



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW GROUP (SIRG)
Second Regular Meeting of 2022
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REMARKS BY THE PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION

(Mary Lou Valdez Deputy Director)

Good morning, Mr. Chair,
Distinguished delegates of OAS Member States, Observers and other special guests,

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) congratulates Member States and the OAS Secretariat for your valuable preparatory work for the 9th Summit of the Americas. This Summit will not only address issues of critical importance to the Region but will harness the necessary political leadership and commitment for sustainable action.

As we stated at the last SIRG meeting, the inclusion of “health and resilience” as one of the Summit’s pillars, is essential for Member States’ recovery and rebuilding. Indeed, health elements are also key to other Political Commitment documents, such as Our Green Future and Digitalization.

As we all know only too well, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives, health, and wellbeing of our populations and devastated our national economies. Sustainable recovery and resilience can only be achieved if we invest in health.

Now, more than ever, regional cooperation is needed to protect the past public health gains of the region and address the health gaps that COVID-19 has laid bare, especially for those most at risk. This includes growing rates of non-communicable diseases which are the main causes of death in our Region, the burden of mental illness, and the need for health data and information for better decisions and actions.

Economic growth and wellness, access to high quality and affordable health services, and strong social protection, will contribute to rebuilding our economies, improving health status, and achieving a safer and more hopeful future.

The Health and Resilience action plan highlights three key regional priorities already recognized by OAS member states in the General Assembly resolution approved in November 2021. These are:

Resilience through preparedness: Ensuring that countries and territories in the Americas have the capacity to better prevent, detect, and respond to health emergencies.

Resilience in manufacturing capacity and supply: Increasing regional production of medical

products to address the gaps in access to COVID-19 vaccines, medicines, and other essential supplies.

And, Resilient health systems and societies: to position health at the center of national recovery and rebuilding efforts and strengthen health systems for equitable access to services and help reach universal health coverage.

PAHO reaffirms its readiness to work to with Members States, offering our technical expertise during the Commitments negotiation process.

We are also ready to work together with other Joint Summit Working Group Members, the private sector, and other stakeholders to help implement your Summit deliverables.

The COVID pandemic has reinforced the importance of our Region's solidarity, a longstanding PAHO value, which will be central in our recovery process. Please count on us.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak.