donations come as the Caribbean country is facing a serious energy crisis that has worsened in recent months. This year, Cuba has suffered three total blackouts in the national electricity system, leaving the country completely in the dark. Currently, power cuts are becoming more and more constant, affecting over 40% of the population daily. The situation has seriously damaged economic activity and the population's quality of life.

The US blockade and the energy crisis

The donations are part of agreements signed between Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, seeking to expand cooperation in strategic initiatives such as energy, transportation, food security and trade.

Cuba's electricity generation comes from old thermoelectric plants—most of which are more than 30 years old—which require constant maintenance to operate. However, due to the US blockade on the country — considered illegal by most UN countries —Cuba has for decades faced serious financial difficulties in making the necessary investments and maintenance to keep its electricity system running.

The import of fuel, like any other good, is hampered by the sanctions that Washington unilaterally imposes on countries that trade with Cuba, because any ship that arrives at a Cuban port is sanctioned, which generates staggering prices the island has to pay to import the products it needs.

In recent months, the Chinese government has donated various components for the installation of photovoltaic parks (renewable energies based on sunlight) on the Caribbean island. The region's climatic conditions make sunlight the most favourable source of renewable energy for the country.

Currently, more than 95% of the country's power generation comes from fossil fuels, while only 5% comes from renewable sources. Cuba aims to generate up to 25% of its electric energy from renewable sources over the next five years. By 2050, the aim is to cover the entire energy matrix with electricity generation based on renewable energy sources.

In mid-December, the Chinese government and Cuba officially announced the construction of several photovoltaic parks on the Caribbean island, with funds donated by China. It is estimated that these photovoltaic parks could save up to seven million U.S. dollars.

Source: Gabriel Vera Lopes for Brasil de Fato
Published on December 31, 2024



Notes from Cuba

CCFA's Brandon Earnest shares his experience traveling in Cuba, highlighting its reliable amenities, and welcoming atmosphere, despite common concerns about power outages and economic challenges.

For many people this time of year is the travel season to escape winter. I recently took a two-week vacation in Cuba at the end of January. I'm the type of tourist that likes to go off resort, so I booked an all inclusive resort close to Havana. While many people were mentioning I should be concerned visiting Cuba "with the power going out and many challenges", I didn't experience any problems people often have concerns with.

Yes, the blockade is making things very tough. Yes, the US has placed Cuba back on the "Sponsors of Terror" list, despite the absurdity and inhumanity of it. Yes, there are power outages that occur at times, this cannot be denied. However, the resort area I stayed at had reliable backup power and when I was in Havana I only noticed some minor outages that were rolling, planned outages for 3-4 hours every other day. This is not enough of a problem for most people to enjoy touring, even off-resort into the city. So my advice is to not let these challenges keep you from a wonderful vacation! You should feel secure booking travel to Cuba.

While I was there, there was a lively Jazz festival and all the usual events were still going on. Cuba has not shut down, on the contrary, they are ready and open for travellers.

Food at the resort was plentiful, even if it was more basic. I did eat off-resort several times and had terrific pizza and burgers, while on resort the food was typically a healthy serving of meat with rice, pasta, and choice of many vegetables with fruits and pastry desserts. The resort even had ice cream options each evening meal. My experience was terrific.

Don't let fear take Cuba off the table of options you have for travel, because the massive outages that happened last fall haven't been occurring regularly. The planned outages are managed, and they barely interrupt your vacation! And as many of us know, their economic situation is only improved with more travellers they receive, particularly Canadians looking for a winter getaway!

Brandon Earnest, CCFA

The electronic tourist visa will be mandatory for entry to Cuba from the end of June

In the first months of 2025, it is intended to reach the first thousand hectares

As of June 30 this year, all travellers entering Cuba as tourists must obtain an electronic visa through the evisa.cu portal. Gihana Galindo Enriquez, Commercial Director of the Cuban Ministry of Tourism (Mintur), explained that both the physical tourist card and the electronic visa (Evisa) remain valid. However, the Evisa offers greater security, efficiency, and convenience throughout the visa application process.

The Cuban Foreign Ministry highlighted that this shift represents a move toward a more modern consular system, better aligned with current global needs. Galindo Enriquez noted that travellers must access the evisa.cu website within 72 hours of entering Cuba. Upon completing the process, they receive a ten-character code to input into the Dviajeros platform, a digital entry form that generates a QR code for presentation to immigration authorities.

Additionally, Galindo Enriquez shared that the Dviajeros form can now be completed up to seven days before travel.

Source: Susana Antón for Granma, edited for clarity
Published on January 21, 2025



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Jazz Plaza, among stars

With two concerts at the National Theater of Cuba and one at the Heredia Theater in Santiago de Cuba, the Jazz Plaza 2025 Festival began a new edition yesterday.



The tribute to the 80th birthday of maestro Frank Fernández, one of the most intense moments at the opening of Jazz Plaza. Photo: Juvenal Balán

The Jazz Plaza 2025 Festival, celebrating its 40th edition, opened its curtains yesterday, featuring 400 foreign artists and numerous Cuban musicians.

With two concerts, at the National Theater of Cuba, and one at the Heredia Theater, in Santiago de Cuba, the Jazz Plaza 2025 Festival could not have had a better start.

At the Covarrubias Hall, the National Symphony Orchestra, conducted by composer, arranger and music producer Joaquín Betancourt, with pianist Rolando Luna as soloist, delivered a unique performance. Blending jazz, popular dance music and Cuban and universal songwriting, the concert demonstrated Joaquín's compositional maturity and Luna's mastery as a performer.

The stage welcomed other talented musicians such as Barbarito Torres, Annys Batista, Carlos Sarduy, Yaroldi Abreu, Felipe Cabrera and Olvido Ruiz, each leaving their mark with exceptional performances.

Then, the Avellaneda Hall hosted a tribute to maestro Frank Fernández on his 80th birthday, celebrating his legacy as a cornerstone of Cuban and global piano artistry. The event featured collaborations with Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, the National Choir of Cuba, and pianist Nachito Herrera, highlighting Fernández's artistry. The event featured collaborations with Los Muñequitos de Matanzas, the National Choir of Cuba, and pianist Nachito Herrera, highlighting Fernández's profound influence across diverse musical projects.

Meanwhile, another great concert was held at the Heredia Theater in Santiago de Cuba, this time by a constellation of musicians who have recently joined the Estrellas de Buena Vista project, which brings together, among others, figures such as Alejandro Falcón, Pancho Amat, Carlos Manuel Calunga and Osiris Valdés.

The Jazz Plaza Festival, running until February 2, was created in 1980 and had among its founders the great musician Bobby Carcassés. In its early years it attracted icons like Dizzy Gillespie and Max RoachIt, and has since grown into one of the most significant musical gatherings in Cuba. This year's edition expands its reach by including Santa Clara as a new venue. Dedicated to the 65th anniversary of ICAIC, maestro Frank Fernández, and the iconic orchestras Los Van Van and Irakere, the festival stands as a testament to Cuba's enduring cultural resilience and artistic excellence.

Despite challenging circumstances, the Jazz Plaza Festival remains a vital space for musical collaboration and cultural exchange, showcasing the power of institutional dedication, artistic education, and the unwavering spirit of Cuban culture in the face of adversity.

Source: Oni Acosta Llerena for Granma
Published on January 27, 2025
Edited for clarity and style

Cuba salutes women in science on their Day



HAVANA, Cuba – In a post on X, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel congratulated Cuban women scientists on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science—with Building a Future for Women in Science" as this year's theme—and praised their commitment and talent, describing it as a good example to girls.

"More than half of Cuban scientists have the face and soul of a woman", he wrote. "Congratulations, admirable women scientists"

The leader's message shared a tweet from the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment recognizing women's role in Cuban science and technology.

On his end, Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla reiterated the island's pledge to guarantee Cuban women and girls full and equal participation in science, which boasts a 53% female presence in the field of research.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed February 11 as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science in recognition of their key role throughout history in fields such as medicine, physics and technology.

Source: ACN, published on February 12, 2025

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CCFA Toronto Statement

The Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto is active in promoting friendship, respect, and co-operation between Canadian and Cuban peoples. We work with other Canadian groups and international organizations.

Our activities aim to:

- Provide information and organize events related to Cuba for the public and media, focusing on culture, health, education, sports, and Canada-Cuba relations
- Counteract the deliberate misinformation about Cuba spread by the U.S.
- End the illegal U.S. blockade of Cuba and defend Cuban and Canadian sovereignty from U.S. interference

About Amistad

Amistad is the newsletter of the CCFA Toronto, posted six times a year with volunteer labour. The Editorial Committee reserves the right to edit submitted material. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editorial Committee.

We encourage everyone interested to submit media articles, editorial ideas, and letters.
Email canadiancubanfriendshiptoronto@gmail.com
Deadlines are the 10th of even months.

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