
Foreign Investment Grew in Cuba in 2018

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Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) grew in 2018, Foreign Trade and Investment Minister Rodrigo Malmierca said, adding 40 new business deals were struck amounting to 1.5 billion dollars.

Of those contracts, 35 are already being executed, the official pointed out at the Round Table TV news hour last night.

Malmierca recalled that since 2013 Cuba open business to FDI under a new policy on foreign capital with a sectorial approach.

The Minister mentioned the flow of FDI has been hindered by Washington's hardened economic and financial hostility. He added the US blockade not only damage Cuban companies, but enterprises from around the world as well.

He also spoke of problems resulting from the use of a double currency and liquidity shortage, plus 'subjective hurdles' such as delays and lack of trained staff. However, he expressed hopes these issues can be solved gradually.

Cuba needs 2 billion dollar FDI a year to boost the economy and put it on solid manner, but it has been unable to reach that figure so far, he admitted.

For her part, the Ministry's investment manager, Deborah Rivas, told the Round Table that since 2014 the number of business opportunities in the country's investment portfolio has been growing. In 2014, Cuba offered foreign investors 246 business projects and this year, 525, she added.

Some of those projects are being executed in tourism, such as hotel building and other infrastructure works, Construction Minister Rene Mesa said.

He highlighted there are 6,000 builders currently working in Mariel Special Development Zone (ZEDM, in Spanish), where they have completed 217,5 kilometers of road, 103 kilometers of railroad, 132 kilometers of aqueducts and 384,7 kilometers of power grid.

Invited to the Round Table, ZEDM's general manager Ana Teresa Igarza said this special business project in the western province of Artemisa has taken a big economic step.

She mentioned 300 million dollar investment was required to complete 200 hectares of infrastructure this year, including the completion in March 2018 of a multimodal terminal, which will be connected to the railway network.

The ZEDM has an employment potential of 10,000 people on diverse sectors; 43 business contracts have been struck so far, amounting to 474 million dollars of FDI, Igarza outlined.
