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REMARKS BY THE INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE

(Ms. Beverly Best, Director, External and Institutional Relations)

On behalf of the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), we wish to thank the OAS, the Chair and all stakeholders of the Summit Committee for inviting IICA to participate in this the 2nd Regular Meeting of the SIRG in 2022. Like others present here today, we acknowledge and commend the participatory and inclusive approach both in terms of the process and the planned actions towards achieving the outcomes of the 9th Summit of the Americas and beyond.

In keeping with the thrust of the Summit, IICA believes that as the Americas repositions itself to recover from this pandemic, and other related crises, the proposed theme “Building a Sustainable, Resilient and Equitable Future” for the upcoming Summit of the Americas is not only appropriate but also timely.

We at IICA and cognizant that these times call for an integrated approach that is multi-pronged in scope and nature among cross-sector partners and stakeholders. Therefore, we support the overarching thrust and actions contained in the draft political commitments in the 5 thematic areas.

Having said that, as the Institute assumes responsibilities for supporting Member States in the implementation of commitments emanating from the UNFSS, COP 26 and other such global conferences, we wish to comment on 3 draft political statements of the Statement for the 9th Summit: Our Green Future, Digital Transformation, and Democratic Governance.

Bearing in mind that IICA’s efforts are focused on supporting its MS to build a more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and innovative agrifood systems for the Americas where the role of Agriculture is not seen in the traditional sense but transformed towards strengthening food systems in

terms of the production, processing, retailing and delivery of food, consumer dietary preferences, and disposal of food, the key comments (which are mostly suggested amendments) are as follows:

In addition to the observations and intervention made by the representative of Pepsico (endorsed by the Ambassador of T&T), Under Our Green Future we suggest there is need to also include texts such as:

To promote the transformation of food systems to ensure that the climate mitigation and adaptation goals of the Paris Agreement and subsequent climate change negotiations are attained, along with the objectives related to health, decent employment, and social inclusion.”

Considering that the operation of food systems has effects on all the stated commitments, we could consider asking IICA to work with other organizations of the Inter-American System and of the United Nations (as well as Private Sector partners) to help countries develop comprehensive plans for food system transformation to support the previous commitments and to achieve the SGDs and the Paris Agreement objectives. The advance in the implementation of those plans will be reported at the Tenth Summit of the Americas”

Under Digital Transformation we suggest to include texts such as

Facilitate affordable and universal broadband Internet access to all the peoples of the Americas by 2030. Under commitment #1, mention should be made of the need to install the necessary infrastructure, in addition to affordable access.

To strengthen cooperation on digital trade, including commitments to facilitate cross-border data flows, while protecting privacy. Under commitment #3, we believe there is need to also consider adding the flow of cross-border products/goods to supplement cross-border flow of data.

To advance the use of digital tools and platforms to expand equity and inclusion and reduce the digital divide; including through greater and inclusive use of e-government, e-commerce, as well as financial, health, educational, civic engagement and cultural preservation technologies. Under commitment #6, we suggest the inclusion of digital agriculture technologies which also support the region’s vision towards promoting regenerative and climate smart agriculture in the hemisphere.

To support the development of open, interoperable, secure and reliable communication network architectures, as well as regulatory policies that expand connectivity, promote competition and foster innovation. Under commitment#10, we wish to underscore the importance of this commitment, given that there are gaps in information on connectivity in the Americas, currently hinder the design of policies to support digital transformation.

Under Democratic Governance, we suggest a minor amendment to

20 (d) Include women and girls, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, minorities, LGBTQI+ people, and vulnerable and marginalised groups in recovery planning, and take into account their different needs, including but not limited to increased burden of care, physical security, lack of access to employment and other economic opportunities. We suggest the inclusion of the acquisition of digital

skills (i.e. the building of capacity in digital literacy) as a necessary complement to having access in order to achieve this commitment.

With these brief comments, I wish to once again express gratitude and to underscore IICA's solidarity and commitment in supporting and advancing this preparatory process which we know will redound to highly successful and impactful outcomes for the 9th Summit.