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PLENARY SESSION OF THE NINTH SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE EASTERN REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY, LUIS LACALLE POU

First and foremost, I would like to thank our host, President Biden, and the entire Organization, for holding the summit. My greetings to all the Heads of State and other authorities. I have been following the speeches and remarks by the various presidents very closely. I regret not being able to be with you due to COVID, but I wanted to be with you in some way and am taking advantage of this virtual option.

It is our lot to be living in a world of uncertainty, of increasing uncertainty, which will be with us for a while. It is up to us governors and authorities to generate certainty and try and provide security. That means security in a number of spheres, including democratic security. Here at this summit, we have spoken of democracy, which is not just limited to elections but includes other democratic mechanisms, such as the separation between branches of government, opportunities to protest, to enjoy freedom of expression, and the ability to criticize the government. Unfortunately, we are well aware that in our Latin America there are countries that are far from offering democratic security for their citizens. Not only now because elections are irregular or non-existent, but also in respect of the most basic rights of any citizen.

Economic security is also important because it allows us to bring prosperity for our people and is based on the possibility that countries can develop, a subject I would like to touch on later.

As for food security in our countries, Uruguay produces top quality food products, including natural and healthy foods, in a manner that is both sustainable and respectful of the environment. There are also countries with a food deficit that are ready and keen to contact countries like ours that have food security and can help feed the rest of the world.

Environmental security is a duty we have to current and future generations. It has to do not just with healthy or environment-friendly practices, or practices to mitigate the harm done by humans. Nowadays, we also need to speak about green finance, environmental finance.

Those countries that access loans and comply with globally necessary parameters deserve to be rewarded with an environmental finance bonus. Those countries that help preserve natural resources should also have access to loans enabling them precisely to perform a task that is vital for humankind.

We come to this summit, as we did to previous summits, to support multilateralism and bilateral relations. Uruguay comes convinced of the benefits of a more open world. Uruguay seeks to open itself up to the world and needs other countries and groups of countries to act accordingly.

Some are struck by the fact that Uruguay nowadays trades most of its products with regions or countries that have opened up their markets to our excellent raw materials, our intellect, science, and technology. That is why we believe that the rest of the world and developed countries have a duty to open their markets and trade.

We have not come here to beg. Rather, we are convinced that in a more open world, there is an enormous opportunity for Uruguay to achieve progress for its citizens.

A few years ago, I read about a different kind of gross domestic product, namely the inclusive wealth index that covers more than just economic data. I, too, try to define prosperity in more than just economic terms. For our countries, to be prosperous, what we need is a more open world, one that is less protectionist, a world in which one country complements another.

So, I would like once again to thank our host, the organizers of this summit, and our colleagues, trusting that all the good things said here at this summit and all the good intentions translate into real actions, because we all know that if this summit and these meetings remain a dead letter and do not in fact have a positive impact on our societies, nothing will have been achieved.

You can count, then, on Uruguay, a country open to the entire world and all its fellow countries of the Americas.

Thank you very much.