

Draft of Constitution ready for popular consultation in Cuba



Havana, July 23 (RHC)-- Cuba's National Assembly concluded on Sunday the second and last day of debates on a constitutional reform, with the approval of a draft text that will be submitted to popular consultations from August 13 through November 15.

After the completion of this stage, the document will return to the Parliament for the approval of the final version that will be submitted to an island wide referendum, through which citizens will approve or reject the reforms.

The draft ratifies the socialist character of Cuba and includes changes in the structure of the State, including the creation of the offices of president and vice president of the Republic, and of prime minister, in replacement of the current president of the State Councils and of Ministers.

It also reinforces people's rights and recognizes various forms of property, including socialist, mixed and private properties.

Addressing the lawmakers at the conclusion of the session, President Miguel Diaz-Canel made reference to some issues that need to be addressed.

He urged Cubans to step up the fight against corruption and illegalities and noted that “fighting corruption is not only a task of the government and the police, but a mission for the whole society.”

The president added that the unity of citizens would be the main tool in this endeavor and expressed his conviction that Cubans will support the fight against those harmful scourges.

Among other priorities, Diaz-Canel mentioned the need of bringing the central government closer to local authorities, in an effort to eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic procedures, and to better assess the progress of development programs, social communication, the computerization of society, and of health and education.

Diaz Canel also spoke about the difficulties that persist in the Cuban economy, with a weak growth of 1.1 % for the first half, citing the impact of the U.S. blockade, bad weather and a drop in tourism and other export earnings.

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