

# *Interested in cooperation with Cuba*

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**Díaz-Canel in meeting with a representation of the mayor's office of Maricá, from the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro. Photo / @PresidenciaCuba**

By María Josefina Arce

Maricá is a municipality in the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro, whose authorities are aware of Cuba's spirit of solidarity and its progress, especially in health and biotechnology, so they are interested in establishing solid cooperation in these and other areas.

This was stated in Havana by a delegation from that Rio de Janeiro territory, in a meeting with President Miguel Díaz Canel, who highlighted the existing potential for collaboration and the experience in that

sense that both peoples have.

The truth is that during the governments of the Workers' Party, from 2003 to 2016, the two peoples developed an effective cooperation in various branches, for mutual benefit.

Widely recognized was the participation of the Greater of the Antilles in the "More Doctors" program, launched in 2013, under the mandate of then President Dilma Rousseff, to bring health to the most remote and poorest places of the South American giant.

The dedication, knowledge and high professionalism of the archipelago's health personnel earned the trust, affection and gratitude of millions of Brazilians, who highlighted the personalized attention of the Cubans.

In five years of work, the collaborators of the Caribbean nation attended more than 113 million patients, from about 3,600 municipalities, of which about 700 had a doctor for the first time in their history.

In favelas and special indigenous districts, especially in the Amazon, Cuban professionals were present, whose work was recognized by the authorities and especially by the population, which gave them 95% acceptance, according to a study commissioned by the Ministry of Health to the Federal University of Minas Gerais.

But the arrival of Jair Bolsonaro to the presidency in 2019 and his attacks and offenses against Cuban professionals and the Cuban government led Havana to decide not to continue participating in this program.

Opinion polls showed that a large part of Brazilians considered that health care in the country would worsen after the departure of Cuban doctors from the "More Doctors" program.

But bilateral collaboration has also covered many other spheres such as culture, sports and education. The successful Cuban literacy method "Yo sí puedo" (Yes, I can) has reached the South American giant, while young people from the South American nation have been trained as doctors at ELAM, the Latin American School of Medicine.

There are also other examples of cooperation between Cuban and Brazilian territories, such as the city of Belen, capital of the northern state of Para, and Havana.

There is a history of cooperation and solidarity between Cubans and Brazilians, in addition to multiple potentialities that make it more than feasible for Cuba and the municipality of Maricá to develop joint projects in favor of their citizens.

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