

ALBA Nations Agree on 23-Point Action Plan to Combat Ebola



Havana, October 21 (NNN-EFE) -- The countries of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, ALBA, have agreed on an action plan to combat and protect themselves from Ebola.

At a special summit of heads of State and government held on Monday in Havana, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said: "We've approved an action plan that's going to allow us to join efforts to prevent and protect our people from this threat. Also, we'll support Cuba's effort... in the vanguard of support for West Africa." The meeting lasted three hours and concluded with a 23-point joint declaration.

In the document, the bloc -- made up of several Latin American and Caribbean nations -- emphasized preventive actions such as the activation of an epidemiological monitoring network, strengthening control measures on the borders of member nations, designing public education campaigns and urging training in specialized health personnel.

The Venezuelan leader said that a "common control center" to deal with the disease would also be established along with rapid response brigades to handle health emergencies in ALBA member nations.

ALBA will hold another conference on Oct. 29th and 30th in Havana to formulate the action plan, which the bloc's health ministers must have ready by November 5th.

Cuban President Raul Castro announced at the meeting that Havana will send two new health care brigades -- 91 health professionals in all -- to Liberia and Guinea Conakry to help fight the spread of the virus. Already deployed in Sierra Leone are 165 Cuban health care workers, who were dispatched there in early October.

ALBA is made up of Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela. Haiti is a permanent invited guest of the bloc.

Also attending the Havana meeting were representatives of Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis, countries whose incorporation into ALBA has already been approved.

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