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**Cuba boosts Economy, Benefits the Population, Despite Blockade**

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Cuba announced today measures of popular benefit and boost for the economy, taken in the face of harshening economic, financial and commercial blockade that the United States has been applying against the island for almost 60 years.

This was announced by the Cuban Television News report, of which Prensa Latina transmits a version of the text released in this regard.

These were decisions resolved by the Council of Ministers, led by the president, Miguel Díaz-Canel, in order to promote an economic strategy based on maximizing internal capacities and human potential of the country.

The president explained they took into account the visits to provinces, the opinion stated by the population, propositions in congresses such as the one of the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba, the opinions of academics attending to the economic problems aggravated by the hostile policy of the U.S. government.

In this regard the Minister of Economy and Planning, Alejandro Gil, said the measures 'are focused on giving a greater response to the needs of the population and the economy,' encouraging the active participation of all actors in the search for solutions and in the confrontation with the economic siege imposed by the White House.

He commented that the provisions seek, in essence, to defend national production; diversify

and increase exports; replace imports; promote productive linkages; strengthen the state company; advance food sovereignty; promote local development; comply with the housing policy; and put science to solve problems.

The measures, which will be put into practice gradually, cover different aspects such as the increase of national production; municipal self-supply; local development projects; investments; retail trade circulation; and the promotion of agricultural production, said Gil at the aforementioned meeting of the Council of Ministers.

He specified that for the budgeted sector, the minimum wage is increased to 400 pesos and the average monthly salary per worker is then raised to one thousand 67.

'This measure includes one million 470 thousand 736 workers of the agencies of the Central State Administration, the local bodies of the People's Power, organizations and associations,' says the communication.

In the case of Social Security, one million 281 thousand 523 people will receive increases in their pensions.

For its part, the Minister of Finance and Prices, Meisi Bolaños, explained that the application of the Special Contribution to Social Security will be generalized to workers in the budgeted sector, as part of the principle that we all contribute to the financing of expenses that they support the benefits for this concept '.

It was specified that the expenses for this salary increase should not increase the deficit of the State Budget approved for 2019.

The Council of Ministers approved to perfect the mechanism for the payment of salaries in the business sector, maintaining the link with the productive results, which will be implemented as of 2020.

Among the incentives, it was emphasized they are aimed to grant the power to approve the payment systems to the director of the company; prioritize the application of the piece rate payment whenever possible; and keep as an indicator that conditions the payment for results in the companies the growth of the profits before tax, compared with previous periods.

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