



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION
(REVIEW GROUP SIRG)
First regular meeting of 2017
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OPENING REMARKS BY GENERAL SECRETARY
LUIS ALMAGRO LEMES

The Summits of the Americas represent singular opportunities for forging hemispheric consensus at the highest political level in order to seek solutions to the continent's most pressing problems and take decisive action on behalf of our peoples.

I am pleased to open the first session of the Summits Implementation Review Group (SIRG) under the chairmanship of Peru.

I wish to thank Ambassador Valdivieso and the team from Peru's mission to the OAS for their commitment to and efforts in this process.

I am also pleased to welcome Peru's National Summits Coordinator, Ambassador Antonio García Revilla, who will chair the SIRG meetings from now on.

One year before celebrating the Eighth Summit of the Americas in Lima, Peru, it is appropriate to review implementation of the initiatives from the Seventh Summit assigned to the Joint Summits Working Group and to discuss the priorities of the inter-American agenda now being prepared for the Lima Summit.

A civic preference for democracy prevails in the Americas but ethical and structural challenges also predominate that must be addressed on an urgent basis, as they affect the very essence of the system: the opportunities gap, citizens' disaffection with and lack of confidence in political parties and representative institutions, the fragility of the rule of law, and growing insecurity, as well as other issues.

Inequality is one of the factors that most fuels the disenchantment with democracy. The eruption of high-profile corruption cases, with differential treatment in the courts, fosters the perception of inequality and has an obvious impact on this disenchantment. We must, therefore, build more just, inclusive, and participatory societies.

As Secretary General of the OAS, for me these are clear action priorities. I have been promoting them since I assumed my position and I hope they can be discussed in the context of the Summit.

It is important for the next Summit to be more than a meeting among Heads of State and Government. The Summit, which now includes all 35 countries in our Hemisphere, must also seek how to better represent the voices of the most vulnerable populations in the Americas.

I feel this meeting should encourage open dialogue among the countries, the institutions of the inter-American system, as well as actors from civil society.

The Government of Peru will guide us in seeking not only an appropriate theme but also a format that will facilitate an exchange among our leaders.

On the way to Lima, we must identify the issues that bind us and the priority issues for the citizens of our region. We must work to strengthen forums for citizen and democratic participation, so as to achieve greater prosperity in our region and create more rights for more people.

The Joint Summits Working Group has been working hard during the implementation phase of the Seventh Summit. To date, it has submitted information on the implementation of all the issues of the Seventh Summit – education, health, the environment, energy, migration, security, citizen participation, and democratic governance.

The Working Group has played a fundamental role in the process by following up all the States' points of agreement on the various issues raised by Panama during the last Summit.

Since the last Summit, ten countries have submitted information on how they have implemented the Summit's initiatives at the national level.

We invite all the States to continue reporting each year on progress made in the implementation and monitoring of the Summits' mandates. This information is used to demonstrate to our citizens the importance of the Summits process and its impact on our region.

I want to conclude by underscoring our Summit Secretariat's commitment to continue providing support to the Chairmanship and the States in this process, as well as to continue strengthening the participation of the Joint Working Group institutions and that of social actors, who are an integral part of the process.

Thank you very much.