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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 093

### **Danilo Medina deems year 2018 as the beginning of a new phase of Dominican foreign policy**

SANTO DOMINGO.- President Danilo Medina regarded the year 2018 as a new stage in the foreign policy of the Dominican Republic with the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Likewise, with the unanimous election of the Dominican Republic as a non-permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations (UN), for the 2019-2020 mandate.

These considerations were expressed by President Danilo Medina during his speech on the nation's state of affairs, on the occasion of the 175th anniversary of the National Independence.

Speaking about the establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China on April 30, the Head of State said that "since then, we have been working to create a framework of cooperation between the two nations. This will allow us to articulate our approach in areas such as exports, visas or in regard to Chinese companies establishing operation in our industrial free zones".

In addition, the People's Republic of China has recognized the Dominican Republic as an approved tourist destination, which will possibly increase the flow of tourists to our country.

Danilo Medina also recalled the unprecedented achievement of the Dominican Republic when it was unanimously elected by the General Assembly of the United Nations, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. "The Dominican Republic, for the first time in its history, presided over the Council throughout the month of January".

Also, the Head of State indicated that in 2018 the "International Award to the Dominican Immigrant Mr. Oscar de la Renta" was instituted by decree to recognize the achievements of Dominicans living abroad and their descendants, up to the second generation.

"We are doing everything possible to simplify travel abroad. We achieved the elimination of visa in 16 countries; of which, nine have already entered into force and the other seven are in the process of ratification". Since last year, Dominicans can go to Russia, Brazil, Nicaragua, Qatar and Belize without a visa requirement.

In addition, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has recognized the progress made by the Dominican Republic in the field of human rights in recent years and has removed the country from Chapter 4-B definitively, where it should have never been listed.

"This was possible thanks to the efforts of the Dominican government and its diplomacy in making more evident and noticeable what I have always said, that we are a sovereign nation, a nation of laws and rights and that we are always going to ensure that laws and rights are respected", he stated.

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 094

### **President cites progress of the Dominican Republic in exports and competitiveness**

SANTO DOMINGO.- President Danilo Medina highlighted the progress achieved in export, competitiveness, and the creation of new jobs, when referring to his administration's accomplishments for 2018 during his speech on the nation's state of affairs before the National Assembly.

He assured that in 2018, declared Year of Export Promotion, "we were able to align strategies with the private sector like never before to take our products and services beyond our borders".

He noted that significant progress was made during those 12 months and an example of this is that the alliance with exporters was strengthened concerning crucial and tangible objectives to position the Dominican Republic in the region.

The Head of State underlined the creation of roundtables tables in the Caribbean and Central America designed to eliminate barriers and obstacles for the export of Dominican products to neighboring countries.

Also, he highlighted the creation of a technical roundtable to facilitate the export of meat products to markets in countries such as the United States.

The President emphasized that "we started 2019 in this manner, and, building upon what we achieved during the Year of Export Promotion and with the same level of optimism and cooperation with the private sector, we embark on this new Year of Innovation and Competitiveness".

He stated that the Dominican Competitive Strategy is ready, which includes 109 measures that will position the Dominican Republic among the best countries to do business with in the entire continent.

The time that it takes an entrepreneur to set up a company will be reduced from 16.5 days to 3 days and the industrial registration procedure will also be simplified.

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

No. 095

### **Dominican Embassy in Canada and Ministry of Tourism hold Dominican Gastronomic and Cultural Festival**

OTTAWA, Canada.- The Embassy of the Dominican Republic in Canada, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism through its Office of Tourism Promotion of Montreal, held a 5-day Dominican Gastronomic and Cultural Festival in the city of Ottawa, on the occasion of National Independence Day within the framework of the 65th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the Dominican Republic and Canada.

The festival featured a seminar on inclusive trade with executives from the Trade Facilitation Office of Canada (TFO Canada) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA-Canada), as well as a training seminar for tour operators. There were also exhibitions of Dominican artisans and hotel chains, and a special presentation prepared by representatives of CHOCAL (Chocolate de la Cuenca de Altamira).

Dominican cuisine was the protagonist in the three restaurants that were part of the Festival: Bistro Alegría, Soup Guy Plus and the Carleton Grill of the Sheraton Hotel, with the latter offering a lunch-buffet for three days based on the Dominican culinary art and prepared by the renowned Dominican chefs Indhira Peguero and Paulette Tejada.

The main activity of the event consisted in the celebration of a reception to mark the 175th anniversary of the National Independence, which was attended by businessmen and Canadian authorities, ambassadors and other representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Canada, representative figures of the Dominican community residing in this country, and members of the delegation that visited the Canadian capital to participate in the activities.

The Assistant Deputy Minister for the Americas at Global Affairs Canada, Michael Grant, delivered a speech in which he talked about the evolution of the Dominican-Canadian relations, highlighting the appeal of the culture and climate of the Dominican Republic for tourists from Canada.

The reception was also attended by the Speaker of the Senate of Canada, George Furey, and the senator from Quebec, Rosa Galvéz, as well as the Canadian Chief of Protocol, Stewart Wheeler.

The Dominican Ambassador Pedro Vergés Ciman took over the podium to remind the audience that 2019 marks 65 years of bilateral relations with Canada, and it will be a period to celebrate and bring to memory the achievements made since relations were officially established in 1954, as well as to consolidate the level of cooperation, cultural, commercial affairs between both nations. "That is why today we wanted to have a two-fold celebration; on the one hand, that of our independence and, on the other, that of the 65th anniversary of our relations with Canada, an endearing country to which I wish to attest, on behalf of our country and our government, the deepest respect and the most profound admiration", said the Ambassador.

Vergés also pointed out the advances of the Dominican Republic in education, poverty reduction, economic growth, tourism, and foreign policy.

The agenda of five days of activities culminated on February 28 with the celebration of the "Dominican Carnival Night".

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 096

### **Film destination: Dominican Republic strengthens itself as stage setting for foreign film shooting**

In recent years, the Government of the Dominican Republic has been working, through the Directorate General of Cinema (DGCine), to promote the country as a film destination. By 2018, 50 audiovisual productions were filmed, including reality shows, documentaries, short films, series, programs, commercials, reports, movies, music videos, and promotional videos, with a foreign investment of DOP \$3,221.3 million.

The increase seems significant, considering that in 2011 only six projects were shot, with an investment of DOP \$253.1 million. The DGCine highlights that in seven years the foreign investment in the country, based on audiovisual projects, increased by 92%, with a net increase of DOP \$2,968.2 million.

Among the projects shot in 2018 are the television series *The I-land*, with an investment of DOP \$966.2 million; *X Projet*, with DOP \$575.2 million; *E Projet 2018*, with DOP \$554.4 million; *Survivor Exaction Mexico 2018* with DOP \$319.6 million, and *The Long Song*, with DOP \$294.1 million.

*The Havisham Effect* and *47 Meters Down: The Next Chapter*, the only two foreign feature films filmed in the country in 2018, brought investments of DOP \$165.2 million and DOP \$59.9 million, respectively.

For 2019, DGCine already registered six foreign projects, with budgets approved for filming in the country, of which three are documentaries: *Latin American Amateur Championship I and II*, with DOP \$479,512 and DOP \$609,681, respectively. *Sugar*, with DOP \$470,000; a TV report (ESP Feature- Clayton Kershaw in Dominican Republic), with DOP \$593,568; a music video (*Half a Mil*), with DOP \$1.0 million, and a corporate video (TUI PR video campaign), DOP \$7,187.655.

But what does the Dominican Republic offer for foreign productions that make them decide to film in the country? Landscapes that adapt to any type of audiovisual production. For example, a Colonial Zone to replicate Havana, given the difficulties to shoot in Cuba. Also, mountain ranges, rivers, valleys, and arid regions to represent both forests and deserts scenery.

The country has three film studios with all the necessary elements for top-level audiovisual productions: *Estudios Quitasueño*, with more than 40,000 square meters devoted to audiovisual production; *Media Lantica* with an infrastructure for aquatic shooting, a horizon water tank, 3 recording studios, and more than 50,000 square feet of support facilities; and *La Casita de Producciones* with offices for pre-production, three studios, an interior patio, and a construction workshop.

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 097

### **Health tourism on the rise in the Dominican Republic**

Health tourism is a global phenomenon that involves traveling to another country to receive one or several types of medical care, therefore, it requires a significant level of commitment from both the public and private sectors in order to turn it into one of the great services that this industry offers.

Alejandro Cambiaso and Amelia Reyes Mora, President and Vice-president of the Dominican Association of Health Tourism (ADTS), affirm that in order for the country to keep advancing as a health tourism destination it is necessary to continually train human resources and invest in infrastructure and the acquisition of modern technologies.

In the Dominican Republic health tourism is not a new phenomenon, it has been practiced for more than two decades, especially with plastic surgeries and other procedures. It has even occurred spontaneously and informally, without having a structure that provides support to the entire value chain of this industry.

“This is precisely why the Dominican Association of Health Tourism (ADTS) is created, with the mission of promoting public-private partnerships, international accreditations, and a regulatory framework that allows strengthening the quality and safety of the supply of health services for the benefit of local and international patients”, said Dr. Cambiaso.

He indicated that there are medical centers in the country with extensive experience in health tourism; According to their statistics, last year they received from 41,500 to 65,000 international patients in health tourism.

Dr. Cambiaso announced that in the coming days it will be published a study that was carried out by the National Competitiveness Council with the support of the ADTS, to measure the market with greater precision and “make a comparison with other destinations. This initiative will allow us to do strategic planning for this industry in conjunction with the Ministries of Health and Tourism”, he said.

The President of ADTS stressed that wellness tourism is an industry six times larger than traditional tourism, since it covers activities that seek to improve the quality of life of people, through improvements in physical, mental, spiritual, and social health. It has had a major boom in the industry of spas, hot springs, massage centers, aromatherapy, and similar businesses.

Dental services, dental implants, general surgery, plastic surgery, cardiovascular surgery, orthopedics, ophthalmology, cancer treatments, fertility programs, weight loss surgery, and executive check-ups are the main services that travelers look for in the country.

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## NEWS SHEET

### EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 098

## **Women scientists from the Dominican Republic make the SGN a role model institution in gender equality**

Since the beginning of human beings' coexistence in our island and its evolution, until reaching what we now call the Dominican Republic, women have contributed significantly within the various areas in which they have had the opportunity to participate.

For centuries, and even in the field of geology, dozens of women with brilliant minds were overshadowed by their gender status. However, many of the great discoveries of science were and are the work of them. That is why in the Dominican National Geological Service (SGN) the progress that the Dominican woman has had can be seen, noting that out of 11 projects that are currently carried out in the institution, 9 are led by women.

62% of the management and administrative positions of the SGN are occupied by professional women trained in different areas of science such as civil engineering, architecture, and geology; as well as accounting, marketing, and industrial-organizational psychology.

The entity is an institution that produces up-to-date information on the basic geological characteristics of the national territory. And it is a place where the creation and dissemination of scientific knowledge is safeguarded for the well-being of Dominican society.

In the SGN it is women who dominate in the field of scientific research, which is the reason why on March 8, from this particular organization stands out the important contributions of them to our society. Some of these research projects have the support of the National Fund for Innovation and Scientific and Technological Development (FONDOCYT), of the Ministry of Higher Education.

But, what is the purpose of these studies where Dominican women stand out in the field of science? These studies, among other things, offer as results the formulation of development methods and land management or territorial reorganization plans for the nation. Data that is provided to local governments or municipalities for decision making. These studies also facilitate scientific cartographies regarding "where cities should grow" according to the geological characteristics of the region and its seismic microzonation.

These investigations also serve to prepare contingency and emergency plans concerning the risks of disasters that our island faces, which is why they significantly contribute to the policies developed by the government, in terms of prevention, mitigation, and disaster risk management. They provide research to various government institutions, as it is the case with the Ministry of Public Works, delivering crucial information for the planning and construction of infrastructure such as bridges, hospitals, roads and avenues, and housing, among others.

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## NEWS SHEET

### EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 099

## **HUB Cámara Santo Domingo 2019 becomes a pillar of export expansion for the Dominican Republic**

The 4th multi-sector trade exhibition “HUB Cámara Santo Domingo 2019” ended with great success, becoming a pillar for the growth and development of the country's exports.

These observations were made by the Director of the Center for Export and Investment of the Dominican Republic (CEI-RD), Marius de León, at the conclusion of the exhibition that took place from March 5 to 8, at the Convention Center of the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MIREX).

According to Marius de León, this type of event contributes to the growth of the country's exports and serves as a support for the well-being of all Dominicans.

“Undoubtedly, one more success based on our efforts from the CEI-RD to strengthen exports in the Dominican Republic, a pillar of growth and development that helps the welfare of our people.”

Democratization of business opportunities for SMEs

This trade platform offered an opportunity for local small and medium enterprises to establish new business relations with recognized companies.

### **Buyers from more than 24 countries**

“Once concluded, HUB Cámara Santo Domingo 2019 definitely served its purpose by allowing our producers with exporting capabilities to exhibit their products, and buyers from more than 24 countries that came together in this edition were able close business deals in the rounds of meetings that we coordinated for all of them.”

The HUB 2019 featured business rounds, exhibition of products and services from the local and international market, conferences and discussion panels related to the different participating industries, and product releases.

### **Innovative commercial exhibition concept**

HUB Cámara Santo Domingo is an innovative concept conceived and designed for the exhibition of products and services, networking, expanding business relationships, updating concepts, discovering new trends, and closing businesses deals.

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 100

### **Large delegation of foreign writers will attend the Santo Domingo International Book Fair**

The 22nd Santo Domingo International Book Fair 2019 (FILSD 2019), will be held from April 25 to May 5. A little over a month before its inauguration, the Ministry of Culture announced that a large number of writers and academics have confirmed their participation.

Ruth Herrera, General Director of “Libro y la Lectura” and of the Book Fairs, informed that authors from Mexico, Colombia, Cuba, and Puerto Rico have confirmed their participation in the FILSD 2019.

Among the authors that will attend one of the most popular cultural event of the Dominican Republic are: Homero Aridjis (Mexico), considered one of the essential contemporary writers of Hispano-America; Adolfo Castañón (Mexico), Mexican poet and essayist, specialist in the mail exchanges between Pedro Henríquez Ureña and Alfonso Reyes; the poet, narrator, and journalist Darío Jaramillo Agudelo (Colombia), and the novelist and essayist William Ospina (Colombia), author of an extensive and acclaimed work.

Also have confirmed their attendance Elena Medel, Spanish poet, scholar of women's poetry; the journalist and new generation novelist Carlos Manuel Álvarez, and the essayist Rafael Rojas, both from Cuba, residing in Spain and Mexico, respectively.

From Puerto Rico, which is the guest of honor of this fair, have confirmed attendance the multifaceted writers José Luis Vega, poet, narrator and essayist, and Mayra Santos Febres, narrator, poet, and cultural manager.

Also, the poet Mara Pastor, the academic Sheila Barrios, and the novelist Juan López Bauzá.

From the Dominican Diaspora residing in the United States, Canada, and Spain, will come: the poet and essayist Rei Berroa, poet Yrene Santos, the narrator Rey Andújar, the critic Néstor Rodríguez, and the poet and storyteller Rosa Silverio.

From Puerto Rico will also come the essayists, critics, and academics Miguel Ángel Fornerín, Eugenio García Cuevas, and Carlos Roberto Gómez, editor and expert advocate of Dominican literature, all of whom are collaborators in the organization of this FILSD 2019.

In December 2018, the Minister of Culture, Eduardo Selman, announced that the cultural event will take place at the Colonial City of Santo Domingo and will be dedicated to the award-winning Dominican storyteller Virgilio Díaz Grullón. The country guest of honor is Puerto Rico.

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 101

### **Self-generation of renewable energy grows in the country**

In the Dominican Republic there is a great growth in the self-generation of renewable energy for domestic, commercial and industrial use, generating 96 megawatts in this segment.

This information was released by the Executive Director of the National Energy Council (CNE), Ángel Canó, during his participation in the “Encuentro Económico de HOY”, in the company of Luis Morilla, Director-Nuclear; Nelson Burgos, CNE Legal Director; Mercedes Arias, Director-Electricity, and Yeulis Rivas, Director of Alternative Sources of that institution.

The Executive Director of the CNE attributed the growth of self-generation to the incentives offered by Law 57-07 on Incentives for the Development of Renewable Energy and Special Programs, in which there is a greater level of awareness concerning the care of the environment and a new niche for commercial banking, which is already granting loans for the installation of solar panels that are used as collateral. He also stressed that the costs of equipment to generate renewable energy have fallen.

Among the law's benefits are tax exemptions: 100% for imported equipment and machinery, including transformation, transmission, and interconnection equipment. Also a 100% exemption of the value-added tax (ITBIS) for equipment and machinery. In addition, incentives to self-producers: granting up to 40% of the total investment as a credit to income taxes, Decree 253-12. Likewise, incentives to community projects: access to financing funds up to 75% of the total cost of the work and its installation (up to 500KW).

Canó highlighted that the Net Measurement Program is a service provided by the distributor to customers who have their own generation systems that use renewable energy sources interconnected to their distribution networks, in accordance with the provisions of article 20 of Law 57-07, a norm that has had a great impact on the Dominican society, since it allows users to sell the surplus of their self-generation from renewable sources, which together with the established tax incentives by that legislation guarantees the recovery of the investment made in an approximate period of five years.

He indicated that 96 megawatts of net metering are being generated by private companies (banks, industries) and domestic use. He said that the number of users has been growing exponentially, since in 2012, when the program began, there were only 200, while by 2018 there were already 3700 among all the energy distributors (edes) and the closed system.

He said that in addition to the self-generation of energy with solar panels, there are small factories that use biomass to produce energy, mainly in poultry, swine, and bovine production.

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 102

### **Danilo Medina awards Medal of Merit of the Dominican Woman to 14 outstanding women**

Santo Domingo.- President Danilo Medina awards Medal of Merit of the Dominican Woman to 14 outstanding women from different areas of society at an event in the Palacio Nacional (Presidential Palace), along with Vice President Margarita Cedeño de Fernández, the Minister of Women, Yanet Camilo, the first lady, Cándida Montilla de Medina, and other officials.

The awarded women are: Dr. Alma Altagracia Bobadilla Tavares, in the area of health. She graduated in Medicine, was the founder and first director of ARS SeNaSa. Kathleen Martínez and Ryna Karina Then Vargas, for their work abroad. Martínez is a lawyer, diplomat, and archaeologist, the first researcher in history who, due to her findings, has managed to place the Dominican Republic on the map of the intellectual community.

Also the Pilot Major María Altagracia Tejada Quintana, who graduated in Military and Aeronautical Sciences at the Military Academy Batalla de las Carreras in 2005. First Dominican women to pilot a super Tucano airplane.

Also awarded were Ramona García Pérez, from politics, with a degree in Education. She promoted several projects in favor of women and the environment within the Lower Chamber of the Dominican Congress and from the Commission on Women and the Environment.

From the Education field: Sofia Georgina Khoury Zouain de Pérez. In Philanthropic Work, Dulce Esperanza Medrano. From San José de Ocoa, she arrives in Santo Domingo to work on her degree in School Counselling at UNPHU. With her work she has made an impact in the areas of education, health, environment, and gender equality.

In the field of arts, the merengue music artist Belkis Concepción. Gladys Sofía Azcona from politics. Also, the judoka María García de Cáceres, Ana Silvia Contreras for community work, the union activist Carlota Aydee Mueses, and Dulce Esperanza Medrano for her philanthropic efforts.

While from the business community Elena Viyella de Paliza stands out.

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 103

### **Dominican Republic is 2nd Latin American country with least discrimination against women, says OECD**

France - The Dominican Republic is the second country in Latin America and number 28 among 120 countries from different parts of the world with the least discrimination against women, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

It is preceded by Colombia, which is the country on the American continent where women are least discriminated by laws or social norms and ranked 14th worldwide, preceded only by European states.

After the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua (30 and 19%), Brazil (37 and 21%), Bolivia (40 and 21%), Uruguay (43 and 22%) and Honduras (44 and 22%).

At the top of the world list are Switzerland (8%), Denmark (10%), Sweden (11%), France (11%), Portugal (11%) and Belgium (11%).

The index, which measures the magnitude of this discrimination (from 0 to 100%) in 120 countries around the world with comparable statistics, is a weighted synthesis of more than thirty variables in four thematic areas.

They refer to discrimination within the family, restrictions on physical integrity, limitations on productive and financial resources, and civil liberties.

Colombia is close to formal equality, especially in regard to the family (10%) and somewhat less in the limitations of access to productive and financial resources (14%) and in the restrictions on physical integrity (15%). Its worst indicator is in the restriction of women's civil rights (21%).

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## NEWS SHEET

### EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 104

## **Miguel Mejía in New York: Dominican Republic is executing a good neighbor policy; an integration model**

New York - Miguel Mejía, Minister of Regional Integration Policies of the Dominican Republic, highlighted the integration process that his country is developing, a model that has generated sympathy in the Central American region.

During a panel held at Baruch College, the Minister of Regional Integration Policies detailed the different angles of this model. The event also addressed the public policies implemented by the government of President Danilo Medina in the field of environment and migration.

In addition to Miguel Mejía, the speakers were Héctor Cordero Guzmán, professor of international affairs, moderator, and Stephanie R. Golob, professor of political science, both of Baruch College. Also, the Dominican officials Washington González, vice minister of Interior and Police; and Omar Ramírez, Adviser to the President on Environment.

### **Vision of integration**

Miguel Mejía offered details of the regional integration vision that President Danilo Medina has, who at the beginning of his administration, in 2012, brought about the Ministry for Regional Integration Policies into the Government's organization structure, appointing him as the head of it. "The President emphasized the insertion of the country in the regional blocks because he understood that we all have big problems that are common for some countries."

"Then, it was necessary for us to group together, identify our needs, and go united as one to begin dialogues with the largest nations and obtain benefits that improve the lives of our fellow citizens."

### **SICA resolution**

That has generated a lot of sympathy in the region. In that sense, the Central American Integration System (SICA) issued a resolution indicating that all Central American countries should emulate the Dominican Republic, creating a Ministry for Regional Integration Policies.

"Since 2012, the country has participated in all the regional and interregional integration blocks such as CARICOM, SICA, ACP and European blocks, and with the United States we have several trade agreements", said Mejía. He added that "Dominican Republic is executing a policy of good neighbor with other countries, which indicates that we have no conflict with anyone in the world."

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 105

### **The Dominican Republic exported more than US \$871 million in the month of February**

Dominican exports reached US \$871.09 million in the month of February 2019 for a year-on-year growth of 3.76%, according to a report published by the Export and Investment Center of the Dominican Republic (CEI-RD).

The main products exported in the month of February were: gold, cigars, circuit breakers, medical instruments, t-shirts and shirts, and instruments for ostomy procedures. Gold was the product that had the highest percentage share with 13.9%, followed by cigars with 7.7%.

The report presented by the CEI-RD indicates that the products that experienced the greatest contraction are: copper minerals (US\$ -5.8 million), cocoa beans (US\$ -4.0 million) and ultraviolet-ray devices (US\$ -3.9 million). They explain that exports of copper ore decreased because during that period there were no exports of this product. In the case of cocoa beans, 22 companies reduced their exports, and in the case of ultraviolet-ray devices, three companies from the industrial free zones showed a reduction in their output.

In relation to January-February of 2019 compared to the same period of the previous year, the CEI-RD reports that the year-on-year variation of exports exhibited an increase of 6.84%.

As detailed in the report, this is because in 2018 the cumulative exports reached US \$1.619 billion while they stand at US \$1.730 billion for those same months of the current year.

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No. 106

### **Dominican Republic presents at OAS a digital government plan for Latin America and the Caribbean**

Washington D.C.- During the participation of the Dominican Republic before the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs of the Organization of American States (OAS), they presented the digital government plan that the Network of e-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean (Red GEALC) will be implementing this year.

In Washington, the delegation of the Network Leaders, headed by its President and General Director of the Presidential Office of Information and Communication Technologies (OPTIC), Armando García, explained that the work agenda has prioritized cross-border services, open data, innovation in the public sector, and public software.

We will also work on knowledge management, digital government measurement, emerging technologies, and communication.

According to details given by the President of the GEALC Network, the annual plan he promotes is geared towards the development of digital government, innovation, and the strengthening of transparency and open government in the countries that make up the organization.

During this year, a regional workshop will be held, as well as several sub-regional meetings and exchanges to discuss the issue of Digital Signature and cross-border services.

“With a cross-border digital signature, electronic transactions between countries in the region will be reliable and secure”, said the President.

#### Meeting with the Committee on Juridical and Political Affairs

The Dominican Republic, represented by OPTIC’s Director General and President of Red GEALC, is currently in Washington to show the advances in e-government in the region, the work plan for this year and to hold meetings with different crucial organizations for the success of ongoing projects.

“Since 2012, the main mission of our country has been to promote e-government, transparency, and the improvement of processes and services to benefit citizens, now we are going for more, promoting these policies without border limits”, said Armando García.

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No. 107

### **Dominican Republic registers new record in arrival of tourists in cruises**

Last Sunday the Dominican Republic reported that 399,169 tourists arrived aboard cruise ships during the first two months of the year, which represents a new record for this country in that period.

The monthly report of the Directorate of Cruises of the Ministry of Tourism (MITUR) indicates that in January the country accounted for 173,928 cruise ship tourists and 60,180 crew members with the arrival of 76 vessels, totaling 234,108 visitors with a year-on-year variation of 13.85%.

While in February, 165,061 foreign visitors arrived at the main marine terminals, mostly La Romana (east) and Amber Cove in Puerto Plata (north), representing a year-on-year growth in the flow of “cruise passengers” in the order of 8.5 %.

MITUR said in a statement that those figures from the first two months of this year represent an increase of 38,790 additional visitors compared to the same period in 2018, when a total of 360,379 cruise ship tourists visited the Dominican coasts.

In addition to this upturn achieved in the aforementioned period, during the first week of March, eleven luxury vessels and yachts arrived in Puerto Plata and La Romana with about 41,000 visitors, the document stated.

Also, it was highlighted that to this “dynamism and growth” is added, from last February, the arrival at Bahía de las Águilas, the southwesternmost region of the country, of the first French luxury vessel Le Ponant, marking a milestone in the evolution of the industry of cruises in the Dominican Republic.

The tourism industry is the main source of income of that country, which reported revenues of more than 7 billion dollars in 2017, which represented 38% of the total exports of goods and services in the country and 25.3% of the foreign currency income.

A report from the Dominican Central Bank explained that in that year the country was ranked in first place in terms of income generated by tourism in Central America, the insular Caribbean and South America, and fourth place in the arrival of international tourists, surpassed only by Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.

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No. 108

### **Dominican Republic could be the production center for Korea's exports to the region**

The Dominican Republic could become the production center for Korea's exports to Latin America, North America, and Europe according to the considerations of the Korean Ambassador to the country Byung-Yum Kim.

The Ambassador of the Asian nation highlighted the country's economic growth, as well as the legal security, infrastructure development, and Law 8-90 on the Promotion of Free Trade Zones as important factors that make our market attractive for their investment.

Korea has been investing in the Dominican Republic since 30 years ago, with more than 10 companies operating in the country.

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No. 109

### **12 more companies will start operations in the free zones of the Dominican Republic**

The National Free Trade Zones Council (CNZFE) approved permits for the development and operation of two new industrial parks, as well as for the installation of 12 free zone companies, which will create about 1,808 direct jobs.

During the ordinary session of the Council, the Minister of Industry, Trade and SMEs, Nelson Toca Simó, who presided over the meeting, informed that these new companies have estimated an investment of more than DOP \$1.67 billion for their development and operation of productive activities, which will generate a foreign currency income of the approximately US \$47 million.

With respect to the two new parks, an investment of more than DOP \$349 million was estimated, the creation of 2,876 jobs, and the generation of a foreign currency income amount greater than US \$46 million.

According to the director of the National Free Zones Council, Luisa Fernández, the free zone industrial parks of Las Carolinas and La Habanera will run their operations in Monte Plata and Santiago, respectively.

Among the productive activities that will be carried out by the new companies are: manufacturing and distribution of boxes for cigars and related items, extraction and commercialization of avocado oil, manufacturing, assembly, and molding of medical devices, manufacturing of candles, fruit processing, call centers, and sterilization of medical devices.

They will have a socio-economic impact in Santiago, San Cristóbal, Bonaó, Boca Chica, and in the city of Santo Domingo.

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No. 110

### **Canada promotes leadership of young Dominican women**

The Ambassador of Canada, Shauna Hemingway, said yesterday that in order to reduce the gap in gender inequality in the country the leadership of future generations must be promoted, listening to their voices and giving them the tools they need to be successful.

With this purpose she announced the “Young Women Leaders Summit”, which will take place from March 21 to 23 at the Jaragua hotel.

“This year, as an embassy we are focused on young Dominican women, to continue enriching our own course and to open ourselves to the new and innovative ideas we will need to face the challenges of today”, she said.

She announced that 20 young women, between 18 and 22 years old, from different regions of the country were chosen for the summit, and they will participate in meetings with governmental and non-governmental personalities, multilateral organizations, and panels with "influencers".

Hemingway explained that during the summit, the young women will work in the development of their capacities to eventually present community projects to the Canadian Fund for local initiatives towards 2020.

#### **Relaunching**

As part of the event, the Embassy of Canada also relaunched the "Él por ella RD" campaign, with the support of UN Women and the Vice Presidency of the Dominican Republic, and with the specialist Luis Vergés as spokesperson.

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## NEWS SHEET EMBASSY OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN CANADA

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No. 111

### **Dominican Chancellor Miguel Vargas signs three agreements with Argentina**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Miguel Vargas, and his Argentine counterpart, Jorge Faurie, signed three bilateral agreements, while the top Dominican official proposed that both governments negotiate the elimination of tariffs in a small group of products.

Specifically, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of a Joint Working Council for the Promotion of Trade, Investment, and Supply chain, according to a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Likewise, they signed an Agreement for the Recognition and Validation of University Degrees to carry out Postgraduate Studies, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding between the White Helmets, (Argentine international humanitarian assistance body), and the Dominican Emergency Operations Center (COE), for Disaster Risk Management and Humanitarian Assistance.

“The signing of these instruments shows the desire to continue creating solid foundations that will further strengthen these ties”, said the Dominican Minister, after signing the documents at the facilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the South American country.

#### **Proposal to reduce tariffs**

Regarding a possible trade agreement, Miguel Vargas explained that currently the Latin American countries that compete directly with the Dominican Republic enjoy tariff preferences of up to 0% because they are full members of the Latin American Integration Alliance (ALADI).

“However, as an observer we must pay 20% more than the rest, particularly in the case of cigars, which is a great disadvantage for us”, said the Dominican official.

Similarly, he defended the idea that in the near future both nations could sign an agreement for the elimination of visa requirements for ordinary passports for Dominican citizens, “according to the principle of reciprocity”.

Last February, an agreement was finalized that established that Dominicans who have visas from the United States or the European Union can enter Argentine territory for tourism purposes.

Also, the Dominican Minister suggested the signing of a framework agreement on motion picture and audiovisual matters, which includes consulting, training, and the exchange of experiences in these fields.

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No. 112

### **Chancellor of the Dominican Republic Miguel Vargas signs three agreements with Peru**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Miguel Vargas, and his Peruvian counterpart, Néstor Popolizio, signed three cooperation agreements on extradition, air services, and natural disaster risk management.

Minister Vargas assured that “these instruments will benefit both nations”, adding that relations between the two countries are at an excellent historical moment.

The agreement on extradition establishes the common rules on this area, while the agreement on air services will contribute to further boost the flow of tourists between both countries.

The third signed document is a memorandum of understanding for cooperation in the field of disaster risk management between the Civil Defense Institute of Peru and the Civil Defense of the Dominican Republic.

With the signing of these agreements ended the 3rd Meeting of the Political Consultations Mechanism between the Dominican Republic and Peru, celebrated in the headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru.

Miguel Vargas was pleased with the outcome of the meeting: “We talked about cooperation in vital areas such as tourism, commerce, social assistance, and the prison system”.

In addition, the two ministers of Foreign Affairs and their technical teams discussed the fight against drugs, the situation in Venezuela and Nicaragua, among other issues.

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No. 113

### **Donald Trump hosted President Danilo Medina in Florida**

After returning from his working visit with the President of the United States, Donald Trump, and Caribbean leaders, President Danilo Medina highlighted the cordiality, respect, and interest in building mutually beneficial relations with the Caribbean.

After being approached by journalists, Danilo Medina reported on the topics discussed at the meeting and noted that Donald Trump is very interested in working with Caribbean countries on trade, security, energy, fighting international crime, and natural disasters, among other topics.

#### **Trade and economic proposals to the United States**

He stressed that in the particular case of the Dominican Republic, he requested to take some measures to resolve some situations of a commercial and economic nature.

“First of all, we proposed that the government of the United States make the efforts so that the Dominican Republic can be favored with the elimination of export fees on steel exported to Puerto Rico”, he stated.

He also explained that even though in the United States there is a law that requires the Armed Forces to buy uniforms and boots only to North American companies, the US government has made an exception for countries with which it has Free Trade Agreements such as Chile, Canada, and Mexico.

“And we have requested that companies operating in the Dominican Republic could also be allowed to export boots for the military of the United States”, he explained.

With regard to natural disasters, the Head of State said that the Dominican Republic has been demanding the establishment of an emergency fund so that at times when one of the Caribbean countries is affected, it could make use of those funds.

“This is not to give away money, but to offer soft loans with low interest rates and that are long-term in nature”, he said.

President Donald Trump's meeting with Caribbean leaders took place yesterday at the Mar-a-Lago complex in Florida, where, along with Danilo Medina, also participated the President of Haiti, Jovenel Moïse, and the Prime Ministers of the Bahamas, Hubert Minnis; of Jamaica, Andrew Holness; and of Saint Lucia, Allen Chastanet.

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