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Concept Paper for the Ninth Summit of the Americas

PROPOSED THEME

“Building a Sustainable, Resilient, and Equitable Future”

The United States envisions a Ninth Summit of the Americas framed around the theme of “Building a Sustainable, Resilient, and Equitable Future.” The Chair’s consultations with National Summit Coordinators, private sector and civil society stakeholders, and members of the Joint Summit Working Group made clear our hemisphere’s shared interest in inclusive pandemic recovery and the need to work together to rebuild our economies and institutions in a resilient and inclusive manner better than they were before. Extensive feedback from the first regular Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) meetings of 2020 and 2021, national-level consultations by the Summits of the Americas Secretariat and Inter-American Development Bank, and direct dialogues with stakeholders and governments informed the Chair’s proposed Ninth Summit theme and priorities.ⁱ We envision a Summit at which leaders identify work we can do together to deliver substantive outcomes for our citizens, our communities, and our nations on pandemic response and resilience, climate change and energy, democracy and good governance, and equitable growth. In each of these areas, the Ninth Summit can explore ways to utilize technology effectively, protect vulnerable and marginalized groups, promote the protection of labor rights for working people across our societies, and uphold the rule of law.

PRIORITIES

I. Health, Recovery, and Resilience

The economies and social fabric of our region have been among the most severely impacted by COVID-19. Public health sectors require significant investments and greater prioritization to both address the ongoing pandemic and increase capacities to prevent, detect and respond to future threats and challenges. The pandemic revealed vulnerabilities in the supply chain of medical products as well as opportunities to improve how health data is obtained, protected, shared, and utilized. Greater regional coordination can better ensure the reliable supply of critical medical goods, including personal protective equipment and ventilators, and while the marketplace for these and other vital supplies has stabilized, stronger cooperation between governments can increase access to critical health goods and the exchange of knowledge on important issues such as the development and access to therapeutics and vaccines. Understanding opportunities for improved coordination and cooperation in responses to public health outbreaks and prioritizing public health emergency preparedness and response capacity

are essential for health security and the strengthening of health systems in the Americas. Our national and hemispheric recovery efforts require effective coordination to ensure equity and inclusion, especially for underserved and vulnerable populations. By adopting effective policies and good practices, our health systems can enhance human capital, improve health and prosperity, and prepare the region for future health threats.

II. Our Green Future

Governments and stakeholders across the Americas are working to improve resilience and integrate sustainability. We work together under the Paris Agreement, and we know that even as we undertake our own efforts, our combined success in the Americas depends on regional cooperation in identifying and implementing policies that support development goals and limit the rise in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius. International institutions, national and subnational governments, private industry, and civil society need to work together to promote a just energy transition that emphasizes decarbonization, renewable energy, and energy efficiency while increasing shared equity in a green future. Energy, transportation, and other critical infrastructure projects can support multiple goals by guarding against environmental harm, creating good jobs, providing valuable new services, and building resilience with intentional designs around the impacts of our changing climate. Greater climate adaptation and resilience will help countries, companies, and citizens mitigate and recover quickly from future natural disasters and extreme weather events. Future-proofing efforts also provide the opportunity to accelerate economic recovery while expanding education and training to create and maintain globally competitive green workforces. Governments and stakeholders can work together to develop the social and physical infrastructure to support the sustainable green industries of the future, address the threat of climate change, and ensure equitable access to energy resources.

III. Equitable Growth and Prosperity

The Americas share many challenges revealed or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In each of our countries and across our hemisphere we need comprehensive responses to make our health and education systems, our economies, and our communities more resilient. Adherence to the rule of law, transparency and good regulatory practices can help ensure both immediate and long-term recovery, support the equitable delivery of essential public services and healthcare, and ensure that the post-pandemic economic recovery is fair and durable. Targeted investments can help our hemisphere address persistent challenges of poverty and inequality while growing the middle class, especially among vulnerable and historically marginalized groups disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

Participants in our consultations shared their ideas on strategic approaches that can inform the work we do together to address inequality, vulnerability, and the root causes of irregular migration. To compete effectively in the global marketplace, our hemisphere depends on skilled workforces, financial inclusion, and equitable access to technologies such as the internet. Educators, employers, workers, and civil society are essential partners with governments in combined efforts to expand economic opportunities, including through greater access to technical training and upskilling opportunities. Workforce development promotes increased participation in the formal economy and opens pathways to decent work, connecting workers to important social protections, while increasing the tax base and investment in social services. A more highly skilled workforce is also essential for the entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises creating future jobs. Investments increasing access to critical and accessible infrastructure, more resilient supply chains, international markets, and e-commerce lay the foundation for long-term equitable growth and prosperity.

IV. Strong and Inclusive Democracies

From the beginning of the Summit of the Americas process, starting with the First Summit, held in Miami in 1994, participants have placed democracy and the fight against corruption at the center of their efforts to improve the lives of those who live here in our hemisphere, and the quality of our region's governance. The Eighth Summit's "Lima Commitment on Democratic Governance Against Corruption" continued this proud tradition. Now the pandemic has strained governments and motivated citizens to call for good governance measures to provide more transparency and accountability. The Ninth Summit should uphold and expand upon these commitments including the effective implementation of international anticorruption obligations by all our governments. Together we can show all people who call the Americas their home that democratic processes and institutions can effectively respond to their needs and deliver inclusive results, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Leaders directed the creation of the Inter-American Democratic Charter at the 2001 Summit in Quebec City, and as we mark the Charter's 20th anniversary, the commitments enshrined within it and the responsibility of Summit governments to fulfill them remain just as relevant today. The Ninth Summit can and should focus governments, civil society, and the private sector on increasing transparency and accountability in government, fighting corruption, bolstering and defending democratic institutions, creating secure communities, and actively protecting and promoting human and labor rights in order to build hope and opportunities for all of the people of the Americas.

ⁱ Recommendations received by the United States in its capacity as Chair of the Summit process include:

- Joint Summit Working Group Concept Paper: Hemispheric Challenges and Opportunities, <http://www.summit-americas.org/JSWGConceptPaperENG.pdf>
- U.S.-based Civil Society Concept Paper: Strengthening democratic values and institutions in the Americas, <http://www.summit-americas.org/CivilSocietyConceptPaperENG.pdf>
- U.S.-based Private Sector Concept Paper: Inclusive growth and job creation, <http://www.summit-americas.org/PrivateSectorConceptPaperENG.pdf>
- Summary of Feedback on Priorities for the Ninth Summit of the Americas, <http://www.summit-americas.org/GRIC2021/Summary%20of%20National%20Summit%20Coordinator%20Feedback%20ENG.pdf>
- National Dialogues between National Summit Coordinators and Civil Society and Social Actors in Preparation for the Ninth Summit of the Americas, <http://www.summit-americas.org/GRIC2021/Informe%20PrepTalks%20y%20Di%C3%A1logos%20Nacionales%20ENG.pdf>
- Report on the SIRG Dialogues by Mr. Dale Eppler, National Summit Coordinator of the United States, <http://www.summit-americas.org/GRIC2021/ChairReportonSIRGStakeholdersDialogues.pdf>