

Cuba Moves Forward with Determination to a Sustainable Development

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Despite the worsening of the U.S. blockade, Cuba exhibits social conquests comparable to those of developed countries.

Cuba holds the fifth position among the first 14 countries in the world that have reduced the rate of hunger and malnutrition. This was highlighted on Wednesday by Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez in his speech during the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals at the UN.

For some it may be a sentence that goes unnoticed, particularly intentionally unnoticed, but for Cubans that and other realities are a source of pride and, more than that, they are an incentive to keep the path taken, even if so much headwinds from the North twists our sails.

But instead of going over the most recent indecencies of the White House against Cuba, these lines attempt to frame some of the results attained by Cuba and that Rodríguez Parrilla highlighted at the aforementioned meeting in the face of The 2030 Agenda.

Cuba keeps at present the lowest infant mortality rate in its history and in the Latin American region: four per a thousand live births, as the Cuban foreign minister highlighted.

As for the topic of public health in particular, among the most important Cuban achievements, Rodríguez Parrilla had given abundant and strong figures last Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> at the UN High Level meeting dedicated to universal health coverage.

Cuba registered a life expectancy of more than 78 years and a child mortality rate of 4 per thousand live births, by the end of last year. On top of this there's an immune level registered of 98%, with the eradication of 14 infectious diseases. Nine of which were a health issue, and 29 were under control.

To attain such results and others in the health sector, Cuba rests on several pillars: a unique public health system free of charge and universal, the State as sponsor of resources for health programs, the training of the necessary human resource to keep these programs working and the support of the people behind those policies at the community level.

The head of Cuban diplomacy explained all this. He also recalled that in the conquest of these achievements this Caribbean nation has not just faced the challenges set by its status as a small developing country, but also and above all the economic, commercial, and financial blockade that the United States has imposed to Cuba for almost 60 years, and which is intensifying today.

The adverse international context in which Cuba has achieved these and other results in its resolve to keep advancing in the achievement of the Sustainable Development goals established by the United Nations cannot be ignored.

When referring to that context, the Cuban foreign minister denounced the unfair international order and the capitalist system that consider - he said - public health as a business and not as a right.

In contrast to this regrettable reality, Rodríguez Parrilla said during his presentation of MEDICC magazine that "For the public health system of Cuba, citizens are not clients, but patients or healthy individuals whose well-being must be protected and promoted with prevention approaches ».

And the humanistic sense of that health care has gone beyond Cuba's borders to reach a total of 164 countries in the last 60 years. More than 400,000 Cuban health professionals have provided their services worldwide over the last decades. At present, they work in more than 70 countries.

«With a fraction of these resources, with a little less greed and a minimum of solidarity, the health problems that are devastating important parts of the world population could be solved.

«Learning how it's done is very important. It will require creativity and humility. But what's essential is to mobilize the moral will that can give way to the political action, »said the Cuban Foreign Minister.

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