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A lot has happened between the United States and Cuba since the election of President Barack Obama. In an earlier *ISLAS* issue, I promised to make sure that you, our readers, were kept informed of changes and progress.

On April 13, 2009, President Barack Obama announced a series of changes in U.S. policy to reach out to the Cuban people in support of their desire to freely determine their country's future. He eased limits on family travel to Cuba, to promote greater contact between separated family members in the United States and Cuba, and increased the flow of remittances and information to the Cuban people.

Moreover, the Obama administration and the Cuban government agreed to resume negotiations on the legal immigration of Cubans to the United States and direct mail services between the two countries. All these seem to be signs that the United States and Cuba have embarked on a new way toward achieving normalization of their relations, although the engagement has so far not involved sensitive issues, such as democracy and human rights.

So, what does this all mean?

While we watch closely for moves from either side that lessen tensions and begin a dialogue on some of the disputes dividing them, *ISLAS* encourages Cubans of color to continue talking, begin to organize, and develop strategies on how to achieve greater participation in the leadership and the economy. One example of this is your Citizens' Committee on Racial Integration (CIR), an organization made up of all races and colors, established on the island to facilitate the advancement of blacks and mestizos in Cuba.

The journal *ISLAS* stands with you and is committed to serving as a forum for discussions, particularly on race issues, just as it has done since its inception. It is here to help you facilitate discussions and disseminate information. Right in this very issue, on page 76, we highlight an opportunity for just such a discussion and exchange of ideas sponsored by CIR.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE