



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW
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**Presentation by Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs
Ambassador James Lambert**

Señor Presidente, Dale Eppler, Coordinador Nacional de Cumbres de los Estados Unidos de América,

Coordinadores Nacionales,

Distinguidos delegados,

Representantes del Grupo de Trabajo Conjunto de Cumbres,

Como estamos en el momento de lanzar los preparativos oficiales para la novena Cumbre de las Américas, repito la cálida bienvenida que les dio ayer el Secretario General, Luis Almagro.

Mi nombre es James Lambert, Secretario de Asuntos Hemisféricos, y responsable dentro de la organización, junto con mis colegas de la Secretaría de Cumbres, de facilitar cada aspecto del proceso de las Cumbres de las Américas. Mi intención en esta sesión es la de informarles brevemente sobre las amplias actividades de la Secretaría.

La lista es extensa e incluye el apoyo continuo a la Presidencia de la Cumbre, el apoyo a los Estados miembros en la implementación de los mandatos de las Cumbres, la coordinación como presidente de las Instituciones Multilaterales del Grupo de Trabajo Conjunto de Cumbres, y la supervisión de la participación constructiva de la sociedad civil en apoyo de un proceso verdaderamente inclusivo.

In addition to this, the Secretariat serves as the institutional memory of the Summits process, including importantly since the 8th Summit of the Americas, as the steward of the Implementation and Follow-up Mechanism, instituted to track the efforts of member states and Inter-American organizations to implement the 57 undertakings set out in the Lima Commitments on Democratic Governance Against Corruption.

Setting aside for the moment the “paper SIRG” conducted last fall, this meeting is the first fully-participatory session since Foreign Ministers of the Americas met at the Ministerial SIRG held on the margins of the General Assembly in Medellín, on June 27, 2019.

That meeting provided an excellent reflection point, bringing closure to the 8th Summit Cycle, one that was uniquely successful, not only in achieving for the first time in 13 years agreed Summit mandates, in this case the 57 undertakings set out in the Lima Commitments for Democratic Governance against Corruption, but in setting out the road map for member states, Inter-American

Institutions and Civil Society to advance in a coordinated, collegial and documented fashion to address the scourge of corruption and its corrosive impact on democratic governance in the region.

The achievement of a fully coordinated hemispheric response to engaging regional challenges and crisis is an objective of the Summits process most clearly articulated at the Quebec Summit in 2001. In addition to launching negotiations 20 years ago on the Inter-American Democratic Charter, Quebec established expectations for a coordinated support to member states from the Inter-American Institutions by consolidating the Joint Summit Working Group under the Chair of the OAS General Secretariat.

However, it is only in the last five years, under the direction of, and with the strong support from Peru and latterly the US, that a strengthened Summit Secretariat has been able to do so.

Let me briefly cite some of the outcomes and services to Member States that have resulted from this renewed capability and more energetic leadership.

I have mentioned the role of the Secretariat in overseeing the implementation mechanism for the Lima Commitments.

The 8th Summit asked participating countries and institutions not only to advance an impressive array of initiatives, but to report back to the subsequent US-hosted Summit on their progress in this regard. The documentation platform developed and maintained by the Secretariat will be key in this regard.

The higher-level coordination and response by the multilateral institutions in back-stopping member states in their efforts to address this agenda is also evident in the 33-page summary of the Joint Summit Working Group activity that was circulated in advance of this meeting.

This on its own would have represented a higher level of engagement and coordination than has ever taken place before by the Joint Summits Working Group. Indeed, to ensure this, in September 2018, Secretary Almagro convened the Heads of the 13 institutions that make up the Group to sign an updated Memorandum of Understanding making clear this higher level of expectation.

With the assistance of a High-level Advisory Board, including Allan Wagner of Peru, Former Vice President Kevin Casas Zamora of Costa Rica, Delia Ferreira, President of Transparency International, and notable Chilean expert Danny Kauffman, the Group has established a common action plan.

Its effectiveness and reach have also been considerably augmented by the inclusion in early 2019, at the request of Secretary General Angel Gurría, of the OECD, and an intensified coordination with their own Latin America Working Group.

The unanticipated consequence of these efforts to consolidate the technical capabilities of the Summit Secretariat and the Joint Summits Working Group was to achieve a state of readiness that allowed it to respond immediately as efforts, attention and challenges were redirected by the onset in early 2020 of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have already reported to the Permanent Council on the four-meetings of Heads of the Joint Summits Working Group convened from March to August 2020 by Luis Almagro and Carissa Etienne to ensure that (1) the support provided by the multilateral agencies would be informed by the broadest available data sets, and (2) duplication be avoided and, where possible, these efforts be transparent and coordinated. These meetings were also webcast so that member states as well could benefit from the information shared.

This level of coordination is unprecedented in the history of Summitry and, as a result, the Joint Summits Working Group, stands ready as an instrument to support the current Chair as we initiate the preparatory phase going towards the 9th Summit of the Americas. A good example of this was the willingness of key thought-leaders from these institutions to lend their considerable skills to the chairing of the dialogues conducted with social actors and business representatives yesterday on Day One of the SIRG.

Before leaving the topic of the multilateral response to the pandemic addressed by the Joint Summits Working Group, it is important to flag the important conclusions drawn about the scope and scale of its devastation. These deliberations were important at identifying the pandemic-related challenges that must be addressed by Member States and by leaders at the 9th Summit of the Americas.

At the request of the incoming US Chair, the Joint Summits Working Group prepared a paper reviewing the challenges. This was shared with member states last fall. In addition to outlining the sanitary, economic, and social consequences, it made clear the deep concerns on the part of the group about the consequences of the pandemic on democratic governability in the region.

Indeed, the Group issued a joint statement identifying specifically concerns with extraordinary measures in score jurisdictions that have the effect of hampering safeguards, limiting transparency driven in many cases by personal, rather than public, interests.

Interim Director of the Summit Secretariat, Maria Celina Conte, will report later this morning on the efforts of the Summit Secretariat to continue the robust engagement of civil society advanced throughout the 8th Summit cycle.

This effort too, which has been carried out in full cooperation with the Secretariat for Rights and Equity, and consistent with the overall OAS approach on engaging civil society, has also identified real popular concerns about corruption and the corrosive effect that has on public confidence in democratic institutions.

Evidently, if public accountability is an important objective (and under the principle of Open Government it certainly should be) then civil society needs to be engaged at all phases of the public policy cycle.

To encourage this public engagement by Civil Society, the Secretariat has facilitated the creation of an extensive series of 34 “corruption nodes” to strengthen local capacity.

With the full support of the US presidency, we have also conducted in most countries two rounds of civil society consultations, facilitating both pre-talks among stakeholders and subsequent exchanges with governments themselves. Ms. Conte will provide additional detail later today.

But it is worth reiterating that we do so following specific instructions and mandates from member states to develop the Summits in a fully inclusive manner.

Many member states have been insistent that we do so in a manner that ensures that all groups consulted, and that particularly engages a balanced gender approach.

In this respect, we have enjoyed particular support from the Government of Canada to permit us to do so in a robust and embracing fashion.

I hope we will hear more on this from Ambassador Adsett, but I do wish to make clear the importance to the Secretariat of direct specific fund project support received from member states.

The final role played by the Summits Secretariat is that of coordination within the General Secretariat itself and to report on the institutional contribution of the Organization beyond the role carried out by the Summits Secretariat.

In this regard, I wish to flag the important contribution of the Secretariat of Legal Affairs in advancing OAS engagement on corruption, including through its coordination of the MESICIC process. In this same regard, their efforts leading to the approval of an “InterAmerican Model Law 2.0 on Access to Public Information” has been key.

My own Secretariat has supported this as well through the efforts of the Department of Effective Public Management under the direction of Maria Fernanda Trigo who has worked with member states to fulfill the Summit mandate to develop an Open Data Program for the Americas for presentation at the 9th Summit.

We have also worked with other Secretariats to advance specific technical assistance to member states in the areas of money laundering, tax crimes, open data, and civil service integrity. My thanks to the Secretariat for Multidimensional Security and particularly the Department against Transnational Organized Crime in supporting these initiatives.

Also, I must recognize direct and generous financial support received by CAF which has facilitated much of this work.

Within the OAS and its sister institutions, we have cooperated closely with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of expression in the preparation of a high-level seminar on this topic under the Chair of Department of State, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Diplomacy, Jon Piechowski.

Finally, I would mention, focusing on the important commemorative opportunity of the 20th anniversary of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, that I have worked closely with my colleague Francisco Guerrero of the Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy and the chairs of the CISC and

CAJP, Bradley Freden and Amb. Josue Fiallo, on a productive discussion together with former President Chinchilla and a host of experts to examine possible ways to strengthen the application of the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

That meeting, which was publicly webcast, took place on May 4. The considerations arising, many of which are very interesting, have been circulated to member states in preparation for this first SIRG meeting, as has been the Chair's summary of thematic inputs received to date.

I will leave off this description at this point, but not before expressing my appreciation to Ms. Conte and members of the Summits Secretariat who have managed in spite of, or perhaps because of the pandemic, to raise their game to a new operational level.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, again for allowing me this opportunity to report.