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OPENING REMARKS BY THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,
CHAIR OF THE SUMMITS PROCESS

(Ambassador Rubén Silié, Chair of the SIRG)

On behalf of the Dominican Republic, warmest greetings to you all.

Much has transpired since last we met and, to be sure, the Tenth Summit of the Americas, slated for December 5, is growing nearer and we are continuing to count on all of you.

My thanks for all of the contributions, comments, and ideas that have been forthcoming. I also wish to express our appreciation to the Secretary General of the OAS, Luis Almagro, and our gratitude to the Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs, Ambassador James Lambert, and to the Director of the Summits Secretariat, Maria Celina Conte, for their ongoing support and follow-up with respect to organizing this meeting. You serve as the institutional memory needed to build upon the mandates adopted, a vital step for lending consistency and a sense of unity to the remarkable political consensus built over the three decades of the Summits of the Americas process.

We further extend our thanks to the members of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG) for their valuable technical support, especially in terms of providing data and setting priorities, which were key in guiding our thinking as we prepared the concept note.

It is also important to highlight the ongoing commitment of civil society and social actors in the Americas, who, in our view, serve as an important bridge between social sectors and the Summits process.

The Dominican Republic looks forward to all of your continued engagement and contributions, which we consider essential for Building a Secure, Sustainable, and Shared Prosperity Hemisphere.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In these times of hyper-connectivity, we are up against a challenge that compels us to seek new forms of social engagement and new ways to join in the exercise of power, to grapple with the effects of extreme weather events, to bring down the high levels of violence, to feed ourselves, to alleviate the hunger of those who have nothing to eat, to close the gap between the haves and have-nots, to ensure a promising future of social mobility, in short, new ways to guarantee societies that offer opportunities to everyone.

If I were asked to describe these turbulent times, I would say we have entered an era of unmet needs. Indeed, as our friend Heraldo Muñoz reminds us, democracy has not been able to meet those needs, with social inequalities having worsened, coupled with a growing sense of insecurity in our streets. With all this, the promising future that democracy is expected to ensure appears elusive for the vast majority.

Antonio Gramsci asserted that when the old is dying and the new cannot be born, improbable phenomena emerge. Today, such a statement can be applied to the regional political situation.

That is why the time has come for our hemisphere to leverage the full power of State action and of the private sector to think more broadly about human security so as to free people from the yoke of fear. To overcome the uncertainty that has taken hold of the citizenry, we must also include food insecurity, water insecurity, and energy insecurity.

We have chosen these types of security as the core themes of the concept note because we know they can become anchors of trust and strategic certainty at a time when uncertainty prevails. We likewise believe that reaching this new dimension of human security, which is embodied in the aforementioned types of security, affords us an opportunity to build robust consensus at a time of severe fragmentation and radicalization in major political debates.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Without security there is not and cannot be peace, nor can the wealth needed to lift millions out of poverty be generated, much less development be achieved. In other words, security is a precondition for stability and development.

It is both surprising and concerning that our region—with just 8% of the global population—is home to 30% of the world's violent homicides, in a context in which there are neither conflicts between States nor civil wars. This warrants urgent attention and joint efforts between States and the private sector.

As indicated in the concept note, in a world marked by turbulence and uncertainty, the Tenth Summit of the Americas can make a significant contribution by making a strong case for building different types of security. These are fundamental pillars for sustainable development insofar as they create the necessary environment for people to live with dignity, freedom, and opportunities for growth.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Latin America and the Caribbean are rich in natural resources. We export a quarter of our entire agricultural output and, according to FAO estimates, in the coming three years we will export 25% of the planet's entire agricultural and fishing output. How is it possible then that, with such an abundance of food in the region, 43 million people go hungry?

It is unacceptable that such an affront to human dignity persists when we have sufficient resources to prevent it. The region must act urgently and creatively to come up with ways to free our hemisphere from hunger, because if we are unable to feed ourselves, the hemisphere risks becoming a breeding ground for abuse, violence, and crime.

This we say without disregarding the close link between the availability of water and food production. The decision to manage water responsibly is, therefore, important, knowing that water stress rates are increasing at an alarming rate.

Our region is enviable insofar as it boasts the greatest agricultural potential and per-capita water availability on the planet, given that with just 15% of the earth's surface, it claims 29% of all precipitation and 40% of fresh water. We therefore contend that a commitment based on the use of technology and innovation will enable us to share best practices with respect to management of this precious resource.

Lastly, if we wish to free ourselves from the trap of continuing to produce nothing more than commodities and few value-added products, we must ensure, inexorably, that we are producing energy that is both affordable and sustainable, because without energy security there can be no industrial activity and consequently no quality jobs, as is desirable.

Thank you all and remember that the Dominican Republic will remain open to receiving your input, without which it would be impossible to achieve the success we all desire.