



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW
GROUP (SIRG)
First Regular Meeting of 2021
June 16 and 17, 2021
Virtual

OEA/Ser.E
GRIC/O.1/INF.23/21
24 June 2021
Original: English

**Summit Implementation Review Group
First Regular Meeting of 2021**

**Report on the SIRG Dialogues by Mr. Dale Eppler
National Summit Coordinator of the United States**

First, I would like to thank my fellow National Coordinators and government representatives for your participation in yesterday's dialogues. The United States appreciates your support for an inclusive Summit process, and thanks you for your patience with some of the technical challenges that are inherent to using any virtual platform. Your contributions to the dialogues send a positive message to our partners in other sectors.

I also would like to thank the Summits Secretariat, Inter-American Development Bank, Citizen Forum of the Americas, and Americas Business Dialogue for their efforts to ensure a diverse and representative group of panelists. And I thank the Summits Secretariat and members of the Joint Summit Working Group for their roles in organizing and moderating these productive dialogues.

I recognize that there are many more voices out there, and we are only able to scratch the surface with the time and tools we have in the context of the SIRG. I hope our dialogue with stakeholder groups does not end today, but that we continue to find ways to connect people to the Summit in constructive and meaningful ways, even as our governments begin our technical work to develop the agenda for the Ninth Summit.

Although the dialogues covered a wide range of topics, we saw a number of recurring themes: requests for governments to be responsive to the needs of their citizens, demands to address the lack of rule of law in the region, recommendations to use digital technology to provide solutions to many of the challenges facing our hemisphere, and calls for increased partnerships between civil society, the private sector, and governments.

In the dialogue on governance, anticorruption, and human rights, panelists broadly agreed that the COVID-19 pandemic has not only exposed existing weaknesses in governance and rule of law but exacerbated them. This has led to backsliding in efforts to protect human rights and fighting corruption that need to be addressed.

People throughout our region are feeling increasingly disenchanted by what they perceive as democratic processes and institutions that are failing to respond to their needs and deliver inclusive development results. We must hear these voices and redouble our dedication to the promotion and

defense of democracy and human rights throughout the hemisphere while ensuring concrete progress on matters that affect the livelihoods and well-being of our people.

Technological solutions can play an important role in advancing transparency, anticorruption, and human rights throughout the region.

In the dialogue on pandemic response and resilience, participants underscored that COVID-19 has pushed the region to address deficiencies and inequalities in healthcare, communications, and other services, bringing the need for increased coordination and preparedness to the attention of all sectors.

Reducing gaps and inequalities in access to healthcare, with increased inclusivity and access to technology, are necessary for increased resilience in the region.

Panelists proposed using the Summit to establish a formal mechanism to facilitate coordination and response across sectors and governments in times of crisis. This mechanism could bring together various ministries, ensure resilient systems, eliminate redundancies, evaluate different risks, needs and vulnerabilities, and increase equitable access to resources and technology, including vaccines, education, and communications technology.

In the dialogue on climate change and sustainable development, panelists focused on human contributions to climate change and the impact of climate change on the region's economies and ecosystems. Mitigating climate change and promoting sustainable development will require people-centered solutions, which should include meaningful youth engagement. Efforts should focus on protecting lands and natural resources; ensuring the well-being of people, especially the most vulnerable; increasing food security; and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and de-carbonizing our economies.

Many panelists highlighted the need for increased climate financing to enable the transition away from fossil fuels and update power grids. The need to mobilize investment is particularly urgent given how vulnerable the region is to weather events.

In the dialogue on economic growth and social inclusion, panelists coalesced around the challenges and opportunities presented by digitalization and the urgent need to strengthen rule of law to attract investment, facilitate access to opportunities by marginalized groups, and restore confidence in governments. Education featured prominently in the discussions. Our economies need a work force with skills and access to opportunities in a period of rapid technological change. Vulnerable groups have fallen even further behind in education as a result of COVID-19.

There was broad agreement in all of the dialogues that effectively addressing the challenges facing our region will require strong alliances and partnerships between governments, civil society and the private sector. This is a message that many of us have heard, and will continue to hear, as we prepare for the Ninth Summit of the Americas. Therefore, it was so important for our process to bring everyone together on the first day of the SIRG in the way we did.

As Chair of the Summit process, I found these dialogues to be extremely useful in highlighting a wide range of issues that are clearly of great importance to our region, as well as in identifying

opportunities for cooperation, which is the essence of the Summit process. I look forward to hearing more of your perspectives to inform the agenda for the Ninth Summit later this morning.