

---

Liberia: Cuban Diplomat Unveils Plan for Liberia's Health Sector

16/12/2016



The Director General for Bilateral Affairs of Cuba, Ambassador Gerardo Peñalver Portal, has disclosed that his country will assist Liberia to improve its health sector.

In an interview with the Daily Observer during his recent visit to Liberia, Ambassador Portal said Cuba is aware of the disastrous health condition that faced Liberia two years ago, coupled with other prevalent curable diseases.

Ambassador Portal said, "We are aware of the Ebola that struck the country, and we want to help the government improve the health of the people, to reduce infant mortality, maternal mortality and other curable diseases."

The Cuban Ambassador stated that his country has the biotechnological and biopharmaceutical industries and doctors who are experienced in fighting and preventing tropical diseases, including malaria and cholera.

With such considerable experience coupled with the re-opening of the Cuban Embassy in Liberia, Ambassador Portal said, "We will be useful to Liberia because conditions are created to develop this cooperation."

In a historical analysis of Cuban-African relations that paved the way for assistance to African countries including Liberia, the Ambassador narrated that during the days of Cuba's struggle for independence, African slaves assisted Cubans and some of those slaves came from the West African belt, including Liberia.

Recalling this memorable assistance, he said though Cuba is not a rich country, it believes in sharing what it possesses and helping to build the health and education sectors through bilateral ties is a way Cuba can reciprocate to Africa.

Ambassador Portal acknowledged that Liberia specifically, has been vigorously advocating for the lifting of US imposed sanctions on Cuba, and since it has a need for improvement in the health system after experiencing Ebola, his country is in the position to help Liberia.

Last week the Ministry's Health Promotion Division launched the National Policy on Health Promotion, which calls for reaching out to communities to discuss and sensitize residents on preventive measures against curable diseases.

In October, there was also a regional workshop on Neglected Tropical Diseases that brought together representatives from Ivory Coast, Guinea and Sierra Leone to Monrovia; and a similar gathering ended yesterday.

Also in October, the Ministry conducted a workshop on Water Quality Control, and a WHO representative at the opening of the one week workshop challenged health workers to design strategies that will make water companies produce safe water for the public.

During the 2014 Ebola crisis, 50 Cuban doctors came to Liberia to help health authorities contain the deadly disease.

---