

# *Cuba: when there is a will, it is possible to build a healthcare system free and accessible for everybody*

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United Nations, September 23 (RHC)-- Cuba's foreign minister, Bruno Rodriguez, denounced that the unjust international order and capitalism, consider health as a commodity and not a right.

Speaking at the high-level meeting on universal health coverage held at UN headquarters in New York Rodriguez recalled that almost half of the world's population does not have access to basic health care services

By philosophy, capitalism is contrary to universal health coverage, because it would mean greater responsibilities and public expenditures for states, and, therefore, less space and profit for those who enrich themselves at the expense of the health of others,' he said.

In that sense, he added, the Cuban experience shows that, when there is enough political will, it is possible to build a single, public, free and accessible health care system for 100 percent of the population.

The minister said that at the end of 2018, Cuba had a life expectancy of 78.45 years and an infant mortality rate of 4.0 per 1,000 live births. The immunization level was 98 percent, with 14 infectious diseases eradicated, nine that did not constitute health problems and 29 controlled communicable diseases, he said.

To obtain these results, Rodriguez said that Cuba not only has faced the challenges derived of being a small developing country, but also the impact of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States for almost 60 years, which today is intensifying.

The Foreign minister added that health is one of the sectors on which this genocidal U.S. policy has the greatest impact, and to make matters worse, he observed, Washington is now attacking Cuban medical cooperation programs with developing countries, with the objective of discrediting and sabotaging them.

“These programs, based on ethical and humanist principles, are an example of South-South cooperation, and have helped many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia”, he said.

He added that by attacking these projects, the United States is not only attacking Cuba, but undermines the real possibilities of many developing nations to achieve universal health coverage, realize the human right to health and meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

Access to health is a human right and the United States commits a crime by proposing to limit it, but it is wrong to think that it will be able to eliminate these programs, he emphasized.

The Cuban foreign minister concluded his remarks stressing that Cuba will continue to give its determined support to those countries in the South that need it and will continue to strengthen its long tradition of cooperation and exchange with entities such as the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization.

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