

Google's Schmidt in Cuba to push Google's ideas for Communism



AFP / Yamil LAGE

US Senator Jeff Flake, left, and Google board member Eric Schmidt visited Cuba

Eric Schmidt, a board member of Google's parent company Alphabet, met Monday with Cuba's new president to discuss improving Cuban internet connectivity, one of the world's lowest.

"The benefits of the internet to the world are extraordinary. And it's important that Cubans have access to the internet at the same level or even better than everyone else," said Schmidt, who stepped down from his post as executive chairman early this year.

He met with Cuban leader Miguel Diaz-Canel about seeking a dialogue even though US-Cuban relations have worsened under American President Donald Trump.

Alongside US Senator Jeff Flake -- a supporter of ending the US trade embargo on Cuba, the Americas' only one-party Communist state -- Schmidt said internet connectivity is key to Cuba's future.

"It's important for the development of the country," he stressed.

Diaz-Canel and Schmidt discussed US-Cuban relations and possible areas of cooperation, Cuban officials said.

Theirs was the first US delegation to meet with the new Cuban president, who was sworn in April 19.

Just over four million Cubans, under half the population, have limited internet access through public screens and wi-fi areas.

The state telephone company says it is in testing on adding data service to smartphones.

Ties between Havana and Washington have cooled considerably since Trump took office in January