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Cuba, Britain ink deals to boost bilateral ties

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Cuba and Britain signed several deals Thursday to boost bilateral cooperation in trade and sports, Cuban media reported.

British Foreign Minister Hugo Swire and Cuban Deputy Foreign Investment and Trade Minister Antonio Carricarte signed a memorandum of understanding designed to promote trade and collaboration in tourism, agriculture, energy, infrastructure and biotechnology.

Swire said his official visit to Cuba indicated Britain's support for the economic reforms spearheaded by the government led by Cuban leader Raul Castro.

Britain's business sector is eager to explore the investment opportunities offered by Cuba, he added.

"We want Cuba to be better known among Britain's business community, and for trade to grow in both directions, in addition to British investment in Cuba," said Swire.

Swire and Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Rogelio Sierra signed an accord to improve mechanisms for political consultations, including the topic of human rights. The two countries also signed a memorandum that seeks to expand cooperation in sports.

Swire praised Cuba's role in the international fight against the Ebola epidemic in West Africa and in the peace talks held in Havana between the Colombian government and the rebel Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

Swire's is the first visit by a British minister to the Caribbean country in a decade.

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