



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW
GROUP (SIRG)
Second Regular Meeting of 2022
March 7 and 8, 2022
Virtual

OEA/Ser.E
GRIC/O.2/INF.23/22
21 March 2022
Original: Spanish

PRESENTATION BY THE YABT

(Cecilia Vilchis, Coordinator, YABT Young Americas Forum)

Good morning to all. Cordial greetings to Ambassador Kevin O'Reilly, US National Coordinator for the Summit Process, to all the OAS National Coordinators and Authorities, civil society and private sector representatives, and my colleagues Dawsher Charles and Maricel Lonati. I hope you are well in these difficult times. Receive my assurances of solidarity and empathy to all.

Let me briefly introduce myself. I am Cecilia Vilchis, from Mexico, currently coordinating the YABT Young Americas Forum, and recently recognized by the Atlantic Council as a Champion of the Americas to promote prosperity, stability, and cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean in preparation for the IX Summit of the Americas.

Today I come before you as one of the Young Americas representatives to share our recommendations on the political commitments for the Ninth Summit, which we have compiled at the YABT through the Young Americas Forum. Accompanying me are my colleagues Dawsher Charles and Maricel Lonati, youth representatives who will also be presenting other viewpoints and proposals on the political commitments.

The Young Americas Forum is a permanent, open, inclusive platform that enables us to bring the voice of youth to OAS processes and to foster the innovating role of youth in economic development and social inclusion. Through the Forum, in 2020 we launched the first InnovAction Challenge "Innovation in Action Responding to COVID-19," a platform helping youth initiatives bring concrete solutions and actions to support community development among the most vulnerable population groups in Latin American and Caribbean countries. These efforts were created in collaboration with the Summits of the Americas Secretariat and the Inter-American Foundation.

In June of this year, we will be participating in the sixth triennial Young Americas Forum at the IX Summit of the Americas, where youth will have the opportunity to strengthen their impact on the discussion of strategies to respond to the continent's most pressing challenges.

As part of the Youth Forum roadmap, YABT has established strategies to answer the challenge of promoting youth participation and empowerment, as well as expanding their impact on public policy and promoting their commitment as positive change agents.

In line with the political commitments of the IX Summit, we are working to establish the IDEAL process through various channels for participation. We have renovated the Forum's web platform by and for young people with the aim of providing dynamic tools and resources that promote greater inclusion, a diversity of voices, equitable processes, and accessibility, all with a long-term vision.

The consultation process in preparation for the VI Forum is framed by and related to the 5Cs of Youth Development—Climate Change, Collaborating with Youth, Connectivity and Digital Transformation, Combating Corruption, and COVID-19—current priorities resulting from a series of consultations with youth and the core themes of the IX Summit of the Americas.

The channels for participation that enable us to involve more youth and networks in the process include:

- Youth Dialogs at local, national and regional levels, organized by youth with YABT support and technical assistance, creating spaces that favor the exchange of opinions, needs and proposals.
- The youth consultation process based on the Dialogs is progressing, and to date various gatherings are being held throughout the continent, including 19 dialogos in 9 countries of the Hemisphere focused on the 5Cs of Youth Development.
- Virtual campaigns to expand and ensure youth participation and representation in spaces such as these. My colleague Dawsher Charles was selected through one of these campaigns.
- Virtual consultations that we have put into place as channels to come closer to young people and enrich the discussion.

We applaud the progress and the inclusive, diverse approach taken into account in the political commitments for the IX Summit of the Americas.

With regard to these commitments, through the Young Americas Forum we have received and grouped various proposals and contributions from thousands of young people throughout the continent, which I will now present:

- As young people, we focus our attention on government efforts to overcome COVID-19 and prepare for future pandemics. We see political leadership and science as methods for finding comprehensive, democratic, inclusive solutions through policies, funding and cooperation to provide access to health and drug coverage, with a special emphasis on vulnerable groups.
- We reaffirm the importance of including the topic of mental health in the action plan, having witnessed the impacts of the pandemic and observed that mental health remains a poorly addressed issue. We stress the need to publicize and discuss it, having seen cases of suicide, depression, and other mental pathologies related to the isolation imposed by the pandemic.

- We see information technologies as tools to increase the reach of and access to public health, as a way to reduce the time, distance, and resources needed to access health systems. The use of artificial intelligence, scientific research, big data, and other technologies will advance health care more efficiently, globally, and easily.
- We have discussed how COVID-19 has made it hard to acquire goods and services, creating uncertainty in the population, primarily among the most vulnerable groups, and have identified the lack of education, professional development, and job opportunities as causes that widen the inequality gap. Therefore, we stress the need to promote inclusive businesses that can provide services and goods for diverse communities in the region, including persons with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities, among others.
- The pandemic has also increased the barriers to entrepreneurs entering the market, especially those unfamiliar with technology. Therefore, companies have reinvented and adapted their business models through innovation. We stress the importance of providing digital literacy programs for business owners, as well as for children, to understand how technology can help them.
- We believe that working to reactivate industries is essential for effective recovery and to accelerate economic growth in the region by making small and medium-sized enterprises more visible and promoting fair trade and a sustainable value chain.
- We call for strengthening the role of women in society, along with greater citizen participation in public agendas, as well as programs to help us reinvent ourselves, providing access to loans so that we can engage in reactivating the economic sector.

We reaffirm our readiness to join efforts and strengthen alliances with the diverse actors involved here, with the aim of advancing and strengthening the response to the challenges facing the continent, influencing and contributing to its transformation.

We stress our commitment to follow up and monitor the agreements struck before and during the IX Summit, serving as bridges between government and society to better respond actively to current and future challenges.

In the coming months, we will continue deploying a series of activities to strengthen youth engagement in this process. Their outcomes will be compiled and systematized by the YABT, to be presented at the IX Summit of the Americas, and will serve as contributions to the political dialog and to defining priorities for the Hemisphere's development agenda.

We stress the need for the countries of our Hemisphere to continue supporting the Young Americas Forum, creating spaces for direct dialog and action. For this reason, and in light of the above, we invite you to answer the call of youth and join efforts to strengthen and further the participatory process.

Thank you very much for your attention.