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REMARKS BY THE CHAIR OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS PROCESS

(By Ambassador Michael G. Kozak, Acting Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, United States Department of State)

Secretary General Almagro, I'm pleased to represent the United States as Chair of the Summit of the Americas process and host of the Ninth Summit of the Americas.

Our Hemisphere, and every Summit host, depends on this group, and on the support of the Summit Secretariat, as we develop every Summit agenda. The United States will look to you for your good counsel as we look to 2021. We want to hear from you throughout this process, and today we want to share with you some of our Summit 2021 priorities.

Next year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter. You can rely on our unwavering commitment to the principles set out in that document. We will continue our efforts to help Venezuelans and Nicaraguans recover their democracies. We will continue to hold the Cuban regime accountable for its abuses.

We will host this Ninth Summit as we all recover from the coronavirus pandemic. The United States is of course committed to economic recovery, at home and in our hemisphere, and we know that it will depend in large part on private-sector investors and on our hard-working citizens. We see no limit to what the people of this hemisphere can do, given the right environment.

We will ensure participation in the Summit by democratic leaders and diverse voices from our region's effective institutions, the private sector, and civil society, including those of the marginalized and the vulnerable, and we look forward to creating opportunities for independent civil society to interact directly with participating governments.

We're committed to advancing the Lima anti-corruption agenda from the Eighth Summit – our citizens deserve more accountable and effective governance.

We will promote engagement with the private sector, working with the Americas Business Dialogue, and we have high hopes for the CEO Summit of the Americas, an opportunity for business leaders to work with governments on our shared economic growth and anti-corruption agenda.

So, these are our priorities, strengthening democratic institutions and respect for democratic values across the Americas, and fostering economic recovery, growth, and investment. It comes down to respecting the voices and the will of our citizens and to working with them to create the

opportunities they deserve to do right for themselves, for their families, and for the communities in which they live.

When the United States launched the Summit of the Americas in 1994, we envisioned that the democratic leaders of the Western Hemisphere would work together as “true partners for prosperity.” Together we have made great strides in bringing prosperity, democracy, and security to the Americas. We’re living in an era of great challenges, so of course we still have work to do, but also new opportunities.

I look forward to working with you towards a successful Ninth Summit of the Americas