



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)
Fourth Regular Meeting of 2008
October 15-17, 2008
St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda
(Grand Royal Antiguan Beach Resort)

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REMARKS BY THE HONORABLE HAROLD LOVELL MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished heads of delegations and national summit coordinators,

Distinguished Delegates,

Representatives of the Joint Summit Working Group,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Prime Minister and the Government and People of Antigua and Barbuda, I am pleased to welcome you to Antigua and Barbuda and to this the fourth meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group. I trust that over the next three days you will find time to sample some of what Antigua and Barbuda has to offer. You will find our people to be warm and hospitable, our waters tranquil and inviting and our culture enticing. It is our hope that at the conclusion of this meeting you will find many reasons to revisit our shores.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda wishes to place on record its appreciation to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for its commitment to the Summit Process and for the leadership they have demonstrated in hosting the Fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago next year. We understand the enormity of this undertaking and we wish to commend the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the able manner in which they have led the process thus far.

Antigua and Barbuda is also pleased with the scope and focus of the draft Declaration of Commitment for the Fifth Summit. In this context we wish to congratulate his Excellency Luis Alberto Rodriguez and his team for their outstanding work in the preparation for the Fifth Summit. In particular we wish to acknowledge the broad based consultations which helped in the preparation of the draft Declaration of Commitment. We believe these consultations bode well for the process of negotiations and for the Summit Process as a whole.

Mr. Chairman,

Antigua and Barbuda supports the theme for the Fifth Summit “Securing Our Citizens Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability” the theme reflects the priorities of the member states of this hemisphere and provides direction for confronting some of the critical issues of our time. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with other member states in an effort to build a stronger more progressive hemisphere and feel certain that through our joint action we can overcome these hemispheric threats and challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves.

Mr. Chairman,

Antigua and Barbuda shares the vision of Trinidad and Tobago for the Fifth Summit of the Americas that is focused on mandates which are tangible and on targets which are realistic. We also share the concern of other member states that the implementation of new mandates must not place an undue financial burden on the already overstretched public resources. The Fifth Summit of the Americas must be a turning point in the future of the important hemispheric process. After four regular summits, two special summits and several unfulfilled mandates our citizens quite rightly are questioning the relevance of the Summits of the Americas. We must deliver therefore strong collective responses to our hemispheric challenges; a clear vision with creative ideas, our people demand this and deserve no less.

Mr. Chairman,

We have seen the recent developments in the international financial markets and have heard the warnings of how these developments can adversely affect our economies and way of life. Moreover the devastation caused by the recent storms and the prevailing scientific evidence on the impact of global warming have heightened our awareness and sobered our thoughts. Globalization has connected all of us. Information is instantaneous and the actions of countries far away affect us all. The challenge for us is to ensure that we promote a people-centered development agenda. An agenda that blends with the best human efficiency possible, the intents of prosperity security and sustainability.

As we seek to give meaning to the theme of “Securing Our Citizens Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability” we have the unique hemispheric opportunity to write a significant chapter on human development in the annals of the Americas.

In closing I wish you all a successful three days of deliberations and pledge the support of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda in ensuring a fruitful Fifth Summit of the Americas.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.