

Scientists speak out

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By Roberto Morejón

The links between Cuban and U.S. scientists date back to the first half of the 19th century, although after the imposition of the blockade they were diluted, until a new phase, not free of obstacles, was opened after 2015.

It is encouraging to know that despite those impediments, men and women from both nations recently addressed in Havana the challenges of global health, through scientific innovation and biomedical research, according to the defined purpose of the meeting.

The topics discussed are compelling even for the layman, as guests and hosts addressed pandemic preparedness, arbovirus, cancer and neurological diseases, health technologies, data science and life-threatening risk factors.

Among the organizers on the Cuban side, the "Pedro Kourí" Institute of Tropical Medicine, known by its acronym IPK, where eminent Cuban scientists research more than 12 specialties.

From the United States came a large delegation made up of representatives from 23 health institutions, all of them convinced, together with their local colleagues, of the need to increase joint efforts to face the challenges of human health.

The Caribbean and North American countries have recently had a positive experience of cooperation in the sciences.

It has been five years since the only biotechnological joint venture between the two countries, with contributions from Roswell Park Hospital in New York and the Center for Molecular Immunology of Cuba. The joint venture's products include the drug CIMAVax-EGF, a well-known Cuban therapy against lung cancer, and other additional immunotherapy treatments.

If it weren't for the restrictions imposed by the blockade imposed by Washington, the dense network of legal mechanisms that support it and the conspiracies of the extreme right of Cuban emigrants, the potential for collaboration between scientists and health workers would have been more exploited.

Cuba aspires that both peoples can share what unites them, for example, to take care of medicines and treatments, based on the experience, knowledge and skills of experts. Perhaps U.S. decision-makers will someday be convinced of the benefits of building a mutually beneficial relationship, at least in the sciences.

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