



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW
GROUP (SIRG)
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PRESENTATION OF THE XXI INTER-AMERICAN CONFERENCE
OF MINISTERS OF LABOR (IACML)

(Minister Gustavo Martinez Pandiani, National Summit Coordinator for Argentina)

Mr. Coordinator for the United States, Ambassador Kevin O'Reilly, Mr. Secretary General of the OAS,

Distinguished delegates here present:

It is an honor for me to participate in this Second Meeting of the SIRG with my first speech as the National Coordinator for Argentina to the Summit Process. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chair for its work, with the cooperation of the various delegations, to ensure the success of the IX Summit of the Americas.

We are immersed in a context of uncertainty in the face of the latest developments on the international scene. In addition to the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the repercussions of an armed conflict in the heart of Europe are threatening the peace and security of all members of the international community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has struck Latin American countries hard, causing the highest mortality rates in our Hemisphere. This led to a drop in economic activity, with record-breaking impacts on the rates of unemployment, poverty, and human development. This extraordinary situation has put the resilience of our societies to the test and posed the challenge of resuming the path toward more equitable development.

In these circumstances, Argentina took on the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, embracing the commitment to cooperate and work together with a view to reaching the consensus that our region needs in order to enhance the quality of life of our peoples. In the same spirit, we are preparing to work within the framework of the Summit of the Americas, convinced that multilateralism and hemispheric solidarity are the most appropriate tool for "building a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future," as the Ninth Summit motto says.

Within the framework of the Organization of American States, Argentina had the honor of presiding over the XXI Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor, the main hemispheric forum for discussing and making decisions on labor issues.

That Conference was held virtually from September 22 to 24, 2021, under the slogan “Building a more resilient world of work with sustainable development, decent work, productive employment, and social inclusion.” This motto relates directly to the search for a post-pandemic recovery that is people-centered and socially just with decent work, bearing in mind the structural inequalities of our region.

The Conference was attended by 30 delegations from OAS member states and representatives of both workers and employers through the Trade Union Technical Advisory Council and the Business Technical Advisory Committee on Labor Matters. It was also enriched by the attendance and contributions of leaders and specialists from international organizations and special guests.

The outcomes of the XXI Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor included:

Adopting the Buenos Aires Declaration and Action Plan as a road map for the region, which distills the action to be taken in the fields of labor and social policy.

The first-ever tripartite plenary session on “Institutionalized Social Dialogue to Recover from the Crisis and Secure a Future of Work with Social Justice and Sustainable Development.”

Making the commitment to continue improving coordination between education and employment to address labor transformations and challenges.

Establishing working groups to lend continuity to activities and actions that contribute to achieving the objectives and mandates of the Conference and the election of authorities.

Recognizing the importance of the cooperation mechanism born of the Conference of Ministers, known as the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration, to support the ministries of labor in their post-pandemic recovery policies.

The recommendations emanating from the XXI Conference can be seen as valuable inputs when adopting the mandates of the coming Summit of the Americas. These include:

Improve occupational training and facilitate productive and labor reconversion for the people vis-à-vis falling employment rates, technological changes, climate change, and the impacts of the pandemic.

Strengthen, update and expand skill-certification systems and employment services. Establish policies for transitions among productive sectors and strengthen the use of technologies for human resource training.

Promote and strengthen discussion and cooperation among the ministries of labor and the ministries of education.

Promote coordination among systems for vocational training and formal education with an emphasis on technical education for work, labor reconversion, and access to digital technologies, among other fields of cooperation.

Develop digital and socio-emotional skills in human resources to integrate them into the processes of transforming the world of work, promoting national and regional frameworks for job qualification.

Work toward updating guidelines, protocols, and regulations for emergency health care, develop measures to promote mental health in the workplace, and promote occupational health and safety from a preventive perspective in accordance with World Health Organization guidelines.

In conclusion, we should highlight the Conference's recommendation on strengthening institutionalized social dialog at both the national and regional levels to build a new, better world of work. Broad participatory social dialog is a privileged instrument for strengthening labor institutions and promoting the effective achievement of fundamental rights for workers. It is through dialog that trust can be built between governments and the different social actors to reach fair, equitable, and lasting agreements, to foster responsible business behavior, and to strengthen sustainable enterprises.

Thank you very much.