



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



OEA/Ser.E  
CA-IX/INF.16/22  
6 July 2022  
Original: English

## PLENARY SESSION OF THE IX SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

### REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF SAINT LUCIA, PHILIP J. PIERRE

Madame Chair

Heads of State and Heads of Government,

Distinguished Ministers, Excellencies and Heads of Delegation,

Citizens of the Americas

Let me thank the President, the City of Los Angeles, and the Government of the United States for hosting this IX Summit of the Americas and for the excellent welcome given to our delegations.

The inevitable march of time, in the decades since the first Summit of the Americas in 1994, finds us meeting here in Los Angeles at one of the most critical junctures in world history. A time of universal and grim crisis that causes deep anxiety among our peoples. It is manifested in the everdeepening climate crisis. Visible in a COVID 19 pandemic that has created health and economic predicaments and compounded by a war in Ukraine with its worldwide disastrous impact on the cost of energy and food supplies.

For us in Saint Lucia and the small island states of the Caribbean, the smallest members of the Americas, these crises are not of our making - none more so than that of climate change. The first of June marked the commencement of this year's Hurricane season in our hemisphere and while hurricanes have always been a feature of our environment, their increasing ferocity and destructive power in the last decade have, undisputedly, been driven by climate change. Consider also that the world only hears of the major weather events because they are covered by the press regionally and sometimes internationally however there are persistent small events brought about by average rainfall that cause significant damage – often manifested in landslides and flooding – and in the process impose additional severe strain on our already limited financial capability. For us therefore climate financing that will allow us to adapt to the effects of climate change and which will enable us to build the resiliency needed to survive it, is of paramount importance. It is therefore disappointing that the wealthy developed countries are yet to deliver on their pledge to raise US\$100 billion a year (the deadline for which has moved from 2020 to 2023) to assist poor developing countries to cope with climate change. What is even more disconcerting is the acknowledgment now that developing countries will need even more than US\$100 billion a year for climate change adaptation.

To complicate matters, it is evident that weaknesses in the mechanisms for the delivery of climate finance are affecting the flow and impact of such funds to developing countries. We in the

Americas must adopt climate finance models that will effectively reduce our acute climate change vulnerability. I therefore call upon multilateral development banks and other regional and hemispheric financing institutions to take action to mobilize greater climate change financing for our countries and to streamline and accelerate its distribution.

The economic crises from the COVID 19 Pandemic and the war in Ukraine have worsened our vulnerability by further contracting our fiscal ability to execute the economic and social programmes that will bring progress to our people. In order to surmount the setbacks from these crises, it is imperative that the countries of the Americas work out innovative forms of hemispheric economic cooperation that will generate the financing and other initiatives that will stimulate economic recovery and growth, including food security, in our nations. It is important that in this new mode of economic cooperation, simplistic measures of Gross National Income that debar small island states from accessing badly needed financing and debt relief are discarded in favour of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) that is a fairer path to sustainable development. We have adopted political commitments at this Summit that seek to address some aspects of the challenges confronting us. If we can implement them, then we will be on our way to securing a better future for the peoples of the Americas because in the final analysis, it is the people who matter. Youth development and empowerment must be a vital part of the solutions being prescribed. In Saint Lucia, my government is determined to create a special space for youth entrepreneurship and business growth within the general economic system to be pursued in the immediate future. In that space youth will be provided with state resources to help them convert hobbies into entrepreneurship and skills into business through finance and marketing support, training and mentorship; thus creating sustainable livelihoods and a new cadre of indigenous business people. A dedicated agency which is agile, flexible and responsive is being created to drive that policy. The wellbeing of our people must be first in our deliberations and our decisions.

My country therefore welcomes President Biden's announcement of the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity which aims for a new model of cooperation between the US and the other countries of the Americas in the face of the crises of our times. However, let me state clearly, that the Americas can only successfully take the highway out of these crises if the Americas act together. It is therefore disappointing that some countries of this hemisphere- namely Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua- were not invited to this Summit and that the Summit has been marred by debates over inclusion and exclusion. The Americas cannot prosper if there is division and conflict in the hemisphere. There is always more to gain in cohesion and engagement than in fragmentation and confrontation. At this time, we must never forget the situation in Haiti which is causing untold hardship among the people. Our generation must not miss the opportunity to create true solidarity among the nations of the Americas. Saint Lucia's Nobel Laureate the Hon. Derek Walcott, lends us words, from his poem "Love After Love", to help capture this moment, and I quote: "The time will come when, with elation you will greet yourself arriving at your own door, in your own mirror and each will smile at the other's welcome". Saint Lucia has a deep and sincere desire to see the realization of true unity among the peoples of the Americas.

The great South American Liberator, Simon Bolivar of Venezuela said: "In the unity of our nations rests the glorious future of our peoples". This is as true today as it was two centuries ago. And so, as I applaud and welcome the boldness of President Biden's Americas Partnership, I say to our esteemed Host and Chair, President Biden, take another bold step for our nations - put an end to the economic hardship in this hemisphere by leading your country to revoke the 60-year-old economic embargo against Cuba and remove the economic sanctions on Venezuela. It is the people who are

suffering. These times demand more than ever that we reflect on the futility of division in our hemisphere and do all within our power to ensure that this ends now.

As I conclude I quote from President Barack Obama “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” Let the Americas come together for a sustainable, resilient and glorious future for our people!

I thank you.