



FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE - Secretariat
CONVENTION - CADRE SUR LES CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES - Secrétariat

UNFCCC technical workshop on integrating practices, tools and systems for climate risk assessment and management and disaster risk reduction strategies into national policies and programmes

**Havana, Cuba
Hotel Meliá Cohiba**

10 to 12 March 2009

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

HOTEL AND CONFERENCE VENUE

The meeting will take place in Hotel Meliá Cohiba, Havana, from 10 to 12 March 2009. The Government of Cuba has made a block booking for participants in the Meliá Cohiba Hotel at a special negotiated rate of CUC 83 (single room) and CUC 96 (double room), incl. breakfast. This corresponds to approximately USD 90 for the single room and USD 103 for a double room. If you have not done so yet, please make your booking by sending the attached hotel reservation form to Ms. Lorena Fernandez-Cueto, e-mail lorena.menendez@insmet.cu, cc: ilambert@unfccc.int. The organizers recommend that participants stay in this hotel during the period of the workshop in order to facilitate easy and secure access to the workshop premises. The hotel stay is payable in cash to UNDP in CUC (see “currency” in section “general information” below) on Tuesday, 10 March. A payment service will be organized at the workshop venue for your convenience.

Meliá Cohiba Hotel
Ave. Paseo entre 1^a y 3^a
Vedado, Havana
Cuba
Tel.: +53 7 8333 636
Fax: +53 7 8344 555

E-mail: melia.cohiba@solmelia.com

Wireless Internet connection is available at the venue and access permits can be purchased at the reception. The voltage is 220V (see “electricity” under “general information” below).

Background information on the technical workshop can be obtained at <http://unfccc.int/4742.php>.

VISA:

Participants requiring visas for Cuba, or transit visas, are **strongly encouraged to contact the appropriate consular authorities by 27 February 2009**. A copy of the invitation to the workshop should be attached to the visa request in order to facilitate issuance. If further assistance is required in obtaining visas, please contact the UNFCCC secretariat (ilambert@unfccc.int) with a copy to our Cuban counterpart



(lorena.menendez@insmet.cu). The secretariat has received confirmation from our Cuban counterparts that participants will receive their visa free of charge. Persons accompanying you for private reasons will need a Tourist Card to enter Cuba. These cards can easily be obtained at any Cuban consulate by mail or in person. The cost is approximately USD 30, slightly varying by country. A list of all Cuban embassies and consulates worldwide can be found here:

http://europa.cubaminrex.cu/Consulares/directorio_deCuba.htm, more information on the issuance of visa and Tourist Cards is available at <http://emba.cubaminrex.cu/>

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE AT JOSÉ MARTÍ INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, HAVANA

The international airport is located approximately 20 km from Havana city centre and 16 km from the Conference venue. It has all the facilities of a modern international airport. Upon arrival, please be aware that luggage from your plane might be made available for pick-up on two different luggage belts in parallel. The customs authorities at the airport carry out security screening on arrival (the website of the General Customs of the Republic of Cuba is <http://www.aduana.co.cu/pasajero3.htm>). On departure, all passengers must pay an airport tax of currently 25 CUC (US\$ 28).

Metered taxis to the hotel/conference venue are available at the airport. The journey time is 20–30 minutes, the cost is approximately CUC 25. It is recommended to use registered, metered taxis and to avoid illegal taxis.

REGISTRATION TO THE WORKSHOP: Participants are required to register and obtain identification badges prior to the opening of the meeting on Tuesday, 10 March from 8:30 a.m. For this purpose, a registration counter will be set up in the lobby of the Meliá Cohiba Hotel.

DSA PAYMENT FOR FUNDED PARTICIPANTS:

All funded participants: Please present your **passport, flight ticket and boarding passes** during registration. These documents will be photocopied in order to make the DSA payment.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON HAVANA AND CUBA

Official name:	Republic of Cuba
Capital:	Havana (La Habana), population over 2 million
Language:	Spanish
Time zone:	GMT -5
Climate:	Cuba is the biggest island in the Caribbean. The island's climate is moderate and stable, tropical but cooler than elsewhere in the Caribbean. In Havana the average temperature during the period of the workshop will be around 26° C with an approximate minimum of 19° C and maximum of 27° C, an average of 7 rain days a month and a monthly precipitation of 58 mm. It is recommended to bring light clothing, mainly cotton and natural fibres; for walks and excursions bring flat comfortable shoes; sunglasses, sunhat and sun lotions. The Cuban weather is very pleasant but it is possible to have a short period of cool



weather due to a cool northerly air stream, and so a light jumper and a light jacket may come in handy.

Currency

Cuban Convertible Peso (CUC) and Cuban Peso (CUP; also known as *moneda nacional*, MN). CUC can be converted into CUP at a rate of 1 CUC = 24 CUP. However, visitors do not need any CUP because **foreigners are advised to pay for all goods and services in CUC.**

As at February 2009 the exchange rate for the Cuban Convertible Peso is 1 CUC = 1.08 USD = 0.81 EUR.

An online currency converter is available at

http://coinmill.com/CUC_calculator.html.

Convertible Pesos can only be bought and sold in Cuba with major currencies, preferably Euros, British Pounds or Canadian dollars. US dollars are not recommended. They are also convertible, but with an 18% tax

Money should be exchanged at banks, state-run casas de cambio (CADECAs) or international airports. It is advisable to exchange all local currency again before leaving the country, as the local currency cannot be exchanged outside Cuba.

Credit cards:

MasterCard and Visa are increasingly accepted, provided they are not issued by a US bank, but fees are often added. Cash can be obtained in banks with non-US Visa credit and Visa debit cards upon presentation of a passport. Cirrus/Maestro debit ATM cards are not accepted.

ATM machines:

Very rare.

Traveller Cheques:

US Dollar, Pounds Sterling and other major currencies are accepted; US Dollar cheques issued by US banks are not accepted. It is recommended to take cheques in a currency other than US Dollars.

Departure tax:

CUC\$ 25 (cash only).

Electricity:

Standard voltage in Cuba is 110 Volts, while newer hotels use 220 Volts. Two types of outlets are in use: the flat US-type outlet for 110 Volts and the round two-pin plugs for 220 Volts.

Telephone:

The country code of Cuba is +53

The outgoing code for international calls is 119, followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 119 44 for the United Kingdom).

The city code for Havana is 7 from abroad and 07 for national calls from outside Havana.

Health:

No mandatory vaccinations.

Note that it is highly recommended that you only drink bottled water during your stay in Cuba.

- Safety: Cuba is safe by any world standards, and the average visitor has no reason to worry about personal safety on the streets, in the hotels, at the beaches or any other place a traveller might visit. Security standards apply as they do in any big city. Be aware of pick-pockets and do not walk alone at night in scarcely lit streets. When going out at night avoid the side streets and avoid, if possible, walking alone. It is recommended to take a taxi to return to your hotel.
- Tipping: Tipping in CUC is welcomed. A 5–10% tip is appreciated in restaurants and by taxi drivers. Small amounts are appreciated by all service staff.
- Official tourist website: <http://www.cubatravel.cu/>

Local map of the hotel/conference venue


