



PRESS RELEASE

Cuba-U.S. Collaboration in a New Era of Change Successes and Challenges for Environmental and Historic Preservation Initiatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, DC, May 31, 2018 – Cuban Ambassador Jose R. Cabañas Rodríguez Ph.D. will kick off an event on June 4 that considers how the U.S. and Cuba can work together at an uncertain political time, marking one of his first public appearances since Miguel Díaz-Canel succeeded Raúl Castro as president of Cuba last month. The event, co-hosted by the nonprofits Center for International Policy (CIP) and Ocean Doctor, focuses on environmental sustainability and historic preservation, long cited as among the most successful areas of collaboration between Cuba and the U.S. even before the normalization of diplomatic relations in 2014.

A range of panelists will highlight recent successful conservation and historic preservation efforts in Cuba, principally ones that are small-scaled and community based. Also featured will be the release of a comprehensive new report by Ocean Doctor and CIP entitled, **“A Century of Unsustainable Tourism in the Caribbean: Lessons Learned and Opportunities for Cuba.”** The rapid development of the Caribbean tourism industry has taken place at the cost of the sustainability of Caribbean cultures and ecosystems. “The past 50 years have seen unprecedented environmental degradation in the Caribbean, including the loss of 50 percent of its coral cover,” says Dr. David E. Guggenheim, founder and president of Ocean Doctor. Landscape modification due to tourism development is a main driver of habitat loss in the Caribbean. Historic and cultural resources have felt the impact of tourism. Meanwhile, Cuba has followed a markedly different path and, as a result, still possesses healthy ecosystems and a vibrant, authentic culture. With mounting pressures of tourism, the report examines the unique opportunity Cuba has to create a sustainable future.

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The event, open to the public (RSVP required), will be held on Monday, June 4th 1-5pm at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1779 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036. Details and an RSVP form can be found at: <https://oceandocor.org/june4event>. The sustainable tourism report will be available for download at 9am EDT on June 4th from: <https://oceandocor.org/tourismreport>

This event and the report are part of the Cuba-U.S. Sustainability Partnership (CUSP), a project of the Center for International Policy, Ocean Doctor and Robert Muse & Associates, in consultation with Cuban governmental and nongovernmental agencies, to support Cuba's efforts to chart a sustainable course in the face of political changes and economic pressures.

The Center for International Policy (www.ciponline.org) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC that promotes cooperation, transparency and accountability in global relations. Through research and advocacy, its programs address the most urgent threats to our planet: war, corruption, inequality and climate change. The organization's scholars, journalists, activists and former government officials provide a unique mixture of access to high-level officials, issue-area expertise, media savvy and strategic vision. The organization works to inform the public and decision makers in the United States and in international organizations on policies to make the world more just, peaceful and sustainable. The Center for International Policy has worked in Cuba since the 1980s.

Ocean Doctor (www.OceanDoctor.org) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC, dedicated to protecting and restoring our oceans through hands-on conservation. The organization's mission is to "advance the conservation of the world's oceans through scientific research, education and community engagement." The organization works to develop and advance economically- and environmentally-sustainable solutions for coastal communities that protect and sustain coral reef ecosystems. The majority of the organization's work is based in Cuba where Ocean Doctor President Dr. David E. Guggenheim has overseen projects since 2000.

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