

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



Speaking notes

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**Bogota Meeting of Think Tanks on
the Summit of the Americas**

March 14, 2011

Bogota - Colombia

Salutations:

1. I appreciate the invitation and congratulations to the organizers, in fostering a more inclusive approach and listening to the voice of the other stakeholders in society. I believe that if we want to develop our countries and create stable societies we need to involve all stakeholders in the decision making process and design meaningful consultation mechanisms. Governments cannot achieve these objectives on their own, peace, prosperity and security are shared responsibilities.
2. Without this inclusive approach it will be difficult to create peace, prosperity and stability in our societies. I believe that efforts over the past five years have resulted in a more coherent and regular consultation with stakeholders, and that's why this initiative from the inter-american think tanks is important.
3. I extend congratulations to Government of Colombia for hosting the Sixth Regular Summit of the Americas in April 2012. I also commend the host for the multilateral approach that has been adopted and the OAS General Secretariat stands ready to assist in the preparatory process, as are the many other Summit supporting institutions. I am pleased with the consultations between the Government of Colombia and the OAS, especially the Office for Summits Management and the Department of Conferences and Meetings, as well as with the Joint Summit Working Group.
4. Summitry is important, especially against the global and hemispheric challenges facing the nations of the Americas. The principal objective of this process is to foster political dialogue, to promote economic cooperation and cultural understanding between member states of the OAS, to create consensus on a forward looking positive agenda. Summits of the Americas remain a unique vehicle to promote and express unity and solidarity between member states and to build trust and confidence.
5. At the same time we need to take account of global geo-political dynamics and the impact of these developments on life in the Americas as well as the interesting developments in our own region. Some developments that require further attention are:
 - a. The absence of circumstances and positive attitudes that can contribute to solving problems between countries. No doubt, we need to work together, given the cross border nature of most of the problems facing the nations of the Americas. We need to build and foster unity to effectively address the issues between and within countries. Our focus should be on what binds us, rather than what divides us.
 - b. The increasingly complex and dynamic multilateral and regional dialogue architecture, ranging from political integration, economic cooperation, sub-regional integration to political consultation. I welcome mechanisms, whether institutionalized or not, that can foster cooperation, consultation,

consensus and collective action, but it will take some time to adapt to these new circumstances and possibly also make it necessary to change the objectives and activities of some of the hemispheric institutions.

We always have to act from the premise that no country in isolation or on their own can effectively solve the challenges faced. In this consensus building process, given the cross-border nature of the challenges, we have to work with all member states at some point in the process. We all depend on each other in this hemisphere. The Summits of the Americas are especially relevant and necessary for this purpose.

6. Many mandates already exist, so possibly, under ideal circumstances, there should have been no need to create new ones. The realities are known and if there is a need for a concise and practical outcome, I believe we should focus on what is common, what is broadly shared, in the hemisphere. We need to increase the credibility and integrity of this process, and that can be only be done if there is ownership not only at the political level, but equally at the level of the citizens, who expect to benefit from the Summit of the Americas.
7. Areas that come to mind in this regard are: promoting competitiveness and job creation, natural disasters, and crime and violence. This in the context of attacking poverty, creating more equality, and strengthening the ability of Governments to more effectively deliver social and economic goods through efficient and democratic governance.
8. We have seen some very positive developments and initiatives in this regard, such as the Social Protection Network that through the OAS has been established build on the experience of Brazil, Mexico, Chile, among others.
9. The objective therefore should be to adopt measurable outcomes and realistic, achievable targets. A result-oriented approach that can provide confidence to the peoples of the Americas. The people of this hemisphere expect that decisions, taken by Heads of State and Government in April 2012 in Cartagena will improve their life in a meaningful and direct way.
10. Focus on coordination, implementation, financing, evaluation and monitoring, institutionalization.

a. Coordination

- i. within countries
- ii. between countries and within the sub-regions
- iii. in the inter-american system of institutions

b. Implementation

- i. national
- ii. sub-regional
- iii. hemispheric

c. Evaluation and Monitoring

- i. national
- ii. sub-regional
- iii. multilateral: OAS Committee, SIRG, JSWG

d. Financing

- i. special financing windows
- ii. national
- iii. sub-regional development banks
- iv. Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank

11. I believe that at the national level a more coordinated preparatory process is required, as well as in terms of implementation and monitoring, between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finance and the technical ministries and specialized agencies.
12. I reaffirm the OAS's commitment in terms of organization and technical support. But I believe that the OAS can be more than the institutional memory for the Summits of the Americas process and functioning as the technical secretariat to the Joint Summit Working Group. It can be also the political house for this process. I believe that the upcoming Summit is an opportune time for member states to consider how to strengthen this process by taking into account the existing dialogue framework in the Inter-American System.
13. Ultimately, which ever theme or approach is adopted by the host country and the member states, it is about democracy and equality, prosperity and equity and peace and stability. The summit has to be a relevant undertaking to the benefit of progress for the peoples of the Americas.

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