Cuba’s Participation in South-South Cooperation

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**Abstract:** The article summarizes the cooperation that Cuba has offered over the years. With the victory of Cuban Revolution on January 1st 1959, the Republic of Cuba has highlighted the vital importance of the practice of the principles of solidarity and international cooperation in its foreign policy.

On October 17 1962, Fidel Castro announces to people the Government decision to bring help to Argelia in the health field. He expressed that day:

“I am sure we will have many volunteers doctors…Today we only can send fifty doctors, but in eight or ten years later, who knows how many doctors we could send to help our brothers…”

**Introduction**

The first Cuban cooperation action dates back to 1963 with the sending of the first Medical Brigade to Argelia. However, as early as 1960 a small brigade had been in Chile when an earthquake affected that country. Since that date, Cuba has offered cooperation to more than 160 countries. It reflects the humanist and altruistic values that Cuban people have developed during these years of Revolution. Efforts around SSC by Cuba cover several sectors, like health, education sports and construction activities. Some glimpses of them are being presented in the following sections.

**The Field of Health**

International solidarity is a principle of the Cuban National Health System. It relies on medical collaboration in countries of the South, as well as triangular cooperation with other

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countries and International Organizations. Cuban cooperation in the area of health translates into 55 years of medical cooperation and over 400,000 professionals and technicians who have served in 164 countries.

Currently, more than 40,000 workers are cooperating in 77 countries, of which twenty thousand are doctors providing services in 30 African countries, 25 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 8 in Asia, 3 in Oceania and 1 in Europe.

Cuba has also contributed to the formation of human resources engaged in the health sector including, teaching and training of health personnel, as shown by the schools of medicine created in 14 countries and the 18,589 foreign professionals who have graduated from these schools. Nowadays, 1,579 professors provide services in eight schools, who are involved in the training of 36,850 students. At the same time, 35,142 health professionals from 136 countries have studied in Cuba, with 9,200 undergraduate students and 2,327 postgraduate students currently enrolled in the different Medical Sciences careers, representing 126 nations from all continents.

Other outstanding programs and projects of great social and human impact developed by Cuba are: Comprehensive Health Program (PIS); Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM); Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors specialized in Disaster Situations and Serious Epidemics; Operation Miracle; Barrio Adentro Mission in Venezuela; Triangular Cooperation: WHO/PAHO-Cuba-Angola cooperation for the eradication of Poliomyelitis, Cuba-Haiti-Brazil and Norway-Haiti-Cuba; and the joint production with Brazil of Meningococcal Vaccine A and C for the countries of “Africa’s meningitis belt”.

Cuba has participated in the founding of medical schools in Africa, for example: Eritrea, Tanzania and Equatorial Guinea. In these schools about 500 young people are currently studying. Cuba cooperates in the confrontation of Ebola virus in three West African countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), in conjunction with WHO in 2015.

The Cuban experience in South-South cooperation in the field of health and its positive results has been widely recognized by several international organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund.
The Field of Education

The Cuban achievements in education have been extended to the world through programmes such as the Yo si puedo, with which over 10 million people learned how to read and write in several continents. Cuba has extended its collaborations both in the institutional modality and in social and care work.

One of these projects is the one referred to as Educate your Child, an educational care programme, being in operation successfully for more than ten years in countries such as Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela, Brazil and Colombia through UNICEF.

Today Cuba maintains the collaboration in the educational field in 15 nations of Latin America and Africa, especially in Venezuela and Equatorial Guinea.

The Field of Sport

Cuban sport institutions led by The Olympic Cuban Committee and the National Institute of Sport, Physical Education and Recreation (INDER) have offered cooperation and technical support to more than 50 countries with the presence of more than 7,000 technicians, teachers and trainers in the sport field who have contributed to increase the result of these countries in different competitions and also have promoted the development of physical education and healthy sport in developing countries.

The International School of Physical Education and Sport (EIEFD) is a university-level sport school near Havana, Cuba, that provides scholarships for international students to obtain a degree in physical education, coaching and sports sciences. The mandate of the school is to prepare graduates to return to their home countries in order to work towards sustainable and transformational development in and through sport.

The Field of Construction

As part of the cooperation in the construction field, Cuba has carried out projects in more than 35 countries in Africa, America, Europe and Asia. Cuba’s participation in overseas projects relies on its highly qualified and committed personnel as key to ensure the quality and professionalism of its trustworthy and competitive services.

Construction of the international airport in Saint Vincent.

Supervision of the construction of the highway Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam.
Today more than 300 engineers, architects, technicians and skilled workers provide their services in design and construction, maintenance and repair, surveying work, specialized technical assistance for any kind of project around the world through United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and DINVAI Construcciones S.A., a Cuban Public Sector Enterprise, which implement the Cuban construction collaboration.

The countries where Cuba has its presence now are: South Africa, Equatorial Guinea, Namibia, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Dominica, Haiti and Vietnam.

Following are some evidences of Cuban cooperation in the construction field:
Conclusions

South-South Cooperation has its fundamental on the solidarity between developing countries, many times in complementary form, taking in account the strength of some countries in certain area and the necessity of the other countries that receive the cooperation.

Like a principle of solidarity that always has characterized the cooperation from Cuba, “we sharing the little we have and not sharing what is left over”.

Cuba has ratified its firm commitment to South-South Cooperation, in spite of its economic shortcomings and the commercial and financial blockade impose by US that do not allow a greater economic development for our country.

Collaboration between the states of the South is an expression of the solidarity that Cuba defends for the benefit of the peoples.