

# *Interest in deepening cooperation in health*

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## **Medical Brigade in Azerbaijan**

By Maria Josefina Arce

The arrival for the first time in Azerbaijan in 2020 of Cuban health professionals to help in the confrontation with COVID 19, marked a milestone in the relations between the two nations, which date back to the times of the USSR, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The work of the members of the Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Situations of Disasters and Serious Epidemics had such an impact on the population that, at the request of the Baku government, a second brigade of 120 aid workers traveled to that Caucasian country.

Until July 2021, the Cubans attended to more than 77,000 patients, carried out multiple medical and nursing procedures, as well as teaching and research activities that complemented the preparation of professionals from both nations in the face of the pandemic.

Hence, health is one of the areas in which Azerbaijan is interested in strengthening its ties with the Caribbean nation, as stated by local authorities in dialogue with members of the Cuban delegation, led by Vice President Salvador Valdés Mesa, who traveled to that territory as a result of the holding of the Summit of the Contact Group of the Non-Aligned Movement, in response to COVID 19, on post-pandemic recovery.

During the meeting with the Azerbaijani President, Ilham Aliyev, the latter expressed his country's willingness to continue boosting bilateral ties and expand economic and cooperation relations, especially in health.

An interest reiterated by the Minister of Health of Azerbaijan. Teymur Musayev, to his Cuban counterpart, José Ángel Portal Miranda, who was also part of the archipelago's delegation.

The new perspectives that are opening up to deepen cooperation were analyzed by the two officials, who agreed that there is a promising future in the field of pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, given Havana's outstanding progress in this field.

There is interest in Cuban professionals providing services in Azerbaijani institutions, as well as establishing academic and scientific exchanges between universities of Medical Sciences of the two nations, with a view to developing joint research and clinical trials.

There is also a willingness to expand relations in other areas such as tourism, education, agriculture and culture.

Cuba and Azerbaijan maintain friendly ties and close cooperation in international organizations. In addition, they seek to share experiences, opportunities and resources for the welfare of both peoples.

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