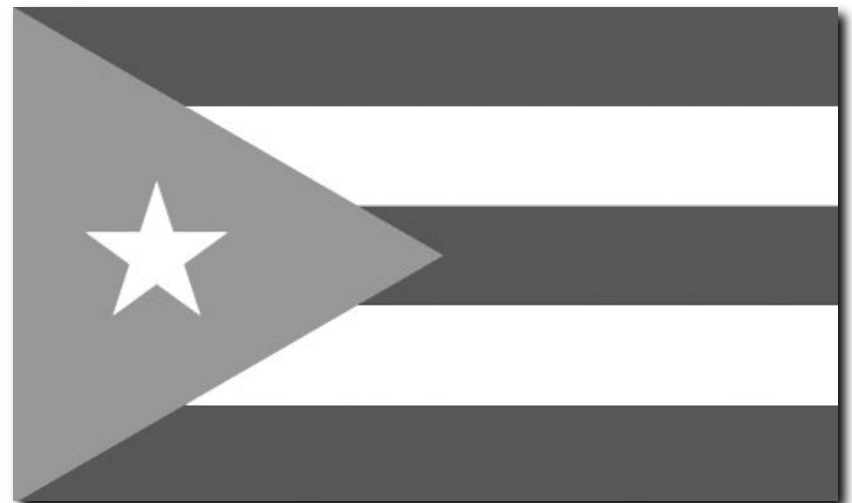


Unique collaboration



VENEZUELA

Alina Perera, Special for **Granma**

• CARACAS, Venezuela.—“Here we are with a concrete result, with tasks completed, attending to all priorities. There are always difficulties and we have to resolve them, but the essence of collaboration is maintained,” noted Roberto López Hernández, Cuban deputy minister of Foreign Trade and head of Cuba-Venezuela bilateral relations, speaking September 27 following the fifteenth quarterly meeting to assess cooperation between the two countries.

López explained to the press that these meetings, which saw several days of working sessions including representatives of both nations at the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry, allow for “an evaluation of all activities carried out under the Cuba-Venezuela Agreement.” He added that details are provided to assess the efficiency of each project, the participation of Cuban collaborators, and the difficulties that arise in the process.

According to the deputy minister, the meeting followed up on projects as important as those regarding health, representing achievements of both the Bolivarian and the Cuban revolutions. More than 27,000 Cuban collaborators continue to provide services in Venezuela, despite the multiple adversities facing both nations.

Addressing adverse global economic and financial contexts; overcoming natural disasters, such as the recent hurricane that struck Cuba; and continuing to deliver results as part of the Cuba-Venezuela Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement, signed 16 years ago, can only be achieved through the combined efforts of two sister nations, López emphasized.

He described the Agreement as “the clearest expression of what Venezuela means to us and what we mean to her: a unique collaboration that is only possible because of this well-established solidarity between Chávez and Fidel, followed by Maduro and Raúl.”

Meanwhile, Ramón Gordils, Venezuelan deputy minister for Economic Cooperation,

stated that “the magnitude of cooperation between Cuba and Venezuela has encompassed practically all sectors of our societies, in the economic, political, and cultural fields.”

He clarified that this close relationship is forged not “as a consequence of a random impulse, but through its administration and management through specific projects.” He stressed that cooperation between Cuba and Venezuela has reached such important levels that increased efforts are required when evaluating these undertakings.

“Despite the blockade of the two nations, the reduction of oil prices, difficulties, and street violence, Cuba’s cooperation in Venezuela is almost fully intact,” Gordils noted, adding that “this means we have gained in efficiency.”

Among the most notable impacts of the Agreement, the deputy minister mentioned the presence of thousands of Cuban health collaborators, “which has provided our country with a totally democratic health system, because it excludes no one,” as well as the existence of cultural and sports promotion programs; and an important alliance of an economic nature.

“Today in Venezuela, we enjoy a significant amount of Cuban products. And there are an important amount of Venezuelan products in Cuba; we are not necessarily speaking of finished products, but of raw materials, of elements that favor production. This is a very difficult reality to change, because it is now part of our normal environment, but for it to remain so requires that we continue to meet, work, review.”

During a speech on September 27, the head of all Cuban missions in Venezuela, Víctor Gaute López, spoke of foresight and unity as key premises for advancing the Cooperation Agreement. He outlined just how much has been achieved in the course of this year, as a result of this collaboration: Venezuela reached 100% primary health care coverage, and several programs making a significant social impact have been created, which go hand

in hand with health projects, such as the Somos Venezuela movement, the Chamba Juvenil plan, surgical days, the vaccination campaign, and the humanized child-birth program.

“In 2018 we will continue advancing. We will experience this as a result of all the

human capital formed over all these years,” Gaute highlighted, who also defined the previous days as positive working sessions, reflecting the historic, productive moment that the Venezuelan people are experiencing in their battle against internal and external enemies. •



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