

President Diaz-Canel reviews Cuban housing program

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Cuban president Miguel Diaz-Canel reviewed this weekend the country's housing program, one of the main priorities of his government due to the shortages Cubans face.

Granma newspaper reports that Diaz-Canel convened the highest authorities of the Construction Ministry to receive information on the production of construction materials at local levels and to check on the capabilities of municipal governments to solve their own housing problems.

Thanks to the installation of artisanal plants to produce construction material in all 168 municipalities, in the last five years local production has grown between 8-15 percent annually.

At present, work is being done to extend this program with the activation of new plants in over 230 popular councils.

Tomás Vázquez Enrique, director of local production of materials of the Ministry of Construction, said that 80% of what is produced this way is meant for the population, while the remaining 20% goes to social works in municipalities.

By the end of 2017, the output of these plants throughout the country were of 316,000 cubic meters of aggregates, 13 million bricks, 40 million concrete blocks, 1,200 square meters of floor and wall tiles, and 37,000 concrete tanks, among others.

Production remains stable this year, but though materials are of proven resistance, sometimes have problems of aesthetics.

Officials stressed the need to increase accountability in terms of quality, since its lack shows disrespect to the people, they said.

Diaz-Canel also received an update on the manufacture of equipment for the mini-industries, including mills, molds, blocks, extruders, presses and concrete mixers, which are carried out in various entities of the country, an effort that must continue to be multiplied in order to further increase local production.

There was also a call to take advantage of all kinds of recyclable materials and equipment that could be reused in this effort.

In this regard, the Cuban President considered that the incentive of local production is one of the fundamental ways to gradually solve the housing problems that have been accumulating.

He commented that there are still potentialities to be exploited in the housing program and it is crucial to rely on the research carried out in construction matters in the country's institutes and universities.

We have to work with several alternatives, with different types of housing construction systems, because what works in one territory does not necessarily work well in another, he said. In this regard, he said, experimental polygons for the construction of small-scale housing can be feasible, where new materials and aesthetic forms are introduced.

In previous days, Diaz-Canel had held other similar meetings to discuss the progress of several other programs, also fundamental, such as transport, water systems, the digitalization of television, the State plan to confront climate change and the preservation of historical memory, as part of a working system in which these types of issues will be periodically reviewed.

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