

Cholera Deaths in Haiti

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Yesterday I explained that in Haiti 1,523 persons had died as a result of cholera and at the same time, the measures adopted by the Party and Government of Cuba.

I didn't think I would be writing anything today about the problem. However I give up that idea in order to write a short Reflection on the subject.

Dr. Lea Guido, PHO-WHO representative en Cuba ?at this moment is representing both organizations in two countries and is a person with a wealth of experience ?, stated this afternoon that under current conditions Haiti can expect that the epidemic will affect 400,000 persons.

On the other hand, the Deputy Minister of Health of Cuba and Chief of the Cuban Medical Mission, our country's ambassador in Haiti and other comrades in the mission, have been meeting all day with President René Preval, Dr. Lea Guido, the Haitian Minister of Health and other officials from Cuba and Haiti, drawing up measures that will be urgently applied.

The Cuban Medical Mission is looking after 37 centres dealing with the epidemic where, until today, they have cared for 26,040 persons affected with cholera; to these they will immediately add, along with the Henry Reeve Brigade, 12 more medical centres (for a total of 49) with 1,100 new beds, in tents that were designed and made for those purposes in Norway and other countries, already purchased with earthquake funds, delivered to Cuba by Venezuela for the reconstruction of the Haitian health system.

Late today encouraging news arrived from Dr. Somarriba: during the past seven days there has not been one single death from cholera in the centres looked after by the Cuban Medical Mission. That figure would be impossible to keep up since other factors can come into play in that result, but the acquired experience, suitable methods and the degree of dedication achieved provides us with a very cheering idea.

We are also pleased that President René Preval, whose term in office ends next January 16th, has made the decision to transform the struggle against the epidemic into the most important activity of his life, one he will leave as a legacy to the people of Haiti and to the government that follows him.

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