



NINTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS  
June 8-10, 2022  
Los Angeles, United States of America



OEA/Ser.E  
CA-IX/INF.14/22  
6 July 2022  
Original: English

## PLENARY SESSION OF THE IX SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

### REMARKS BY THE PRIMER MINISTER OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, GASTON BROWNE

Colleague Heads of Government

Excellencies

While I register my regret that invitations to this Ninth Summit of the Americas were not extended to all Heads of Government, I acknowledge that the crucial issues, confronting our global community, demand our urgent and collective attention.

It is my hope that there will be no future summits to which any Head of Government of our Americas will be omitted.

Indeed, we regard the trade embargo against Cuba as harmful to the promotion of peace and prosperity in the Hemisphere.

It should be ended.

Similarly, we urge engagement with the government of Venezuela, allowing the country to use its resources for its people's needs, and to play a peaceful and constructive role in our region.

To achieve this, there is work to be done by all sides to narrow differences, and establish cooperation, in the interest of advancing the economic, social and political well-being of all the peoples of our Hemisphere.

Right now, a confluence of troubling global events requires our collective and strong leadership to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic; to respond adequately to Climate Change and to surmount the challenges of food insecurity and escalating oil prices.

The inflationary pressures are driving tens of millions of people in our Hemisphere into abject poverty, requiring greater hemispheric cooperation and solidarity.

As leaders, we must act urgently bring the rising cost of living under control

However, the reality is no one country can overcome these challenges.

The widest possible hemispheric and international cooperation to mobilise our collective resources behind a clear plan of action is vital and must be encouraged and pursued.

While I do not expect that this Summit can produce a definitive plan, I hope that, at least, we can agree on its elements, including the identification of priorities and practical measures that can be implemented.

Colleagues, we are at a defining moment.

All of us need to summon the political will to act, and to act with purpose.

Beyond the new and urgent challenges that confront us all, there are others that have lingered and festered for too long.

The important truth, emanating from COVID-19, that no one is safe until all are safe, applies equally to the overarching threat of Climate Change; to the conditions of underdevelopment that lead to irregular migration and refugees; to inappropriate and inadequate criteria for access to concessionary financing; and to de-risking and financial exclusion of small economies from the international financial system.

I draw special attention to the fact that, for decades, the effects of Climate Change have repeatedly caused loss and damage to small states with no compensation.

Our countries have suffered – and continue to suffer – even though we are the least contributors to the causes of Climate Change.

This is one of the greatest injustices that exists today.

It requires the attention of the United States and others.

If we learned nothing else from the COVID-19 pandemic, it should be that we cannot legislate against cross-border effects of global issues, nor can we build walls to exclude them, or establish border patrols to turn them back.

Lip service, neglect and national self-interest may serve the wealthier countries among us for a time, but eventually deteriorating conditions in the neighbourhood will engulf all, unless we act, and act now.

What is urgently required is genuine international cooperation to remedy these ills, which have persisted relentlessly, forcing many small states to cope by borrowing on commercial terms.

This borrowing to repeatedly repair infrastructure damaged by the impact of Climate, and more recently, to finance extraordinary expenditure incurred in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, has enlarged our debt burden, leaving little fiscal space to build resilience, and to construct necessary physical infrastructure.

In this connection, my Government welcomes President Biden's announcement of a new "Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity".

My government is particularly pleased that President Biden's 'Americas Partnership' aims to mobilise new financing, and to revitalize multilateral development banks, revamping their lending policies to better meet the specific needs of the majority of our nations.

I remind, however, that many Caribbean countries have exhausted their borrowing capacity to respond to these exogenous shocks and need debt relief and post-COVID recovery assistance to shore up their tattered economies.

Therefore, contracting more debt is not the answer.

I also remind that, for no good reason, six CARICOM countries are denied membership of the Inter-American Development Bank Group and, therefore, to access from their lending and investment. My government encourages President Biden to include, in this new Partnership, the US joining other development partners as a member of the Caribbean Development Bank, which services all CARICOM countries, and is indispensable to our needs.

My government applauds and celebrates renewed, reinvigorated and sustained US attention to the mutual economic prosperity of the US and the nations of our hemisphere.

President Biden is providing much appreciated leadership in this regard.

But we recognize that the United States alone cannot do everything.

Hence, we urge cooperation between the US government and other governments, such as China, which is playing a constructive role throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the areas of infrastructural development and the build out of renewable sources of energy, collaboration between the US and China could accelerate the pace of economic transformation in the region.

Colleagues, this Summit should be remembered as one at which we, the leaders of the Americas, confronted the barriers to the economic progress and prosperity of the larger American family, and decided to act decisively, to overcome them.

That will be achieved not by the declarations that we will issue, but by the actions we take to implement them – faithfully, and expeditiously.

Thank you.