1987 RR-88-88.

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:AM-CUBA-SMOKING
CUBAN MARK NO SMOKING DAY WITH FIDEL CASTRO IN THE VANGUARD
BY LIONEL MARTIN
HAVANA, APRIL 7, REUTER - CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO WAS CONGRATULATED ON THIS INTERNATIONAL NO SMOKING DAY BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION FOR HAVING STOPPED SMOKING THE HAVANA CIGARS THAT WERE INTIMATELY ASSOCIATED WITH HIS PUBLIC IMAGE, THE HAVANA-BASED NEWS AGENCY, PRENSA LATINA, REPORTED THURSDAY.
THE CUBAN LEADER GAVE UP SMOKING IN AUGUST 1985 ON HIS SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY AS AN EXMPLE TO OTHER CUBANS AND ESPECIALLY TO THE YOUTH, HE SAID AT THE TIME.
CASTRO SAID HE DECIDED TO BREAK THE HABIT AFTER THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION PUBLISHED STATISTICS THAT SHOWED THAT CUBA WAS THE NUMBER THREE RANKED SMOKING NATIN IN THE WORLD.
CUBA MARKED INTERNATIONAL NO SMOKING DAY THURSDAY BY SUSPENDING THE SALE OF CIGARETTES AND CIGARS IN ALL COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AND BY IMPOSING A PERMANENT BAN ON SMOKING ON CUBANA AIRLINES PASSENGER PLANES ON NATIONAL FLIGHTS.
ALL PACKS OF CUBAN MADE CIGARETTES SOLD WITHIN THE ISLAND NOW CARRY THE WARNING +SMOKING ENDANGERS YOUR HEALTH+ (FUMAR DANA LA SALUD). FREQUENT TELEVISION ANNOUNCEMENTS ARE ALSO AIMED AT WARNING CUBANS ABOUT THE DANGERS OF SMOKING.
IN ONE ANNOUNCEMENT, ALBERTO JUANTORENA, WHO WON GOLD MEDALS IN THE 400 METER AND 800 METER SPRINTS IN THE 1976 MONTREAL OLYMPICS , STRIKES A MATCH AS IF HE IS ABOUT TO LIGHT UP A CIGARETTER. THEN THE CAMARA MOVES BACK AND ONE SEES A TABLE SURROUNDED BY CHILDREN WITH A BIRTHDAY CAKE IN THE MIDDLE WITH JUANTORENA LEANING FORWARD TO LIGHT THE CANDLES AS THE WORDS +DO NOT SMOKE+ APPEAR ON THE SCREEN.
ON THURSDAY, CUBA'S OFFICIAL TRADE UNION NEWSPAPER, TRABAJADORES, DEVOTED AN ENTIRE PAGE TO AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE HEALTH HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH SMOKING WHILE THE OFFICIAL YOUTH NEWSPAPER, JUVENTUD REBELDE, PRINTED AN INTERVIEW WITH NERY SUAREZ, THE COORDINATOR OF A NATIONAL COMMITTEE THAT WORKS TO DISCOURAGE SMOKING.
SUAREZ SAID THAT THE NUMBER OF CUBAN SMOKERS DROPPED BY SIX PERCENT IN 1987 AS COMPARED WITH THE PREVIOUS YEAR. SHE SAID THAT 54 MILLION FEWER PACKS OF CIGARETTES AND 17 MILLION FEWER CIGARS HAD BEEN SOLD TO CUBANS IN THE SAME PERIOD.
THE COORDINATOR OF THE ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN SAID THAT 24 PERCENT OF CUBAN SMOKERS ARE SMOKING FAR LESS AND THAT 59 PERCENT TRIED TO BREAK THE HABIT WITHOUT SUCCESS.
STATISTICS OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION SHOW THAT CUBA WAS THE NUMBER THREE SMOKING NATION IN 1982 WITH AN AVERAGE PER CAPITAL CONSUMPTION OF 119 PACKS OF CIGARETTES AND 36 CIGARS. BY 1987 THE FIGURE HAD DROPPED TO 98.6 PACKS OF CIGARETTES AND 32.5 CIGARS.
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