

Cuba launches commercial exports of COVID-19 vaccines

September 27 2021, by Andrea Rodríguez



A nurse greets a young girl as she arrives with her mother to receive a dose of the Soberana-02 COVID-19 vaccine, in Havana, Cuba, Thursday, Sept. 16, 2021. Cuba began inoculating children as young as 2-years-old with locally developed vaccines on Thursday. Credit: AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa

Cuba has begun commercial exports of its homegrown COVID-19

vaccines, sending shipments of the three-dose Abdala vaccine to Vietnam and Venezuela.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel announced the arrival in Vietnam on his Twitter feed Sunday. The official Cubadebate news website said the shipment included 900,000 doses purchased by Hanoi and 150,000 more donated by Cuba.

Vietnam's President Nguyen Xuan Phuc visited Cuba last week and toured the laboratory that produces the vaccine, announcing an agreement to buy at least 5 million doses.

Cuba's Center of Genetic Immunology and Biotechnology also announced that initial shipments of the Abdala shots were sent to Venezuela over the weekend.

That country's [vice president](#), Delcy Rodríguez, announced in June that Venezuela had agreed to buy \$12 million worth of the Cuban vaccine, though officials have declined to say how many doses were involved.

Another Cuban-developed COVID-19 [vaccine](#) is being produced in Iran.

Cuba also hopes to extend exports of its locally developed vaccines, and last week asked the World Health Organization to approve them, which many countries require before importing vaccines.

Cuban scientists have said the vaccines are more than 90% effective against illness, though—like all vaccines—less so against mere infection.



A mother holds her daughter who is injected with a dose of the Soberana-02 COVID-19 vaccine, in Havana, Cuba, Thursday, Sept. 16, 2021. Cuba began inoculating children as young as 2-years-old with locally developed vaccines on Thursday. Credit: AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa

Cuba plans to fully vaccinate 90% of its population by the end of November—a key step to reopening an economy heavily dependent on tourism.

Cuba's director of epidemiology, Francisco Durán, said Monday that the country of some 11 million people has registered 860,799 infections with COVID-19 and 7,279 deaths during the pandemic.

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