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## PLENARY SESSION OF THE IX SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

### REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR OF SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THELMA PHILIPP-BROWNE

Excellencies, it is my distinct pleasure to address this august gathering, in the vibrant multicultural city of Los Angeles. I bring you warm fraternal greetings from the Government and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis. Permit me to express profound apologies on behalf of our esteemed Prime Minister, Dr. the Honorable Timothy Harris, who would have loved to be here, but the exigencies of matters of state have precluded his attendance. He sends his best wishes for a fruitful Summit.

President Biden, allow me to extend my delegation's deepest appreciation to your government and people, for hosting this IX Summit of the Americas and for your excellent hospitality. The Summit comes at a moment of a convergence of global crises, but yes, we can turn these crises into opportunities to build back better. The theme of the Summit, "Building a Sustainable, Resilient and Equitable Future", is therefore a timely one as our countries navigate our way, out of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. As a region, the Americas was the most severely affected. Home to less than 15% of the global population, the hemisphere accounted for approximately 29.5% of confirmed COVID-19 cases and sadly, 43% of global deaths.

The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis therefore believes it is incumbent upon us all to cultivate "a mind to work" if we are to restore, rebuild and collectively advance towards a Sustainable, Resilient and Equitable Future for the people of the Americas. No nation should be left out, or behind if we are to extract the greatest positive outcomes for the greatest number of people in our hemisphere. We envisage that a region, diverse in culture but intrinsically linked by geographic proximity and common challenges, should emerge as one that is integrated, inclusive, productive, prosperous, and peaceful. We further believe that each child born to every household in this hemisphere, be it one of the over 17,000 households in St Kitts and Nevis, 132 million or thereabout in the US or approximately 3.8 million in Cuba, should be afforded an enabling environment to achieve his or her fullest potential to become a resilient, creative and productive citizen, equipped to deal with our region's challenges be they health, environmental, technological, economical or governance related. To this end, St Kitts and Nevis urges the government of the United States of America to consider ending the economic embargo against the Republic of Cuba. Had it not been for Cuba, many countries in the Caribbean would not have withstood the onslaught of the coronavirus. Cuba's world-renowned healthcare sector should be a source for hemispheric pride and their voice at the Summit would have been invaluable for building sustainable, resilient and equitable global health. The same could be said of our brothers and sisters in Venezuela as we tackle an energy crisis, fueled in part by geopolitical fights from another century. It is hoped that this Summit provides the impetus to eschew 20th century conflicts and truly focus on the battles of the future- the fight for people, the fight for the planet, the fight for prosperity--all necessary for the attainment of peace.

The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis wishes to place on record its sincerest appreciation to the United States and indeed to all Hemispheric partners who supported us throughout the pandemic. Your vital cooperation enabled us to open sooner, safer, and stronger.

It is in this spirit that we pledge to dedicate efforts at the national level to achieve the well-intentioned outcomes of the Draft Political Commitments on Health and Resilience in the Americas, Regional Agenda on Digital Transformation, Accelerating the Sustainable, Clean, Renewable and Just Energy Transition, Our Sustainable Green Future, as well as the Inter-American Action Plan on Democratic Governance. We highly value the yeoman efforts that were invested into crafting these documents, which should serve as a road map for action.

Saint Kitts and Nevis is pleased to report that we have begun significant work in many of these areas which mirror our foreign and development policy. Nonetheless, these political commitments will certainly serve to give us greater impetus to prioritize these matters on our national agenda and to employ more concrete action to facilitate the necessary implementation.

In the area of Health and Resilience, partnerships with the Social Security Board, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and the Pan American Health Organization among others have been established to effect the seamless roll out of the Universal Healthcare program by the first quarter of 2023.

Cognizant that 75% of infectious diseases are traceable to the increasing interface between man and the animal and plant environment, we are also committed to the implementation of the IHR 2005 and the One Health Approach to the pursuit of global health security. Our advocacy against chronic non-communicable disease is vibrant and the battle to decrease our proportion of the premature deaths from NCD's in our hemisphere, is enjoined at the highest level as our Prime Minister promotes and leads health walks.

The ramifications of the pandemic and the vagaries of geopolitics highlight how central food is to our health and well-being. My country views the development of the agriculture systems and sector as foundational to resilience and is acting in line with CARICOM and through IICA to invest in food and nutrition security. We posit that food security is an area replete with low hanging fruit and is ripe for Inter-American cooperation...

The Digital Transformation Strategy of Saint Kitts and Nevis was launched in 2019, to make doing business with government more efficient. We are very pleased that the Political Commitment on Digital Transformation, aligns with Government's plans for transforming the Federation into a digital economy. We believe special emphasis should be placed on the vulnerability of our Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as it relates to our telecommunications and infrastructure in general, considering our exposure to climatic and external shocks. We therefore call for the appropriate resources (financial, technical and human) to be mobilized to assist SIDS. We anticipate this will be done in consultation and partnership with major tech firms across the hemisphere, paving the way for coherence, complementarity, and public-private partnership- a key ingredient for building resilience and sustainability.

St. Kitts and Nevis believes that an energy system based on renewables is the only model that can fuel a resilient future and our National Determined Contribution foresees a dynamic mix of renewable energy. Currently a Solar Farm expected to be one of the largest of its kind in the region, is

being constructed on Saint Kitts and is projected to be completed by 2024. A geothermal project on Nevis is also earmarked for further investment as we strive towards a greener and cleaner future. Accordingly, the PACT 2030, an initiative to ensure energy security and climate resistance launched by President Biden, is timely and most welcome.

Saint Kitts and Nevis continues to pursue the promotion of Democratic Governance. The Integrity in Public Life Act was passed in 2013 and came into full effect on 11th July 2018. This Act highlights the Code of Conduct for Public Officials and addresses abuse of and misconduct in Public Office.

Additionally, we consistently enjoy positive reviews regarding the conduct of our elections which have been deemed “free and fair and free from fear” by successive Observer groups. As the birthplace of Alexander Hamilton, a founding father of this country, St Kitts and Nevis stands as a flag bearer for a dynamic democratic state.

Finally, excellencies, it gives me great pride to reiterate the commitment of Saint Kitts and Nevis, in the spirit of Inter-American cooperation, towards deepening the regional integration process, while calling on all States to promote frank dialogue, mutual respect and broad-based inclusivity, as we seek to resolve issues in our hemisphere and look to the future to fight what really matters -the betterment of our peoples and sustainability of our planet. Let it be said that when we leave this Summit, we leave with a firm commitment to tangible deliverables that would put our hemisphere on a path to enhanced productivity, prosperity and peace and may history so record!

Thank you very much for your patience. God bless us all and may God bless our hemisphere.