



Organization of  
American States



**REMARKS DELIVERED BY**

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**THE THIRD MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH-LEVEL  
AUTHORITIES ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**November 17-18, 2011**

**Panama City, Panama**

Dr. Rubén Berrocal, National Secretary for Science, Technology and Innovation of Panama and Chair of this Ministerial

Dr. Jorge Saggiante, Acting Executive Secretary for Integral Development, OAS  
Honorable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

Special Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking Dr. Berrocal for the kind invitation to participate in this Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities on Science and Technology. Panama is a country that is dear to me and so I am delighted to be here, but I also always welcome the opportunity to speak about the Sixth Summit of the Americas.

On April 14-15, five months from now, the Heads of State and Government of the Americas will convene in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia for the Sixth Summit of the Americas. As you know, the last such Summit was in 2009 in Trinidad & Tobago. Since that time, there have been several changes in elected leadership.

Slightly more than half of the leaders will be attending the Summit of the Americas for the first time. Also, for the first time in Summit history, four countries will be represented by female Heads.

While there will be new faces at the Summit, we have also learnt important lessons from previous experience that have led to some changes in the way we approach the Summit. My participation in this meeting today reflects a recognition that in order to have a successful Summit with implementable outcomes and measurable results, it is essential to have early engagement and to secure buy-in from key stakeholders before the meeting of Heads.

When the Hemisphere's political leaders meet in April 2012, they will lay out their vision for an Inter-American agenda that revolves around the Summit's central theme, "Connecting the Americas: Partners for Prosperity."

The concepts of partnership, connectivity and development inherent in this central theme are, I believe, of particular relevance for this meeting of authorities on science and technology. So too are the six thematic areas that fall under this umbrella namely natural disasters, poverty and inequality, access to technology, citizen security, physical integration and regional cooperation. These six sub-themes represent issues of hemispheric priority and each, in some way, reflects the importance of partnership for confronting these challenges and capitalizing on opportunities for progress.

Science and technology must clearly play a critical role in confronting these challenges and in developing a vision and joint action plan. As such, recommendations that emerge from this meeting could potentially be integral to the development of results-oriented initiatives for the Heads of State and Government to consider and adopt.

In that regard, I note that the Draft Plan of Action, “Translational Science, Technology and Innovation: Knowledge for Competitiveness and Prosperity” while focused on a science and technology vision and work plan, also incorporates specific elements on innovation, training and education, infrastructure and technological development. These areas of focus can both enrich Summit preparations and facilitate follow-up and implementation on the six themes that are being negotiated by the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG).

I highlight this point of preparation and follow up because linking these two phases is central to our ongoing efforts to consolidate a Summit architecture that: (i) is geared toward results; (ii) helps to clarify and reinforce the relationship between the various inter-American processes and the Summit; and (iii) provides the impetus for coordinated action.

I should mention that the strategic links between the Ministerial on Science and Technology and the Summit have been noteworthy. At the 2009 Summit, the Western Hemisphere’s Presidents and Prime Ministers committed to “create conditions for increasing public investment and to take measures that promote investment in the private sector, particularly in science, technology, engineering,

innovation, research and development, and to encourage the strengthening of linkages among universities, science institutions, the private and public sectors, multilateral agencies, civil society and workers.” They also called upon “Ministers and high level authorities with responsibility for information and communication technologies (ICT) and for health and education to promote the use of ICT in all those areas in which they can improve our public and private sectors and the quality of life of our people, and to seek to improve access for households and communities.”

As of today, several countries have reported significant increases in their public expenditure on national programs of science and technology with a focus on infrastructure, training and education, increased access and reducing the digital gap.

For the next Summit, the host country has proposed further advancing the issue of technology in the Americas by placing emphasis on public-private partnerships to develop the necessary public policies and infrastructure to ensure greater access and facilitate service delivery in areas such as education and health care. The recommendations from this meeting will therefore be important for serving as a reference point and for informing negotiations on this issue.

In this regard, I am pleased to deliver an invitation to Chairman Berrocal from the Chair of the Summit Implementation Review Group to address that negotiating group when it meets in December to begin considering the theme of Access to and Use of Technology. I should also share with you that the intention is to elaborate

succinct, focused documents for the Sixth Summit that contain concrete initiatives and would urge that recommendations be elaborated with that objective in mind.

I look forward to the outcome of this meeting, the recommendations that will be presented for consideration in the Summit process and to a continued partnership for action to advance the shared goal of enhancing connectivity, competitiveness and development in the Americas.

Thank you.