

## Cuban Health Minister visits ITM

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Dit is de omschrijving

**The Deputy Minister of Health of Cuba, Dr. Marcia Cobas Ruiz, visited the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp (ITM) on Friday 27 February 2015 to discuss Ebola and ITM's institutional partnership with the 'Instituto Nacional de Higiene, Epidemiología y Microbiología (INHEM)' and the 'Instituto de Medicina Tropical Pedro KourÃ (IPK)' in Cuba.**

Minister Cobas Ruiz travelled to Belgium for a High-Level conference on the Ebola crisis organised by the European Commission. Cuba has taken an active role in the response to the current epidemic, among others by sending health workers to the affected countries in West Africa.

Minister Cobas Ruiz discussed the Ebola response and lessons learned for future outbreaks with ITM Director Prof. Bruno Gryseels and Belgium's national Ebola coordinator Dr. Erika Vlieghe. She also visited ITM's high-security laboratory dedicated to Ebola diagnostics in Belgium.

### Antwerp – Havana

The longstanding collaboration between Antwerp and Havana was also on the agenda. Minister Cobas Ruiz exchanged among others with Prof. Patrick Van der Stuyft, scientific coordinator of ITM's institutional collaboration with IPK and INHEM, and IPK's Dr. Dennis Pérez Chacón. Dr. Pérez Chacón happened to be in Belgium as she successfully defended her PhD thesis at the University of Ghent on 17 February 2015.

As public research institutes in Cuba, ITM partners INHEM and IPK contribute to the formulation of equitable and sustainable health care and disease control policies. They also inform the scientific community through regional and international exchanges.

Since more than 15 years, ITM is supporting IPK and INHEM in the realisation of academic goals through capacity building, scientific cooperation and joint research, with funding of the Belgian Development Cooperation. Having performed her PhD research on dengue prevention and control in the context of this institutional collaboration, Dr. Dennis Pérez Chacón is a concrete example of the capacity building and contributions to health policy formulation which are at the heart of this programme.