

Measures for vulnerable groups: Council of Ministers discusses next reform steps



Cuba's new Economy Minister Joaquín Alonso Vázquez (2nd from left) at the meeting of the Council of Ministers (Source: [Granma](#))

Cuba's Council of Ministers [discussed](#) the status of the implementation of new economic measures last week. The "measures to correct distortions and stimulate the economy" adopted in December are to enter the next phase this month. President Miguel Díaz-Canel announced that "no institution and no process" will stay without a point of contact with the package.

The first economic results of the new year were not good, explained Prime Minister Manuel Marrero at the meeting. However, the plan for 2024 had been developed in the knowledge that the situation would remain difficult and that the external factors would not change. "We have to look for internal solutions to our problems and cannot now say that the failure to comply with the budget is due to the fact that the blockade or the international crisis has worsened," said Marrero.

Cuba's Deputy Minister of Economy, Mildrey Granadillo de la Torre, explained that more people and families in vulnerable situations are currently being identified to benefit from targeted support in the future. As the news portal "Cubadebate" [reports](#), 189,169 families with a total of 350,472 people are currently receiving some form of targeted state support. This includes, for example, the use of nursing homes and outpatient care, access to discounted meals or programs for pregnant women. In future, the products of the state ration booklet (Libreta) will only be available at a heavily discounted rate for vulnerable groups.

Other planned changes, which are being worked on in March, include a "redimensioning" of the currency market, new contract rules for the marketing of agricultural products, and the

creation of an institute for private economic actors. As the deputy minister emphasized, "each individual measure will only be introduced once the conditions are in place". This includes both public relations work and the planning of their impact on the population. In this way, the principle should be upheld "that no one is left unprotected".

Marrero explained that ways must be found to prevent the situation of people in a precarious social situation from deteriorating as a result of one of the measures.

The reforms are intended to get the socialist country's economy back on track for growth after four years of crisis. As a first step, salaries in the health and education sectors were significantly increased in January and new import duties were introduced for alcohol and tobacco products. This was followed on March 1 by the introduction of new fuel prices and higher electricity tariffs for heavy consumers after a one-month delay. ([Cubaheute](#))