

# *Cuba and the United States Hold Migration Talks*

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Washington, July 10 (RHC)-- Delegations from Cuba and the United States held a new round of migration talks Wednesday in Washington. A statement by the Cuban Foreign Ministry explains that both parties evaluated the commitments regarding migration accords currently in force.

Below is the full text of the Cuban Foreign Ministry statement:

On July 9, 2014, a new round of migration talks was held between the delegations of the United States and Cuba, which were presided over, respectively, by Edward Alex Lee, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Bureau for Western Hemisphere Affairs of the U.S. State Department, and Josefina Vidal Ferreiro, Director-General of the U.S. Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting took place in a respectful environment. An analysis was made of the evolution of the migration accords as well as the results of the actions carried out by the parties, both individually and collectively, to combat illegal migration, human smuggling and the falsification of migration documents, which included the celebration of technical meetings and workshops that were attended by the authorities in charge of these activities in both countries.

The Cuban side offered updated information about the results of the implementation of the new Cuban migration procedures which have been in force since January 2013.

The Cuban delegation expressed its satisfaction because both governments agreed, early in July, to enforce the Technical Operational Procedures for Search and Rescue Operations that will make it possible for the authorities of the two countries to cooperate in the efforts to save the lives of persons that might be in distress.

Once again, the Cuban delegation insisted that alien smuggling and illegal migration would not be eradicated, nor could there be a legal, safe and orderly migration between the two countries, as long as the “wet foot/dry foot” policy and the Cuban Adjustment Act remain in force, for these are also the main encouragement to irregular arrivals in the U.S. from third countries, by Cuban citizens who illegally depart from Cuba. The Cuban delegation particularly emphasized that these practices are incompatible with the measures adopted by Cuba to regularize migration and facilitate travel procedures for Cuban citizens; and is likewise incompatible with the interest expressed by both governments to enhance the effectiveness of the operations aimed at preventing and combating illegal migration and human smuggling.

The Cuban delegation emphasized its deep concern about the serious difficulties caused to the consular services that are offered by the Cuban Interests Section in Washington to Cuban, American and foreign citizens residing in the United States due to the interruption of the banking services as a result of the blockade policy and Cuba’s unfounded inclusion on the list of “State sponsors of international terrorism.”

The Cuban delegation reiterated its willingness to maintain these exchanges in the future, given their importance for both countries.

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