

Third Meeting of Cuba-U.S. Bilateral Commission Slated for Havana on Monday



Havana, May 13 (RHC/Xinhua) -- Cuba and the United States will hold a new round of talks next week, a senior foreign ministry official told the media in Havana.

Gustavo Machin, deputy director for United States, said delegations from the two countries will meet in Havana on Monday, in what will be the third session of the Cuba-U.S. Bilateral Commission. Machin said the focus will be bilateral political and economic ties, and that an agenda for the rest of the year will also be set.

The Cuban official said the two sides continued to have differences on key issues, but noted that less than a year since formally reopening embassies, significant progress has been made in areas like environmental protection and maritime security, and that postal services and direct flights had also been re-established.

The Cuban side said among issues that remained unresolved are the withdrawal of the U.S. from Guantanamo and the lifting of the blockade.

In the economic field, sanctions in place by Washington continue to hamper the normalization of ties, noted the Cuban official.

"Cuba has not been able to make financial transactions using U.S. dollars, because banks around the world fear that dealing with Cuban institutions may result in sanctions by the U.S.," said Machin.

The third session of the Cuba-U.S bilateral commission will be presided over by Josefina Vidal, director general for United States in the Cuban Foreign Ministry, and by the Counselor of the U.S. State Department, Ambassador Kristie Kenney.

The Cuba-U.S. Bilateral Commission was created in August, 2015. Its first meeting was held on September 11th, 2015.

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