



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)
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**Presentation by Luis Viguria, Chief Executive Officer
Young Americas Business Trust (YABT)**

H.E. Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the Organization of American States,

H.E. Nestor Mendez, Assistant Secretary General,

Mr. Dale Eppler, United States National Coordinator for the Summits Process,

Ambassador James Lambert, OAS Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs,

María Celina Conte, Interim Director of the Summits of the Americas Secretariat,

Distinguished representatives of the Summit Implementation Review Group,

Distinguished Ambassadors, Permanent Representatives of the member states to the OAS,

Esteemed Young People of the Americas,

We are grateful for the opportunity given to our organization, Young Americas Business Trust – or YABT – to address you today and report the outcomes of this ongoing effort, through initiatives pursued in response to the young people's recommendations for the Ninth Summit of the Americas – especially in the context brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

An international organization created under the OAS and incorporated in the United States, YABT aims to promote social and economic development for young people in the OAS member states, supporting the objectives and pillars of the Organization, as well as the mandates from the Summit of the Americas.

Our work with young people has therefore focused on two primary areas:

- **Youth Participation, Democracy, and Development** – This involves working with young people, governments, and international organizations to create effective and inclusive forums to engage young people in policy dialogue and decision-making processes. Young Americas Forum, the official platform for the participation of young people in the Summit of the Americas process, is one specific case.

- **Implementation and Action** – Working with enterprising young people of the Americas, to take action on finding sustainable solutions to deal with the priorities and meet the needs of our Hemisphere, supporting implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in response to and as follow-up on Summit mandates and recommendations.

Using two significant milestones for youth participation in the Summits process as a basis: i) their status as official stakeholders; and ii) their consolidation as partners for prosperity, working hand in hand with governments, the private sector, and civil society to take concrete steps to support implementation of the Summits mandates.

Understanding that young people, especially women and those already living in poverty, bore the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the consultations with the young people, we understand that the three priorities for this demographic are:

1. Climate change
2. COVID-19
3. Collaborating with young people on development: Through entrepreneurship, innovation, and leadership, in social, economic, and environmental recovery efforts.

Based on these priorities, we can point to the development and implementation of the *InnovAction* Challenge as a concrete outcome: Innovation in Action responding to Covid-19, as part of the sixteenth edition of the Talent and Innovation Competition of the Americas (TIC Americas).

The *InnovAction* Challenge is a multi-sector initiative developed by the YABT, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, the Inter-American Foundation, and the OAS, with substantial support from the United States Government through the State Department, whereby we promote working with young people to support specific economic and social inclusion proposals as part of the member states' post-COVID-19 recovery efforts.

We can proudly report that this first stage of the program drew participation from 1,312 young people – from 32 of the 35 OAS member states – who came up with 1,052 solutions framed within the following priority areas, which were determined based on the recommendations the young people themselves had made:

1. Social Inequality
2. Gender Equity
3. Youth Citizen Participation
4. Reactivation of Industries

The purpose of this process is for the member states and international organizations participating in the Summit process to have access to the best proposals, and for these to be solidified to support recovery plans of the countries in the region.

Throughout the first stage, the young people underwent ongoing training from international experts, to improve their projects and prepare them to move on to the implementation stage. We are currently in the final stage, where the finalist teams will showcase their proposals to the public; and

the projects chosen by the international judges will receive seed capital and ongoing advice to work with them on implementation. We believe that this process must be institutionalized and sustained over time to promote the active youth participation.

We invite the member state representatives and the members of the SIRG to see the young people's proposals, which will be presented via the official OAS networks on Wednesday, June 23 at 10:30 a.m., during the finals of the InnovAction Challenge. We will also hold a dialogue framed around the three priority areas cited earlier: Climate Change, COVID-19, and Youth Collaboration in Economic and Social Recovery Efforts. The outcomes of these discussions will be presented to Secretary General Luis Almagro on June 25 at 11:00 a.m. and will also be transmitted through the official channels of the OAS.

Furthermore, in underscoring the importance of keeping an official, effective, and ongoing process in place for youth participation in the Summits of the Americas process, I would like to reiterate the commitment of the YABT and the willingness of the youth of the Hemisphere to organizing the Sixth Young Americas Forum as part of the next Summit of the Americas. It will be officially launched this coming August 12, as part of the commemoration of International Youth Day, declared by the United Nations.

In closing, I must once again thank the Government of the United States of America, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat, and the Inter-American Foundation for their favorable response to our request for support. I must also thank the member states and the international organizations of the Summit Implementation Review Group for stepping up efforts with the YABT, on behalf of the young people of the Americas.

And finally, special thanks to the Government of The Bahamas for its annual financial contribution to YABT, thanks to which we can continue supporting young people in the Caribbean. We invite the rest of the member states to join us in this effort, so that our Hemisphere can increase its investment in youth projects that contribute to the strengthening of the inter-American system.

Standing at this podium, I take this opportunity to thank you the young people of our countries for your leadership, courage, and resilience. I would also like to reiterate our commitment to continue working with you.

Thank you very much.