

ALBA-TCP: An essential integration mechanism



By María Josefina Arce

In a few hours it will be another anniversary of an integration mechanism that has marked a before and after in Latin America and the Caribbean.

For nearly two decades, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-People's Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP) has encouraged collaboration based on solidarity and respect.

The focus has always been on contributing to the well-being of the peoples. It could not be otherwise, when the emergence of this bloc is due to the initiative of two men of great humanism as the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz (1926-2016), and the Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez Frías (1954-2013).

It was born at a time when the United States was trying to impose on the region the FTAA, Free Trade Area of the Americas, a plan of domination, to the detriment of the sovereignty of the peoples.

ALBA-TCP has developed many projects over the years, especially in the areas of health and education, which have benefited millions of poor Latin Americans and Caribbeans.

In education, the literacy of some five million people in the area with the Cuban method "Yes, I can", and the declaration by UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, of Venezuela, in 2005, Bolivia, in 2008, and Nicaragua, in 2009, as an Illiteracy-Free Territory.

A milestone was the clinical, genetic and psychosocial study of people with disabilities, which made it possible to articulate policies in favor of this sector of the population in six ALBA-TCP countries.

The COVID 19 pandemic was a challenge for all nations, as it put health systems to the test. Faced with the challenge, the member countries of the mechanism once again demonstrated their unity and commitment to life.

The ALBA Bank established a humanitarian bridge for the transfer of vaccines, health personnel and supplies to several countries in the region.

Likewise, a fund of two million dollars was established as economic relief to the Caribbean for the purchase of immunogens.

Cuba sent health workers to the countries of the bloc to help in the fight against the disease caused by the new coronavirus.

Cuba received valuable donations from its ALBA-TCP brothers, in view of the tightening of the U.S. blockade in the midst of the health emergency.

On this new anniversary, ALBA-TCP continues to be an essential bloc to advance the development of our countries and the welfare of their citizens, in the midst of an increasingly unequal world.

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