

ASCE's Annual Conferences

During its first nineteen years of existence, the Association's principal activity has been its Annual Meeting, held in Miami, Florida, each August. There, during a two and a half-day period, scholars and professionals present papers and participate in roundtable discussions. Papers and their formal discussions, as well as roundtable summaries, are included in a volume of papers and proceedings. The conference is open to the general public. Registration information can be found at: www.ascecuba.org

Among the wide range of topics covered in past annual meetings and volumes are: current analyses of the socio-economic and political situation in Cuba; lessons from transition economies; stabilization proposals; legal aspects of transition, such as property rights and privatization; agricultural issues, with particular emphasis on the sugar sector; labor; foreign investment; tourism; governance; social security and social safety net; the environment; balance of payments and trade policy; external debt problems; foreign assistance requirements; and a wide spectrum of issues related to monetary, fiscal and financial systems.

Nineteen such volumes have been published, and they are widely used inside and outside of Cuba by universities, research centers, government agencies and others. Selected papers from these volumes are also available in the Annual Proceedings of the Publications section of ASCE's Web Site (www.ascecuba.org), which is hosted by the University of Texas at Austin's Latin American Information Center (LANIC). ASCE's site receives approximately 10,000 hits per month.

The First Annual Meeting of ASCE took place at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, Florida, in August 1991. The Cuban Research Institute and the Latin American and Caribbean Center of Florida International University co-sponsored this conference. Professor Modesto Maidique, President of Florida International University, addressed the gathering. The meeting was very successful; there were 18 main presentations which provoked active discussions and there was significant media coverage of the event; 94 persons attended. A special recognition was given at this meeting to Dr. Justo Carrillo for his contributions to the Cuban economy.

The Second Annual Meeting, which took place in August 1992, again at Florida International University (FIU). By then the association's membership had reached 130, spread over 12 countries. Twenty-two papers were presented at that conference.

ASCE's Third Annual Meeting, held at Florida International University in August 1993, the association had over 170 members and attendance at the meeting reached 143. Professor Carmelo Mesa Lago, Distinguished Service Professor of

Economics at the University of Pittsburgh, delivered the Luncheon Address on "A Perspective for Social Safety Nets in Cuba."

At the Fourth Annual Meeting, in addition to the usual topics on the Cuban economy and the socio-political climate, were the experiences of Russia and other countries in their transition to a free market economy, an analysis of the implications of the introduction of monetary dualism, a proposal for banking reform, proposals for the design of a social safety net, and an overview of the changes required in Cuba's laws and legal institutions during its transition to a free-market democracy. Ernesto F. Betancourt, former Director of Radio Marti, gave the luncheon address on "Castro's Finale."

The Fifth Annual Meeting of ASCE was held in August 1995 at the James L. Knight Center of the University of Miami. It was co-sponsored by the North-South Center of the University of Miami. By then the membership of ASCE was close to 260. During this annual meeting the practice of having round table discussions on multi-disciplinary topics was introduced. C. Richard Nelson, Director of the International Security Program at the Atlantic Council of the United States made a presentation on the conclusions of the report prepared by the Council on "A Road Map for Restructuring Future U.S. Relations with Cuba." Mr. Xavier L. Suárez, Esq., former Mayor of the City of Miami, was the luncheon speaker.

The Sixth Annual Meeting of ASCE was held at the Knight Center of the University of Miami. This conference was co-sponsored by the North-South Center of the University of Miami. The welcoming remarks were given by Ambassador Ambler Moss, Director of the North-South Center. By that time ASCE's membership had surpassed 300. During this meeting, in addition to the presentation of fifty (50) papers on a large variety of subjects, round-tables were organized to discuss various topics of interest to the membership. During the Sixth Annual Meeting special recognition was given to Dr. Felipe Pazos for his life-long achievements on economic analysis and policy and his defense of democratic principles. A paper on "La Seguridad Social: Un `Logro' que tiende a Desboronarse" was presented at the conference --in-absentia-- by Marta Beatriz Roque, from the Instituto Nacional de Economistas Independientes de Cuba. The luncheon speaker was Alberto Ibarguen, Editor of El Nuevo Herald of Miami.

In August 1997, the Seventh Annual Meeting of ASCE took place at the James Knight Center of the University of Miami. Close to 200 individuals attended (including some 20 journalists) and 20 sessions were organized at which over 100 members actively participated. During the reception, special recognitions were bestowed on Armando Lago and Carmelo Mesa-Lago for their work on Cuban issues and their contributions to ASCE. Professor Luís Aguilar León was the luncheon speaker; he spoke on an outlook for the Cuban economy and the political situation.

The Eighth Annual Meeting of ASCE was held on August 1998 at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida. The number of attendees at the Eighth Annual Meeting exceeded 200 per day. The program covered a wide variety of topics, with about half of the sessions devoted strictly to economic topics and the other half dedicated to legal, sociological, and political science topics. A highlight of the meeting was the keynote address by Professor Irving Louis Horowitz, Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Political Science at Rutgers University. He spoke about lessons that can be learned from Cuban communism, drawing on his own long experience in studying the Cuban revolution.

In September 1988, the Board voted to award “honorary membership in ASCE” to Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, Félix Bonne Carcasses, René Gómez Manzano and Vladimiro Roca in recognition of their work and participation in ASCE.

The Ninth Annual Meeting was held on August 1999 at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida. It was co-sponsored by the School of International Studies and the School of Business Administration of the University of Miami. The program for this conference reflected the increased interdisciplinary character of the issues being addressed by ASCE’s members within the context of the socio-economic and political developments of Cuba. There were about eighty main presentations in 23 sessions dealing with a variety of issues.

The Tenth Annual Meeting was held on August 2000 at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida. The conference, whose main theme was “Ten Years of the Special Period: Retrospective and Perspectives,” was co-sponsored by the University of Miami School of International Studies, the University of Miami School of Business and the Cuban Studies Association. The keynote speaker was Dr. Sidney Weintraub, formerly with the University of Texas and at the time William E. Simon Chair in Political Economy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, who spoke on “The Role of Trade in Cuba’s Economic Transition.” Carlos Alberto Montaner, well-known writer and syndicated columnist, was guest speaker at the reception. The meeting opened with a greeting delivered over the telephone from La Habana by Marta Beatriz Roque, from the “Asociación Nacional de Economistas Independientes,” who had recently been released from prison.

The Eleventh Annual Meeting of ASCE took place at the Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, Florida in August 2001. At this conference there were two special luncheon speakers, Professor Arnold Harberger of the University of California, Los Angeles, who spoke on “Exchange Rate Policies and the Transition in Latin America and Russia,” and Professor Antonio Jorge of Florida International University and the University of Miami, who spoke on “Nación, Sociedad y Economía en la Cuba Post-revolucionaria.”

The Twelfth Annual Meeting of ASCE took place in Miami, Florida, on August 1-3, 2002 at the Omni Colonnade Hotel, in Coral Gables. In light of the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Republic of Cuba, the theme of the

conference was “The State, Institutions and the Market Economy.” There were presentations involving independent economists from the island; Marta Beatriz Roque and Oscar Espinosa Chepe. The Guest Speaker at the Luncheon was Dr. Ramón Díaz, former President of the Central Bank of Uruguay and past President of the Mont Pelerien Society. He spoke on “Economic Criterion for a Constitution that Would Sustain a Market Economy.”

The Thirteen Annual Meeting of ASCE took place in Miami, Florida, on August 7-9, 2003 at the Omni Colonnade Hotel, in Coral Gables. The general theme of this Conference was “The External Sector of the Cuban Economy,” The keynote speaker was Philippe Dimitrov, former Bulgarian Ambassador to the United States.

The Fourteen Annual Meeting of ASCE took place in Miami, Florida, on August 5-6, 2004 at the Wyndham Grand Bay Hotel, in Coconut Grove. The Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies of the University of Miami provide Secretariat support for this Conference. The keynote speaker was Stephen Johnson, from the Heritage Foundation, who spoke on “Supporting Cuban Democrats.” In addition, there were special presentations by Adolfo Franco, from the US Agency for International Development, Walter Bastian, from the US Department of Commerce, and Dan Fisk, from the US Department of State, on issues of US-Cuba relations.

The Fifteen Annual Meeting was held on August 4-6 in Miami Florida at the Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus located in Miami, Florida. The Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus was the principal institutional sponsor of this Conference and the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies of the University of Miami served as ASCE’s Conference Secretariat. The keynote speaker at the conference was Dr. Egor Gaydar, former Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, who was the primary architect of the dismantling of the Communist regime and the transition toward a market economy in Russia under the presidency of Boris Yeltsin. He shared with us the lessons learned in that process and discussed possible implications for a transition in Cuba.

The Sixteenth Annual Meeting was held on August 3-5, 2006 at the Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus in Miami, Florida. Special guests at this conference included Ricardo López Murphy, former Minister of the Economy and Defense of Argentina and candidate to the Presidency of that country, and César Vidal Manzanares, a well known Spanish historian, writer and journalist.

The Seventeenth Annual Meeting was held in Miami, Florida on August 2-4, 2007. The focus of this meeting was on lessons learned from other countries in transition. Carlos Alberto Montaner gave a very moving keynote address on Cuba and Mr. Horacio Aguirre, director of the Diario Las Américas, spoke at the reception on the importance of free press in promoting good governance and democratic freedoms. As part of its efforts to expand research and knowledge on Cuba beyond the economic and social sciences, there was a presentation on

Havana and its Landscapes describing the sad conditions of Havana's infrastructure and the resources needed to restore the city to its pre-Revolutionary eminence. This is part of a project being done by Florida International University School of Architect under the guidance of Architect Nicolás Quintana.

The Eighteen Annual Meetings were held in Miami in early August of 2008. The meetings included papers representing a mix of new topics and approaches with traditional ones. For example, there was a panel dealing with the Cuban Blogs, and another on infrastructure, where engineers discussed along with economists current issues in Cuba dealing with power and the water/wastewater sectors. More traditional papers covered issues of monetary duality, legal and transition issues, property claims and US/Cuba relations. The key note address was delivered by Mary Anastasia O'Grady from the Wall Street Journal, and Alberto Mueller addressed the reception participants.

ASCE's Nineteenth Annual Meeting was held on July 30-August 1, 2009 at The Hilton Miami Hotel. The main theme for the meeting was "Cuba in a World of Uncertainty," focusing on three sources of uncertainty: (1) internal economic and political reforms; (2) U.S. policy toward Cuba; and (3) the impact of the global financial and economic crisis. Tom Gjelten, a correspondent on economic, intelligence, and national security issues for National Public Radio, delivered the luncheon lecture on "*The Bacardi Story and Cuba's Future*". Mr. Gjelten is the author of *Bacardi and the Long Fight for Cuba: The Biography of a Cause*.

The Twentieth Annual Meeting of ASCE is scheduled for July 29-31, 2010. The main theme of that Conference will be "Cuba at the Crossroads in the 21st Century" focusing on Cuba's existing economic and social conditions, recent Cuban policies to address the impact of the world economic and financial crises, Cuban policy shortcomings, and needed structural reforms.