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**Cuba Highlights UNESCO's Role to Consolidate World Peace**

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10/04/2019



Paris, Apr 9 (Prensa Latina) Cuba on Tuesday noted here the crucial role of UNESCO in the consolidation of peace, which is increasingly relevant in light of growing global threats.

The statement was made by the Cuban representative at the 206th session of the Executive Council of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Ambassador Oscar Leon Gonzalez, who called on member States to defend peace and settle disputes through dialogue, in strict accordance with the principles of the Organization.

In that regard, he recalled that the region of Latin America and the Caribbean is a victim of the aggressive and irresponsible attitude of the government of the United States, which implements a regime change policy against independent and sovereign States, thus violating international law and the UN Charter.

'The possibility of using military force against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is declared openly, which would bring unpredictable negative consequences for the region,' he charged.

All this challenges the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Peace Zone, signed by the heads of State and Government in Havana in 2014, Leon added.

The diplomat also condemned the tightening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, with more damage to its people in all spheres of society, including the UNESCO sectors.

'The extraterritorial nature of that policy and its direct impact on the interests of third countries are deepened,' he pointed out.

On the other hand, international stability and peace are indispensable conditions for the success of UNESCO's work all over the world, including the results of the ongoing reform, Leon added.

Regarding that process, he mentioned as a priority the strengthening of UNESCO in the field, 'where the Organization adopts its true value for girls, boys, youths, women and men'.

He went on to say, 'We support the efforts to equip the Organization with the necessary human and financial resources, so this year we honor again the contribution to UNESCO's budget in an early date and we make modest voluntary contributions during the current biennium'.

The ambassador also referred to the ties between Cuba and the Organization, which 'have been consolidated significantly over the past few months' by the visits to UNESCO's headquarters by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel and Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez.

'They held meetings with the director general (Audrey Azoulay) and reaffirmed the excellent state of bilateral relations,' he noted.

Leon recalled that 2019 marks 500 years of the foundation of Havana, one of the anniversaries to which UNESCO is associated in the current biennium and 'another opportunity to promote the imprint of this Organization in the lives of Cuban women and men.'

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