

# *Facing common challenges together*

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**Illustrative image taken from Minrex**

By María Josefina Arce

Friendship and respect define the relations of more than four decades between Cuba and Iran, two sovereign and independent nations bent on continuing to expand and strengthen cooperation between the two peoples.

And on that path Cuba this week welcomed Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, president of the Persian nation, whose visit to Cuban territory has been another sign of interest in overcoming together the difficulties imposed by the economic sanctions imposed on both nations.

In this way, a business forum was held in Havana with representatives of the business sector of the two states and in which the willingness to expand economic and investment ties was ratified.

Havana and Tehran have a strong nexus in the political sphere and are working to achieve excellence in various areas such as biotechnology.

In fact, during the COVID 19 pandemic, Iran became the first country to produce Soberana 02, one of the Cuban antigens against the disease caused by the new coronavirus, of proven efficacy and safety.

It was possible thanks to the close collaboration between two prestigious institutions: the Pasteur Institutes of Iran and the Finlay Vaccine Institute, creator of Soberana 02.

There is a great joint experience in the production of vaccines, such as the anti-pneumococcal vaccine, at the time the most sold and expensive, and to which Cubans and Iranians could not have access due to the coercive and illegal measures imposed by the United States against both peoples.

The inauguration of the production plant took place within the framework of the Eighteenth Session of the Iran-Cuba Intergovernmental Commission, which was held in Tehran in May last year.

As a result of that meeting, government representatives of both nations signed 13 agreements in the energy, agricultural and industrial sectors, among others.

The visit of the Iranian president speaks of the importance his country attaches to its relations with the Greater Antilles, which last February also received the Foreign Minister of the Persian nation, Hossein Amir Abdollahian.

The Iranian Foreign Minister described Cuba as a friend, a brother and a strategic ally, and reiterated his country's will to continue consolidating bilateral ties.

And that close friendship has become evident, among other aspects, in the accompaniment of the Cuban people in their tireless struggle against the U.S. blockade, which hinders their socio-economic development.

The presence of the Iranian president among us has undoubtedly given a new impetus to the ties between two friendly nations that seek to face common challenges together.

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