

# THE CUBA CONSORTIUM

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PROSPECTS FOR UNITED STATES-CUBA  
NORMALIZATION, COMMERCE, AND INVESTMENT

*Program Summary*

A PROJECT OF THE HOWARD BAKER FORUM

## **The Consortium**

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The Cuba Consortium is an assembly of companies, non-profit organizations, investors, academics, and entrepreneurs organized to track and examine the normalization process in both countries and to inform and prepare its members for opportunities to engage Cuba. They are complemented by foreign policy, political, economic, international development, legal, and cultural experts who have specialized knowledge of the diplomacy, politics, and economics of the normalization process.

## **The Organizer**

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The Cuba Consortium is organized by The Howard Baker Forum, a bipartisan convener of public policy conferences and roundtables founded by the late Senator Howard Baker and designed to advance sound foreign and domestic policies.

## **The Advisory Board**

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The Cuba Consortium is guided by an Advisory Board consisting of former officials, subject matter experts, and international business leaders. The Board is co-chaired by Senators Nancy Kassebaum Baker and Tom Daschle and includes Dr. Michael Adams, Richard Blum, Sheila Burke, Tomás Díaz de la Rubia, Senator Byron Dorgan, Rodney Ferguson, Senator Bill Frist, Dr. Helene Gayle, Maurice Greenberg, Senator Bob Kerrey, Linda Klein, Fred Malek, Janet Napolitano, Thomas Ross, Senator Olympia Snowe, The Honorable Ellen Tauscher, Bill Weldon, and Rob Wilder, among others.

## **The Experts**

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The Cuba Consortium has enlisted a number of Cuba experts, trade lawyers, international business specialists, and former government officials to advise and educate its members. The experts come from a wide range of universities, business schools, law firms, institutes, think tanks and foundations, and from Congress and senior levels of the U.S. government.

## Objectives

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- Assemble, inform, and advise Americans interested in the normalization process. Provide reports on progress made and barriers to normalization. The Cuba Consortium will not lobby either government but will inform members, enlighten the public, and contribute to the debate, bridging the gap between opposing views.
- Serve as a clearinghouse for information, tracking Cuban economic, legal, and human rights reforms and U.S. economic, political, and legislative developments that impact the prospects for normalization.
- Engage with Cuban institutions, small businesses, and thought leaders to network, exchange views, analyze reforms, examine development ideas and strategies, and lay the foundation for cooperation, investment, and economic growth among the people of Cuba and the island's nascent private sector.
- Conduct sector-specific roundtables and arrange tours to Cuba to meet with public officials, Cuban institutions, and private commercial interests to assess specific opportunities for business, investment, or collaboration.

## Events and Timeline

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The Cuba Consortium held an initial partners meeting to officially launch the program on October 7, 2015. On January 28, 2016, The Consortium held an Advisory Board and member reception at the Cuban Embassy in D.C., hosted by His Excellency Ambassador José Ramón Cabañas Rodríguez. Its first public conference in Washington, D.C. will be held on February 18, 2016 and the first annual year-in-review progress report will be published shortly thereafter. The Consortium will host its first sector-specific roundtable in Arkansas on March 21-22 for the Agriculture and Food industry. Other sector-specific roundtables will follow in the summer and fall of 2016.