
New Rules Consolidate Self-Employment in Cuba

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The introduction of new norms that regulate the interaction of Cuban or foreign juridical figures with self-employed workers will fortify the integration of self-employed Cubans into the national economy.

The director of self-employment attention and control at the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS), Idalmis Álvarez, said that the recent rules, in addition to those already enforced, are crucial to stabilize and improve this sector.

Less than three months after several regulations were implemented to update the self-employment legal system, it was prudent to approve other regulations to comply with requests made by self-employed workers or entities, the official explained.

Accordingly, it was announced that once the corresponding rules are enacted, the productive surplus of state-run entities can be sold to the non-state sector using bank accounts in either of the two Cuban currencies.

This initiative, which accompanies others such as the 'Zones +shops', has the objective of providing self-employed workers with additional access to raw materials.

After it takes effect, the legal entities, both state-run Cuban institutions and foreign ones, will be able to deal with non-state businesses using either official currencies.

Similarly, and with the objective of attaining territorial autonomy, Municipal Administration Councils now have the power to authorize certain activities currently approved by provincial governments.

The municipal councils are also entitled to regulate prices and set fixed or maximum tariffs when the conditions and characteristics of the territory require it.

Although the number of self-employment activities are now grouped in 123 options rather than the previous 201, five new jobs have been approved in order to increase the opportunities for those interested in this sector, such as the certified interpreter/translator category.

Four months ago, the corresponding authorities also approved the opportunity for one person to be involved in more than one self-employed job at a time as long as the activities do not interfere with one another.

Similarly, the limit of 50 employees per restaurant, bar or recreational center was eliminated and will be now determined by each location's size and needs.

The objective of the recent regulations on the self-employment sector is to ensure that it is carried out in an organized and legal way, commented Alvarez.

According to MTSS statistics, a total of 580,828 Cubans were self-employed at the end of 2018, representing 13 percent of the country's workforce.
