

# *More than three decades in favor of life*

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Image from the newspaper Trabajadores

By María Josefina Arce

In Havana stands a first-class productive scientific complex, which today celebrates thirty-six years of valuable work in favor of the health of Cubans and people from other regions of the world, who have benefited from its effective medicines, developed with state-of-the-art technology.

The genesis of the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology lies in the innovative and futuristic thinking of the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, who knew how to see the important role that biotechnology was called to play in the well-being of Cubans.

"The center is great, but I hope that the scientific results obtained will also be great," said Fidel, and he was not wrong. Its contribution to the promotion of agricultural, veterinary and environmental plans has been great.

But it is also due to the dedication and high professionalism of its workers that many drugs have improved the quality of life of many people.

In the presence of COVID 19, researchers from the renowned institution gave life to the Abdala vaccine, marking a milestone in Latin America and the Caribbean. The immunogen, highly safe and effective, has been used, together with others that are also the result of the efforts of the scientific community, in the vaccination campaign of the Cuban population.

At present, the Caribbean nation has a control of the disease caused by the new coronavirus, thanks to Abdala, Soberana 02 and Soberana Plus, which together with the established protocols made the current scenario possible.

Abdala is also used in other nations such as Mexico, Vietnam, Iran, Venezuela, Syria and Nicaragua, given its high efficacy in preventing a severe state of the disease caused by the new coronavirus and death.

Undoubtedly one of its best known products that has made a difference for countless people is HEBERPROT-P for diabetic foot ulcer, which reduces amputation of the lower extremities.

There are many, however, its achievements. Epidermal Growth Factor, the tetravalent vaccine against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and Hepatitis B and the Alpha and Gamma recombinant interferons.

It has been more than three decades of intense work, of stealing time to rest, but for these men and women, trained by the revolution, it has been worth it, because lives have been saved and they have contributed to the advancement of the country in other branches.

It has also been years of having to overcome the many obstacles imposed by the criminal U.S. blockade, which has intensified in the midst of the world health emergency caused by COVID 19. But Cuban scientists have proved their worth and dedication throughout this time and have always responded promptly to any task. And the Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology is undoubtedly at the forefront.

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