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Authorities in Charge of Constitutional Referendum Appointed in Cuba

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Havana, Dec 28 (Prensa Latina) The 17 members of the National Electoral Commission (CEN, in Spanish) in charge of organizing, directing and validating the February 24 referendum on Cuba's new Constitution have taken office on Friday in Havana.

The Capitol in Havana, seat of the National Assembly of People's Power's, hosted the ceremony with the participation of the electoral authorities, headed by Alina Balseiro.

The 17 members of the CEN were appointed by the Council of State, and between January 4 and 13, provincial, municipal, district and special electoral commissions will be appointed and constituted.

More than eight million Cubans are summoned to the polls on February 24 to establish, by direct and secret vote, their position regarding the Constitution approved unanimously by the National Assembly on December 22.

Its letter was enriched with popular opinion in a process described here as unprecedented in Cuba and the world, after a consultation held between August 13 and November 15 with the participation of almost nine million people in more

than 133,000 meetings in neighborhoods and work and study centers.

According to the Secretary of the Council of State, Homero Acosta, some 780,000 proposals were issued from those meetings and from the opinions expressed by Cubans living abroad, turned into 9,600 standard proposals after processing, half of which were incorporated in one form or another into the Constitution.

The project subjected to popular criteria underwent 760 changes, he pointed out.

The president, Miguel Diaz-Canel, speaking on Dec 22 at the closing of the second ordinary session of the National Assembly, called on citizens to support the constitution which would replace the one in force since 1976.

He also recalled the symbolism represented by the day chosen for the referendum, which marked in 1895 the resumption of the struggles for Cuba's independence.

On a date as memorable as February 24th, 124 years after the resumption of the independence struggle led by the National Hero Jose Marti, Cubans of these times, faithful to the traditions of struggles, will go to the polls to approve the Constitution, as an expression of firmness, loyalty to the legacy of the Commander in Chief of the Cuban Revolution, comrade Fidel Castro, and we will say with our vote: Yes to the Revolution (...)', he stressed.

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