



FROM THE ASCE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. We look forward to seeing all of you throughout the spring and summer as our planned ASCE sponsored events begin to materialize. In particular, we hope to see all of our Washington members at ASCE's biannual Carlos Diaz-Alejandro lecture which will be given by Dr. Carmen Reinhart on Thursday, April 28, 2011 at noon (details below). Dr. Reinhart needs no introduction for us as she has participated in ASCE for years, and her recent book, *This Time Is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly*, likely sits on many of our members' bookshelves. What is even more interesting for ASCE is that her current research links the work of Carlos Diaz-Alejandro (whose landmark papers such as "Latin American debt: I don't think we are in Kansas anymore" and "Good-bye financial repression, hello financial crash") to the recent financial crisis. We look forward to seeing you all at this marquee ASCE event:

"Why Reading Diaz Alejandro is Essential for Understanding Financial Crises"

Carmen Reinhart

***Thursday, April 28, 2011, 12:00 – 1:00 PM
C. Fred Bergsten Conference Center***

***Peterson Institute for International Economics
1750 Massachusetts Avenue, NW.
Washington, DC 20036***

As our outreach efforts continue, we have developed two new tools to improve ASCE's communications. First, to improve communication with you, our membership, we have developed an online Member Survey. This survey will be open until May 20, 2011, and we ask that all our members participate and share your views with the Board. The survey is anonymous, free, and can be completed by pointing your internet browser to the link below. We eagerly look forward to your feedback.

Our second tool for communication is ASCE's presence on Facebook, the social networking site. Like other organizations, ASCE has both a fan page for its website, and a Facebook web presence (which is like a virtual

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person with a Facebook page). Hence, we encourage you to join the ASCE fan page, which already has dozens of members, and also become a Facebook friend of ASCE (search the name "Asce Web Presence" or follow the link below).

Finally, we are beginning our campaign for the Annual Conference with this newsletter. Attached you will find the registration form and we encourage you to sign up as soon as you can. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank you for your continuing support of our organization and I look forward to seeing you in our events throughout the spring and into the summer.

Best regards,

Rafael Romeu

Important Internet Links:

ASCE Member Survey Link

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Y96BSNS>

ASCE Facebook Fan Page

<http://www.facebook.com/www.ascecuba.org>

ASCE Virtual Facebook Presence

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1000022484357>

FROM THE ASCE SECRETARY

Dear Friends,

Cuba's Communist Party Congress demonstrated yet again that no young leaders are going to be given an opportunity to provide fresh ideas for the country's future. Although Fidel officially stepped down, Raúl at 79 is the Communist Party's First Secretary and José Machado Ventura at 80 is the Second Secretary. In fact, even Culture Minister Abel Prieto, less old at 60, is no longer part of the Politburo or Central Committee. Raúl Castro admitted that "...we are faced with the consequences of not having a reserve of well-trained replacements with sufficient expertise and maturity to undertake the new and complex leadership responsibilities in the Party, State and Government." And frankly, while Cuba's leaders continue to make promises to change the face of the Party leadership to be more representative of the country's multi-racial population, they have had over half a century to make that become a reality. While Cuba's leaders deny the opportunity to average Cubans to play a role in their country's future and provide input on the best course to take, we at ASCE encourage all opinions on the matter. Surely by now ASCE members have had more than a few thoughts on the outcome of this Congress. We again invite you to send in your proposals for our September half-day seminar in Washington, D.C. "After the Sixth Party Congress – Where is Cuba headed?"

Best wishes,
Tania C. Mastrapa



FROM THE ASCE TREASURER

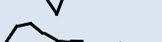
Current state of our Treasury

We are ending April in a worse financial shape than we did a year ago. Our deposits stand at \$25,145, which is 12% less than last April. The reason for this decrease is that membership renewals and conference pre-registrations are not flowing in yet. Had we had them by now, we would be seeing an improvement of 6% in our cash position thanks to our close watch on expenditures.

Hopefully, this is a transitory shift in our revenue collection cycle. If you observe the sparkline at the bottom of Table 1, the beginning and end points of which encompass the period from April 2010 to April 2011, you would realize that our inflows are about to spike around this time.

Please take advantage of the enclosed single form for membership renewal and conference (pre) registration, and act now. Membership dues are our main source of revenue, for the annual conference runs at a regular deficit of about \$10,000 dollars, primarily driven by venue-related expenses. Designing, printing and mailing our annual conference proceedings is also another activity that impacts our treasury negatively, although to a lesser extent.

Table 1: Our cash position. Key data snapshots.

Last 13 Months	Apr-10	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11	
Checking Account						
	Beginning Monthly Balance	\$ 14,218	\$ 2,049	\$ 4,421	\$ 2,368	\$ 361
	Credits	\$ 5,711	\$ 2,584	\$ 928	\$ 663	\$ 448
	(Debits)	\$ (27)	\$ (212)	\$ (2,982)	\$ (2,670)	\$ -
	Ending Monthly Balance	\$ 19,902	\$ 4,421	\$ 2,368	\$ 361	\$ 809
Savings Account						
	Beginning Monthly Balance	\$ 8,816	\$ 24,828	\$ 24,830	\$ 24,832	\$ 24,334
	Credits	\$ 1	\$ 2	\$ 2	\$ 2	\$ 2
	(Debits)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (500)	\$ -
	Ending Monthly Balance	\$ 8,817	\$ 24,830	\$ 24,832	\$ 24,334	\$ 24,336
	Total Beginning Monthly Balance	\$ 23,034	\$ 26,878	\$ 29,252	\$ 27,200	\$ 24,695
	Total Credits	\$ 5,712	\$ 2,586	\$ 930	\$ 665	\$ 450
	Total (Debits)	\$ (27)	\$ (212)	\$ (2,982)	\$ (3,170)	\$ -
	Total Ending Monthly Balance	\$ 28,718	\$ 29,252	\$ 27,200	\$ 24,695	\$ 25,145

Consequently, we are implementing a symbolic charge of \$25 for printed copies of future annual proceedings, while providing a free CD/DVD copy to those requesting it. Also, the Board is exploring possible conference venue changes for 2012.

Sincerely,
Geni Gomez



FROM OUR MEMBERS

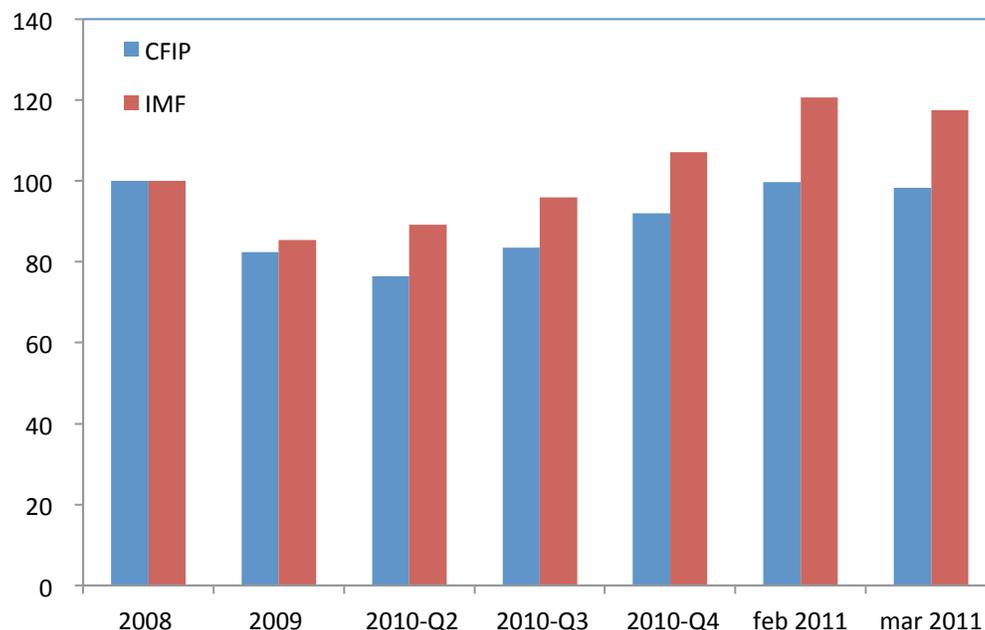
Rising Food Import Prices Press Cuba

Luis R. Luis

Rising prices of foodstuffs in global markets are hitting Cuba, pressing the balance of payments and adding urgency to efforts to improve domestic food production. Cuba is a net importer of foodstuffs and is expected to buy more than \$2 billion worth of foreign agricultural and animal products in 2011. More importantly, the rise in imported food prices has a sizable impact on the wellbeing of the population, which needs to pay higher prices for basic necessities in official or unofficial markets, or, alternatively, is subject to a combination of a stricter rationing system and a decline in the quality of products offered in official food stores.

In order to gauge the movement of food import prices, an index has been constructed (Cuban Food Import Price Index- CFIP). This index tracks the price of six commodities that accounted for 66.3 percent of the value of Cuban food imports in 2009. Rice has the largest weight in the index (28 percent), based on average imports during 2005-2008, followed by dairy products (21 percent) and wheat (18 percent). The other three commodities are chicken meat, corn and coffee. Vegetables, oil seeds and various meats comprise the bulk of the one-third of imports not covered by the index.

Cuba Food Import Price Index (CFIP)



Sources: Anuario Estadístico de Cuba 2010, IMF and US department of Commerce.

The Index shows that by March 2011 food prices had reached the high levels of 2008, after a cumulative increase of about 12 percent in 2010. On a positive note Cuban import price increases have been significantly below those of worldwide food market prices as gauged by an index of food



commodity prices weighted by world export earnings constructed by the IMF, which shows March 2011 prices to be close to 20 percent higher than in 2008. Cuba has been helped by its import mix, as the price of rice has declined 26 percent since 2008 (Thai white milled, fob Bangkok) offsetting sharp rises in corn and wheat. Recent news that the weak rice price is leading to the curtailment of crops in Vietnam and other major producing countries suggests the lull in rice prices may be short-lived. Substitution of Cuban imports for lower cost alternatives, such as poultry for beef products is likely to be an element of the adjustment to the high price environment. Measures to stimulate production of cattle, rice, vegetables, pork and other products are yet to have substantial impact on lowering the import bill. The on-going expansion of private farming could also become important.

Some Key Price Trends Impacting Cuba's Trade Balance

	Feb-2010	Feb-2011	Mar-2011	Trend ¹
Exports:				
Sugar (\$lb)	0.22	0.29	0.26	↓
Nickel (\$mt)	19,060	28,412	26,710	↑
Imports:				
Rice (\$mt)	585	536	515	↓
Oil (\$bll)	75	98	109	↑
Wheat (\$mt)	195	348	317	↓
Corn (\$mt)	159	293	290	↓
Chicken (\$lb)	0.83	0.85	0.86	↑

Source: World Bank.

1. Red indicates negative impact on Cuba's trade balance, green positive



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Job Opportunity

Recently, during the Cuban Research Institute (CRI)'s 20th anniversary celebrations, John F. Stack Jr., Director of FIU's School of International and Public Affairs, announced the formation of a search committee for a Director of the Latin American and Caribbean Center's CRI. The current interim director Uva de Aragon is retiring in November. Damian Fernandez was the last acting director. FIU encourages interested candidates who could lead CRI into what seems to be a very challenging Cuba transition period into the XXI century.

Infrastructure Assessment for a Transition in Cuba

When: Thursday, May 5, 2011, reception at 6:00 pm, panel session commences at 7:00 pm

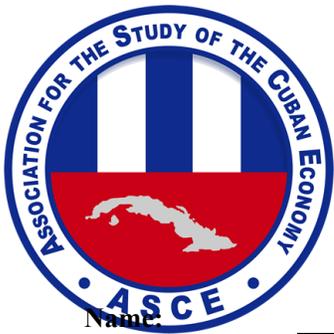
Where: Casa Bacardi, 1531 Brescia Avenue, Coral Gables, FL 33146

The topics to be covered will be:

Architecture:	Nicolas Quintana, Juan Bueno
Infrastructure Right of Way:	Nicolas Gutierrez
Transportation:	Sergio Alfonso, Carlos Penin
Water/Wastewater:	Helena Solo Gabriele, Armando Perez
Power:	Juan Belt
Electrical Energy:	Manuel Cereijo
Telecommunications:	Manuel Cereijo
Health Care Infrastructure:	Manuel Alzugaray, Pete Martinez

There will be available a book and a CD with the contents of the compendium.

Capacity is limited: For reservations email hmsolo@miami.edu



**SINGLE FORM FOR
CONFERENCE (PRE) REGISTRATION AND
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL**

asce@ascecuba.org
www.ascecuba.org

ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF THE CUBAN ECONOMY

21st Annual Conference—August 4–6, 2011

Hilton Miami Downtown

1601 Biscayne Blvd, Miami, FL 33132

PO Box 28267
Washington, DC
20038-8267

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION ¹

- A) Regular member \$90
- B) Contributing member \$91–\$200
- C) Sponsor \$201–\$350
- D) Benefactor over \$350
- E) Student \$25
- F) Lifetime \$2,500

Questions?

Contact us:
asce@ascecuba.org

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

<u>Pre-registration</u> (No later than July 15) ²	<u>ASCE Member</u> ³	<u>Non-Member</u>
Conference fee	\$75 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$175 <input type="checkbox"/>
Official Lunch (Limited capacity—reserve early)	\$45 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$45 <input type="checkbox"/>
Cuba in Transition, Vol. 21 Printed (Pre-order) ⁴	\$25 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$60 <input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Registration</u> (Past July 15)	<u>ASCE Member</u>	<u>Non-Member</u>
Conference fee	\$100 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$200 <input type="checkbox"/>
Official Lunch (Limited capacity—reserve early)	\$50 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$50 <input type="checkbox"/>
Cuba in Transition, Vol. 21 Printed (Pre-order)	\$25 <input type="checkbox"/>	\$60 <input type="checkbox"/>

Total enclosed: _____

**Please make check to “ASCE” and send registration form to:
ASCE, PO Box 28267 Washington, DC 20038-8267**

¹ Membership in ASCE is renewed on an annual basis and runs from July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012.

² To enjoy pre-registration benefits, payment must be postmarked no later than July 15, 2011.

³ To obtain ASCE members registration rates, dues for 2011–2012 must be paid before the meeting.

⁴ Hardcopies of “Cuba in Transition” volumes are available for \$80 in ASCE’s website www.ascecuba.org. Starting with the 21st volume, members are entitled to a free CD/DVD version of the Annual Proceedings.



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asce@ascecuba.org
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**ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF THE CUBAN ECONOMY
21st Annual Conference—August 4–6, 2011
Hilton Miami Downtown
1601 Biscayne Blvd, Miami, FL 33132**

PO Box 28267
Washington, DC
20038-8267

HILTON MIAMI DOWNTOWN HOTEL INFORMATION

Room Group Rate: The Hilton Miami Downtown is offering a room group discount of \$95.00 per night (plus 13% tax) from August 3 thru August 7 for those attending the ASCE Conference.

Reservations: Individuals Calls for reservation will be made to 800-HILTONS.

Reservation Due Date: To secure your room at the discounted group rate, reservations should be made directly with the hotel no later than July 28, 2011.

Location: 1601 Biscayne Blvd, Miami, FL 33132.

Parking: A discounted parking is offered too for attendees not staying at the hotel (self-\$12, valet-\$15).

Neighborhood: Walking-distance amenities nearby the Hilton Miami Downtown include the new Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts (Formerly Carnival Center); Miami-Dade Cultural Center; Gusman Center for the Performing Arts; and Bayside Market Place.

Metromover: The Omni loop of the free Metromover has its Adrienne Arsht Center Station just one block from the hotel.

Connecting Metrobus Service: 3, 16, 32, 36, 48, 62, 95x, 120, A (101), C (103), M (113), S (119), Flagler MAX (51), Biscayne MAX (93)

Map:

