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EMBASSY OF ARGENTINA, WASHINGTON, D.C.

# ARGENTINA IN FOCUS

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Minister of Health, Carla Vizzotti, and Chancellor Santiago Cafiero at Ezeiza Airport send a donation of AstraZeneca vaccines.

## COVID-19 ARGENTINA: A TRANSIT FROM BEING A RECIPIENT OF VACCINE DONATIONS TO BECOMING A DONOR

Like most countries throughout the world, Argentina faces a new wave of cases of the Omicron variant with a growing number of affected citizens. The number of cases increased in just a few weeks, from less than 10,000 a day to more than 100,000 in recent days.

As in the rest of the world, this situation has generated waiting periods in the domestic testing system, but

fortunately it has not had a serious impact on the capacity of its health system, since currently the percentage of bed occupancy for all pathologies, both in the public and private sectors, remains below 40%.

Although there are already more than six million positive cases since the beginning of the pandemic in our country, the intense and outstanding work of all health workers



Once again, I share with you the latest edition of our Embassy Newsletter. This edition includes an article about the commitment that Argentina has assumed in the donation of vaccines against COVID-19 in order to expand their access of in all countries.

In this edition we also include an article on the creation of a new Joint Maritime Command that will carry out search and rescue operations, besides supervising maritime traffic in the South-West and Southern Atlantic Ocean.

Finally, an article on the cooperation between Argentina and the United States in the field of metrology and measurement standards.

Jorge Argüello  
Ambassador to the United States

MINISTER VIZZOTTI  
 REAFFIRMED OUR COUNTRY'S  
 COMMITMENT TO AN EXTENSIVE  
 IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM  
 AGAINST COVID-19 AS A GLOBAL  
 PUBLIC GOOD.

and the high level of vaccination have made it possible to reduce the severity of cases and deaths up to now. Even so, the government continues its efforts to regarding its vaccination plan and the application of a third dose.

More than 33 million Argentines citizens (i.e, approximately 72.3% of the country's total population), have received two doses. Also, more than four million people received a booster shot, which will continue to be applied in the coming weeks.

President Alberto Fernández thanked President Joe Biden for his decision to help other countries, and in particular for the decision to donate 3.5 million dosis of vaccines to Argentina in July 2021, when vaccines were needed the most.

Indeed, the arrival of these vaccines and the government's procurement of tens of millions of doses (more than 97 million doses were distributed throughout the country to date) made it possible to reinforce the vaccination plan implemented by the national government. and reach the majority of the population. Therefore, it was possible to mitigate the risks of hospitalization and death from COVID while at the same time, move quickly to a return to normality, and economic and employment recovery.

In addition, thanks to the progress made in the national vaccination plan, Argentina went from being a recipient of vaccine donations, to being a donor country.

On December 29, taking into account that our country has the necessary stock to vaccinate all its inhabitants with additional and booster doses, the government offered to donate 1,096,800 doses of vaccines to the COVAX initiative. This was reported by Health Minister Carla Vizzotti during a meeting she held with the director of the COVAX Fund for Latin America, Santiago Cornejo. At that meeting, they analyzed the joint work carried out during the pandemic and the role played by Argentina in donating vaccines against COVID-19 in order to expand their access of in all countries.

Minister Vizzotti reaffirmed our country's commitment to an extensive immunization program against COVID-19 as a global public good, understanding that the world will not be able to overcome this pandemic until transmission has been controlled in each and every one of the countries.

This donation to the COVAX system is in addition to more than 3.2 million doses donated to Angola, Bolivia, Barbados, the Philippines, Kenya, Mozambique, Vietnam, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, while other States are currently evaluating their acceptance of this offer.

Regarding these bilateral donations, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Santiago Cafiero held a press conference in November at Ezeiza Airport, when more than one million doses of AstraZeneca vaccines against COVID-19 were donated by our country to Vietnam and the Republic of Mozambique.

The Minister pointed out that Argentina received almost seven million donated doses that allowed a swift progress in completing the vaccination scheme and paved the way for the current epidemiological situation in the country. "Now, with this same perspective, we are donating vaccines to those countries that have not yet been able to advance in their vaccination plan," said Vizzotti, who highlighted the joint work carried out between the Ministry of Health, the Foreign Ministry, and the ambassadors of the different countries.

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Foreign Minister Cafiero stated that “we are proud that those boxes of vaccines are labeled “Produced in Argentina” and our flag is also shown. Because behind that is the science, technology, public universities and the development that we have as a country have achieved”. Likewise, he stated that “the Argentine people understand that no one is saved alone. We all have to be in solidarity to go through this situation experienced at a global level”.

It is important to point out that Argentina is not only donating vaccines, but also through the Ministry of Health and the White Helmets, it is providing assistance and exchanging experiences in each of these countries regarding logistics and technical work. The commission chaired by Sabina Frederic, and under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, began discussions about this solidarity exchange of experiences in the management of COVID-19 so that, as is happening at a global level, Argentina responds positively and proactively to the international needs caused by the pandemic. ■



BESIDES SUPERVISING  
MARITIME TRAFFIC IN THE  
SOUTH-WEST AND SOUTHERN  
ATLANTIC OCEAN, THE NEW  
JOINT MARITIME COMMAND  
WILL CARRY OUT SEARCH AND  
RESCUE TASKS.

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scientific activities and controlling and eliminating illegal fishing.

The Joint Maritime Command's operational tasks will be carried out in different ways, including naval, naval aviation and aerospace resources made available for this purpose. As to the Argentine Navy, the ARA "Bouchard", ARA "Piedra Buena" and ARA "Storni" ocean patrol boats will be used, as they are naval units equipped with modern sensors and weapons systems to comply with this mission.

On the other hand, bearing in mind that the complex effort of monitoring and control of maritime and fluvial areas also requires the coordination between various State agencies through an agreement signed by the Ministries of Defense and Security, joint efforts will be undertaken by the Argentine Navy and the Argentine Coast Guard, in order to strengthen the ongoing monitoring and patrolling of the Argentine exclusive economic zone. ■



Photo Credit: INTI.

## COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF METROLOGY AND MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

The Argentine National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) and the United States National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) closed the year 2021 fruitful dialogue and exchange of experiences in three areas of shared interest for metrology: metrology for digital transformation, quantum metrology, and certified reference materials for food safety and pharmaceuticals.

Both Institutes have a shared mission to disseminate measurement standards and the quality assurance of goods and services produced throughout their respective countries. In addition, both play a crucial role in innovation and technology advancement for economic development. They have had longstanding cooperation for more than 20 years, and during 2021 this cooperation was enhanced in metrology. The dialogue facilitated the discussion among

the experts, the exchange of results in the laboratories, and the composition of their innovation portfolios in the respective fields.

Hector Laiz, Director of Metrology, Quality, and Environment of INTI, and Claire Saundry, Director of International and Academic Affairs of NIST, agreed that the discussions helped expand cooperation to find joint projects for mutual collaboration and technical assistance.

Concerning the metrology for digital transformation dialogue, the experts exchanged cybersecurity in IoT, Artificial Intelligence and remote sensors, and cyber-physical laboratories. In addition, both Institutes shared experiences about the impact of innovations and technology associated with industry 4.0, and common

AREAS OF COOPERATION WERE IDENTIFIED, SUCH AS GRAPHENE CHIPS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN LABORATORY ACTIVITIES SUCH AS THERMO-CONVERSION OR IMPEDANCE LABORATORIES, AND OPTICAL COMMUNICATIONS.

areas for cooperation were identified between the experts, especially on recent development on digital transformation topics such as digital and remote calibrations and the establishment of digital certificates across the industry.

The second area of common interest was quantum technologies in fiber optics and electrical metrology. In this particular dialogue, the Argentina National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) presented its electrical units and the New International Systems of Units (SI) work. NIST made a comparative analysis about its optical and atomic clocks and presented its quantum initiatives. Areas of cooperation were identified, such as graphene chips, technical assistance in laboratory activities such as thermo-conversion or impedance laboratories, and optical communications.

Concerning certified reference materials for food safety and pharmaceuticals, both institutions exchange about standards reference programs, cooperation in chemical metrology, food safety programs, clinical standards reference materials, protein biomarkers, allergens in food

for future CRM (Certified Reference Material), and other specific reference materials in food such as fish or dairy.

The discussion facilitated the comparability on instrument calibrations, certifications, analysis, and traceability that each Institute applies in industrial material production, environmental studies, health measurement.

Notably, expert Patricia Gatti from INTI, presented the CRM plan for 2022-2024. This plan will focus on the certification of reference materials of olive oil, honey, calibration solutions mycotoxins, aflatoxindon and patulin, mycotoxins in peanut, wine, joint project with the INV (National Institute of Wine), Toxics elements in fish muscle, Antibiotics (Fipronilin bovine meat), Pharma, impurity Paracetamol, impurity D Carvedilol, Medical cannabis, final steps THC calibration solution, beginning CBD. Also, she presented a new plan 2022-2024 for identifying allergens in food, with the harmonization of minimum criteria and information contents to be included in the labeling of processed food of domestic and imported origin. As a net exporter of food, nutrition, and safety, quality assurance is a high priority for Argentina's economy, so INTI and NIST agreed to deepen collaboration on this area, particularly in contaminants and allergens.

The dialogue on the three areas mentioned above, digital transformation, quantum metrology, and certified reference materials for food safety and pharmaceuticals, has been enriching. In addition, both Institutes discussed the possibility of increasing cooperation in academic exchange and laboratories visit as soon as the pandemic conditions allow it or in a virtual modality. By 2022, both INTI and NIST agreed to continue the dialogue in new disciplines of mutual interest to augment the scientific, technical, and commercial capabilities. ■