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Happy New Year to all!

I'm looking forward to this year. I can feel that it is going to be a positive one. Why do I have a new found twinkle in my eye and spring in my step? Because on November 5, 2008, Americans woke up to the realization that the most influential man in the free world, is also America's first African-American president. Moreover, on Tuesday, January 20, 2009, Barack Hussein Obama was sworn in as the 44th president of the United States of America. This is truly a unique moment in the American experience and the greatest milestone in our history.

In a country with a long history of slavery, segregation, and discrimination, Obama's victory illustrates that the American people can move beyond their cruel and prideful bigotry. Obama's victory shows that the American people are able to judge a man by the content of his character, not just by the color of his skin, which was a dream expressed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. almost 46 years ago. On November 5, 2008, Obama won 26 states, and the District of Columbia with a total of 365 electoral votes, putting him well above the 270 votes needed to clinch the presidency. President Barack Obama will be the first person of color to govern a country with a white majority.

For many Americans, the extraordinary election of Barack Obama inspires hope for meaningful change—at a time when the U.S. economy has left millions without jobs or an affordable place to live. But for African Americans, there is a special pride in his victory. President Obama said it best after the election, “The victory achieved on November 4th means so much to so many... but to all of us, it is a stirring affirmation of our country's most fundamental promise: America is a place where anything—anything we choose to dream together, anything for which we choose to work together—is possible.”

It is my hope that the people of Cuba, and particularly its Afro population, find in this victory new encouragement for their own long struggle against racism. To date, the Cuban people's reactions to President Obama's victory are as varied as the diverse sectors of their population. But, as the new administration moves forward, *ISLAS ISLAS* will be there to inform our readers of any significant changes that unfold and discuss its impact on the Afro populations in the U.S., Cuba, and other countries.