

# *Cuba denounces impact of U.S. blockade on the fight against COVID-19*

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Paris, June 8 (RHC)-- Cuba denounced on Monday, at the sixth extraordinary session of UNESCO's Executive Board, the obstacle that the U.S. blockade represents to its efforts to confront COVID-19.

"The pandemic highlights the enormous restrictions imposed by the United States with its economic, commercial and financial siege, which constitutes the main obstacle to access to the necessary medicines, materials and health equipment," said Oscar Leon, the island's representative to the Council, at the virtual forum.

Regarding the videoconference modality used by UNESCO and other organizations to guarantee the holding of meetings in the midst of the health crisis, he pointed out that digital platforms must be used to guarantee the incorporation of all States under equal conditions.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by Washington on Cuba for six decades has affected its participation in events. In this connection, León warned that the hostile stance of the United States not only hinders Cuba's development, but also tries to prevent its relations with organizations of the UN system, including UNESCO.

According to the island's representative, the siege intensified by the current administration, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, constitutes the main barrier to the development and well-being of Cubans and hinders international cooperation in the areas of competence of UNESCO: science, education, access to information and culture.

In his address to the Executive Board, Oscar León reiterated Cuba's call to strengthen solidarity and collaboration among countries as the key response in the context of the pandemic, a scenario from which the United States is moving away with its aggressiveness.

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