

SPEECH BY THE FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA (CITMA), JOSE FIDEL SANTANA NUÑEZ, AT THE MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE SIXTH ANNUAL FORUM OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, TO BE TAKEN ON MAY 5, 2021 (9:00-10: 15 hrs).

Dear Mr. President:

Distinguished Ministers and High Authorities of Science, Technology and Innovation

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cuba, I wish to thank the call to this new exchange on the role of science, technology and innovation in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Since last year, we have seen how a pandemic has considerably affected the life conditions of millions of people on the planet, aggravating the numerous crises that already existed in December 2019.

Throughout the pandemic period, there has been consensus on the relevant role of science, technology and innovation not only to achieve the elimination of the virus, but also in their responsibility to assume the complex scenario that will arise once the international situation is stabilized.

The results obtained in research, therapies, vaccines and medicines have put to test the capacity of scientific generation and innovation from men and women of science in all parts of the world, but it reminds us that there is a long way to go to guarantee their sustainability and make access to these results more democratic.

After 13 months of having been detected the first cases of COVID-19 in our country, Cuba has five vaccine candidates, two of them, Soberana 02 and Abdala, in Phase III of a clinical trial. A third vaccine candidate, Soberana Plus, currently in Phase II, has been specially designed for confirmed COVID-19 patients, and could be unique in the world.

These are not the only results that Cuba will be able to share with the international community. Throughout these months, novel therapeutic solutions and diagnostic methods have been conceived, as well as innovations in the use of pre-existing drugs, while at the same time own mathematical models have been developed for the prognosis, confrontation and evaluation of the development of the pandemic.

We are not talking here of fortuitous results. The National Plan for Economic and Social Development until 2030, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, gives a relevant role to scientific research and innovation.

The merit is also in achieving it in the midst of adverse conditions. With the intensification of the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against Cuba, we have been prevented from accessing new technologies, medicines, fuels, financing, knowledge and information, which makes this policy more genocidal.

It is time to unite wills and efforts to face the immense challenge posed by the global socio-economic recovery.

Let's promote it on the basis of new knowledge and innovative products, cooperation and international solidarity.

Let's do it for the right to health, respect for peace and the development of our peoples.

Thank you