

Fruitful cooperation

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By Maria Josefina Arce

The cooperation between Cuba and the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency, goes back several decades and has materialized in the application of nuclear technologies in vital areas such as human health, agriculture and environmental conservation.

The Agency's support in the fight against cancer, one of the main causes of death in Cuba, has been invaluable. Thanks to the IAEA, the cyclotron technique was introduced for the production of radiopharmaceuticals for the diagnosis and treatment of this disease.

With the National Center for Agricultural Health, it is developing the Integrated Measures against Zoonotic Diseases initiative, which includes the use of nuclear techniques to rapidly detect pathogenic agents that cause diseases in animals that are transmitted to humans.

It has been instrumental in supporting Cuban health authorities in their fight against mosquito-borne diseases such as Zika, dengue and chikungunya, using the environmentally friendly sterile insect technique, which uses irradiation to control insects.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, the agency also provided assistance to the archipelago with donations of diagnostic kits and nuclear techniques equipment to combat the virus.

Cuba also supports the IAEA's regional cooperation program through capacity building and participation in expert missions to other countries, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean.

Cuba is currently part of a new project launched this year by the Agency on environmental contamination in rivers, lakes, reservoirs and lagoons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The IAEA has repeatedly recognized the good preparation of Cuban experts and the contribution of the Caribbean nation in various collaborative actions, as the main means for the promotion of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

There is a fluid dialogue between the two parties at the highest level. Several executives of the entity have traveled to Cuba, as is the case now of Najat Mokhtar, Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications.

This new visit by an IAEA executive will allow for a review of the joint projects currently underway and to evaluate other cooperation options that will benefit the country and other countries in the region.

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