

# *Cuba works for its children*

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**The Cuban government has constantly called for the care of the most vulnerable citizens, an exhortation reiterated by President Miguel Diaz Canel, in view of the incidence of COVID 19.**

By María Josefina Arce

The Cuban government has constantly called for the care of the most vulnerable citizens, an exhortation reiterated by President Miguel Diaz Canel, in view of the incidence of COVID 19. And children are one of the population sectors upon which the attention of the authorities, health personnel and our scientific community have focused.

On that path to protect them from the disease caused by the new coronavirus, Cuba became the first country in the world to develop a vaccination campaign in pediatric ages, with its own immunosystems of proven efficacy and safety, thanks to the political will of the government and the high preparation and dedication of our researchers.

Today we can say that all children and adolescents from 2 to 18 years of age have been successfully immunized with Soberana 02, a drug designed from the beginning for the nation's infants and which was created by the prestigious Finlay Vaccine Institute.

A total of 1,600,000 children have received two doses of Soberana 02, plus one dose of Soberana Plus at an interval of 28 days.

María Eugenia Toledo, principal investigator of clinical trials of Soberana 02, affirmed that the decision to vaccinate infants was backed by years of history and prestige in the development of immunogens for the youngest children.

Let's not forget that vaccination campaigns have been carried out in Cuba since 1962, which have allowed some diseases to be eliminated from the national territory and others not to be a health problem. At present, eight of the 11 drugs that are applied are produced in our country.

Cuba has achieved a coverage of over 98% in all vaccines, resulting in a high level of immunization of the population, an achievement recognized by international organizations such as the World Health Organization and the Pan American Health Organization.

On this occasion, the vast knowledge of Cuban scientists has once again been demonstrated. In no case during the vaccination campaign against COVID-19 were serious reactions observed, nor heart afflictions such as myocarditis and pericarditis, which have been detected in other nations.

And an extremely important detail is that after the process was concluded, no deaths of children were reported in the Caribbean state.

But Cuban scientists go further and do not stop in their purpose of protecting all segments of the population, given the permanence in Cuba and the world of COVID 19, now with a new Omicron variant, which, although less lethal, is very contagious.

The renowned Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology is working tirelessly on a clinical study of the Abdala immunogen in children under two years of age. In this way, the entire population will be covered, although, as the authorities have reiterated, it is necessary to maintain the observance of hygienic and sanitary measures.

Cuba's National Hero, José Martí, who loved children and created beautiful pages for them, once wrote: "We work for the children... because children are the hope of the world", and this Martí's thought has guided Cuba since January 1959, which protects and guarantees the rights of minors.

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