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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The timing of this ministerial meeting of the Summit Implementation Review Group could not be better as we prepare for the Fourth Summit of the Americas, which is now less than five months away. Thanks to the truly outstanding efforts of your government, with very able assistance from the OAS Office of the Summits Process, we are already well advanced in the planning process and ready to begin negotiations on Wednesday at the continuation of this SIRG meeting.

The revised draft document you have provided us will serve as a solid starting-point for our negotiations. It makes clear that the theme of "Creating Jobs to Fight Poverty and Strengthen Democratic Governance" is much more complex than it might appear at first blush, involving issues as diverse as education and health, transparency and the fight against corruption, and security and trade, as well as the more obviously related topics of investment climate, macroeconomic, and labor policies.

It is our view that the theme of the Fourth Summit necessarily leads to a focus on five critical factors as the fundamental elements governments must pursue if our countries are to achieve sustainable job creation, poverty reduction, and inclusion:

1. good democratic and transparent governance, as the most basic responsibility of each of our governments;
2. pro-growth economic and trade policies, without which there cannot be sustained job creation;
3. the increasing importance of security and its interdependence with democracy and prosperity in our countries;
4. investment in human capital and promotion of internationally recognized labor standards; and
5. more broadly, the creation of "ownership societies," where people have equal opportunity to pursue their destinies and to reach their highest potential.

These are the elements of a positive agenda that both tackles the immediate challenges facing us and shows the promising path forward toward greater hemispheric integration with realistic approaches.

If the declaration we will negotiate over the next months is to be more than a set of words, the broad commitments our leaders make to this hemispheric agenda have to be matched by measurable actions over the short term, or we risk increasing cynicism, rather than demonstrating resolve, with regard to our leaders' commitment to tackle the tough issues related to creating jobs.

Here at the General Assembly, we have been discussing the strained resources of the OAS. And we have heard from civil society, academics and others that a proliferation of mandates,

even if they are issued with the best of intentions, suggests anything but a serious commitment to implementation, if these mandates are not accompanied by actions and resources, first at the national level, and then, in support of national actions, at the regional level. We simply cannot make promises that we as governments, as a community of like-minded nations, and as members of the OAS, the IDB, ECLAC, and other regional and subregional institutions, are not willing to pursue without determination and the necessary political will.

Certainly, we have to reject a document that seeks to take an easy out by casting blame for our problems onto a faceless international architecture or, with even less justification, onto the international financial institutions that our own governments own and run, and which have served for decades as partners and supporters of national efforts to create stable, working economies. Instead, we need to gain agreement on a set of specific, short-term, measurable and achievable commitments that promote accountability and will demonstrate tangible progress toward our broader goals.

In the same vein, we must ensure that the November Summit builds upon not only the commitments made at prior Summits of the Americas, but the actions and achievements each of our governments has made since those summits. As Summit Coordinator for the United States, one of the things that concern me most is accountability and follow-up for the commitments my President has made at previous Summits. In less than five months, President Bush will sit down with your leaders to look at our hemispheric agenda—a process that has to start with what we've done to implement the Quebec City Plan of Action, and what we've done to implement the Declaration of Nuevo Leon. On a monthly basis, I call together representatives of other agencies in our far-flung bureaucracy to review what we've done and what needs doing with regard to the commitments made at those Summits. It is a never-ending task.

No previous commitments are more important than those our leaders have made with regard to integration, particularly on the trade front. Completion of the Free Trade Area of the Americas, in particular, has been a commitment reiterated by leaders at every Summit since Miami. Our business community, civil society, academia, and indeed the world, will be watching for what our leaders say about their plans for further opening markets in the years to come. My government cannot support a document that takes a piecemeal approach to our nations' collective efforts to lower trade barriers, which are driven by a recognition that increased flows of goods and services will provide greater opportunities for our businesses, and therefore hold out the prospect of more and better jobs. Global, regional, and binational trade talks and agreements all have their place, and different issues will be resolved at different levels, particularly by our trade negotiators. The complexity of these issues and the diversity of interests represented around this table make it inappropriate, in the view of the United States, to single out particular elements of these different trade negotiations. Rather, we believe leaders will want to signal their broad commitment to lowering barriers to trade and to agree on the way forward on this very important element of the continuing integration of the economies of this hemisphere.

In the end, our elected leaders will give direction to the trade negotiators. Beyond trade issues, which at this stage are in the able hands of our trade ministries and negotiators, the Summit must give special attention to progress on implementing the commitments, for which leaders set a target date of the November Summit, which includes reducing significantly the time and cost of starting a business, strengthening property rights, producing and disseminating reports on our education systems, and providing at least 600,000 people in our hemisphere living with HIV/AIDS the antiretroviral treatment many of them need. Happily, I think we have accomplished much, but I

have been encouraging civil society, in various meetings we have regularly with civil society, to hold us accountable for our progress on these issues, and believe that each of our governments needs to be prepared to give an account for our progress. Then, together, we need to build on that progress with new specific targets that will demonstrate the conviction we have to implement that mandates our leaders set out for us in Mar del Plata.

Mr. Chairman, the Summit of the Americas process, and the next Summit in particular, as the mechanism for implementing the shared vision of our leaders, is a powerful force for hemispheric integration and for demonstrating in a really effective way solidarity with governments that are committed to implementing policies at home that will ensure good democratic governance, sustainable growth and prosperity, and an effective fight against poverty. With its focus on creating jobs, we believe that the Fourth Summit of the Americas represents both an opportunity and a challenge for the process we have been building over the last decade, and we look forward to working with you, and with all of our partners in the hemisphere, to craft a renewed hemispheric agenda and to lay out a concrete set of actions for our leaders to consider. Thank you.