**Transfer of the Chairmanship of the Summit of the Americas**

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OAS Secretary General, Mr. Luis Almagro

National Coordinators of the Summit of the Americas Process

Ladies and gentlemen:

Slightly more than four years ago (on May 10, 2016, to be precise) Peru accepted the Chairmanship of the Summit of the Americas. We assumed the honorable charge with a great sense of responsibility, as we were clearly aware that for several years the countries of the Hemisphere had been unable to generate the confidence needed to achieve concrete and substantive agreements within the framework of this mechanism.

For that reason, we began our chairmanship by reflecting calmly on what issue could bring us together for a common purpose. It was enough to take an unbiased look at what was happening in the region to conclude that many of our countries were suffering the severe effects of unprecedented corruption: networks with transnational scope were undermining our institutions and the values that sustain democracy; eroding the social fabric; and generating a profound disillusionment among citizens regarding the efficacy of state action and the judicial system.

Thus, Peru felt that a convergence would make it possible to send a clear and firm message challenging this scourge. Accordingly, it proposed that the Eighth Summit should follow the theme of “**Democratic Governance against Corruption,”** seeking to bring together concrete efforts to put an end to impunity, strengthen institutions, and establish, as President Martin Vizcarra indicated when inaugurating the Summit, “a regional alliance against corruption.”

**The process**

But choosing a pressing issue was not enough. We were also driven by the conviction that convergence would only be possible if our Chairmanship was clearly perceived as intended to **conduct this process on an open, transparent, and participatory basis**. Thus, from the outset, in addition to the region’s countries, intense consultations involved social actors. Thus, civil society, youth, and entrepreneurs were part of the process, always with the valuable support of the Joint Summits Working Group

Having established these bases, in the year 2017 Peru’s Chairmanship organized four meetings of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) to discuss three specific pillars: Democratic Governance and Corruption; Corruption and Sustainable Development; and Aspects of Cooperation, International Institutions, and Public-Private Alliances. This process produced the draft Lima Commitment presented in February 2018, the final version of which was completed in 2018 during four regular meetings of the SIRG and a ministerial meeting prior to the Summit.

As I mentioned earlier, our intention from the start was to achieve a **concrete, practical, and action-oriented result**. We are thus very pleased that the democracies adopted the Lima Commitment by consensus at the Eighth Summit. This Commitment not only marks a return to a document approved by a summit after 13 years. Above all, it institutes a renewed hemispheric agenda with 57 mandates for preventing and combating corruption.

The Eighth Summit also reaffirmed that the defense of democracy supports the fight against corruption. This assertion also led 16 of the participating countries to sign a Joint Statement on the crisis in Venezuela, where the situation since the breakdown of constitutional order and the rule of law has continued to deteriorate. We shall continue to persevere in our efforts to help the Venezuelans to recover their democracy through free, transparent, and legitimate presidential and parliamentary elections.

**Social actors**

We are particularly pleased to note the success of our efforts to ensure significant participation among **social actors**. To achieve this, the Chairmanship kept civil society continuously informed regarding advances made in the process and encouraged it so that its work in preparation for the Summit would be carried out through thematic coalitions. Thanks to this, 28 coalitions were formed that, together with the Summits Secretariat, promoted in-person and virtual national consultations. Another innovative step was to allow social actors’ representatives to speak at the meetings of the SIRG and this practice continued during the Summit’s plenary session, so that their recommendations and suggestions would reach the Heads of State and Government without the need for intermediaries. No doubt a new and healthy form of participation has been established that, we are sure, will continue to be strengthened.

**Mechanism for Follow-up and Implementation of the Lima Commitment**

Another notable decision of the Eighth Summit was the adoption and launch of the Mechanism for Follow-up and Implementation of the Lima Commitment, to ensure the fulfillment of the mandates undertaken in this area. This mechanism, also proposed by Peru, takes into account the experiences and lessons learned in the context of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and helps to strengthen the transparency of governments and international bodies vis-à-vis the citizenry. The first phase of recording advances, initiated last January, has been completed by 18 States and eight entities of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG).

**Appreciation**

And now, allow me to express our appreciation as this result would never have been possible without the support of many people.

It is necessary above all, in summing up, to reiterate our gratitude for the support and willingness of the states that participated in the process, as well as their principal actors, who made it possible to achieve these results, results that are useful for all in strengthening democratic governance and the fight against corruption.

We also had the support of some organizations such as the IDB and the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT), institutions that were responsible for conducting the Third Business Summit “Made in Americas” and the Fifth Youth Forum of the Americas.

I would particularly like to express my appreciation for the constant support of the Joint Summit Working Group. We are pleased by the revitalization of this group, based on the agreement to strengthen its coordination on attendance at the Summits. We salute the inclusion of the OECD in this group. We encourage them to continue collaborating on the implementation and fulfillment of the Lima Commitment.

We also recognize the OAS General Secretariat and particularly the constant guidance, experience, and support shown by the OAS Summits Secretariat, Ambassador James Lambert, Mrs. María Celina Conte and their entire team.

**Farewell**

Today Peru hands over the Chairmanship of the Summit of the Americas, with the conviction that we must continue to bet on this forum where the countries of the Hemisphere address common issues in the search for tangible results.

Our region now faces urgent challenges as the result of the pandemic that plagues us regardless of any borders. Given the nature and magnitude of these challenges, it is obvious that we cannot face them alone. This requires us to strengthen multilateralism, specifically processes like the Summit of the Americas, to build the well-being and development of our nations.

In these grave and unexpected circumstances, we are sure that the United States of America, the country that welcomed the First Summit in 1994, will successfully conduct the Ninth Summit, relying on all its experience and diplomatic skill. For this, they can rely on the full support of Peru.

Esteemed Ambassador Kosak:

The expressions of our forebears in this shared space that we call America are also powerful bonds. In Peru, the cradle of Andean civilization, the *apachetas* or stone mounds have been found since time immemorial along the roadsides, like offerings to overcome difficulties. I am thus very pleased to present you with a symbolic and virtual Inukshuk, this *apacheta* of the ancestral peoples of the northern reaches of the Americas, as a symbol of what these Summits represent: the guide and unity of our peoples, enabling us to overcome difficulties and strive toward common goals.

Thank you very much.