

# *Cuba and Brazil committed to boosting their relations*

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By María Josefina Arce

The trip to Cuba last weekend by Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to participate in the Group of 77 Summit was also an opportunity to boost bilateral ties, which under the Workers' Party governments have been characterized by their dynamism, but experienced a setback with the coming to power in 2019 of the far-right Jair Bolsonaro.

The two countries broke new ground in collaboration in the fields of health and biotechnology. In Havana, an important Protocol of Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation and in the health economic and industrial complex was signed.

Both Havana and Brasilia are committed to technology transfer, joint research projects and the development of high value-added products.

Brazilian authorities have highlighted the importance of this agreement, given the remarkable progress made by the largest of the Antilles in biotechnology, which has allowed obtaining valuable drugs for certain diseases and has meant a better quality of life for many Cubans and citizens of other nations.

One of Cuba's milestones in this field is the development of vaccines. In fact, it was the first country in Latin America and the Caribbean to obtain its own immunogens against COVID 19, which caused so many deaths worldwide.

The Brazilian Minister of Health, Nisia Trindade, pointed out that this agreement will enable her country to benefit from the cutting-edge knowledge that Cuba has developed in this area, while Brazil will contribute its production capacity at scale, in public and private laboratories.

In the area of health, Brasilia and Havana have already maintained an outstanding cooperation. It should be recalled that Cuban specialists participated in the More Doctors Program, launched in 2013 by then President Dilma Rousseff to bring health to the entire Brazilian geography.

But the two states also seek to strengthen and expand collaboration in other areas. Hence, earlier this month a delegation of businessmen and technicians from the South American giant traveled to the archipelago to explore the possibilities of cooperation in agriculture.

In order to follow up on this issue, Brazilian experts will return to Cuba next October and November to address technologies for agribusiness.

Since January of this year, when Lula da Silva arrived for the third time at the Planalto Palace, the two countries have been working to resume the excellence of their relations. Last August, for example, Celso Amorim, head of the Special Advisor's Office of the Presidency, and Jorge Viana, president of the Brazilian Agency for the Promotion of Exports and Investments, traveled to the Cuban capital.

There has been a fluid exchange in recent months between Cuba and Brazil, which confirms the willingness of the two governments to restore ties based on friendship and respect.

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