

# *Applying lessons learned from the pandemic*

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By Roberto Morejón

PAHO, the Pan American Health Organization, urged the countries of the area to actively participate in the elaboration of a new international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

By advocating this procedure, associated with the World Health Organization, the region of the Americas and the Caribbean would reaffirm the importance it attaches to being ready for any new contingency such as the one caused by the scourge of Covid-19.

The Pan American Health Organization is on the right track, as was underscored at the 60th Directing Council meeting in Washington.

Those present, mainly ministers of health and officials, agreed that although the health emergency has ended, there are still cases of Covid-19 and the corresponding lessons should be learned.

As stated at the conclave in the U.S. capital, it is advisable to increase vaccine production capacity in Latin America and the Caribbean, so as not to fall behind.

With native biologics, the response to new contingencies would be more adequate, which is why this is one of PAHO's priorities.

However, it would be a mistake to think that health institutions in the Americas should only be alert to Covid-19.

At its 60th Directing Council, the Pan American Health Organization approved the so-called Elimination Initiative, aimed at putting an end to more than 30 communicable diseases and associated conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Experts point out that these diseases continue to be the main cause of ill health, disability and death in the Americas, accounting for 81 percent of overall mortality.

Faced with this and other dilemmas, the Pan American Health Organization rightly recommends and encourages governments and institutions to insist on innovation, a creative tool that was emphasized by Jarbas Barbosa, director of PAHO.

In addition to facilitating access to drugs or vaccines, as is its objective, the entity intends to allocate part of the funds received to pave the way for technological innovation.

And, more importantly, to contribute to the production of this technology in the region, to the extent of each country's possibilities.

In this way, important contributions will be made towards the recovery of the ground lost due to the pandemic.

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