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Summary of Feedback on Priorities for the Ninth Summit of the Americas

As Chair of the Summit Implementation Review Group and host of the Ninth Summit of the Americas, the United States thanks the governments that submitted feedback to the three concept papers circulated in October 2020 by the Summits of the Americas Secretariat at the request of the Chair. The United States wishes to thank the Joint Summit Working Group, Council of the Americas, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, International Republican Institute, National Democratic Institute, and National Endowment for Democracy for their contributions to the three concept papers that served as the basis for initiating a dialogue about the Ninth Summit of the Americas. The Chair notes with appreciation the work of the Citizen Forum of the Americas for compiling a summary of feedback from civil society representatives throughout the region on their Summit priorities.

This exchange of documents constituted the first regular SIRG meeting of 2020, and we view this exercise as the first step towards ensuring that a comprehensive range of interests and ideas are taken into account when jointly formulating the agenda for the Ninth Summit of the Americas. In this spirit, we encourage all governments in the hemisphere to engage with independent stakeholders in their countries and we thank those that have done so.

The Chair appreciates the time many National Summit Coordinators made available prior to the first SIRG of 2021 to directly discuss their governments' priorities for the Ninth Summit of the Americas and share their views on the Summit process and the most urgent issues facing our region.

The following provides a brief overview of feedback conveyed to the chair:

- The primary value of the Summit of the Americas is that it brings together people from across our hemisphere; as such, the Summit should be held in person when it is safe to do so.
- The far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will be a central concern in the run-up to the Ninth Summit of the Americas and the Summit itself. The crisis has disproportionately affected vulnerable and marginalized groups including women, minorities, indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities. The hemisphere risks backsliding on significant gains in social inclusion unless these issues are acknowledged and squarely addressed through comprehensive policy responses.
- The crisis exposed deficiencies in institutional capacity throughout the region to respond to the pandemic and demonstrated how some measures to control the spread of the disease weakened democratic rights, reduced the space for civil society actors, and enabled corruption.

- The pandemic highlighted digital inequality, economic inequality, and health access inequality in the region; reducing the digital gap and addressing these inequalities should be priorities for the Summit.
- Mitigating climate change and implementing environmental reforms remain priorities for much of the region.
- The private sector has an important role in supporting inclusive and sustainable economic recovery. These efforts can catalyze a digital transformation throughout the region, and there is broad acknowledgement of the benefits of developing common principles and sharing best practices regarding cyber security, privacy, data protection, artificial intelligence, and equal access.
- Governments must continue to implement leaders' commitments from past Summits, particularly the *Lima Commitment on Democratic Governance Against Corruption* and the fight against corruption. Following up on past commitments is crucial to ensuring the continuity and credibility of the Summits process.
- The Summits process must respect sovereignty.
- The Summit should take into account conditions specific to developing/middle income countries and small island states.
- While several governments acknowledged that certain countries from outside the region have been undermining our shared values of democracy and human rights, other governments disagreed with the assertion about external malign influence and called on the Summit to focus on unifying rather than divisive issues.