

# *Cuba Calls at WHO World Assembly for Universal Health Coverage*

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Geneva, May 24 (RHC)-- Cuban Health Minister Dr. Roberto Morales Ojeda on Tuesday called for universal medical coverage during the 70th World Health Assembly -- the decision-making body of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Addressing the plenary session of the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Morales underscored Cuba's supports for the strengthening of systems geared toward achieving universal health coverage. He noted that health is a fundamental human right and should then be at the center of all public policies toward sustainable development.

Morales Ojeda reported that by the end of 2016, life expectancy in Cuba was 78.45 years, while the country also has a immunization program that protects against 13 diseases. The program, he added, is comprised of 11 vaccines, eight of which are Cuban made medication, providing for over 98% coverage.

The Cuban health minister further noted that Cuba continues to maintain key indicators which, in 2015, saw the island become the first country in the world to officially eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.

Among the challenges currently facing Cuba he noted the country's rapidly aging population, non-communicable chronic diseases, low birth rates, and the negative effects of climate change.

"The UN 2030 Sustainable Development agenda provides the opportunity to develop better health systems and improve the population's wellbeing," stated Dr. Roberto Morales, noting that political will and collaboration are vital to such endeavor.

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