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WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR OF THE SIRG

(By Ambassador Hugo De Zela, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru)

Before moving to our first agenda item, let me state how much importance the Peruvian Government places on this meeting and, therefore, on effective follow-up on and implementation of the Lima Commitment that the Heads of State and Government adopted at the Eighth Summit of the Americas.

Peru is of the view that the 57 mandates contained in this document are a powerful response from our Governments in terms of strengthening democratic governance and the fight against corruption in the Hemisphere. Hence, it is a political commitment at the highest level, geared toward combating this scourge – and it involves international cooperation among our states.

Our region set the world an example when it adopted the Inter-American Convention against Corruption more than twenty years ago. Today, with the Lima Commitment we are continuing to reaffirm this leadership; it includes concrete measures on access to information, political party financing, transparency in public works, asset recovery, and measures to combat international bribery and corruption, among others.

The Lima Commitment also features the most extensive cooperation for conducting investigations and procedures related to corruption crimes, as well as respect for the autonomy of our institutions in prosecuting them.

All of this is a clear message about the regional governments establishing zero tolerance on corruption. It is also a demonstration of our commitment and strong will to cooperate when cases of corruption arise, because they pose a threat to democracy, the rule of law, and to development for our peoples.

The Follow-up Mechanism under the Lima Commitment contains a virtual platform, with public access, for states to record the level of compliance with each mandate. It will feature a database of best practices and technical skills, as well as cooperation opportunities and resources on the subject.

Citizens in general will therefore be able to transparently track progress made by states on the commitments undertaken, while the countries of the region will be able to access cooperation and technical assistance offers from international institutions.

The Mechanism will also create synergies with other processes in this field, such as those included in the Inter-American Convention against Corruption and the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

As President Martin Vizcarra put it, this is ultimately about consolidating an international political commitment against corruption, while cooperating regionally to identify new and more effective ways to combat the problem.

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