

OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
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Fifth Summit of the Americas
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Press Release

Trinidad and Tobago takes lead role in Summits process

Port of Spain (February 26, 2008) Only two days after its public launch of the Fifth Summit of the Americas, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will host the XLI Meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) at the Tobago Hilton, on February 28 and 29, 2008, welcoming the member countries and institutions of the Summit process to the first of a series of negotiations and consultations planned for the year 2008.

Ambassador Luis Alberto Rodriguez, National Coordinator and Special Envoy to the Americas of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, will chair the two-day proceedings, which will begin with a brief opening session and remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, the Honourable Paula Gopee-Scoon and the Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Ambassador Albert Ramdin.

The SIRG is comprised of the 34 democratically elected governments of the hemisphere, which are represented by their appointed National Coordinators. Meetings of the SIRG are crucial to the continued success of the Summit process, as they provide a forum for reporting on the implementation of past Summit mandates and allow for negotiation of priorities for the upcoming Summit.

As host of the Fifth Summit, Trinidad and Tobago serves as Chair of the Summit Implementation Review Group until 2009, and is responsible for convening, defining the agenda for and conducting all meetings of the SIRG in the lead up to the next Summit.

The XLI Meeting of the SIRG will focus on the main issues contained in the Preliminary Concept Paper prepared by Trinidad and Tobago, namely human prosperity, energy security and environmental sustainability, all of which form part of the Government's "vision of a hemisphere in which all citizens have the

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opportunity to participate fully in society, to benefit from economic development and growth, and to enjoy peace, security and prosperity in their daily lives.”¹

The meeting’s agenda is also in keeping with the Government’s decision to make the process towards the Fifth Summit more participatory, where the perspectives of key stakeholders, in this instance, the countries and partner institutions, will inform and strengthen the Concept Paper, eventually shaping the Declaration and Plan of Action of Port of Spain.

VSOA-TT 02/2008

About the Summit of the Americas

The Summit of the Americas brings together the 34 democratically elected leaders of the Western Hemisphere to exchange ideas and opinions on the main political, economic, social and security challenges facing the Hemisphere and to develop strategies and solutions to collectively address them.

For further information, please contact:

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¹ Excerpt from the introduction to the Preliminary Concept Paper “Securing Our Citizens’ Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability”.