



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)
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PRESENTATION ON THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM
(Ambassador James Lambert, Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs)

Mr. Kevin O'Reilly, National Summit Coordinator of the United States

Distinguished National Summit Coordinators

Permanent Representatives to the OAS

Representatives of the Joint Summit Work Institutions

Mr. Chair, it is with great pleasure to present the work plan for Civil Society and Social Actors for the IX Summit Process.

The Summits of the Americas have, since their inception in 1994, encouraged the participation of civil society and social actors in the Hemisphere. The Heads of State and Government have consistently recognized the importance of including these actors and encouraged governments to develop and implement public policies and Summits inputs in a more participatory, inclusive, and sustainable manner.

Following specific mandates, the Summits of the Americas Secretariat has been promoting the participation of civil society and social actors in the Summits Process by generating different avenues for their engagement. As a result, civil society participation has improved in quality and quantity over recent Summit cycles.

Taking into account past experiences and feedback provided by civil society and social actors, the Summits Secretariat has opened several spaces for participation throughout the preparatory phase and the IX Summit itself. These initiatives will allow civil society and social actors to, first, gather, consolidate, and present their inputs throughout the preparatory process; and second, to strengthen civil society capacity in relation to the IX Summit themes and other topics of interest.

Among the activities to be carried out within the framework of the preparatory phase of the IX Summit between February and May 2022, are the following:

The launching of the Summit theme, which entails presenting the theme/sub-themes of the IX Summit to civil society and social actors of the Americas with the participation of the host country. This activity also contemplates a Question-and-Answer session for the targeted audience.

Second, the establishment of **Thematic-Regional Working Groups**. These groups would be self-managed, and they would serve as a space for discussion of the theme and/or sub-themes of the IX Summit.

The Summits Secretariat will establish Working Groups at a thematic and subregional level (namely: Mesoamerica, English-speaking States, Southern Cone, Andean region) with the aim of fostering constructive dialogue and formulating recommendations on the Summit theme for member states' consideration during the negotiation process.

And because working groups are intended to strengthen the influence of civil society organizations and social actors during the IX Summit preparatory phase, the Summits Secretariat suggests that inputs/progress from civil society working groups feed the work of the SIRG working groups.

Third, the **Hemispheric Dialogue between regional spokespersons and Governments officials**. This will be a space for civil society and social actors to present contributions to participating countries within the framework of a Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG) meeting. Civil society and social actors would contribute through their thematic/regional working group spokespersons, the youth through the Young Americas Business Trust and the private sector through the Americas Business Dialogue.

Concerning the Participation process for the IX Summit, the host country of the IX Summit and the Summits Secretariat will prepare guidelines for the participation of civil society, including the selection criteria for participants.

The participation process entails two phases: *1) Application process and 2) Accreditation process*:

With regards to the **applications to participate**, these will be subject to a first review by the Summits Secretariat and a second and final review by the host country of the IX Summit.

And for the **accreditation process**, once their application has been approved, civil society and social actors will be able to register on the accreditation platform.

Now, moving on to the activities to be carried out **within the framework of the IX Summit itself**, between June 6 and 8, the following are contemplated:

First, the **Hemispheric Forum of Civil Society and Social Actors**. The Hemispheric Forum will provide a space for civil society and social actors to dialogue among themselves and prepare their intervention for the Dialogue with High-Level Government Representatives. The Hemispheric Forum will consist of two parallel events: an initiative fair and thematic workshops. The **Initiative Fair** will provide a space to civil society representatives and social actors to present their projects on the IX Summit themes. It aims at highlighting their work and promoting the exchange of good practices among themselves. The Fair will serve as a platform to support social entrepreneurship, regional programming, and to identify gaps in said programming. For their part, the **Thematic Workshops** intend to increase awareness of civil society and social actors on IX Summit themes and other topics of interest.

The second activity contemplated is the **Dialogue between Social Actors and High-Level Government Representatives**, which allows the 20 spokespersons of the established thematic-regional working groups, and a youth spokesperson from the Young Americas Business Trust to exchange ideas, as well propose initiatives and common actions on the Summit theme/sub-themes to high-level representatives of the participating countries of the Summits Process.

Finally, there are the parallel forums for civil society. Throughout the years, the Summits Secretariat has collaborated with Summit host countries to institutionalize forums that ensure the inclusion and diversity of social actors, including youth, private sector, indigenous peoples, labor unions, among others. It is recommended not only to maintain the practice, but also including other forums, such as Afro-descendants forum, women organizations forum, or any other interested groups. In this sense, the various side events of the first U.S.-hosted Summit for Democracy offer us some useful examples of how such events can also be linked usefully and pragmatically to the themes of the Summit.

Currently, the confirmed forums are the Civil Society and Social Actors Forum, the Young Americas Forum, and the CEO Summit. Those under consideration are the Indigenous Leaders' Summit, the Labor Forum and Women Organizations.

All the initiatives that I just mentioned were modelled to promote dialogue between member states and civil society and social actors. We encourage each government to engage with their local civil society and social actors during the Summits Process, and we count on your participation at the *Dialogue between Social Actors and High-Level Government Representatives*.

In addition, there are plans to undergo the coordination of a **Summit Stakeholders Roundtable**. It would consist of a private dialogue between selected representatives from civil society and social actors (and the private sector, if deemed appropriate) and high-level government officials (such as Heads of State and Government). This roundtable would be an opportunity to discuss specific IX Summit priority areas and future actions.

Our Hemisphere has a vibrant and very active civil society, which is a key asset. It is an essential component for strong and inclusive democracies and, if incorporated to public policy design and implementation, it can provide more sustainable and efficient solutions. Therefore, I would like to underscore the need of strengthening the participation of all Summit stakeholders, and civil society in particular, to find common solutions that benefit our Hemisphere.

Thank you very much for your attention.