

# *Candidate of OAS Leadership Supports Cuba's Participation at the Summit of the Americas in Panama*

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Washington, October 17 (RHC) — Guatemala's Eduardo Stein, one of the candidates seeking to become head of the Organization of American States, said Thursday that it would be regrettable if the presence of Cuba at the 2015 Summit of the Americas prompted other countries to boycott the event.

Panama, host country of the next Summit of the Americas, has publicly signaled that it wants to see Cuba attend the April gathering, while a formal invitation will not go out until late December.

"It would be very regrettable if, in this edition of the summit, if the Cuban government decides to accept the invitation and participate, other governments decide not to be there," said Stein, a former Guatemalan vice president.

"That would shatter the principle of inclusion that all of us are seeking as well as the possibility of understanding each other," he said during the latest in a series of forums at Washington's Woodrow Wilson Center featuring candidates for the OAS post.

While the United States government has yet to say whether it would boycott the summit if Cuba were there, Washington maintains that the Cuban government should be excluded, under the pretext of Havana's violation of democratic principles.

By cautiously reaching out to Cuba, Stein said, the Panamanian government has shown that it takes "very seriously" the idea of striving for full inclusion, Stein said.

Cuba was suspended from the OAS in 1962, during the Cold War when the United States imposed pressure on the organization in an attempt to overthrow the socialist government of Cuba and isolate it.

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