

# *Two brothers are back*

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By Roberto Morejón

Cubans welcomed the 20th Summit of ALBA-TCP, Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-People's Trade Treaty, and hailed the reaffirmation of commitments to strengthen that mechanism and the return of Bolivia and Saint Lucia.

The meeting in Havana, on the 17th anniversary of the founding of ALBA, corroborated the importance given by the government headed by President Luis Arce and the Movement Towards Socialism to the integrationist bloc.

After winning the elections, Arce rejoined his country to the 10-nation conglomerate.

Thus, he put an end to the arbitrary decision of Jeanine Añez's regime, who ordered Bolivia's exit from ALBA-TCP.

The ultra-conservative ruler assumed power after the coup d'état in 2019, and led Bolivia's foreign relations into a quagmire.

Precisely, during his speech at the ALBA-TCP meeting here in Havana, President Luis Arce apologized to Cuba for the mistreatment that the West Indian medical brigade received in his country on the instructions of the right-wing-backed Áñez administration.

Cubans highly valued the expressions of the president, who recalled the support of our professionals in the field of ophthalmology and Havana's assistance to a literacy campaign.

Another country that returned to ALBA-TCP, in this case after five years of interruption, was Saint Lucia, a territory of 616 square kilometers and 183,000 inhabitants.

Saint Lucian Foreign Minister Alba Baptiste, present at the 20th summit of the bloc, said that his country benefited from the integration, and recalled that 10,000 of his compatriots underwent ophthalmologic surgeries during Operation Miracle.

Baptiste, who praised the work of a brigade of Cuban doctors in Saint Lucia, ratified the commitment to the regional mechanism.

Cuba, like the rest of the ALBA-TCP members, is pleased to have Bolivia and St. Lucia back to continue working on a very useful project.

This was evidenced during the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus, with the establishment of a humanitarian bridge for the transfer of vaccines and doctors.

As Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel pointed out, ALBA-TCP was born of unity, nourished by solidarity and cooperation, and affirms the power of the peoples to transform history.

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