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REPORT BY THE SUMMITS SECRETARIAT ON THE WORK  
IN SUPPORT OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS PROCESS

(Presented by James Lambert, Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs)

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I am honored to be here today in my capacity as OAS Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs, responsible for the Summits of the Americas process. This meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group has been convened to continue following-up on the mandates and initiatives emanating from the Summits of the Americas process.

One of the main functions entrusted to this group by the Heads of State and Government is derived from the Plan of Action of the Second Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile which calls for the SIRG to meet on a periodic basis to follow-up and assess the degree to which the Summit mandates have been implemented. In the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain, Member States indicated their intention “*to continue to provide annual national reports to the OAS on the actions and progress made towards achieving the specific objectives set at the Summits of the Americas,*” and instructed “*the General Secretariat of the OAS, in accordance with its central role in supporting the implementation of Summit mandates and in coordination with the members of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), to provide a comprehensive report to the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), annually, on the actions and progress made at all inter-American Ministerial Meetings towards supporting Summit objectives.*”

As we soon enter the preparation phase of the VIII Summit of the Americas, it is timely to reflect upon the main achievements and progress made since the VII Summit in Panama.

The Summits Secretariat has been actively working with Member States, institutions of the Joint Summit Working Group, and Civil Society and Social Actors both in following up on previous Summits, as well as starting to prepare for the next Summit to take place in Peru.

### Activities in support of Member States

The Summits Secretariat has actively engaged with the government of Peru to initiate work and devise a work plan for the period leading up to the VIII Summit of the Americas. An initial on site visit was held in January in Lima, making progress in the work to be undertaken by the Summits Secretariat and the Government of Peru in the leadup to the next Summit. And since then, the teams from the host country and the OAS Summits Secretariat have continued to work closely and collaborate in order to initiate the work for the preparatory phase of the VIII Summit of the Americas.

In terms of the general work on implementation and follow-up, in the last year and a half -- since late 2015 through today -- the Secretariat has received National Reports on implementation from 10 countries (Argentina, Barbados, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru and the United States). This information has been uploaded to the Summits of the Americas Follow-up System ([SISCA](#)) and is available to the general public for their perusal. The Summits Secretariat has continuously provided technical support to Member States in the preparation of national workshops for the preparation and presentation of National Reports and the use of SISCA.

In this regard, the Secretariat hosted two online webinars on November 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> (one in English and one in Spanish) for National Coordinators, their representatives and members of the Permanent Missions of Member States to the OAS. In addition, a national workshop was held in Panama on November 24<sup>th</sup> with the participation of 12 government institutions. In addition, during the onsite visit to Lima, the Summits Secretariat also hosted a SISCA training workshop with the purpose of training national institutions in the use of the system. 25 representatives from 16 government institutions were trained in the use of the online system for reporting and follow-up.

In order to further disseminate the important information contained in the national and institutional reports, the Summits Secretariat has been routinely preparing news briefs with information adapted from the reports received with the goal of highlighting Member State and/or institutional fulfillment of Summit-related initiatives as well as showing measurable results and the real impact of these programs on people's lives.

National reports on advances and achievements of Member States on the implementation of Summit mandates and initiatives are of vital importance for the Summits process. They represent the primary source for demonstrating that Summit initiatives are being implemented through actions and initiatives both at national and hemispheric levels that lead to real results.

Therefore, Chair, I wish to take this opportunity to urge Member States to submit their National Reports at the earliest possible opportunity in anticipation of the upcoming Meeting of the SIRG at the Ministerial Level to be held within the framework of the forty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly.

### Activities for the coordination of the Joint Summit Working Group.

During the forty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly, which took place in the Dominican Republic in June 2016, the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) met at the Ministerial Level, where the Secretary General presented a report to Member States, prepared by the Summits Secretariat, on the specific work undertaken by the Joint Summit Working Group on

activities and programs that respond to Seventh Summit initiatives, in fulfillment of the request by Ministers of Foreign Affairs at the Seventh Summit. At this time, the Secretary General presented a brief publication “[Summits of the Americas -- Cooperating for the Americas](#)” that highlights some of the initiatives that institutions are implementing in follow-up of the VII Summit of the Americas.

Since then, the JSWG has continued working on following up on the initiatives from the VII Summit, and in November, I chaired the third meeting of 2016 of the Joint Summit Working Group, which focused on the implementation by the institutions of VII Summit mandates and initiatives and on the relations between the Summits process and the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. For this discussion and with the support of the technical areas of the OAS, the Summits Secretariat prepared the [matrix on the VII Summit mandates/initiatives and the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). The purpose of this matrix is for it to eventually serve as a support document for the preparation of future national reports from Member States and institutional reports from the members of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG). A robust discussion by representatives of the Institutions and a rich exchange of information on Summit implementation and follow-up set basis for further collaboration between the institutions of the JSWG and the delegation of Peru as host of the next Summit.

Concurrently, the institutions of the JSWG have also been uploading information on the SISCA on follow-up and implementation activities from the Seventh Summit of the Americas. A training session on the use of the system for the institutions of the JSWG was conducted last month, and to date 11 of the 12 institutions have reported on implementation of Summit initiatives. As such, I am pleased to report that we have circulated a compendium of the institutional reports we have to date on Seventh Summit initiatives as document [SG/SISCA/doc.8/17](#). This document will serve as the basis for the presentation of an institutional publication to be presented during the upcoming regular session of the OAS General Assembly in Mexico.

#### Activities related to civil society and other social actors

In September 2016, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, carried out an online survey with civil society representatives and social actors who participated in the events in preparation for the VII Summit of the Americas with the purpose of obtaining their level of knowledge and satisfaction in engagement with the Summits Process through the existing participation mechanisms. The purpose of this survey was to assist the General Secretariat’s work in improving the different participation mechanisms currently in place in preparation for the VIII Summits of the Americas.

More than nine hundred responses were received, with important feedback provided on the level of knowledge of the Summit Process, the level of satisfaction on the design and format of the consultations and forums in preparation for the VII Summit, and the use of social media platforms and Virtual Consultations.

The results of this survey have been shared with Peru as we prepare for the next Summit, and have been uploaded to the Summits website for consultation by Member States and the general public.

One of the main findings of this survey was that the limited understanding of the Summits Process remains an obstacle to civil society participation in consultations. In response, the Summits Secretariat organized, with the support of OAS offices in Member States, informative virtual

consultation sessions with civil society and social actors with the aim of increasing awareness and knowledge of the Summits Process and of the different participation mechanisms in the Process for all stakeholders.

The first round of information sessions was held in mid-December in 15 countries, and a second round of information sessions was held late March in 16 countries. On site information sessions were held in Lima in January and in Ottawa in March. A total of 581 representatives of civil society organizations and social actors participated in these information sessions, where the Summits Secretariat provided a detailed explanation of the Summits Process, including the different actors that participate in the process; continued promoting the participation of a wide range of stakeholders in the Summits Process; and sought to strengthen the interaction between the Summits Secretariat and stakeholders, the Summit host-country & government officials. [Presentation](#)

As we begin with the preparatory phase towards the VIII Summit of the Americas, the Summits Secretariat will continue working closely with the Summit host country in securing spaces for participation of civil society and social actors in the preparation phase and at the time of the VIII Summit of the Americas.

#### Linkages with Inter-American Ministerial processes

The Summits Secretariat is also responsible for following-up on inter-American Ministerial and Sectoral Meetings. The mechanism of dialogue at the Ministerial level presents a great opportunity to foster the Summits Process by improving the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the technical support provided in the preparation and follow-up phases. The forward and backward linkages of the Ministerial and Summits processes seeks to provide for a more coherent, structured and inclusive Inter-American agenda.

Within the last year, the Summits Secretariat has accompanied the preparation of the Ministerial meetings of Inter-American Commission on Women, Ministers of Culture, Ministers of Social Development and Ministers of Education by providing information on Summits mandates and initiatives and ensuring that the Ministerial meetings strengthen their linkages to the Summits Process. This week, the Summits Secretariat circulated document [GRIC/O.1/INF.04/17](#), which compiles the reports of the Ministerial meetings that have been held in the past year.

In addition, the Summits Secretariat has established an inter-secretariat group composed of focal points from each one of the OAS Secretariats in order to better coordinate the links between Ministerial meetings and the Summits Process and to facilitate reporting on OAS actions responding to Summits mandates and initiatives.

#### Closing

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, before closing, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Guyana, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and the United States for the financial contributions received in 2016 and in the course of 2017 to the work and activities of the Summits Secretariat. As you are well aware, the Summits Secretariat receives limited funding from the OAS Regular Fund, and as such all of the activities we undertake depend on external contributions from Member States. In this regard, and considering that in recent years external funding has sharply declined, the Summits Secretariat has prepared project proposals to seek financing to be able to fulfill

its mandated functions and activities. These detailed proposals were sent to all Summit National Coordinators and OAS Permanent Missions in November 2016 in an effort to strengthen the funding base of the Summits Secretariat. I would like to invite all National Coordinators, Permanent Representatives to the OAS and distinguished delegates to consider supporting the activities of the Summits Secretariat, specially as we enter the preparatory phase of the next Summit, which ultimately results in an open, constructive, and frank dialogue at the highest political level in our Hemisphere.

To close Mr. Chairman, I would like to recognize and thank the Government of Peru for steadfast support to our Secretariat team, with whom we are working closely in the preparations for the upcoming VIII Summit of the Americas.