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**Benefits of Operation Miracle**

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More than 2.5 million people have now benefited from Operation Miracle, a joint Cuban - Venezuelan program, that has performed cataract and eye operations to improve or restore the sight.

A news report in Cuba's national paper Granma has just announced these latest figures which show the lasting success of this continent wide initiative.

The program plans to operate on about six million patients in Latin America, the Caribbean , Africa and Asia.

Pilar González, Director of the National Rural Health Plan of Uruguay , said that there have been more than 40,000 free eye surgeries in their country since 2007.

Gonzalez , who participated in the 67th Annual Assembly of the World Health Organization (WHO) said.  
"We are very grateful to the Cuban cooperation. We believe that this is an example of international solidarity".

Eye operations of this kind in a private hospital would cost about five thousand dollars in most countries putting them out of the reach of most people so Operation miracle has given sight back to millions who could otherwise be permanently disabled by these conditions.

Operation Miracle begun in 2004 with its goal is to serve low-income people who are blind from curable causes.

The program plans to operate on about six million patients in Latin America, the Caribbean , Africa and Asia. According to the WHO there are approximately 285 million people in the world who are visually impaired, of whom 246 have low vision and 39 million are blind.

The World Health Organisation estimated that 80 % of all cases of visual impairment can be avoided or cured.

