



JOINT SUMMIT WORKING GROUP
Meeting of High Authorities
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PRESENTATION BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT
LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM (SELA)

By Ambassador Oscar Hernández
Director of Relations for Integration and Cooperation (SELA)

His Excellency Mr. Luis Almagro, Secretary General of the OAS and Chair of the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG);

His Excellency Ambassador Michael G. Kozak, Acting Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, United States Department of State;

Her Excellency Dr. Carissa F. Etienne, Director, Pan American Health Organization;

High Authorities of the Joint Summit Working Group,

Ladies and gentlemen:

It is truly my honor, in my capacity as Permanent Secretary of SELA, to be here today as an observer at this meeting of the Joint Summit Working Group on the occasion of the Fourth Meeting of High Authorities on the impact of COVID-19 in the Americas.

The Permanent Secretariat has expertise in project and initiative preparation and execution, which may make a substantive contribution in implementing the commitments assumed at the Summits, with unquestionable impact on improving the living conditions of the peoples of the region.

In its sphere of action, SELA promotes cooperation and integration among countries of the region, as well as best practices of both public policy design and the definition of mechanisms for implementing and/or measuring the impact of these policies. In that context, we in the Permanent Secretariat have prepared a list of the primary measures, actions, and policies implemented by member states to address the pandemic, which we update weekly.

The developments we are now witnessing due to COVID-19 have underscored the need for coordination and cooperation among the different international organizations. We are certain that our presence in the JSWG will contribute significantly to its work in this Hemisphere.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought to the fore the need for internationally-coordinated action to address global issues, and the vital role of clear, evidence-based, flexible, and high-standard rules to support a comprehensive response to the crisis and its sequelae. At the same time and now more

than ever, the capacity of the multilateral system to address this global phenomenon is being questioned.

International organizations are under unprecedented pressure to respond in a timely and effective manner and to assist their members during the crisis. Today, collective action is essential to strengthen the regional multilateral system and maintain confidence in organizations such as ours. Our practices must remain transparent, inclusive, and well-coordinated.

Our current efforts in the region to address the challenges of the Americas, as well as those yet to be addressed, must reflect a vision not only guaranteed by the effectiveness and relevance of the respective mandates, but must also be based on information- and knowledge-sharing, so as to optimize cooperation and the financing of activities, and avoid duplication of effort.

I wish to emphasize that we in SELA attach great importance to the efforts under way in different regional bodies to ensure best practices in combating corruption, a scourge that is a factor in the deterioration of our region's economic development, especially in such difficult times, so as to contribute to a process of growth with equity.

To conclude, I reiterate that SELA, as an organization of the inter-American system, wishes to contribute to the group of regional and international institutions that provide support for the Summits process in implementing and following up on the mandates, and to assist in identifying and analyzing the challenges faced by the Americas.

We are willing to do so and able to provide technical guidance in the quest for solutions.

Thank you very much.