

Cuba: owners of our homeland and our science

By: Cynthia Hernández Mayol / CubaSí

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Cuba has proven, once again and amid this turbulent times of pandemic, its potential in the field of science and innovation. The Cuban Revolution has made a difference in the history of mankind. In our case, not only alternatives related to the treatment have been implemented, but our goal is also to immunize the population with our own efforts.

Thanks to the Cuban protocol —the governmental handling of the situation in this case— the number of infected people and deaths by Covid-19 is way below the average of several countries in the region and other continents. This fact has raised questions on the veracity of these numbers.

On the other hand, the Cuban health care system has taken on the most accurate guidelines and medicines in the clinical management of positive Covid-19 cases; namely, precautionary and therapeutic actions for contacts of positive cases and vulnerable groups, active inquiries, among other epidemiological measures.

Today, the utmost concern of any individual in the world regarding this new coronavirus ranges from the fact of not getting infected to how to get immunity, not to mention the guarantees of success, long-term, of the vaccine itself.

Some nations have already begun the complex and possibly lengthy process of vaccination. However, the monopolization of some vaccines —as it occurred with the US— and their low availability, generally speaking, do not suggest a prompt solution accessible to all. The critical international panorama urges the contribution and unity of all.

How is Cuba getting ready, from Havana, to face the immediate future of this pandemic?

Besieged by a violent economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed by the US, this small island will be possible the first nation in Latin America to launch a vaccine produced by its own efforts against Covid-19. Cuba has five vaccine candidates in different clinical stages, and it is foreseen that Cuba may produce all the doses to immunize its entire population.

The scientific institutions responsible of developing and assessing these vaccine candidates are busily engaged in the last few weeks in Havana in the phase III study of the immunization process of *Soberana 02* and *Soberana 01A*.

To do so, a group of 44,010 individuals —ranging from 19 to 80 years old— was selected. These individuals will get two doses of *Soberana 02* every 28 days, while the others, in addition to these two doses, will get another with *Soberana 01A*.

Within the research, there will be individuals who will get placebos. However, at the end of the study, they will get vaccinated by the candidate with greater chances of success. At any moment, volunteers will be closely monitored and all the necessary health care will be provided, according to protocols.

Up to now, most of those who get the first dose of *Soberana 02* have barely felt mild pain, redness and warmth in the area where the jab occurred, while no adverse events related to the vaccine candidate had developed.

The volunteers involved in the process, which aims to *“prove the capability of the vaccine candidates Soberana in the prevention of the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2,”* have demonstrated, consciously and unconsciously, the trust that they feel and have in the Cuban science and public health.

There are many who, globally, have decided to step aside based on the indecision triggered by strong adverse effects in vaccines, which have led to death in some cases, and they rather choose not to get involved as *“guinea pigs,”* although the use in humans of these medications were previously authorized.

The Revolution, since its very first days, has been for the good of all and for all.

With the Triumph of the Revolution in 1959, Cuba shifted its path and granted freedom and right to a free health care to all citizens. The quality of life of all Cubans changed overnight.

The massive vaccination campaigns began. Several diseases that threatened the people’s health and caused annually thousands of deaths were eradicated. The family doctor program provided special health care of every community across the nation, even remote areas.

Today, from different Havana’s territories, with *Soberana* and *Abdala* (other vaccine candidate) in the eastern region of Cuba, Cuban scientists plan to examine and prove the efficiency and safety of those vaccines to be used in the future.

The Cuban people will get immunized from SARS-CoV-2 before the end of 2021 wherefore almost paused economic activities such tourism will resume activities. Help will transcend borders based on our solidarity and internationalism.

Our Commander in Chief, Fidel Castro Ruz, referred to what Cubans are capable of doing and achieving despite our complex situation, praising the men and women of science in Cuba, almost 20 years ago, on December 2002, in a speech delivered at the Latin American School of Medicine:

Fidel Castro Ruz stated: *“We are a small country, but this small country has proven that there is always a way when there is a will. There is always a way when a country’s human resources are well used... Today, this small country is essential in the battle against diseases threatening to devastate entire nations, or even entire regions in certain continents.”*

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff
