



SUMMIT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW
GROUP (SIRG)
First Regular Meeting of 2024
February 20, 2024
Virtual

OEA/Ser.E
GRIC/O.1/INF.37/24
23 February 2024
Original: Spanish

OPENING REMARKS BY THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC,
CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SUMMITS PROCESS

(Ambassador Rubén Silié, Chair of the SIRG)

- Mr. James Lambert, Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs, Organization of American States,
- Ambassador Francisco Mora, United States National Summit Coordinator,
- Ms. María Celina Conte, Director of the Summits Secretariat,
- National coordinators and deputy national coordinators of the member states,
- Representatives of the Joint Summit Working Group institutions,
- Distinguished permanent representatives and alternate representatives of the member states,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Distinguished colleagues, on behalf of the Government of the Dominican Republic and as we begin as Chair *pro tempore* of the Summit of the Americas, we want to warmly welcome you to this meeting of the SIRG. This occasion marks the start of a new chapter in our collective endeavor towards the Tenth Summit, which we will host in Punta Cana in October 2025.

First of all, we would like to thank the United States for leading the Summits Process between 2020 and 2023; and for the robust hemispheric agenda that it has placed in the hands of the countries of the region.

We commend the Summits Secretariat for its outstanding work as technical secretariat and institutional memory for this process. Coordinating for the various stakeholders to participate in the Summits Process has been critical; Coordination has also been vital to our activities advancing and doing so efficiently, and to ensuring a smooth transition from the outgoing Chair to the incoming Chair.

Another cornerstone of the Summits Process is the Joint Summit Working Group, thanks to the invaluable technical and financial support it provides to state efforts.

Allow us to also applaud civil society and social actors in the Americas for their steadfast commitment. The Dominican Republic hopes to be able to continue enjoying their active participation, which is vital to building a more inclusive and prosperous region.

Besides the central goal of this SIRG meeting, we would like to state that as Chair we intend to work very closely with the states, the JSWG institutions, and the social actors; and to that end we will leverage our close relationship with the Summits Secretariat.

We look forward to the Summit being inclusive and horizontal. To prepare for it, we will listen to everyone in equal measure. Your perspectives and recommendations will be key to shaping and implementing the hemispheric agenda. Likewise, we hope to harmonize the Summits Process agenda with that of the inter-American ministerial meetings.

Next December, it will be our delight to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Summit of the Americas, a milestone that beckons us to reflect on what we have achieved and to set ourselves new and ambitious goals. Further on, we will be providing you with more details about the event, in terms of its concept and logistics; but be assured that your recommendations are more than welcome.

This Chair will continue building on the success and experience from past summits and will therefore in due course call a meeting of the SIRG Steering Committee, which comprises the host countries of other summits, in order to share their best practices and ensure a smooth, efficient, and effective process.

A major incentive for undertaking this Summit of the Americas is the opportunity it gives us to support regional integration – a commitment that is of paramount importance. The ideal of a region united not only by geography and economic ties but, too, by shared values for us to rise above our differences and articulate a truly regional way of thinking, has been the dream of the Americas rooted in the struggle for freedom.

From that standpoint, the first rule of engagement is inclusion, because we must see ourselves as a community governed by tolerance and good neighborliness – key ingredients of the social cement for us to be able to pack together the myriad nationalities and identities with very different political leanings that converge in the Americas.

In order to carry out our work as one we will be careful to ensure that our relations are horizontal and that everyone gets an opportunity to express ideas and be heard in order to build a truly legitimate consensus.

Let us not forget that the principle of one country, one vote, which underpins multilateralism, makes sense only if we recognize that, regardless of the size of our GDP, or any other economic or social indicator, we are all sovereign states with the same rights and obligations.

The Dominican Chair will therefore focus not on ideological musings but rather on identifying measures to help us effectively move towards development and peace – because we firmly believe in a multilateralism that accommodates different views and preferences, but without ideologies, as the only way to move forward for the benefit of the well-being of all.

Our present demands more moderation than confrontation, which is why our work will be geared towards mediation and, in Dominican political history, our experience tells us that dialogue has been an indispensable vehicle for consolidating long-term democratic stability, together with sustained economic growth.

We Dominicans are proud that our Caribbean island identity, far from isolating us, has made us a geographic meeting point which, coupled with our renowned hospitality, offers us the unique privilege of being a space for dialogue amongst the fellow citizens of the Americas.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we cannot afford to forget that the Summit of the Americas process has borne fruit for 30 years, thereby helping us to acknowledge that we are a hemispheric community. The celebration of this anniversary will be an occasion for us to reflect together on these

last three decades as we look to the future. We will be organizing an event to mark the occasion and you will be getting more in due course.

I invite you to prepare for the second regular meeting of the SIRG, scheduled to be held in Washington, D.C., in May. We will shortly provide a draft schedule and working procedures.

Esteemed colleagues, the doors of the Dominican Republic remain open to receive your suggestions and input. We are confident that, together, we will be able to rise to this important challenge.

Thank you very much!